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Paul Lazarsfeld and the Trajectory of the American Media Reform Movement, 1922-1955

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Paul Lazarsfeld and the Trajectory of the American Media Reform Movement, 1922-1955

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Abstract

This thesis explores a previously neglected period in American public broadcasting history, that of the early- to mid-1950s. Engelman (1996) has described the 1950s as 'The Foundation Years', a time in which large philanthropic foundations - most prominently the Ford Foundation - invested in non-commercial broadcasting. While the importance of the Ford Foundation to the development of public broadcasting has been noted in the literature, it has never been explored in any detail. Where it is discussed, the focus tends to be on the practical support that the foundation offered, funding the production and distribution of programmes.

My focus is not on the practical support offered by the Ford Foundation, but rather on the contribution that the foundation attempted to make to the philosophical debate regarding the place of broadcasting in American public life. I argue that the Ford Foundation intended, in the early 1950s, to breathe new life into the media reform movement that had been advancing the cause of public broadcasting throughout the 1930s and 1940s. Following the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) 1952 decision to reserve a portion of the broadcast spectrum for educational television, and at the behest of Robert M Hutchins, the Ford Foundation established a Television Advisory Committee (TAC). The purpose of the TAC was to undertake a wide-ranging, critical review of the place of television in American society, similar to that undertaken by Hutchins' own Commission on the Freedom of the Press. One of America's pre-eminent media scholars, Paul F Lazarsfeld, was appointed to Chair the TAC, yet its original aims would never be realised. In this thesis, I argue that Lazarsfeld himself was largely to blame for impeding the work of the TAC, to the long-term detriment of American public media.

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Chapter 4 – The television freeze of 1948-1952

Chapter 5 – Paul Lazarsfeld and the Ford Foundation

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

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Preface

This thesis began, as I suspect many do, with a question entirely different to the one that I eventually answer. Having settled that I was interested in examining Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) in its international context, I began to work my way through the relevant literature, eventually finding Hallin and Mancini's (2003) *Comparing Media Systems*. In this work - which I will return to later - the authors argue that the media in Western Europe and North America can best be understood as a series of related media systems, where the media of individual nations are grouped together according to common traits. In Hallin and Mancini's work, the United Kingdom - my primary area of interest - was grouped alongside Ireland, Canada and the USA in the 'North Atlantic' system. On first reading this, my natural reaction was to stop and ask: "really?". How could you group together the UK - home of the BBC, and arguably the birthplace of an entire public service tradition - with the USA, that had done so much to commercialise the media, both at home and abroad? Surely these were two opposing poles, when it came to the media in liberal-democratic states? How could you argue that the UK and USA were more closely related than the UK and Germany, say, or France?

It was in pursuit of this question that I first set off, and my initial aim was to dig down into what I thought of as the inherently flawed model proposed by Hallin and Mancini. My plan was, at first, to undertake a comparative case study of the UK and USA, with the focus on PSB. Wanting to set the case studies in their context, I began to write a short background chapter outlining the historical development of PSB in Britain and America. Little did I know that this short chapter was the cuckoo in my nest. Over the next few years, it grew uncontrollably, devouring everything before it. What began as a contemporary comparative study of the UK and USA soon became a historical comparative study, looking at the intertwining paths of British and American media history from the 1920s to the 1960s. Soon, it became apparent that I would not be able to do justice even to this subject, and the focus shifted from the comparative to the singular; this would be a history of the early years of public media in the USA, but with one eye on developments here in the UK. And even then, I was forced to narrow my remit even further. Where I have eventually arrived is at a pre-history of American public broadcasting, from the early days of radio to the years in which television hammered down the stakes, and became central to American life.

While much of the material that I gathered for earlier iterations of this thesis has been discarded – or at least, stored in a drawer for future use – each previous version has left its mark on this final draft. I am, by now, less inclined to scoff at Hallin and Mancini; stepping back, taking a broader view of the British and American systems of broadcasting has made me much more aware of their deep-rooted similarities. Yet, having started out from similar points of origin, there is no doubt that the UK and the USA took different paths, each claiming to operate in service of the public, but employing starkly different means of doing so. So, while the focus of this thesis has narrowed dramatically during its writing, it is a desire to better understand this difference that remains the driving force.

Researching American broadcasting while living in Wales brings with it a particular set of challenges. While I have been able to access some documents online, the bulk of the archival work that makes up the backbone of this thesis demanded that I travel to the USA. My original insights, found in Chapter 5, are the result of long hours spent poring through documents held in various archives in New York and Washington DC. Each trip to the archive had to be funded, and I had to contest with flight delays, and jet-lag, and homesickness and all of the other minor privations of global travel. Yet I believe that the transatlantic perspective that I bring to the material enriches the arguments that I make, even when that is more implicit than explicit. The new conclusions that I draw regarding the nature of public media in the USA are derived from American evidence read with Welsh eyes.

A word of thanks

Having spent many years working on this thesis, I have accumulated a long list of people who deserve my thanks. Andrew McStay and Vian Bakir that shouldered the burden of my supervision, and did so patiently and supportively throughout. I owe both of them a huge debt of gratitude. I am also grateful to Nathan Abrams, Kate Taylor-Jones and Stephanie Marriott, who each helped me through the early stages of developing this thesis.

On a practical level, I wish to thank the staff of the Rockefeller Archives, the Columbia University library, and the Public Broadcasting Archive at the University of Maryland. Particular thanks goes to Bethany J Antos at the Rockefeller Archive and Michael Henry at the University of Maryland, both of whom went above and beyond the call of duty in assisting me to find elusive sources.

I also wish to express my gratitude to the Santander Network, who funded part of my travel to the USA through their partnership with Bangor University. I am also grateful to Ralph Engelman and David Morrison; their work informs much of what is written in this thesis, but they were also kind enough to respond to a number of questions that I had, and encouraged me in my work.

Finally, I need to both thank my family, and beg their forgiveness. When I began working towards this thesis, my daughter, Martha wasn't yet two-years old, and my son, Iago was still an infant. Their entire lives, to date, have been lived in the shadow of my PhD. Likewise, my wife, Mai, has had to make space in our marriage for this beast of a thing for far too long. Their patience and tolerance has been legendary, and am eternally grateful to them for it.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

    1.1 Introduction

    1.2 Literature Review

    1.3 Research questions

    1.4 Methodology

    1.5 Structure of the thesis

Broadcast media have been at the centre of public life for a century, and throughout this period, governments in Western democracies have sought to define the relationship between the public and the media. In most of Western Europe and Canada, governments have historically assumed responsibility for the provision of broadcast content, and have seen this as the preferred means of protecting and fostering the public interest. The overwhelming majority of Western European pre-war democracies instituted systems of public broadcasting in the 1920s and 1930s, with similar systems being adopted immediately following the Second World War in nations that had previously been ruled by authoritarian dictatorships. In the United States, however, it took until 1967 for the Federal Government to pass legislation creating a public broadcasting system, broadly analogous to the one found across the Atlantic. This is despite the fact that the USA shared a strong cultural, political and intellectual tradition with Western Europe. Indeed, during the period in which British broadcasters and policy-makers were working to establish the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), their American counterparts were engaged in discussions that closely mirrored those in the UK. Yet, while the discussions in Britain and America revolved around the same questions, and often drew the same conclusions, the answers that they arrived at were starkly different. Where Western European governments assumed responsibility for providing a programme service for their public, early American policy-makers saw their role not as provider but as arbiter.

Over the past century, the Western European model of Public Service Broadcasting has proved to be remarkably consistent. New media have emerged to compete with the old for audiences, yet the organisational structures of many of the Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs) that were established in the 1920s and 30s have remained the same. What is produced by the BBC has changed beyond recognition over the past 90 years, but the shape of the BBC itself has largely remained the same. The abolition of the Board of Governors and its replacement with the short-

lived BBC Trust in 2003 represented the first substantial change to its governance structures in 75 years. New broadcasters emerge periodically, chipping away at the BBC's audience, but the corporation remains the same. It is a rock, solid and permanent among the swirling currents of the media.

American broadcasting history could hardly be more different. As I discuss in Chapter 3, five years - between 1922 and 1927 - were spent attempting to come to a consensus on the legal and regulatory framework that would govern the use of broadcast radio. Yet by 1935, there were voices questioning whether it was fit for purpose; in one of the first critical reflections on 'The American System of Broadcasting', campaigner Armstong Perry pointed to those who asked whether any "amount of reform can convert a business dedicated to the motives of private profit into a satisfactory vehicle for the promotion of the public benefit" (1935: 28). This question would be asked time and again over the following decades. Thirty years after Perry's paper, Lyndon B Johnson's presidential administration would include broadcasting in its Great Society policy programme, leading ultimately to the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. The fact that the same issues that dominated the Radio Conferences of 1922-27 were still being debated in 1967 is testament to the unsettled, ever-changing nature of the American System of Broadcasting.

1.2 Literature Review

How America got from 1922 to 1967 is one of the questions that drive this thesis. Parts of this period in American broadcasting history have been the subject of much recent, high-quality research. The foundational work in this area is McChesney's 1993 study, which argues that media reform was an issue that emerged following the passage of the the Radio Act of 1927, and remained on the political agenda until 1935. The passage of the Communications Act of 1934, according to McChesney, dealt the reform movement a fatal blow. More recent scholarship has built upon the work of McChesney, but has also challenged this periodisation. Slotten (2009) begins the history in an earlier period, placing greater emphasis on the importance of the Radio Conferences organised by Herbert Hoover in the 1920s, and also looking in greater detail at the development of educational broadcasting during radio's infancy. Pickard (2011, 2012, 2015), on the other hand, has concentrated on the period following 1935. While he largely concurrs with McChesney that the Communications Act of 1934 was a weak and ineffectual piece of legislation, he argues that the reform movement did not die with its passage. The late-1930s to the late-1940s

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saw the reformers aided by allies within government, particularly progressive New Dealers appointed to the Federal Communications Commission. Balas (2003) then goes on to locate the FCC hearings of 1948 to 1952 in the context of the media reform movement, although, like Pickard she does not offer an account of why the movement did not survive beyond the early 1950s.

While the history of public broadcasting from the 1960s onwards has not been scrutinised in as much detail, Engelman (1996) has written a comprehensive and authoritative institutional history, while Ouellette (2002) provides a critical overview. These academic texts can be read alongside more polemical, journalistic accounts (see Ledbetter, 1998) and insider histories (see Day, 1995; Mitchell, 2005), providing a coherent historical account of the period from 1967 onwards. Between these two bodies of scholarship, however, there lies something of a Dark Age. My aim within this thesis is to shed some light on this neglected period in American broadcasting history.

So,the story told by the historians of early media reform comes to an end in the early years of the 1950s, and the history of public broadcasting proper doesn't begin until the mid-1960s. In the middle sits an account of American broadcasting that is almost exclusively concerned with the development of commercial broadcasting. Boddy (1993) argues that the period in question saw the entrenchment of the commercial model of Amercian broadcasting that had first emerged in the 1920s. He emphasises the significance of the Federal Communications Commission hearnings of the 1940s, and argues that the hearings of 1948 to 1952 (see Chapter 4) had the effect of entrenching the dominance of the commercial networks for a generation. Yet Boddy's account focuses almost exclusively on the commercial networks themselves, and has little to say about those who sought to build alternative structures. Like Balas (2003) he sees the FCC hearings as being the final chapter in the story, without offering any explanation as to why the reform movement did not survive into the 1950s.

I can only guess as to why the history of American television in the 1950s is almost exclusively the history of commercial television, but I am inclined to think that it can be explained in one of two ways. The first is that it was an era in which nothing happened. The media reform movement, to all intents and purposes, fell into a deep slumber in 1951 when the FCC decided to allocate television spectrum to educational broadcasters (see Chapter 4), and did not awake again until it was roused by the Carnegie Commission in 1965. McChesney, whose work on the pre-war media reform

movement is so central to our understanding of the period, seems of the view that the movement had come to an end by the close of the 1940s, and that "the television system was gift-wrapped and hand-delivered to Wall Street and Madison Avenue without a shred of public awareness and participation" (2008).

The other possible explanation is that the work of the media reform movement continued throughout the 1950s, but has remained hidden from view. This is, to a certain degree, understandable. The 1950s were the years in which commercial television emerged not simply as a new medium, but as a cultural and artistic forum that would, alongside cinema, define the post-war American experience. Commercial broadcasting grew in power, and that power was co-opted by government in service of its own interests at home and abroad. As Wall (2009) has demonstrated, the advertising industry was instrumental in building the post-war American consensus – the 'American Way' – and advertisers need commercial media to distribute their commercials. Media reformers found it increasingly difficult to make their voices heard, and as their power diminished, so did their place in American media history.

However we account for the gap in scholarship, it is difficult to deny that it exists. It is, perhaps, best illustrated by the work of Engelman (1996), whose political history of public radio and television recognises that the story of the medium did not begin in 1967. While his main focus is the years after the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act, he begins by arguing that American broadcasting has "public origins", and that the establishment of public broadcasting proper, in the late 1960s, can be understood only by looking at the development of both radio and television in preceding decades. Yet, while Engelman argues that the 1950s were of crucial importance to this development, particularly in the case of television (1996: 135), his account does not delve into the details of this period. Having established the importance of the Federal Communications Commission hearings of 1954 - 1952 (see Chapter 4), Engelman's account (1996: 140) then moves immediately on to 1958, and the appointment of John F. White as head of the Educational Television and Radio Center (ETRC). This omission is understandable in a single-volume work primarily dedicated to the history of public broadcasting post-1967. Yet there has been no attempt to fill in this gap, to build upon the work of Engelman, in this area.

Of particular interest is Engelman's assertion that the period from the early 1950s to the mid-

1960s can be understood as 'The Foundation Years'. Borrowing the phrase from the Network Project - a group based at Columbia University that offered a radical critique of the American media - Engelman argues that two large philanthropic foundations, the Carnegie and the Ford Foundations "controlled - indeed orchestrated - the rise of public television at each stage of its development up until the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967" (1996: 135). Enormous philanthropic foundations such as these are not, by and large, a feature of British public life; in the USA they have played a central role in the development of public policy, particularly in the post-War era. Yet their role in the development of media policy has received little academic scrutiny.

This thesis shares many of the assumptions that inform Engelman's work. Fundamentally, I share his view that the story of public broadcasting in the USA does not begin in 1967; if we are to understand how and why federally-funded public broadcasting emerged as it did, then the developments of the mid-1960s onwards need to be viewed in the context of the four decades that preceded them. To do this, we can make use of some excellent research that has already been published, particularly regarding the 1930s and 1940s. But the picture is incomplete, and the relationship between calls for media reformer in the pre-War period, and advocacy for public broadcasting in the post-War period - often being made by the same people - is unclear. My aim in this thesis is to build upon Engelman's work by looking in greater detail at the work undertaken by the Ford Foundation in the early and mid-1950s. This research is informed by a main research question, accompanied by a number of related, but supplementary questions.

1.3 Main research question:

How did public broadcasting policy develop in the USA during the early 1950s?

Supplementary research questions:

1. How does this period relate to earlier development in American broadcasting history, particularly earlier debates surrounding the public interest in broadcasting?

2. What role did the philanthropic foundations play in this history?

3. What implications did this period have for the later development of federally-funded public broadcasting?

1.4 Methodology

Corner (2003) identifies five different aspects of television history[1] that can be the subject of academic research: institutions, professional cultures, representation and form, television as a sociocultural phenomenon ('television in public life' or 'television in everyday life') and television as technology. While there is arguably some overlap between these categories, this thesis is primarily concerned with public service broadcasting as an institution. In Chapter 2, I outline in detail what is meant by the term "institution", and how it applies specifically to PSB. In the concluding section of Chapter 2, I argue that PSB can be understood as a broadcasting institution dedicated to the advancement of three sets of core values (parity of access, pluralism and serving the public sphere). These values are embedded in three areas: the content produced by the broadcaster; professional norms that inform working practices; and regulation, legislation and other formally documented policies.

When deciding on which methodological approach to adopt, I briefly considered the possibility of looking at the public-service programmes produced during the era in question. While my focus is primarily on norms and principles, it is entirely reasonable to argue that television and radio programmes are the outcomes of broadcasting policy, and that by looking at programming we are able to make judgements regarding the efficacy of policy. In the context of this thesis, for instance, it would be possible to undertake a detailed analysis of the television series *Omnibus* - funded by the Ford Foundation, and broadcast on commercial television during the period in question, 1951 to 1961. In analysing the programme, it might be possible to draw conclusions regarding the aims

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[1] Corner's focus is on television, but his arguments apply equally to broadcasting in general.

and objectives of the Ford Foundation, and its vision for television. To approach the research question in this manner would be to employ a more inductive approach; beginning by observing the programming being produced, and using those observations to draw conclusions regarding the Ford Foundation's policy priorities during this period. However, I am not convinced that this is the most suitable approach in this case. While the work of the Ford Foundation is central to my research, my interest goes beyond a single programme. This thesis is concerned with American public broadcasting on a macro-level, and narrowing the focus so dramatically runs the risk of obscuring the broader picture.

Another methodology that I briefly considered was one rooted in what Scott (1990, 2013) describes as the normative pillar of the institution. This approach looks at the professional practice of those working in PSB, and seeks to understand how they incorporate normative values into their daily lives. As is discussed in Chapter 2, there exists a body of research into PSB that makes use of this approach, but it remains relatively uncommon. Such studies usually rely on collecting data from human subjects, through interviews or ethnographic observation, and demand a high level of access to the research subject. The best of these, such as Born (2005) are longitudinal - usually gathering data over a period of years - and have a large sample size, drawing data from a cross-section of workers. Applying this approach to the history of PSB is extremely problematic, and the problems only increase as time passes. Were this a contemporary study, this methodology would have been given far greater consideration, as it is a method that has the potential to deliver significant insights. However, the passage of time has made this an impractical methodology for this particular thesis. To be able to apply this approach, I would need to interview individuals involved in discussions regarding the public interest in broadcasting during the 1950s. Few of the key players are alive today, and it is unlikely that any still living would be able to recollect the events of 65 years ago with the detail and clarity required.

As a result, both programme content-based and interview-based methodological approaches have been eschewed in favour of looking at written documentation. Deacon et al (2007: 16) argue that there are four situations that justify the use of document analysis as the main research tool: When studying historical situations that preclude the use of other methods; when access to subjects is restricted; where the purpose of the research is to re-analyse material collected by other researchers; and finally when carrying out textual research that is focused on the documents in

question. Bertrand and Hughes emphasise the changing nature of social science methodologies, arguing that while "sociologists have been traditionally wary of documents" (2005: 132) this tradition has come under sustained challenge since the 1960s, and research that is primarily focussed on the analysis of existing documentation is now accepted as methodologically sound. They argue that by the 1980s, "ethnographers were routinely acknowledging the value of documentation" citing the examples of Burgess (1993) and Hammersley and Atkinson (1983) to make their case. Hodder argues in *The Interpretation of Documents and Material Culture* that document analysis is key to closing the gap between "what people say" and "what people do" (2007: 393); that is, Hodder argues that research methods which rely on discussions with individual are flawed by the participants' tendency to subjectively self-report findings that reflect better on their own reputation. In Chapter 5, I look in detail at the work of the Ford Foundation during the early- and mid-1950s; central to this chapter is my analysis of the work of the Television Advisory Committee (TAC) that existed within the Ford Foundation between 1952 and 1954. The work of the TAC is used as a qualitative case study, of the kind that Bowen describes as being particularly well suited to a document analysis approach: "intensive studies producing rich descriptions of a single phenomenon, event, organisation, or program" (2009: 29).

In selecting documents for analysis, consideration was given both to the significance of the documents to the policy making process, but also the extent to which the documents reflected the range of competing views that formed part of the policy-making process. Bovens (2007: 457-458) describes the "problem of many hands" when analysing public policy, noting that while individual policies are ultimately adopted by single organisations or institutions, their formulation is the work of a number of individual policy actors and often represent a consensus (or sometimes majority) position arrived at by the collective work of those actors. Overly emphasising the most significant documents – laws, executive orders, articles of incorporation, and charters – risks that the work of the "many hands" in creating those documents is marginalised. In selecting documents, therefore, I have sought out both official documentation, as well as the personal papers of key individuals involved in policy discussions. My hope is that in bringing together these sources I am able to present a rounded picture of the policy-making process.

I am fortunate that some of this personal correspondence has been retained in the archives that I visited in the USA, alongside the official documentation. Other personal papers were held in

archives that were relatively easy to access. However, it is important to note that when deciding which documents to examine, selection of source material is not always a matter of researcher choice. Thumin (1998: 99) notes that "it is a truism that as historical researchers we can only gain access to items which *at the time* were considered sufficiently valuable to be preserved" [emphasis in original]; some material, particularly less formal documentation of events (personal notes, as opposed to official memos, for instance) may simply be lost to history. Of the material that has been preserved, not all of it is readily available. Duff, Craig and Cherry (2004) surveyed 600 Canadian researchers regarding their use of archives, asking specifically about barriers to access. Listed among the problems encountered were a number of restrictions placed deliberately on material by donors or rights holders. Private donors (or their executors) may demand that researchers ask permission before examining sources, often refusing permission for research that they perceive to be harmful to the reputation of the donor. Public records are often placed under blanket restrictions; in the UK, the Public Records Act demands that government provides the public with access to material only after a specific time period has elapsed - originally 30 years, recently reduced to 20. Other archives place administrative barriers between the public and the materials they hold, failing to update their finding aids, offering finding aids that are too detailed or complex, or often not providing a finding aid at all.

Of the barriers to access listed by Duff, Craig and Cherry (2004), the most commonly cited was that of geographical distance. Some archives have moved to digitise material for online viewing, but this is a labour intensive process that has enormous cost implications. The ethics of archival preservation demands that digital preservation involve the making of high-quality long-lasting copies (Conway, 2010: 70). Many archives will provide researchers with online access to lower-quality digital copies, but this is usually on an ad-hoc basis, with the researcher responsible for meeting the (often significant) cost of retrieval and scanning. In the overwhelming majority of cases, archival research involves travelling to the archives themselves, incurring costs. Cost has proved the greatest barrier to access in the case of this thesis, and has been an instrumental factor in the selection of primary sources. During the course of my research, I have secured travel grants that have enabled me to undertake three separate research visits to the USA. Since the focus of the original research in this thesis is the work of the Ford Foundation, I naturally prioritised resources to allow me to spend time at the Ford Foundation archive, which is currently held at the Rockefeller Foundation in Sleepy Hollow, NY. Fortunately, I was able to combine my visits to the

Ford Foundation archives with visits to the Carnegie Corporation of New York archive, which is held at Columbia University in New York City, where Paul F Lazarsfeld's personal papers are also kept. During one research visit, I was able to travel to the Public Broadcasting Archive at the University of Maryland, although the material viewed at this archive proved less relevant to the thesis than expected.

Having made the case for document analysis, and outlined how I have selected documents, I am left to explain how these documents will be used. My hope is that I am able to address this without becoming entangled in arcane epistemological debates. The vast majority of the documents that I rely upon as primary sources in this thesis are written texts, and I am concerned with their content. While I appreciate the argument - made, for instance, by Hodder (1994) - that archival research can involve examining the materiality of sources, my focus is the words on the page, rather than the pages themselves. The documents that I rely upon to make my argument are usually dated, and attributed to a specific author. The majority have been written in an official capacity, usually by the permanent staff of the Ford Foundation, or by other individuals working for the Ford Foundation on a specific project, or individuals whose views have been canvassed by the Ford Foundation or its employees. In places, the line between professional and personal communication is blurred; many of the individuals involved with the Television Advisory Committee enjoyed personal friendships. The failure of key individuals to clearly distinguish between personal and private is addressed in the text of the thesis, and my conclusions reflect upon these relationships. Similarly, where there is lack of clarity regarding the provenance of the documents, this again is noted in the body of the thesis. Where I have made assumptions regarding authorship or date, I have explained my reasoning in the body of the thesis.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

Since the subject of this thesis is public broadcasting policy, it begins with a review of the relevant literature on this subject. Chapter 2 attempts to outline what is meant by the terms "public broadcasting" and "Public Service Broadcasting", both in a broad, trans-national context, and specifically in the American national context.

The remainder ofmy thesis is structured chronologically, tracing the historical development of public broadcasting in the USA from 1922 to 1954 over the course of three chapters.

In Chapter 3, I look at the early years of American broadcasting, dating from 1922 to the end of the 1940s. This chapter relies heavily on existing historical research into the media reform movement. However, I supplement this existing research with some original analysis of primary documentation produced during the Radio Conferences of 1922 to 1927. In addition, I set the conclusions drawn by McChesney (1993), Pickard (2011, 2012, 2015), Slotten (2009) and others in their international context, drawing comparisons between the work of the policy makers in the UK and the USA during this early period.

While Chapter 3 presents a broad overview of a period that stretches over two and a half decades, in Chapter 4 I begin to narrow my focus, concentrating on the events of the so-called 'television freeze' of 1948 to 1952. During this period, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) declined to award new broadcast licenses while it considered the arguments for reserving a portion of the broadcast spectrum for non-commercial broadcasting. Existing research into the history of this period is relatively thin on the ground, but it falls outside the limits of my primary archival research. The conclusions that I draw in this chapter are based on the small amount of existing scholarship on the period, accompanied by analysis of a limited number of primary sources that I was able to access - including autobiographical accounts, as well as an edited version of original testimony given to the FCC during the 1948 - 1951 hearings.

The original contribution to knowledge can primarily be found in Chapter 5. Here, I look in detail at the work undertaken by the Ford Foundation between 1951 and 1954. My main focus is on the Television Advisory Committee (TAC), a Ford Foundation initiative that was founded by Robert Maynard Hutchins. Following its founding, responsibility for the TAC was given to Paul F Lazarsfeld, the eminent media scholar based (primarily) at Columbia University. In this chapter, I provide a critical analysis of Lazarsfeld's contribution to the development of public media policy during the early- and mid-1950s. Based upon primary documents held both at the Ford Foundation archive and the Columbia University archive, my conclusions challenge the existing account of Lazarsfeld's involvement with the Ford Foundation, found in the work of his biographer, David Morrisson (2000, 2006, 2008).

Chapter 6 contains my conclusions. In this final chapter I argue that the intervention of Lazarsfeld

in the Ford Foundation's work on television may have a significant impact on the development of public television policy in the USA. I suggest that greater scrutiny be given to this period, in order to deepen our understanding both of the development of public television history, and of Lazarsfeld himself. This chapter, and the thesis, ends with proposals for further research that might be undertaken to further scrutinise and substantiate the initial conclusions that I draw here.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framing: Public Service Broadcasting

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to examine the early development of broadcasting in the United States of America, with a view to explaining the significant differences that exists between Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) in the USA and PSB in similar European nations. Before going on to look in detail at the the specific historical context which takes up the remainder of the thesis, it is important that I first offer an overview of the concept of PSB. There is broad consensus within the academic literature that PSB is a concept often eludes attempts at definition. Tracey describes an "elegant vagueness" that typifies "so much of the discussion about public service broadcasting" (1998: 22), while Curran and Seaton describe the principle of PSB as "always…fought over and continually reinterpreted" (2010: 341). Lund (1988), Scannell (1990), Hoynes (2003) and Jacubowicz (2011) have all made major contributions to the study of PSB, while at the same time cautioning that to attempt to settle on a single, transnational and ahistorical definition would be a futile exercise. Chapters 3 -6 of this thesis one focus on a single nation - the USA - and a specific time frame, beginning with the early 1920s, and ending in the 1960s. This relatively narrow focus does not, however, justify adopting a blinkered view. While this chapter does not attempt to come to a single, universal definition of PSB, I do intend to take a broad view of the concept, looking at major currents that have typified its development both in the USA and Western Europe. In this chapter, I have organised my discussion of PSB around two different themes, or approaches to the concept. The first section looks at PSB as a feature of specific media systems. Here, I look not at the specific qualities of PSB, but rather at the broader philosophical aims that drive the demand for PSB; it is about *why* PSB exists at all. The second, longer, section then goes on to look at PSB as an institution, as defined by Scott (1990, 2013), looking at its normative and regulative pillars. The Normative pillar of an institution (discussed in 2.3.1) is based upon the values and norms that make up the institution. Closely related is the Regulative Pillar of an institution (discussed in 2.3.2)

which focuses on the codification of these values and norms in regulation and legislation. In the concluding section of this chapter, I will offer a brief definition of PSB that will then be used to inform the historical analysis found in later chapters.

2.2 Why PSB? Public Service Broadcasting and media systems

Within media studies, systems approaches have generally been used to look at the media from what McQuail (1992) describes as the macro level. This approach often seeks an overview of a range of different media, as they are organised on a national, or even transnational level. The researcher looks for features that are common across the entire system, meaning that the focus tends to be on similarity rather than difference. As a result, systems approaches can tend to draw conclusions that are general and lacking in detail. They are useful, however, in providing a broad theoretical context within which other, more detailed, studies can be located. A comparative case study approach is often used to draw out large trends in the way in which media is structured within individual nations, with these nations then being grouped together into types that share common attributes. In these transnational media systems studies, PSB is often one of the variables that is analysed, More importantly in the context of this thesis, media systems analysis are often strongly normative, and have an institutional focus. There is a tendency to look at the values and norms that are at the foundation of the system, and how they are used to construct and justify specific broadcasting institutions.

One of the earliest, and most influential media systems studies written from a transnational perspective, is Siebert, Peterson and Schramm's 1956 *Four Theories of the Press*[2]. Despite first being published 60 years ago, and clearly bearing the imprint of the Cold War, *Four Theories* remains a highly influential study of media systems, and offers a framework for understanding media that scholars still draw upon today - albeit in modified form. From a contemporary perspective, the *Four Theories* can seem a little unsophisticated. Siebert, Peterson and Schramm offer little in the way of evidence to support their assertions, and their theories can be descriptive in nature; there is a tendency towards casual observation, rather than methodologically sound empiricism. This weakness is particularly pronounced in their discussion of the Authoritarian and

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[2] It is worth noting that while the book is titled *Four Theories of the Press*, the theories that it proposes include broadcast as well as print media.

Soviet Totalitarian theories of the media, which are based on alien systems, viewed from considerable distance. As a piece of research on non-Western media, the *Four Theories* is of little value. Indeed, Sparks (2000) goes as far as to argue that the Soviet Totalitarian model is more than a historical irrelevance, and that its flawed conclusions can be held partly responsible for a failure to anticipate major problems in the transition to post-communist rule in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics.

The problems with the Authoritarian and Soviet Totalitarian theories do not detract from the usefulness of the *Four Theories* in the context of this thesis, however. Part of its usefulness comes from the fact that it is rooted in the historical context that I am examining. As I will show in the following chapters, educational institutions - and indeed individual educators - are a vital part of the history of early American broadcasting, and the development of radio and television were shaped in part by academics involved in the development of media policy. Siebert, Peterson and Schramm's work is located at this nexus between academia and policy-making; their work is informed by their experience of the media reform movement of the 1940s, but it also went on to have a very direct influence on the historical context that I discuss in Chapters 4 and 5. In fact, Wilbur Schramm contributed directly to the work of the Ford Foundation on television during the mid-1950s, and his correspondence with Paul Lazarsfeld regarding the direction of policy research at this time is discussed in Chapter 5. If the analysis of authoritarian and totalitarian media found in the *Four Theories* suffers from a lack of familiarity, then the opposite is true of its analysis of the Libertarian and Social Responsibility theories (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1955); here, the authors provide keen insight into the precise social, cultural and political world that was occupied by American broadcasters and policy-makers. It is important, however, to stress that the usefulness of the *Four Theories* is not exclusively as a framework for understanding mid-20th Century American broadcasting. The fact that it continues to inform contemporary academic analysis of media systems - it is cited as a major influence on both Hallin and Mancini (2003) and Hardy (2008) - is testament to the enduring value of its core arguments. The value of the *Four Theories* lies in the way in which two of the four theories - the Libertarian and the Social Responsibility theories - identify and describe two major philosophical currents that are at the heart of liberal-democratic systems of broadcasting.

Despite its name, the Libertarian theory outlined by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm is rooted in a

classically liberal philosophical tradition; the authors identify John Milton, John Erskine, Thomas Jefferson and John Stuart Mill as four key figures in the development of the thinking which underpins Libertarian media systems. The theory of the media which is derived from this classical liberal tradition is one which evolves in opposition to political absolutism. A minimum of state interference in the media is the defining quality of a libertarian system, with the press being given the greatest possible freedom in order to maximise its potential as a check on over-mighty government. The libertarian model recognises that this approach will deliver "a barrage of information and opinion, some of it possibly true, some of it possibly false, and some of it containing elements of both" (1963: 51). However, a diversity of views is seen as being of central importance to this model, and government should do nothing to regulate media content. The public is given the freedom to compare the cases put forward by the various producers of content, and to choose that which best serves the public interest. For proponents of this theory, this model is a Miltonian "self-righting" one, where the consumers of the media act as regulators by exercising market choice. Siebert, Peterson and Schramm concede that in practice, this level of libertarianism does not exist. They point to Chafee's extensive list of executive, legislative and judicial examples where supposedly libertarian systems intervene in individual market choices (ibid.: 54). Key areas where the libertarian media model chooses to limit freedoms include defamation law, obscenity law, and the broader suppression of information in cases of "clear and present danger" to the safety of the state (i.e. in times of war or revolution).

The alternative to the Libertarian model described by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm is the Social Responsibility model. This is described in terms of a corrective designed to mitigate against some of the worst excesses of the Libertarian model. It is here that the ideas found in *Four Theories* are most closely linked to the historical context in which they were written, drawing heavily on the work of the Commission on the Freedom of the Press (sometimes called the Hutchins Commission, after its Chair, Robert Hutchins of the University of Chicago). The Commission was established in 1942 to examine the role of the press in a modern democracy, and published its final report in 1947. Following the publication on the report, Hutchins would go on to work for the Ford Foundation, and his work for the foundation is of central importance to the development of broadcasting policy discussed in Chapter 5. It is important to emphasise, however, that while their arguments emerge from a specific historical context, the conclusions that they draw are not limited to this context. The Social Responsibility Theory is grounded in events and debates which were

contemporary at the time of writing, but the principles of social responsibility that it lays out are far-sighted and long-lasting.

Siebert, Peterson and Schramm distinguish between the Libertarian and Social Responsibility theories by drawing upon Isiah Berlin's notion of negative and positive freedoms (1956: 93). Within the Social Responsibility Model, the emphasis is moved from a purely negative conception of individual liberty to a conception of liberty which is more positive ("freedom to" instead of "freedom from"), and where the collective needs of society are at least a consideration when exercising freedom of the press. The essential purpose of the press – to inform the citizenry so that they can participate in the political process, to convey the views of the same citizens to the powerful, and to act as a watchdog against government tyranny – remains the same, but the Social Responsibility Theory argues that the Miltonian process of Self-Righting has not operated as it should, and that positive steps are needed to ensure that these ideals are protected. It is argued that the press in the America of the 1940s and 1950s has failed in its essential duty in a number of specific ways. It is seen as self-serving, propagating views and opinions which are favourable to the interests of its owners, advertisers, and the "business class"; it is inherently conservative, opposing social change; it is sensationalist, and "has endangered public morals"; and it is responsible for invading the privacy of individuals (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1962: 78-79). It is suggested that an independent agency be established to report on the state of the press, and that civil society take a greater role in both producing media, and training those who would become journalists. Government intervention would only be warranted where there is a clear failure of self-regulation and self-righting, with Siebert et al warning that "Any agency capable of promoting [positive] freedom is also capable of destroying it" (ibid.: 95).

The *Four Theories* offer a model of media systems that is far from perfect. While it presents an excellent analysis of the currents of mid-20th Century American media policy, its purported internationalism is somewhat limited. It treats the Social Responsibility theory as an almost exclusively American innovation; the authors make reference to the "Anglo-American" (ibid.: 74) nature of the work, but only in that there existed a British Royal Commission on the Press operating at around the same time as the Hutchins Commission. The influence of European models of PSB on the Social Responsibility is not discussed at all, and the *Four Theories* does not give any consideration to alternative models of pursuing Social Responsibility, other than the limited self-

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regulatory one proposed by Hutchins. In this sense, the *Four Theories* is not only focussed on the situation in America, it also sees American broadcasting through a narrow ideological lens. The presumption that runs through the work of Siebert, Peterson and Schramm is that Libertarian Theory is the foundation of American broadcasting, with Social Responsibility theory offering a limited corrective as a response to market failure.

Later attempts to develop the *Four Theories* have recognised these weaknesses in the original work, offering amendments and additions. Hachten (1981) presents valuable revisions, but their primary purpose is to address the narrow national focus of the original, by offering different models or theories for geopolitical regions, making it less relevant to this thesis.

More closely related to the original Four Theories approach are those proposed by Merrill and Lowenstein (1979) and Picard (1985). Merrill and Lowenstein first attempted to build upon the Four Theories in 1971, making relatively minor revisions to Siebert, Peterson and Schramm's original typology. Soviet Totalitarian became Social Centralist under their original system, divorcing it from its specific national context. Likewise, the Social Responsibility model was re-named Social Libertarian, recognising the limited role given to government in Siebert, Peterson and Schramm's theory, and emphasising its closeness to the Libertarian Model. The effect of these revisions was to place the four theories on a single unified continuum, with Authoritarian and Libertarian as two polar opposites. In doing this, Merrill and Lowenstein allowed for a greater freedom for those using his system to identify degrees of difference between individual national contexts. Their 1979 revision of the system changed the name of the Social Centralist (previously Soviet Totalitarian) to Social Authoritarian, and used Social Centralist to describe a social-democratic model, in which government intervention and ownership was used as a corrective in liberal-democratic systems. The result of this was to introduce a system made up of five models, again existing on a single continuum (see fig. 2.1)

Authoritarian-----Social Authoritarian-----Social Centrist-----Social Libertarian-----Libertarian

Fig. 2.1 Theories proposed by Merrill and Lowenstein

Merrill and Lowenstein's addition of the Social Centrist theory was significantly expanded by Picard's Democratic Socialist model of the press. Picard, like Lowenstein, locates his model between the Social Responsibility and the Soviet Totalitarian (or Social Authoritarian) model, but explicitly links it to the question of public ownership. The crucial distinguishing factor of Picard's model is his insistence that the media in a Democratic Socialist model

> are not instruments for private owners......or are they instruments of the state or party......... Instead, under democratic socialist theory, media are viewed as instruments of the people, public utilities through which the people's aspirations, ideas, praise and criticism of the state and society may be disseminated. (1985: 68)

Picard is not clear about the exact nature of how the public would own the media in his model, arguing for the use of "foundations, non-profit corporations, journalist-operated cooperatives, and other collective organizations" (67) – the model used for Public Broadcasting in the United States – but neither expressly prohibiting or advocating state ownership. What is interesting in Picard's Democratic Socialist model is the extent to which he sees it as a method of protecting largely the same set of norms as those that underpin Siebert et al's Libertarian model. Picard argues that the Democratic Socialist model is the best way of guaranteeing the existence of media that

> provide an avenue for expression of the public's views and to fuel the political and social debates necessary for the continued development of democratic governance. Under such an approach, the state acts both to ensure the ability of citizens to use the press and to preserve and promote media plurality. (1985: 67).

While the *Four Theories* and its antecedents are in some ways limited, they are also offer valuable insight into the functioning of media institutions on a macro level. The original work of Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1964 [1956]), developed by both Merrill and Lowenstein (1979) and Picard (1985) identify the broad cleavages within liberal-democratic media policy in the mid- to late-20th Century. While they are not sufficient, in and of themselves, to explain the precise nature of policy-change, they prove useful in explaining the fundamental philosophical tensions that often drive the actions of policy makers. So, as I will go on to argue in greater detail over the following chapters, the development of American public broadcasting can broadly be understood as the result of contesting policy initiatives that are, respectively, rooted in the Libertarian and Social Responsibility theories.

Before moving on to look in more detail at PSB, however, I think it important to briefly discuss another highly influential work in the media systems tradition, that is of relevance to this thesis. Hallin and Mancini's 2004 study, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*, is in many ways a post-Cold War attempt to update and improve the models proposed by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm. Where the *Four Theories* is normative, and rather vague, the *Three Models* is far more precise, and empirical in nature. The primary aim of Hallin and Mancini's *Three Models* is to move on from thinking about the broad principles that underpin Western media systems, concentrating instead on the individual qualities of national media systems in Western Europe and North America. To do this, they have designed their research around a 'most similar system' approach – that is, an approach where a large number of cases are selected with relatively few variables between them[3]. Hallin and Mancini compare four key qualities of each of the media systems that they analyse: the development of media markets, political parallelism (the degree and nature of the links between the media and political parties), the degree of journalistic professionalism, and the degree and nature of state intervention. (2004: 21). These qualities are then located within a broader national political context, including the nature of civil society, with distinctions being made between "liberal" and "welfare state" democracies (ibid.: 49), "consensus" and "majoritarian" constitutional systems (ibid.: 50-53) and "rational-legal authority and clientelism" (ibid.: 55-59).

Having placed 18 countries into this framework, Hallin and Mancini propose 3 new models for differentiating media systems. France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain are classed as belonging to the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist model. This model is broadly characterised by an elite orientated, small circulation press; media which are closely allied to political parties, and take a strong advocacy position; and a central role for the state "as owner, regulator and funder of the media" (ibid.: 73). The second model proposed is the Northern European or Democratic Corporatist Model, which is used to classify Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. In contrast to the previous model, countries which operate within the Democratic Corporatist model tend to have high circulation newspapers which include a diminishing tradition of newspapers allied to political parties. This is complemented by professionalised journalism, and a high degree of press freedom. The media is well-supported and

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[3]   It should be noted that Hallin and Mancini have sought to extend their model beyond the Western European and North American context in later work, notably Hallin and Mancini (Eds.)(2011)

well-regulated by the state, but Public Broadcasting often includes parliamentary or civic/corporatist elements, where civic interest groups are represented by (and on the boards of) specific broadcasters (ibid.: 31).

The final model, and the one which includes Britain (along with the USA, Canada and Ireland), is the North Atlantic or Liberal Model. This model, like the Democratic Corporatist, is rooted in national contexts which have a long tradition of a free, mass-circulation press and which have market-dominated economies. Commercial rather than party-political newspapers are the norm, and journalism is highly professionalised. The role of the state is limited, although this varies greatly from country to country (ibid.: 75). Indeed, Hallin and Mancini take great pains to emphasise that each model represents a broad category, and that there are significant variations between most national systems. One of the major problems with Hallin and Mancini, from the perspective of this thesis, is its failure to truly encompass the degree of variation that exists within each model. Anyone primarily interested in PSB who looks at America and Britain will first be struck by the enormous differences between the two nations. While the UK may have a commercial television sector that shares many of the qualities of the American one, the gap between American and British PSB is enormous. In the UK, the BBC is the dominant force, unsurpassed in terms of both domestic and global reach. Across the Atlantic, public broadcasting, on the whole, has marginal impact on the popular audience, and none of the worldwide clout of the BBC.

Not only is Hallin and Mancini of limited use because of its approach to PSB, but it is also stymied by a lack of adaptability, particularly when attempting to take an historical view of media systems. While their model is more precise and detailed than that offered by the *Four Theories*, it also more rigid. Admittedly, *Four Theories* is very much a product of a specific point in time, but its emphasis on two contrasting philosophical trends or impulses allows for greater flexibility. This allows us to think historically, to understand the development of PSB as the product of an ebb and flow of ideas. The *Three Models* is much more of a snapshot, an image of national and transnational media systems as they were at one particular point in time. Indeed, as they themselves note in the final chapter of their study, the conclusions that they draw are already diminishing in relevance. While they argue that the three models outlined in their study help to understand the historical development of the media in Western Europe and North America, they also concede that two of

the Three Models that they identify – The Democratic Corporatist and Polarized Pluralist – are already in the process of breaking down, victims of the ascendency of the Liberal Model (Hallin and Mancini, 2003: 251-254). This is due to a number of diverse factors, including the influence of American news values and practices, the rise of secularism, and the commercialisation of the media (Ibid: 251-295). While Hallin and Mancini are keen to stress the limits of homogenisation, and avoid any sweeping conclusions about the triumph of the Liberal Model, their comparative framework must be understood within its changing historical context.

Hallin and Mancini's work represents an attempt to step in from the global comparative perspective adopted by their predecessors. Yet, while they work within a narrower frame of reference than Siebert, Peterson and Schramm it is the older, less sophisticated work on media systems that is of greater use here. While it does not provide a coherent and comprehensive theoretical frame by which to understand the early development of PSB in the USA, it outlines the philosophical currents that inform this particular chapter in American broadcasting history.

2.3 Public Service Broadcasting as institution

The media systems approach to broadcasting is of use to this thesis in that it identifies the philosophical currents that drive media policy in Western media systems generally. This thesis, however, is not an analysis of an entire media system, but rather a critical history of the development of one aspect of one system, namely Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) in the USA. To do this, I must shift perspective, from macro to meso-level analysis. Throughout chapters 3 and 4, I will outline the development of broadcasting policy in America between the 1920s and the late 1940s, focusing on questions related to the idea of the public interest. This will be followed, in Chapter 6, with a more detailed examination of one element of television policy development during the 1950s, a period that has historically been neglected in the scholarship. Before doing this, however, it is essential that I set out the meaning of the term Public Service Broadcasting. In doing so, I approach PSB not as an abstract concept, divorced from its use in practice; rather, what I intend to do is look at PSB as an institution, using the work of Scott (1995, 2013) and other scholars of 'new institutionalism'.

The term institution is often used within the literature on PSB and media policy generally, usually as a means of eliding differences in models of ownership. So, in the UK, the term 'PSB institution' is

sometimes used to describe the BBC, Channel Four, and ITV and Channel Five, despite the fact that each is a legal entity quite different from the other. The BBC, for instance, is a public corporation that receives the majority of its funding from the public purse (in the form of the license fee), and has strict limits on its ability to generate commercial income. Channel Four is, likewise, a publicly-owned corporation, but it is not awarded any money from the public purse, and has significant latitude in how it generates commercial income. Finally, ITV and Five are Public Limited Companies (PLCs), and therefore entirely commercial entities. However, as holders of television broadcast licenses for Channels Three and Five respectively, they are expected to produce programming that is much more tightly regulated than other broadcasters who hold purely commercial broadcasting licenses. So, 'PSB institution' is sometimes used as an umbrella term to describe all of these different corporations and companies, presumably for the sake of brevity and simplicity (for some examples of this usage, see: Tambini, 2015; Enli, 2008; Biltereyst, 2004; Moe, 2011; Brevini, 2013).

My use of the term 'institution' differs from that outlined above, and draws on the work of public policy scholars that research the role of institutions in areas other than the media. Scott describes institutions as "multifaceted, durable social structures, made up of symbolic elements, social activities and material resources that enable or impose limitations on the scope for human agency by creating legal, moral and cultural boundaries" (2001: 49). Within this context, the public broadcasting companies and corporations listed above are organisations, the institution is Public Service Broadcasting itself. This distinction between institution and organisation is rooted in a school of thought sometimes labelled 'new institutionalism', which sees institutions not only as legal entities, but also as sets of rules and norms that govern action within a specific domain. John describes new institutionalists as approaching institutions as "belief systems and habits of decision making" (2012: 48), while Björck (2004: 2) writes of institutions as being made up of actors following a "script" of patterned behaviour within a social setting.

Scott (1995, 2013) argues that there is tendency for researchers interested in institutions to approach them from one of three ways, and that the institutions themselves can be understood as consisting of three "pillars": the regulative, the normative and the cognitive (1995) or cultural-cognitive (2013), that are enacted through three carriers: cultures, social structures and routines (see Fig. 2.2).

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Carrier	Pillar		
	Regulative	**Normative**	**Cognitive**
Cultures	Rules, Laws	Values, expectations	Categories, typifications
Social Structures	Governance systems, power systems	Regimes, authority systems	Structural isomorphism, identities
Routines	Protocols, standard procedures	Conformity, performance of duty	Performance programs, scripts

Fig. 2.2 Institutional Pillars and Carriers (Scott, 1995: 52)

Research into PSB as an institution tends to focus on questions of regulation and ownership, and the values that inform both. In Scott's model, the first two (regulation and ownership) belong to the Regulative Pillar, while the third (values) belongs to the Normative Pillar. It is worth noting, however, that these are tendencies rather than strict, mutually exclusive categories. Although Scott warns against attempts to blend all three pillars together into a "single, complex, integrated model of an institution" (1995: 60), it is reasonable to look for ways in which insights into one of the pillars influence the other two. So, the principles that inform the Normative Pillar may be enshrined in the laws and regulations of the Regulative Pillar, while influencing behaviour in the Cognitive Pillar, and so on. The remainder of this chapter looks at key ideas within the existing literature on PSB from the perspectives of Regulative and Normative institutionalism. That is to say, the focus is on two related areas of research: the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern PSB, and the normative values that relate to (both influencing, and being influenced by) those frameworks.

2.3.1 The Normative Pillar of PSB

When looking at institutions from the perspective of the normative pillar, the emphasis is on two aspects of institutional life: values and norms. Values are "conceptions of the preferred or the desirable " while norms "define legitimate means to pursue valued ends" (Scott, 2013: 64). Much of my focus is on the first of these, PSB values, since this is an area where there already exists a significant body of academic work. The majority of this work is written from an European perspective, and discussions of British PSB dominate, but the insights regarding the institutional

nature of PSB remain a valuable tool for understanding PSB in its North American as well as European setting. Raboy (a French-Canadian) argues that the dominance of the UK within the academic and policy literature can be explained by the fact that "the ideal [of PSB] (or a certain conception of it) originated in the experience of the BBC and…the BBC still stands as the quintessential model of public service broadcasting worldwide" (1995: 6). While there is a danger in over-stating the importance of the British experience when studying PSB, there is no denying the vital role that British broadcasters, policy-makers and scholars have had in developing PSB values. More importantly, while there are strong links between European and North American broadcasting, the relationship between the UK and USA has historically been close and mutually influential to a far greater degree (see Hilmes, 2012). While conclusions drawn about the European, and specifically British, models of PSB may not map directly on to the American context, they have been a formative influence on its development throughout the history of broadcasting.

While this is a historical study, primarily concerned with the 1950s, much of the work on PSB values that I discuss in this section was published during the 1990s. On the surface, this may seem anachronistic, based neither in the period that I examine, nor reflecting the most recent developments in the field. However, much of the work produced in the 1990s is, in my estimation, particularly suitable when offering a comprehensive overview of PSB as a concept. What the scholarship published in the 1990s does is critically summarise and synthesise a body of theoretical work developed during a distinct period in media history. This period, broadly between the end of the Second World War and the 1980s - described by Ellis (2002) as The Age of Scarcity - was one of relative stability, typified by incremental change in the nature of broadcast media. If we take the 1920s as the starting point in the history of broadcasting, then it is accurate to describe its first three decades as ones of turbulent change, both technological but also political, social and economic. The emergence of two new media - radio and television - within these first three decades were accompanied both by economic collapse in Europe and the US, and a brutal war inflicted on a global population still in the process of recovering from the previous one.

The post-war period, by contrast, can be understood in terms of stability and continuity. Economically, this was a period of rapid growth; politically, it was an era of consensus. Similarly, it was a period of relative technological stability, typified by gradual, incremental improvements in existing technology - colour television, FM stereo radio - rather than the emergence of new media.

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This relatively stable, consensual context worked its way into some of the academic research and policy discussions of the era. There is a long history of semi-formal co-operation between European public broadcasters that goes back to the early 1950s, and the establishment of the European Broadcasting Union (see Gripsrud, 2007). This pan-European approach to PSB was given additional impetus in the 1980s, when the emergence of satellite television - with its ability to broadcast across national borders - led to attempts by the European Union (or the European Economic Community - EEC - as it was then) to create a transnational regulatory framework for broadcasting, initially through the Television Without Frontiers directive, and later through the Audio-visual Services Directive. In doing so, the EEC pushed to the fore questions regarding the relationship between citizens, consumers, government, regulators and broadcasters, public and private - what Donaldson (1996) describes as an attempt to reconcile "Liberal Free Trade and European Cultural Integrity". In embarking on this regulatory initiative, the EEC motivated a more detailed, expansive and critical discussion of the philosophical underpinnings of PSB[4]. Some of this work was undertaken in the policy arena, but much of it took place in an academic context, leading to a rich body of work on public broadcasting by European scholars.

By the turn of the century, however, the issues raised by satellite television and transnational broadcasting seemed less urgent in the face of the rise of online media. Both academics and policy-makers began to question whether PSB had any meaning in a world of decentralised and largely deregulated peer-to-peer communication. This is not to say that the academy abandoned the study of PSB in the 21st century. Quite the contrary, the emergence of these new questions led to an intensification of the debate, and the emergence of new conceptual models. The European Council disposed of the term PSB in 2002, replacing it with the platform-neutral Public Service Media (see Jakubowicz, 2010). In the UK, Ofcom (2007) took a different route, proposing a model it called the Public Service Publisher; this time, the focus was not on the content, but on new methods of funding and distribution. As Freedman (2009) argued, this model was not only a response to technological change, but also an attempt to frame PSB in neo-liberal terms. There is a wealth of material published on public broadcasting (or public media) over the past decade and a half, but it has tended to be concerned with the current state of the institution in the context of online media.

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[4] For a concise account of the development of pan-European broadcasting legislation, see Burri (2007)

This is what makes the work published during the 1990s and early 21st century of particularly useful to this study. It represents an overview of the development of public broadcasting values that is rooted in the stable consensus of the post-war but pre-digital era. Much of this work is explicitly historical, employing a perspective that stretches back to the earliest years of broadcasting. Michael Tracey (1998) for instance, acknowledges his debt to a long list of thinkers stretching from the 1920s to the 1990s.

My discussion of PSB values draws upon on six main publications, that have been chosen because of the way in which they synthesise other, earlier work. Their views are broad in scope, and by combining their work I am able to present a set of PSB values that while not universal, do represent the broad consensus found in Western liberal-democratic writing on the subject. While I am aware that attempting to create a definitive list of values risks being reductive, in this case I feel that it is possible to draw together and crystallise a number of differing historical and ideological viewpoints in a coherent whole. Differences between the authors that I cite here are minor. Some are more detailed than others, and there are, of course differences in how ideas are articulated. But there is no real ideological or theoretical disagreement that would justify separating them into differing schools of thought, and a narrative account of the main points found in each source would be repetitive. For ease and clarity, I have grouped the main points according to author in the table found in Fig. 2.3.

Fig. 2.3 Public Service Values

	AUTHOR					
	Blumer (1992)	**Tracey (1998)**	**Freedman (2008)**	**Scannell (1994)**	**Barendt (1995)**	**Born and Prosser (2001)**
VALUES	Comprehensiveness	Universality of access	Universality of Access and Appeal	Universality of Access	General geographical availability	Universality
	Generalised Mandate	Universality of appeal		Universality of appeal		
	Diversity, Plurality and range	Provision for minorities	Commonality or Communitarianism		Range and variety of programmes	
	Cultural vocation					
		Serving the public sphere	Support for the public sphere	Serves the public sphere	Concern for national identity and culture	Citizenship
					Impartiality of programmes	
	Non-commercialism	Distance from vested interests	Treats the viewer as a citizen, not a consumer		Independence from both the State and commercial interests	
					Substantial financing by a general charge on users	
	Has a relationship	Demonstrates a				

	with the state	commitment to education				
		Engages in competition in good programming rather than for numbers	Demonstrates an understanding of the progressive power of quality and creativity			Quality of services and output
		Uses guidelines that liberate rather than restrict programme makers				

Based upon the arguments presented in the work of the authors listed in the table above, I would argue that the Normative Pillar of PSB is made up of three key values. Public Service Broadcasting should:

1. Offer parity of access, at low cost
2. Feature programming that is comprehensive, pluralistic and of high quality
3. Demonstrate a commitment to the public sphere

1. A service that offers parity of access, at low cost

This principle broadly corresponds to comprehensiveness in Blumer (1992), Universality of Access in Tracey (1998), Scannell (1994) and Freedman (2008) and Universality in Born and Prosser (2001). Tracey describes it as ensuring "that no one should be disenfranchised by distance or accident of geography" (1998: 26), yet I would argue that it needs to be understood as involving more than simple geographical concerns. In order to be able to view, listen to, or read content produced by PSBs, some specialised equipment is needed; ensuring ease of access often involves making judgements about the financial commitment that the audience needs to make before it can access the service in their geographical area. This question of technological access is one that has become far more important in the past two decades, due to the proliferation of media technologies (Born and Prosser, 2001: 677). There is, for instance, room to question the extent to which the BBC has ensured parity of access to its television services in recent years; between 1998 and 2010-12 some BBC television services were not available to viewers of analogue television, despite the fact that they paid the same flat rate license fee for access to the service. Similar concerns could be raised about DAB digital radio, and other platform-specific digital services (i.e. smart-phone apps) where users are unable to access the whole range of BBC services without significant investment in equipment. It should be noted, however, that the question of technological barriers to access is not exclusively a 21st century issue. Changes from black-and-white to colour television, and the emergence of FM radio have all raised similar questions about how PSBs can ensure parity of access to its services across socio-economic groupings, as well as geographical area.

2. A service that features programming that is comprehensive, pluralistic and of high quality

Of the three sets of values, this is the one that is most theoretically problematic. The emphasis here is on the kind of content that PSBs should produce, and it is an area where discussions of broadcasting emerge from earlier debates surrounding culture more generally. Not only do these debates have a long history that pre-dates the invention of broadcasting, they also link into more recent controversies regarding the nature of culture that come to the fore as a result of social change that occurs after the establishment of radio and television. While there is consensus within the literature that quality, plurality (or diversity) and comprehensiveness are all recognised features of public broadcasting, a precise understanding of each term remains somewhat elusive.

Hendy (2013: 13), drawing on Cardiff and Scannell (1991) and Williams (1962), argues that part of the impetus for the development of 'quality' as a core value of PSB can be traced back to the mid-19th Century. He places particular emphasis on Mathew Arnold's 1869 book *Culture and Anarchy*, and the Victorian middle-class' desire to provide the working-class with 'improving' cultural products. In response to the extension of the franchise and increased literacy rates, Arnold saw that a properly functioning democracy relied upon establishing a sense of purpose amongst the lower-middle class and working class men. Arnold rejected the notion that culture should be equated with the abstract philosophical study of classical texts; the preamble to *Culture and Anarchy*, takes issue with the view professed by Frederic Harrison MP that:
 the active exercise of politics requires common sense, sympathy, trust, resolution and enthusiasm, qualities which your man of culture has carefully rooted up, lest they damage the delicacy of his critical olfactories (Harrison in Arnold, [1869] 2013: 43)

Culture, for Arnold, was a means of freeing men from the purely mechanical and individualised existence that had been created during the Industrial Revolution; allowing them to move from simply "a having and a resting" to "a growing and a becoming". This process of development and growth was a communal one, where the individual had a duty to improve the intellectual lot of all:
 to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward (Arnold, [1869] 2013: 50)

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For culture to play this corrective role it was necessary for it to be embraced by all men, yet Arnold recognised that this was not a practical prescription. His immediate answer was to call for the drive towards culture to be led by men like himself – dubbed "aliens" (Arnold [1869] 2013: 118) - that had broken free of the intellectual restraints of their class. These men would serve the state, and help create the conditions that would draw their fellow men away from the mechanically individualistic and help them to "grow and become". Arnold's emphasis on the leadership role given to these "aliens" has led to charges of authoritarianism and elitism being levelled against him. Marxist critic Terry Eagleton (2008) argues that Arnold's work is written against a background of crumbling religious power, and that his notion of culture is designed as an instrument of middle-class ideological control to replace that of the church. Another Marxist, Raymond Williams, has criticised Arnold for what he perceives to be authoritarianism cloaked as liberalism. Arnold's defence of culture was, for Williams, merely the defence of the status quo "not excellence but familiarity, not the knowable but only the known values" (2005: 8). Unlike Mill, Williams saw Arnold as an enemy of freedom, rather than its friend.

During its early, formative phase – particularly in the UK – it was the Arnoldian "aliens" that would dominate the discussion regarding the purpose of broadcasting, and would help form the early values that underpinned it. Men such as John Reith, the first Director General of the BBC, who would leave an indelible mark on PSB, in the UK, Europe and the USA. Reith came to broadcasting largely by accident, joining the British Broadcasting Company following a career in military engineering and armaments manufacture. During his period in the military Reith had convinced himself that he had leadership qualities, and his growing interest in the purpose of broadcasting would be informed by a keen sense of paternalism that drew heavily upon a late-Victorian, Arnoldian, sensibility. Reith himself conforms closely to the characteristic post-Victorian identified by Mandler and Pedersen; supportive of an "enabling state" that sought to improve the lot of the poor only through public institutions firmly under the control of the educated upper-middle classes (1998: 7). Indeed, Avery (2006: 7) has drawn attention to tendencies within Reith's thinking - "a sneaking envy for the 'efficiency' of German authoritarianism" (Mandler and Pedersen, 1998: 7) - that reflects the illiberal nature that was part of this post-Victorian character.

Such is Reith's influence over PSB that this paternalistic, post-Victorian approach is now named after him: Rethianism. This was a philosophy laid out by Reith himself in evidence to the Crawford

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Committee in 1925; not content to discuss mere questions of organisation and structure, Reith outlined to the committee the ideas that he had proposed a year earlier in *Broadcast Over Britain* (Reith, 1923). Scannell and Cardiff describe the approach to content found within Reith's "brief and trenchant manifesto"; Reithian broadcasting

> had a responsibility to bring into the greatest possible number of homes in the fullest degree all that was best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour and achievement. The preservation of a high moral tone, the avoidance of the vulgar and the hurtful was of paramount importance. Broadcasting should give a lead to public taste rather than pander to it (Scannell and Cardiff, 1991: 7)

Others have put it more bluntly. The literary critic Harold Nicolson had been commissioned to write and present a radio series on contemporary literature in the early 1930s. Nicolson describes a dinner that he shared with Reith, where the Director General attempted to enlighten him as to the precise nature of Reithianism, saying:

> He believes firmly in the ethical mission of the BBC and tries to induce me to modify my talks in such a way as to induce the illiterate members of the population to read Milton instead of going on bicycle excursions (Nicolson, quoted in Dawkins, 2016: 7)

This example illustrates how ill-suited Reithianism was to the age into which it was born. While the BBC is an institution that would dominate British cultural life during the 20th Century, Reithianism - in its original sense - would decline in the post-War era. Its paternalism and aversion to vulgarity would fall out of step with a world in which distinctions between high culture and mass culture were being eroded. Raymond Williams is, perhaps, the most important figure in tearing down the wall between the two, arguing, in 1962 that "This distinction between art and entertainment may be much more difficult to maintain than it looks. At its extremes, of course, it is obvious. But over the whole range, is there any easy and absolute distinction?" (Williams, 1962: 71). After Williams came entire movements dedicated to destroying the distinction, in academia and within the culture itself.

Yet while Reithianism in its original, unbending form would not survive long into the second half of the 20th Century, vestiges of it would remain in this notion of 'quality' as a core PSB value. Despite the Cultural Turn within the academy, despite Post-Modernism, concerns about the "Crisis in

Culture" (Arendt, 1993 [1961]) would resurface time and again, with newer media frequently seen as a threat to the old. This was not simply a product of post-Victorian British snobbishness; Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chair Newton Minnow's famous speech described mid-century American television as "A Vast Wasteland" (see Minnow and Cate, 2003), reflecting long-held beliefs within some American intellectual circles that television was a corrupting influence, largely due to the lack of 'quality' programmes.

Despite the fact that elitism has been in decline throughout the 20th Century, concerns regarding 'quality' programming have proved to be extremely resilient. Even today, in an age where media professionalism has given way to a democratic cult of the amateur, public broadcasters still cling on to notions of 'quality'. Look, for instance at the current BBC Charter, and the public purposes that define the corporation's remit; the third of five purposes is to "stimulate creativity and cultural excellence" (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2006: 2). Yet almost a century after Reith first articulated his ideas, the notion of what represents "cultural excellence" remains unsettled, still batted back-and-forth between high and mass culturalists. It is arguable more of a problem for American public broadcasters than British ones. Attempts to argue that PSB should function as a guarantor of quality programming - "an oasis of the vast wasteland", to borrow from Outlette (2002: 23) - can be found throughout its history, but have never managed to adequately address the question of subjectivity. Oulette (2002), Balas (2003), Ledbetter (1998) and Smith (2002) are among those who have argued that American public television has lost sight of its core purpose by appealing to an increasingly narrow range of viewers that reflect the make-up of those contributing to and controlling the stations, rather than the public itself.

Rather than allying themselves with either the 'high' or the 'mass' culturalists, many public broadcasters have favoured an alternative approach. A comprehensive programme offering might, once upon a time, have involved making a programme that the whole family could watch together. Were each family identical, this approach might still hold sway; programmes featuring nothing that would scare the children or embarrass their parents could be all that the audience needed. But few such ideal families ever existed, and after the Second World War they became rarer still. The notion that broadcasting could cater to everyone together soon had to step aside to in favour of the notion that broadcasting had to cater to everyone apart. Many public broadcasters still prize the collective viewing experience, where vast swathes of the nation tune in to watch a programme

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at the same time. But they also realise that this alone does not make a comprehensive offering, and that they must also cater to the tastes of those who are not at home in the great collective.

This approach is described as the "full portfolio" model by Jakubowicz (2003), where PSBs treat their viewers not as a single coherent audience, but rather as a collection of different audiences, each with its own preferences for different forms of content. Even this approach is not without problems however, particularly when broadcasting to a population that is culturally heterogeneous. Offering a full portfolio three decades ago might have been fairly straightforward; the audience would have remained relatively homogeneous, by today's standards. But since the end of the 1970s, traditional socio-cultural boundaries have become less distinct. Gender is a fluid concept, sexuality no longer merely a private matter, but a question of social identity. The nature of education has shifted, as has the cultural and ethnic make-up of most communities. There is scarcely a better example of the 'full portfolio' model, however, than the BBC. It now (domestically) broadcasts five national television services[5] (with some limited regional variation), ten national radio services, 39 local radio services, and also maintains an extensive online presence. Criticisms are levelled at the BBC's content not for being overly narrow, but by providing too much. Commercial broadcasters now complain that they are forced to compete in a marketplace that is distorted by the very fullness of the BBC's portfolio.

Yet ensuring a pluralist offering is about more than simply increasing the number of different programmes available. Pluralist, as I use it here, is different to diverse, and draws in part on the work of Freedman (2008, 2013) and Karppinen (2013). As Freedman argues, there has been a failure, at times, within media policy debates to distinguish between diversity and pluralism. Of late, this has been seized upon by neo-liberal proponents of structural deregulation, who argue that reducing the barriers that restrict their access to the market would lead to an increase in media plurality. As both Freedman and Karppinen argue this market-based approach is divorced from questions of power, and would likely become "a lens through which the structural inequalities that are present within the media are further cemented" (Freedman, 2013: 82). Karppinen proposes a different understanding of media pluralism, one that does not simply equate more voices with increased plurality. Instead, he argues for a pluralism that is "guided by the aim

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      This does not include BBC Three, recently moved online; S4C which it substantially funds, but does not control; or BBC Alba, which it funds and owns in partnership with MG Alba.

of questioning prevailing truths and including as many social perspectives as possible" (Karppinen, 2013: 71) and as "a critical concept that refers to the recognition and challenging of existing power relations" (ibid.: 72). This notion of pluralism, therefore, includes not only providing for the needs of well-established and clearly-defined social, cultural and ethnic groups, but also demands that PSB gives a voice to the voiceless, and to some extent challenges the prevailing order. It is not a matter of making a list of socio-cultural groups, and giving them a programme each. Providing a pluralistic content offering involves giving consideration not only to who these groups are, but also how they relate to each other, and to prevailing power structures.

3. A service that demonstrates a commitment to the public sphere

Questions of pluralism also inform the third of the three core values that are identified in the literature, commonly described as being related to the 'public sphere'. Academic work on PSB, particularly that published during the 1990s and early 2000s, tends to make use of the broad concept of "the public sphere", but demonstrates a reluctance to engage with the detail of Habermas' (1989) work on the subject. Tracey describes this distinction in terms of PSB "serving the public sphere" (Tracey, 1998: 28), clearly drawing upon (although not directly referencing) Habermas. Similarly, Scannell says that he recognises his debt to Habermas, but that he does not "accept the particular theoretical lines of enquiry that he [Habermas] pursues" only that "the issues he addresses and the problems he poses seem.......fundamental to the study of modern societies and the contributory role of modern media" (1989: 136).

This reluctance to engage with Habermas in detail may be due to the perception, articulated by Keane that he "curiously ignored the public service broadcasting model" (1995: 3) in his writing. This is not entirely accurate; Habermas does refer to the process by which government "turned private institutions of a public composed of private people into public corporations"[6] (Habermas, 1989: 187), but it is an aside, rather than a central part of his argument. As Dahlgren argues, Habermas' public sphere is a curious mixture of a "normative ideal to be strived for and as a manifestation of actual historical circumstances in early bourgeois Europe" (1995: 10) - and PSB scholars have tended to favour the former over the latter. While he does discuss the development of the public sphere within the Social-Welfare State (Habermas, 1989: 222) what Habermas' work

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[6]   Whether this clumsy formulation is in the original German, or the result of poor translation, I do not know. His meaning hopefully comes clear after repeat reading; he is discussing institutions that communicate with the public, being taken from private into public ownership.

provides is not analysis of PSB, but an historical framework that helps explain how the conditions that render PSB necessary were created. His argument is that within the liberal model of press freedom, private ownership was originally a protection "from interference by public authority" (ibid.: 188), but that the process of "economic, technological and organizational concentration" has moved the media out of the public sphere "and re-entered the once private sphere of commodity exchange" (ibid.). PSB, therefore, offers the opportunity to create a public sphere of sorts, based on the principle of "equal access ... through the state's guarantee of active interference to this end" (Habermas, 1989: 227). Some have offered a detailed analysis that bridges between Habermas' early-modern historical perspective and the world of late-20th Century PSB (Garnham, 1990; Dahlgren, 1995; Price, 1995) but the general tendency within work on PSB is, like Scannell, to seize on the broad normative thrust of Habermas' work, without worrying too much about the precise historical detail. So, the public sphere can be understood to be a "space for rational and universalistic politics distinct from both the economy and the State" (Garnham, 1990: 107). The "great strength" (ibid.: 109) of the PSB model, for Garnham, is that it is based on this Habermasian notion of being located somewhere that is equally apart from the (implicitly capitalist) economics and the State.

However, Garnham's (1990) work on Habermas not only links PSB to the public sphere, but also to the concept of Ideal Speech found in Habermas' work on communicative action and discourse ethics (1984 [1981]), 1987 [1981]). This work was written after the first German-language publication of *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989 [1962]), and in some ways can be understood as a more detailed articulation of how a truly effective public sphere might function. Here, however, he concentrates not on the historical development of macro-level institutions, but on epistemological questions - a focus on how people debate ideas, rather than the forum in which they debated. Central to the development of the Ideal Speech Situation is a concept of knowledge formation that is neither coldly empirical, or wholly discursive or interpretive in nature. For Habermas, ideas cannot be divorced from the social contexts in which they are produced and - crucially - communicated. The ability to form knowledge through a process of social communication relies on a set of basic assumptions that bind all communicators together, and allow them to both present ideas and challenge them on an equal footing - the Ideal Speech Situation. In essence, in the Ideal Speech Situation, each speaker is bound to present arguments that have a basis in fact, to assert that they have authority over those facts, and their

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motives are transparent when presenting those facts. Both speaker and listener must agree to this as the basis of "communicative rationality" (Habermas, 1984 [1981]: 10), but must also be free to question the veracity of the other. For Habermas, this framework, a "consensus-bringing force of argumentative speech" (ibid.) was the ideal means of unifying supposedly objective, empirical claims with individually subjective views.

Arguments regarding PSB's commitment to "the public sphere" often focus on the production of news and current affairs content. It is in this area that Habermas' concept of communicative rationality as the basis of Ideal Speech is particularly relevant. Public broadcasters place great emphasis on their status as a facilitator or guarantor of ideal speech, through notions of balance, objectivity and impartiality. Differing voices are given the opportunity both to present views, but also to challenge the views of others. The broadcaster plays a role in testing both the authority of those invited to participate in public debate, and the claims that they make. This is not to say that public broadcasters make use of Ideal Speech exactly as articulated by Habermas. While they do emphasise elements that can be found within his notion of communicative rationality, they also invoke other standards that frame speech that they broadcast. Questions related to privacy, consent, harm and offence etc. all play a role in governing speech on PSB. But it remains a fact that PSBs favour a framework of regulated speech that is closer to Habermas' Ideal Speech than it is to more libertarian notions of a 'marketplace of ideas'.

When academics and policy-makers discuss PSB in terms of the public sphere, they tend to extrapolate from key principles, rather than offer a detailed discussion of the complex theoretical arguments that he presents. I would argue that the public sphere, as a value that it at the heart of PSB, can be understood as a combination of two different ideas, both found in Habermas' work.

1. PSB serves the public sphere by creating and maintaining platforms for communication that are distanced both from direct state interference, and also from commercial interests
2. PSB serves the public sphere by ensuring that discussions which take place on these platforms are governed by notions of rational legitimation (or ideal speech).

From values to norms

Values only represent one aspect of the Normative Pillar of PSB however, and to understand the institution it is essential that we also consider the norms that are associated with those values. Scott distinguishes between the two by describing norms as the "legitimate means to pursue valued ends" (Scott, 2013: 64). In the context of PSB, these norms are of crucial importance; many of the values that underpin PSB are actually shared with many commercial media companies. The difference between the Normative Pillar of PSB and the Normative Pillar of commercial media is often in the differing norms that are adopted.

Take, for instance, the three values that I have outlined in the previous section. Drawing on the academic literature, I have argued that the institution of PSB is based upon a commitment to quality of programming, plurality of programming, and ideal speech in news and current affairs. The problem is that many commercial broadcasters would argue that they are equally committed to these values. Despite the assumptions of some 20th Century broadcast reformers, few commercial television broadcasters deliberately produce programmes of low quality, and no-one sets out with the aim of creating a 'vast wasteland'. Commercial producers are keenly aware of their position in a competitive market, where their ability to sell advertising relies on being able to attract an audience. The networks, historically, may not have been prepared to take too many risks, sometimes retreating into Paul Klein of NBC's model of 'Least Objectionable Programming' (Pearson, 2005: 13) - but neither were they engaged in a race to the bottom. In fact, commercial broadcasters often pride themselves on the quality of their output; it is, to return to Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, a libertarian system, which seeks to "advance the interests and welfare of human-beings by continuing to place its trust in individual self-direction" (1956: 71). The audience will be the arbiters of quality, by flocking to the best programmes offered by the commercial broadcasters, leaving less worthy fare to wither on the vine. As later chapters will show, this idea that quality is as important to the commercial broadcasters as it is to PSB can be found throughout the history of American broadcasting. In fact the very idea "that broadcasting represents a job of entertaining, informing and educating the nation and should, therefore, be distinctly regarded as a public service" comes not from John Reith, but from David Sarnoff (1968 [1922]: 41), of the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) - father of the two commercial networks National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and the American Broadcasting Company (ABC). And it is not an exclusively American argument, or one that is specific to the early years of broadcasting. Hilmes talks of a

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"long history of oppositional rhetoric" (2012: 3) that typifies the Transatlantic relationship between British and American broadcasters - each thinking itself superior to the other, while remaining under its influence. And throughout this oppositional history, it has rarely been a clear-cut case of high quality public television versus low quality commercial (or even quality Brits and trashy Yanks). More often than not, it is a matter of differences in taste and style. Even today, almost a century later, the distinction between Reithianism and Sarnoffism (if such a thing exists) is vague. British public broadcasters are these days criticised for not achieving the heights of quality that are reached by American commercial cable networks such as HBO or AMC - producers of *The Sopranos* and *Mad Men*. In the USA, public broadcasters turn to programmes imported from British commercial broadcasters - most notably *Downton Abbey*, dismissed in the UK as melodramatic and trashy - in order to meet its commitment to quality content.

Similar arguments can be made about the way in which values overlap between public and commercial media in the field of current affairs and news, specifically the notion of Ideal Speech. Journalists, whether they work for public or commercial media, pride themselves on good ethical conduct, based around the same fundamental values as the Ideal Speech model that PSB utilises - objectivity, balance, veracity, transparency (see Smith, 2011; Sanders, 2003; Harcup, 2015). Indeed, a number of writers on journalistic values (Golding and Elliott, 1979; Merritt, 1995; Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001; Hallin and Mancini, 2004) argue that a commitment to public service is one of the values cherished by journalists, whether they work in the public or private sector.

The distinction is not necessarily between public and commercial values, but rather between public and commercial norms - the ways in which these values are embedded into the professional practices of those working in the institution. This is an area where there is a dearth of research; while there is a long tradition of newsroom sociology and ethnography[7] that critically examines the relationship between the individual and the broader institutional context, this approach tends to be dominated by questions that are specific to the field of journalism. There are also a number of studies of working practices within broadcasting and the wider creative industries (see, for instance: Caldwell, 2008; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2013; Mayer, Banks and Caldwell, 2009; Havens, Lotz and Tinic, 2009), but these do not look specifically at the question of working within PSB, as opposed to commercial broadcasting. There are, however, a small number of good quality

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[7] Cottle (2007) provides an exhaustive overview of research into this field

studies on working practices within public broadcasters that do shed light on professional norms, and the degree to which they are based in the values of PSB.

Of the small number that exists, three major studies of stand out: Burns (1977), Tunstall (1993) and Born (2004). The first of these, Burns' *The BBC: Public Institution and Private World* was published between the third and fourth volumes of Briggs' (1970, 1979) history of British broadcasting, but bought an entirely different perspective to field, using methods taken from "social anthropologists" (1977: xi) to look at the corporation from a perspective that neo-institutionalists would immediately recognise. His aim was not simply to tell the story of how the BBC had developed as an institution, but also to understand the "interests and objectives" that drove the individuals working within the BBC. Where Briggs' history had tended to focus on the great men that had been responsible for leading the corporation, Burns took a more rounded view. His account of the BBC examines the motives and attitudes of a range of workers at the BBC, as well as "the different social systems which are built up out of these commitments" (ibid.) - what would be understood by Scott as institutional norms. During the early 1960s, Burns interviewed some three hundred members of staff across a wide range of areas: creative, technical and administrative. Having delivered a report to the BBC in 1964, his work was placed under embargo, until he was invited to return a decade later to undertake more interviews, and the embargo lifted. His 1977 book combines findings from both field studies, with historical material gleaned from Briggs and others to provide not only an overview of the BBC in the 60s and 70s, but also an account of how it had come to take on the shape that it had by those years.

Burns' work reveals a BBC populated by men and women who often held dramatically different, often antagonistic, views of how the organisation should operate. But even within this variety, he found a surprising degree of overlapping attitudes, particularly within distinct settings (such as the production studio). He talks of a commitment that bind together "work, colleagues and career", a long list that includes an attachment to the corporation and its ideals, but also a sense of collegiality (Burns, 1077: 106). While "a direct and simple identification of personal and organisational goals.......is reserved for a small minority" of top-level managers (ibid.: 109), there is a much broader sense of attachment to public broadcasting as an ideal, larger and more valuable than that encompassed by an individual's daily working practice "a 'para-dedication', a commitment to the BBC as a public service, together with a critical dissociation from the

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Corporation as it is" (ibid.: 111). Burns identifies a strong comprehension of, and attachment to traditional public service values, but that were articulated and reinforced by this sense of collegiality. Working at the BBC during the 1960s and 1970s was about a common purpose that, while often divorced from (and even critical of) the specific mission being pursued by the organisation's management, was understood to be distinctive, of high quality, and in pursuit of social goals.

While Tunstall's (1993) work is different from Burns', it is possible to trace the historical development of the institution by reading them alongside each other. Tunstall does not set out specifically to look at the question of public service values, but it examines a professional context - British television pre-1990 - where public service values were an inescapable aspect of professional practice; to work in television, during this period, was to work in public broadcasting by default. He describes British broadcasting as being modelled on the civil service, with producers historically working for one of two "two large cultural bureaucracies with an occupational hierarchy" (1993: 4). Within these hierarchies, producers working practices were informed by organisational values, rather than by the demands of the market that would later come to dominate. Individual producers remained largely insulated from commercial pressures, producing programmes according to universal values. The notion that they should produce programmes for a particular segment of the audience (or the market) is alien to the producers that feature in Tunstall's work, who are guided by an ideal, abstracted audience. Creative producers were insulated from financial concerns. Not only are they kept at arms length from discussions regarding the finance of their broadcaster - whether with government or commercial sponsors - they are also often completely unaware of the costs of productions that they themselves work on. Access to resources (labour, equipment, space) is rarely quantified in cash terms, with producers having little regard to fiscal prudence when planning or producing programmes. Tunstall's work is very much rooted in its national and historical context, and both the BBC and ITV would undergo radical change during the 1990s, that would arguably diminish the importance of PSB values to the working practices of their employees. Fitzwalter (2008), writing about Granada Television, traditionally one of the most influential ITV franchises, talks of the reforms of the 1990s in terms of a "dream that died".

The dwindling importance of PSB norms in working practices at the BBC has been extensively charted by Born (2004), who undertook a detailed ethnographic study of the BBC during the final

years of John Birts' tenure as Director General, and much of the period in which his successor, Greg Dyke, was in charge. She describes the BBC as "a cultural state", one with "its own distinctive ethos, language, and its own quasi-tribal structure of loyalty, identification and division" (2004: 67). Three decades after Burns first began to observe life at the BBC, Born finds an organisation that has continually re-invented itself, but where the central tension between management and creativity remained unresolved. The approach to finances and the audience had changed radically, under John Birt's reforms, and there was a greater understanding of other public broadcasters as rivals, rather than as colleagues. But running throughout the organisation, even in the market-driven 1990s, was a sense of working to a set of public service ideals. Like Burns, Born finds that this identification with PSB ideals is not driven by the corporation's management, but is socially constructed and reinforced by programme-makers. In Born's study, this occurs at genre-level:

> staff have a powerful belief in the central importance of and the contribution made by that genre to the BBC's public service mission. This is accompanied by a palpable sense of rivalry towards adjacent genres (2004: 77)

During the 1990s, the tendency for PSB values to be articulated through working practices on an individual and social level took on a new impetus. As discontent with Birt's approach increased, Born found that criticism of management was often articulated in terms of Birtian failure to appreciate the meaning of those values. There was a perception that management paid lip service to PSB ideals - put "Reithian icing on the new managerial cake" (ibid.: 81) - but that its initiatives were contrary to the fundamental ideals of the institution. Lower-level staff, particularly those involved in programme-making engaged in "informal re-workings of the Reithian ethos" (ibid.:84) through the performance of their professional duties in accordance with ethical and aesthetic norms that they perceived to be in accordance with PSB values, rather than according to management strictures.

The influence of Burns (1977), Tunstall (1993) and Born (2004) can be seen in the small number of more recent research on working practices within PSB. Nissen (2014) divides the organisational development of public media organisations into three periods: The Age of Monopoly (1920s to 1990s), a New World of Market Competition and Tighter Public Regulation (1990s to 2010s), and The Digital Era (2010s onwards). Throughout each era, public broadcaster organisations contained two professional cultures - one creative, the other managerial - that were distinct from, and

sometimes antagonistic towards, each other. While his description of the Age of Monopoly lacks a clear evidence base, its conclusions concisely and cohesively draw together many of the arguments found in earlier research. Organisations were often based on administrative arrangements found in government or public utilities, and managers were often drawn from these professional areas. Creative workers were often organised in groups that had strong bonds of loyalty (a finding that echoes Burns, 1977), but which did not facilitate effective cross-organisational working - "autonomous principalities in a loosely-knit kingdom" (Nissen, 2014: 90).

Ytreberg (2002) offers a more detailed categorisation of workers that may be found (or are assumed to exist) within British and Scandinavian public broadcasters. Rather than looking at the organisational structures of public broadcasting, Ytreberg approaches the subject from the perspective of self-presentation; how people conform to "ideal types" that are constructed and reinforced within social settings. His work draws attention not only to the way in which people working in public broadcasting understand their own role, and the role of their peers, but also perceptions of how those working within the institution should (or shouldn't) perform their roles. He discusses four "ideal types" - the Paternalist, the Bureaucrat, the Charismatics and the Avant-gardists - and offers arguments that, again, reinforce and update some of the earlier, more substantial studies on public broadcasting working cultures. For Ytreberg, there are questions regarding how genuinely paternalistic PSB was in its early years, but he argues that in recent years paternalists have given way to charismatics, with familiarity now dominating on-screen. His discussion of the Avant-gardists has similarities with Burns' (1977) discussion of close-knit working communities within the setting of the studio, and Ytreberg also reinforces the notion of PSB organisations as possessing divided cultures, where bureaucrats are categorically differentiated from creatives.

Running throughout this body of research on working practices in PSB organisation is a set of norms that evolve over time, but which are anchored in the core values of public broadcasting. Organisational roles are sharply demarcated, with a clear distinction between groups of worker that are dedicated to the production of content, and workers that take on managerial or administrative roles. Creative work is structured around relatively small, self-contained units, based on content genre, or medium. While there tends to be a high degree of centralisation (of budgeting, for instance) and a hierarchical management structure, these production units have

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traditionally been given a significant amount of freedom. Management culture defines some of the organisational goals, but these are often less important than goals which are set by individuals, in collaboration with their fellow workers within production units. This organisational structure can be understood as putting into practice some of the values that I have described as belonging to the "public sphere" set of PSB values (above); not only does the PSB organisation need to be distanced from both commercial and political pressures, but individuals working within the organisation also adopt working norms that distance the process of producing content from that of managing the organisation. The reliance on self-contained production units that work towards self-defined aims based on institutional values rather than organisational goals can also be related to PSB's pursuit of 'quality programming'. Insulating programme-makers from audience responses (particularly pre-1990s) was understood to be a means of encouraging innovation, of helping to prevent programme-makers from falling into patterns of comfortable, crowd-pleasing behaviour. Tracey (1998: 31) describes this in terms of creating a "secure living space, arena for action, for broadcasters with all kinds of interests in possible programmes and possible varieties of audience". Fundamental to all working practices is a sense of purpose that extends beyond simply attempting to achieve personal or financial goals. Working in public broadcasting is more clearly vocational than working in commercial media, and individual working practices are often based upon an appeal to a set of values that are principled and long-term, rather than based upon meeting material or immediate targets. This sense of working to fulfil a vision that is larger than the individual administrative unit, or larger even than the organisation itself, binds together the disparate elements within the public broadcaster. Laid over the entire process is a sense of fealty which often subsumes individual professional goals.

These professional norms help to distinguish between public and commercial broadcasting. Commercial broadcasters (and other commercial media) often share the values of public broadcasting. They strive to produce a diverse range of high-quality programming, while also adopting professional values that are designed to serve the public sphere and create contexts for ideal speech. But these values exist within organisations that lack the public service norms that embed them in professional practice. Within the commercial sector there is less of a distance between creative and managerial staff, or between audience demands and production choices. There is less scope for producers to organise themselves into autonomous units, that reinforce socially-constructed notions of public value that are able to challenge the dominant organisational

mission. And the sense of working for a wider institution, with clear, publicly-orientated values is less pronounced.

2.3.2 The Regulative Pillar of PSB

A Normative Pillar approach to PSB is useful in outlining both the values that are the foundation of PSB, and also the norms that put those values into practice. At the heart of public broadcasting, however, is not only a set of voluntary norms, but also a framework of "rule-setting, monitoring and sanctioning activities" that Scott (2013: 59) understands as belonging to the Regulative Pillar. This framework is largely based on the same values discussed in the previous section - parity of access; comprehensive, pluralistic and high quality programming; and a commitment to the public sphere - but is encoded in regulation and legislation. In looking at the Regulative Pillar of PSB, I contend that contrary to Taussig's assertion that "it is delivered content and how people perceive it which defines PSB" (2006: 59), these legal and regulatory frameworks are of central importance. The Regulative Pillar of the institution is of central important to the process which takes abstract policy notions and makes them reality. As John argues

> It is impossible to begin to understand how political systems make public policy without some attention to the rules about who makes decisions, what powers they have, what is the official sequence of the policy-making process, and what constraints decision makers operate under (2012: 29).

The Regulative Pillar of PSB can be understood by looking at three different sets of codified rules - those governing ownership, those governing funding, and those governing the production of content. These are not wholly distinct categories, and each is often intertwined with the other; broadcasters that are publicly owned are often subject to greater restrictions on both their ability to raise commercial funding, and in the content that they are obliged to produce.

PSB content obligations

The one area in which the Normative and Regulative pillar of PSB are most closely related is that of content. In fact, one of the key distinctions between public and commercial broadcasting is the way in which values related to content are formally codified. As discussed in section 2.3.1, commercial broadcasting often aspires to the same values as their public rivals; David Sarnoff and

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John Reith both set out to create content that educates, informs and entertains. The difference is that when commercial broadcasters fail, they are not held to account. Public broadcasters, on the other hand, are often expected to maintain content standards as a condition of their continued existence. Jakubowicz (2003: 151) argues that PSBs often make use of a three-tiered system of accountability, consisting of externally oriented self-regulation, internally oriented self-regulation, and external regulation. Externally oriented self-regulation often involves the creation of arms-length governance structures, such as the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, or the Dutch NOS Supervisory Board, functioning as a bridge between the organisation and the public it presumes to serve. These governance arrangements often (although not always) have responsibility for maintaining internal standards, overseeing editorial guidelines, for instance, or writing annual reports that review the broadcast output. The third layer of accountability is external regulators, who have legal powers in regard to licensing or funding services, and whose evaluation of programme performance carries with it the power of legal or financial sanctioning.

The emergence of new media at the turn of the 21st Century has arguably increased pressure on PSBs to conform to a plethora of new content standards; largely as a means of justifying their existence in a more market-driven media landscape, where broadcast spectrum has effectively ceased to be a scarce resource. Yet the demand that PSBs clearly demonstrate how they meet the lofty ideals that serve as their foundational principles is not new; as the following chapters demonstrate, debates about how to measure desirable outcomes in programming date back to the emergence of broadcasting in the 1920s. The fundamental problem that has plagued public service content regulation - on internal and external level - for the best part of a century is how to create standards that the accountability structures can use to make decisions. Paul Lazarsfeld, whose work on television is the focus of my research in Chapter 5, was strongly of the opinion that this represented one of the major philosophical challenges for those interested in broadcasting. How to formulate a standard that could be used to objectively measure performance in programming? Five decades later, it remains an issue that has not been settled; as Steemers (2003) argues, while there is a clear sense of the values that justify the existence of PSB, quantifying them has long proved challenging. Nowhere is this more problematic than the question of 'quality', and the tendency has been for regulators

As a result, accountability structures have tended - historically at least - to concentrate on two sets of PSB values: plurality, and the public sphere. Hellman (2001: 183) talks of a public policy model of broadcast regulation in which "reflecting and giving equal access to the various sectors of society, serving the multiplicity of audience types as well as striving to achieve a wide range of choice in programme content" has become the core normative value by which PSB content offering is judged. In practice, this normative approach has led to accountability mechanisms that focus on programming quotas, based both around genre (i.e. ensuring that there is a specific number of hours of arts programming being broadcast) and representation (i.e. ensuring that linguistic, ethnic or cultural groups are proportionately represented on the airwaves). As Hellman notes however, such approaches can be reductive, and do not offer a rounded picture of the service being provided. For instance, following the acquisition of Channel Five by Richard Desmond in 2011, *OK! TV* - an extension of the celebrity gossip magazine also owned by Desmond - was broadcast nightly, and classified by the broadcaster as part of its current affairs provision. This re-categorisation allowed Channel Five to meet the public service obligations contained in its broadcast license, without its programming making any tangible contribution to increasing the plurality (or quality) of the media landscape.

Public sphere approaches to content regulation in PSB tend to focus on questions of impartiality and balance. Here, there is a quasi-judicial role played both by internal and external accountability structures. PSB values are embedded in clearly defined editorial codes that seek to set rules for the articulation of some form of Ideal Speech. Internal facing self-regulation often focuses on creating structures of accountability, based on these editorial codes. Decisions regarding who is given a platform, and how their views are presented, are taken within a clearly defined chain of command; journalists answering to editors, who are in turn accountable to newsroom managers, heads of departments, and chief executive officers. External facing self-regulation tend to operate *ex post facto*, dealing with complaints, and often making recommendations on changes to editorial policy - although this has not always been the case. It was only with the passage of the 1990 Broadcasting Act that the independent (i.e. non-BBC) television regulator abandoned pre-broadcast scrutiny of content. Wholly external regulators often perform the same function as the external facing self-regulators, approving editorial codes and passing judgement on individual breaches. In the case of external regulators, however, the sanctions for breaches are likely to be more substantial, and can lead to the withdrawal of broadcast licenses in some contexts. Commercial broadcasters are often

obliged to meet standards set by external broadcast regulation, of course, but the tendency is for these standards to be less demanding. The regulatory bar set for PSB content is usually much higher than that set for content produced and broadcast by commercial radio and television.

Ownership of PSB

Harrison and Woods (2001: 484) note that the European Union, when defining PSB "do not address – at least not expressly – the question of who carries out PSB functions"; these functions have often been carried out by state-owned broadcasters, but the authors note that alternative models exists where the end goals of PSB are fulfilled by companies that are outside the public sector, both commercial entities and non-profits. Countries which place greater emphasis on a Libertarian understanding of the role of the media tend to favour PSB institutions which have looser ties to the machinery of state, and which may have a significant degree of commercial freedom in a less regulated marketplace. Likewise, national contexts which have a tradition of strong central state control may favour a closer relationship between PSB institutions and the executive branch of government. Situated between these two poles are attempts to create institutional frameworks which seek to guarantee independence from both government and commerce for PSB institutions. Raboy describes these three situations, respectively, as "Private enterprise core", "State core" and "Public service core" systems (1999: 35), which broadly correspond to Lowenstein's Social Centrist/Social Libertarian/Libertarian models (see previous section).

While the structures of the nation-state influences the shaping of the rules that govern PSB institutions, other cultural, political and geographic factors also have a vital role to play. Katsirea (2008) talks of a 'European audiovisual model', that has developed in response to greater European integration and the decline of state monopoly broadcasting across Europe. The EU's drive towards a single free market, regulated on a supra-national level with a prohibition on state financial aid is difficult to reconcile with a broadcasting tradition that has been constituted and regulated at state level, in pursuit of a national interest, and funded – wholly or in part – by the public purse. Developed as a compromise between the free-market impulses of the EU and the desire of individual member states to protect distinct national cultural institutions, the European audiovisual model is based on the principle of "a balance between a strong and independent public service sector and a dynamic commercial sector" (Weber in Katsirea, 2008: xxxi). This

approach seeks to protect key services and institutions from being subject to European regulation of state aid, while liberalising the pan-European market in commercial broadcasting. Her argument draws attention to the way in which supra-national broadcasting policy is now helping to shape PSB on a national level.

As Hallin and Mancini (2004) illustrate, the influence of civil society is central to understanding the organisation of the media in some European countries. While non-state religious, cultural and political organisations traditionally have a stronger grasp on the private press as opposed to public media institutions, their influence remains an important factor when looking at PSB in certain countries. Humphreys (1996) notes the Netherlands and Italy as two examples of European media systems where control of PSB institutions has historically come under the influence of non-state groups. In the former, television channels are closely allied to the "pillars" of Dutch society, which represent political and religious groupings, reflecting the Netherlands' pluralistic political culture (139-142). Italy's state television service, RAI, has historically been ordered along political party lines. Between the mid-1970s and the mid-1990s the three television channels provided by RAI were each allocated to a single party grouping, with the Christian Democrats taking control of RAI 1, the Socialists RAI 2, and the Communists RAI 3 (154). Both systems have undergone significant change since the mid-1990s – under pressure from shifting social dynamics in the Netherlands, and the collapse in support for the 3 traditional political parties in Italy – yet they illustrate the ways in which non-state actors can play a central role in influencing the shape of media institutions.

In addition to the role played by civil society, it is important to remember that not all PSB institutions are constituted on a national level. While some public media institutions have a strong centralist identity and provide uniform programming for the entire nation, others seek to address regional variation by providing services designed for specific regional, linguistic or ethnic groups. France, for instance, has a relatively weak tradition of regional broadcasting, dating back no further than the mid-1970s, and is institutionally connected to the national parent corporation, France Télévisions. This is in marked contrast to the German model, where PSB is historically rooted in the individual Landers, or regional states, as opposed to the federal government. Both French and German models are, of course, reflective of their respective political cultures; the French system an articulation of a Gaullist desire for national unity, the German system borne out of a fear of

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allowing the country to slip back into Nazi tyranny. To draw attention to the importance of regionalism, and regional broadcasting institutions, is not to attempt to downplay the fact that they necessarily exist within their respective national context; It is simply an attempt to emphasise the importance of taking a multi-dimensional approach when describing and classifying public broadcasting institutions.

The role of civil society and devolved government are significant, since they are both areas in which the American model of public broadcasting is arguably closer to the continental European tradition than it is to the British one. As will be seen in the following chapter, American public broadcasting has a long tradition of decentralisation that relies on civil society, existing public institutions (such as universities) and local government to deliver PSB objectives.

PSB funding

Lowe and Berg (2013) identify four methods by which PSBs are funded: license fees, direct subsidy, subscription or pay-per-view, and advertising. These four methods have then been organised along four dimensions. "Transparency of receipt" describes how the clarity by which funding is collected; subscriptions and license fees are transparent, while funding from advertising or general taxation are less so. "Character of payment" is related to whether there is an element of volition; again, subscription models allow viewers to make a choice whether to support PSB or not, while general taxation funded-systems do not. "Purview of collection" is related to this previous point, and examines whether the collection of funding is individual (like a license fee) or collective (general taxation). And finally, the "orientation of address" considers whether the funding model is based around a conception of citizenship (general taxation) or consumer choice (subscription) (2013: 80-81). These four factors have been represented visually by Lowe and Berg in the diagram found in Fig 2.4.
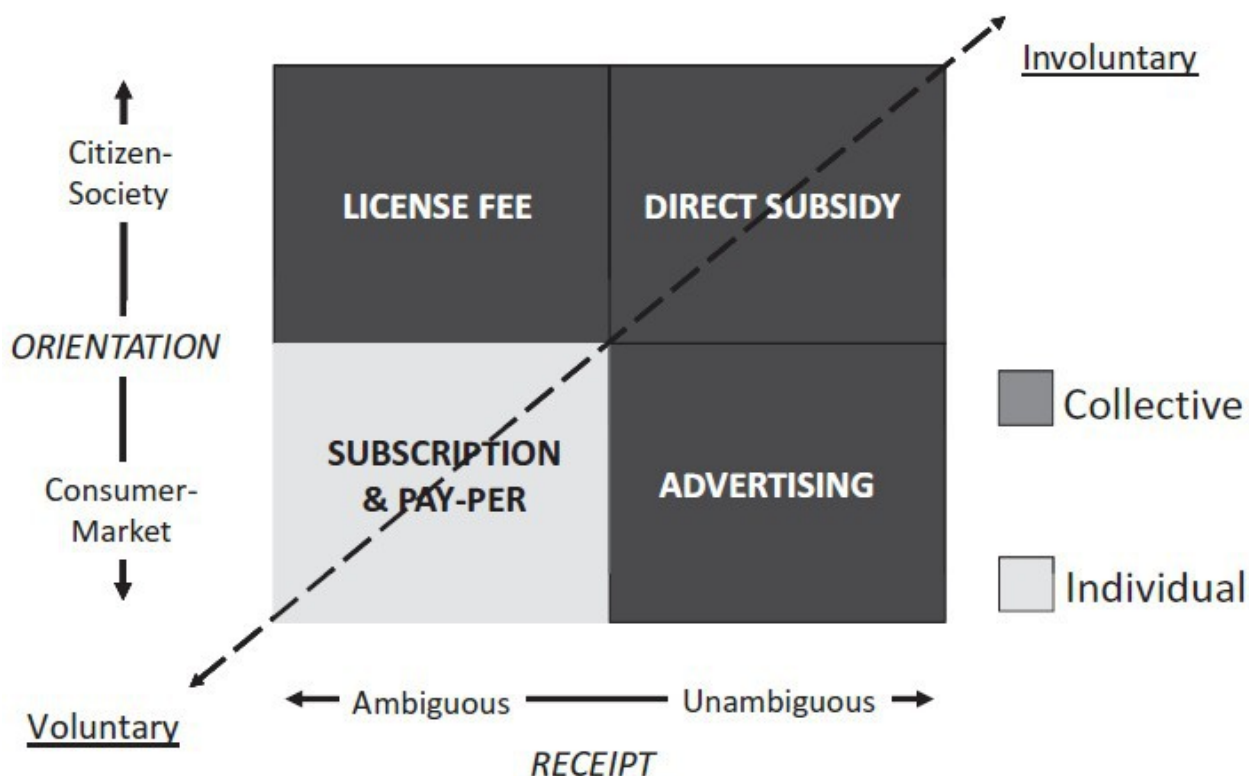
Four modes of funding with implications

Fig 2.4, from Lowe and Berg (2013: 81)

The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) undertook a survey of PSB in 45 of its member countries in December 2015, and found that PSB organisations relied on public sources for 77.9% of their incomes, on average (EBU, 2015: 7). License fee payment made up 66.8% of public funds, by total spent (ibid.: 9). This figure reflects the fact that while many countries within the EBU rely on general taxation as their primary funding mechanism, four of the five largest territories within the EBU - the UK, Germany, France and Italy - are heavily reliant on the licensee fee to fund PSB. License fee-dependent nations are in the minority, however, with only 20 of the 45 countries reliant on this funding model. Funding from general taxation is the preferred method in Spain, the BeNeLux countries, and many Baltic and Eastern European nations.

While many PSBs derive a portion of their funding from advertising sales, these sales are often subject to greater regulation than would be found in a purely commercial marketplace. Anderson (2007) argues that television advertising regulation commonly places limits on the length,

frequency and content of television adverts. Certain products are often prevented from being advertised on television altogether - cigarettes, pharmaceuticals, political campaigns - while restrictions are placed on how and when other products are represented. The consumption of alcohol, for instance, must be represented in specific ways in some national contexts. In others, the advertising of unhealthy food is not permitted during programmes aimed at children. In addition, there are often rules regarding accuracy, to ensure that unsustainable claims are not being made regarding the merits of the product being advertised.

In the context of PSB, however, there are often additional regulations in place to police not only the amount, frequency and content of advertising, but also the relationship between the advertiser and the broadcaster. The sponsorship of individual television programmes was banned in the UK until 1988, with advertisers able only to buy "spot advertisements" that had no direct relationship with the programme being broadcast (Curran and Seaton, 2010: 177). Until 2011, product placement - the inclusion of commercial products within programmes in exchange for a fee - was prohibited on British television, in accordance with both British and European regulation.

Further restrictions were placed on Channel Four, which was prevented from directly selling advertising space until after the passage of the 1990 Broadcasting Act (ibid.: 186). Previous to this, advertising space on Channel Four was sold by the companies that held ITV licenses, who were then obliged to make a fixed payment to the Independent Broadcasting Authority (the commercial TV regulator that also owned Channel Four pre-1990) in order to fund Channel Four. Even post-1990, Channel Four - now owned by the Channel Four Television Corporation, rather than the IBA - was subject to a system of complex advertising sales regulation. Under the terms of the 1990 Broadcasting Act, Channel Four would sell its own advertising, but if its share of overall British television advertising revenues fell under 14%, it would receive a payment from the ITV license holders. However, if their revenue exceeded 14% of total advertising revenues, half of the excess would be paid to the ITV companies (Catterall, 2013: 82) . The aim was to insulate Channel Four, a PSB, from market pressures, allowing it to produce programmes without fear or favour. In the event, Channel Four's performance exceeded all expectations and in 1997 the 14% rule was eliminated altogether.

This approach to advertising can be understood by looking at the European Union's Television

without Frontiers (TWF) directive, which drew together key currents in European broadcast regulation, heavily influenced by the public service tradition. In TWF, advertising is governed by a series of principles, including the requirement to identify advertisements, the requirement to separate advertising from other content, and a specific prohibition on "surreptitious advertising", or product placement (see Ginosar and Levi-Faur, 2010). While the public service model often draws funding from advertising whose content is regulated in the same way as other commercial media, PSB is also subject to additional regulation governing the relationship between the advertiser and the broadcaster (or programme maker). While TWF applied to all European broadcasters, it is clearly derived from a public-service orientated conception of media regulation; its replacement in 2010 with the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AMSD) demonstrated a shift in the regulatory environment, reflecting the increased role of commercial media in the European broadcasting landscape. AMSD contains fewer, and weaker restrictions governing the relationship between advertiser and broadcaster.

In addition to the three core methods of funding - license fee, taxation and advertising - many public broadcasters do receive income from alternative sources - what Lowe and Berg (2013: 85) group under "Other" funding, but do not describe in detail. This other funding varies from country to country, but can represent a significant source of income for some broadcasters. It is particularly lucrative in the UK, where the BBC and Channel Four receive 27% and 32% of their respective income (ibid.: 86) from these "Other" sources. In the British context, this mainly consists of the commercial exploitation of intellectual property. This sometimes involves selling produced programming to be broadcast abroad, but also includes the sale of concepts and formats - *Who wants to be a Millionaire?*, *Top Gear* and *Wife Swap* are all examples of programme formats originated on British PSB, with the rights to adapt them sold to other broadcasters the world over. PSBs also derive income from the direct sale of intellectual property to consumers, both at home and abroad. While domestic audiences are afforded an opportunity to watch PSB programming free of charge for a limited time, once the public 'window' has closed, then they must often pay an additional fee to watch again. Historically, this process would have involved a defined number of repeat broadcasts, followed by the sale of the programme on VHS or DVD. Increasingly, PSBs offer their programmes online, free-of-charge, for a limited time; usually 30 days in the case of the BBC, although Channel Four have a more generous window that they support by the sale of online advertising. After this defined period, PSBs will then sell the online exhibition rights to commercial

providers that charge a fee for the public to view the content.

American exceptionalism

Viewed from the perspective of the Normative Pillar, there is little to distinguish between the European and North American approaches to PSB; it is the same set of fundamental values that lies at the heart of the institution in both cases. A Regulative Pillar approach, however, exposes some of the factors that make the American model of PSB distinctive. Two areas in particular stand out; models of funding, and organisational structure.

American PSB is not unique in its organisational structure, and shares some features of other national systems, particularly in central European countries such as Germany or Switzerland that have federal political constitutions. It is arguably the most extreme example of a decentralised PSB system, however. The American system is constituted around several hundred member stations, each legally independent of the other. These are sometimes non-profit companies or corporations established specifically to provide public broadcasting, but some member stations are owned by universities, or by local government. Some programming is produced locally, but much of it is bought and sold nationally from other member stations, through cooperative arrangements that resemble - but are loath to call themselves - networks. Individual member stations often provide both radio and television services, but the national "non-networks" - National Public Radio (NPR) and Public Broadcasting System (PBS) - are divided by medium. Overseeing the entire institution is the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), which is a public corporation that is tasked with allocating funding from the federal government. Yet while it holds the purse-strings, the CPB has no regulatory oversight of member stations, who hold licenses awarded by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the regulator for all American broadcasting and telecommunications, public and commercial.

Its model of funding is as complicated as its organisational structure. Federal funding of PSB in the USA is substantially lower - both as a proportion of GDP, and per head of population - that anywhere in Europe. Lowe and Berg (2013: 83) note that the total amount of federal funding awarded to American PSB in 2008 was less than the total amount awarded to public broadcasting in Finland during the same year - despite the fact that the population of the USA was some 60 times higher than that of Finland. In a report published in 2012, the CPB estimated that federal

funding represented only 18% of the total revenue of the public TV system. For smaller member stations, grants from the CPB represented around 1/3 of their revenue, while this dropped to some 10% for the larger, metropolitan member stations (CPB, 2012: 17).

To make up for the lack of federal funding, American PSB stations rely on income from a range of other sources. The main sources of alternative funding include support by state and local governments, universities, and charitable foundations. However, a significant proportion of revenues come from funding that is uniquely American, individual contributions and 'underwriting'. Individual contributions differ from subscriptions, in that they are not a pre-requisite payment, required to access the content. Public broadcasters generally provide content on free-to-air platforms, but then ask viewers to make voluntary financial contributions. These requests for money typically take the form of pledge drives, where specific weeks of the year are set aside when member stations ask viewers and listeners for financial contributions. In 2012, this revenue stream represented the highest proportion of the income of American PSB, representing 22% of television revenues, and 34% of radio revenues.

The other major source of funding is known as commercial underwriting, a category of funding that is supposedly different from advertising, yet seems curiously similar to the untrained eye. When television licenses were awarded to Non-Commercial Educational (NCE) broadcasters in 1952 (see Chapter 4), the FCC included an absolute prohibition against broadcasting any promotional content - ostensibly to protect them from commercial pressures, but also to protect the commercial television industry from increased competition for advertising revenue. Commercial companies were free to make donations to public broadcasting member stations, and the fact that they had made these donations could be acknowledged on-air - but this was limited to a simple statement of fact. This prohibition was partially lifted in 1982, when the FCC altered the license conditions of NCEs to allow them to broadcast not only the identity of commercial donors, but also feature their branding materials, and "and other non-promotional information about the donor, including location and identification of product lines" (Federal Communications Commission, 1981: 155). This was an attempt to address a perceived crisis in the funding of American public television, while also preserving the fundamental value that protected PBS from commercial pressures (Chapman, 2013: 395).

Viewed from an European perspective, the commercial underwriting model is a curious one. It is based in the same set of values as European regulations regarding advertising and public broadcasting; what it sets out to do is serve the public sphere by creating distance between commercial funding and programme making. American regulation, post-1982, attempts to serve this value by limiting what commercial sponsors are permitted to say, prohibiting them from making claims regarding the quality of their products, for instance. Yet the provisions adopted by the FCC create a strong link between the commercial sponsor, and individual programmes. This is in sharp contrast to the European model, which - under the Television Without Frontiers (TWF) Directive, at least - demanded that there was a clear demarcation between commercial and editorial material. Before the 1997 revisions to the TWF Directive, commercial underwriting was explicitly prohibited within EU countries; while by the same measure, the European spot advertising model remains explicitly prohibited on American public television.

The standard adopted by the FCC in 1982 (and further refined in 1984 and 1992) has had questionable success in guarding against commercial pressures on public television. Ledbetter (1997: 153) notes that until the mid-1970s PBS - the "not-network" for American public television - used internal self-regulation to prevent conflicts of interests. Companies could not underwrite programming in areas where they had a clear commercial interest. By the 1990s, however, this prohibition had been abandoned, and commercial underwriters were increasingly funding programmes in which they had a direct interest. Cook's 2003 survey of programming on WGBH-2 - one of Boston's member stations, and one of the most popular and powerful forces within PBS - concluded that "advertising is alive and well on public television (2003: 92). Despite attempts by both external and internal accountability structures to provide a regulative structure to protect American public television[8] from undue commercial interest, there are serious questions regarding the effectiveness of these attempts.

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[8]   While this section discusses American public television, the same system of commercial underwriting exists within American public radio.

2.4 Conclusion

The American example reminds us of the difficulty of arriving at a single, universal definition of PSB. Differences between the institutional form of PSB are particularly pronounced when we move between Europe and America, but it is important to emphasise the degree of difference that can exist even within a single media system. Much of the discussion in this chapter has focussed on the UK, partly because it is the context that I am most familiar with, but also because it is notable for its high degree of internal variation. Here, the single institution of public broadcasting contains the BBC, Channel Four, ITV and Channel Five; three[9] organisational models, each dramatically different from the other, yet all based on the same set of core values.

While it is difficult to arrive at an overarching definition of PSB, it is not impossible. As I have argued in this chapter, it is possible to understand PSB as the product of the fundamental tension within Western liberal-democratic media systems between Libertarianism and Social Responsibility (as understood by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1956). It is an institution based upon three core values: offering parity of access; a comprehensive, pluralistic and high-quality programme offering; and which is committed to serving the public sphere. These values can be found in the content that is produced, but are also embedded in professional norms, in regulation and in legislation.

It is also an institution that changes over time, both responding to and shaping its social, economic and cultural surroundings. My aim, over the following three chapters, is to look at the early history of American broadcasting, a period that pre-dates the establishment of federally-funded public broadcasting in the USA. In doing so, I argue that PSB, in the American context, does not simply emerge fully-formed in 1967. Rather it is based upon long-standing debates and discussions regarding the public interest in American broadcasting that embody many of the values and norms that define PSB. In order to fully comprehend the nature of public broadcasting in the USA today and the challenges that it faces, it is necessary that we first understand the philosophical arguments that have dominated American broadcasting policy from its inception. This is the subject of the next chapter, which examines the emergence of broadcasting in the USA, and the debates regarding the precise nature of the public interest in broadcasting that accompanied the new medium.

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[9]   ITV and Channel Five are differentiated by degree, rather than category.

Chapter 3: The public interest in early American broadcasting

3.1 Introduction

The argument that I present in this thesis owes a considerable debt to a number of other scholars who have recently focused their attention on what Pickard (2015) describes as "America's battle for media democracy". As Slotten argues, the early history of American broadcasting had, in the past, tended to emphasise "mainstream, hegemonic practices" (2009: 2). The history of the large commercial networks that would come to dominate American radio, and later television, broadcasting was relatively well documented. The work of campaigners, broadcasters and policy-makers that strove for an alternative to purely commercial broadcasting had not been awarded the same prominence. Pickard and Slotten are perhaps the two most significant authors who have sought to remedy this situation, developing and expanding upon the earlier research of McChesney (1993) and Engelman (1996) among others (Fones-Wolf, 2006; Horwitz, 1997; Starr, 2004).

In this thesis, there are three aspects of the media reform movement that I wish to explore in greater detail. The first of these is the conceptualisation of the idea of media reform itself; within the existing literature, this is something of a catch-all term that is used to draw together three interlinked groups of actors who shared a common aim. The media reform movement is a term used to describe a loose coalition of civil society groups - trade unions, churches, pressure groups - educational broadcasters, and their allies (or at least sympathisers) within the formal policy-making apparatus. Pickard describes their work as "attempting to create a media system more aligned with the liberal democratic ideals upon which the United States was purportedly founded" (2015: 7). My argument is that the ultimate aim of the media reform movement were more

specific than this; they were, essentially, arguing for the establishment of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) in the USA. Not a system of PSB that took the same organisational form and funding model as that found in the UK, but a form of PSB - as I defined in the previous chapter - none the less. In this chapter, I revisit some of the early history of media reform in the USA specifically to argue the case for understanding this period within the context of PSB history.

The second aspect that I wish to explore is that of chronology. McChesney's (1993)work on media reform focuses on a relatively narrow time frame, from 1928 to 1935. Pickard describes the 1940s as being a "formative period" in American media history, which "gave birth to many of the intellectual foundations and normative assumptions that continue to structure the American media system"(2015: 7). While wholeheartedly agree with both McChesney and Pickard that many of the dominant patterns of American broadcast regulation were set during the 1930s and 1940s, they developed during an extended period of gestation dating back to the early 1920s. Not only had these ideas been debated for two decades before the great media reform battles of the 1940s, but I would argue that they are largely a product of this specific period in American history, linked to the free market ideology that drove the presidential administrations of Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge and - a key figure in this chapter - Herbert Hoover.

Neither of the points that I make above are entirely novel. Slotten's (2009) account of the period argues that the development of educational broadcasting during the first half of the 20th Century laid the foundation for the emergence of a federally-funded public radio network, National Public Radio (NPR), in the late 1960s. The contribution made by educational radio was both philosophical - offering arguments for how and why an alternative to commercial broadcasting might be bought about - and practical. Many NPR licenses, to this day, are held by university radio stations that have existed since the beginning of the last century. Largely due to this fact, Slotten also begins his account of media reform far earlier than Pickard, outlining some developments that take place as early as the turn of the 19th century. He also emphasises the crucial ideological contribution made by Hoover during his time as Secretary of Commerce in the 1920s.

Where my account diverges both from Slotten and Pickard is at its conclusion. Slotten outlines the development of public radio from 1900 until the late 1940s, while Pickard explicitly argues that progressive regulation, and with it the ambitions of the media reform movement suffered a

"spectacular defeat" (2015: 205) during the same period. There is little doubt that the media reform movement entered a period of decline from the mid-1940s onwards, but the precise point at which it is defeated is unclear. As I argued in my introduction, this period has been neglected in the academic literature, and where it is discussed, this discussion tends to be somewhat vague. Where media historians have discussed the late-1940s and early-1950s, the focus has tended to be on practical developments, particularly the growth of educational television. Philosophical developments during this period are almost entirely absent from the academic literature.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I look in detail at the period between 1948 and 1954. Chapter 4 focuses on one of the last great battles of the media reform movement, over the allocation of television spectrum for educational broadcasters. It is during the FCC hearings of 1948 to 1952 that the Ford Foundation becomes involved in the media reform movement, and in Chapter 5 I argue that during the period 1952 to 1954 they attempt to keep alive the philosophical debate surrounding broadcasting and the public interest. To set these discussions in context, this chapter outlines the development of the media reform movement leading up to the FCC hearings of 1948 to 1952. Here, I follow Slotten, arguing that the policy developments of the 1920s are crucial in setting out the philosophical ground on which the media reform movement would fight its later battles - that these are the "crucial early patterns" (Slotten, 2009: 3) that shape the debate for a generation. And, like Slotten, I seek to understand these developments as being early articulations of public media policy, rather than the slightly more vague notion of "media reform" or "media democracy".

While my arguments mirror those of Slotten, to a degree, I believe that I add to them by introducing a transnational perspective. In my preface to the thesis, I described my initial plan to present a comparative analysis of PSB in the UK and the USA. While the emphasis of the finished work is on the American situation, the comparative perspective can be seen most clearly in this chapter. Combining existing scholarship on the history of American and British broadcasting, with new readings of some key primary documentation, I believe that I am able to deepen and expand the findings of existing research into American public broadcasting from the 1920s onwards.

3.2 From point-to-point to broadcast: first attempts at regulation

The early development of broadcasting regulation was primarily focussed on the technical challenges that accompanied the invention of radio as a broadcast medium. During the period from 1912 – when Congress first passed legislation specifically written to regulate broadcast radio – to the passage of the Radio Act of 1927, the US government was more interested in *how* people broadcast radio, rather than *what* was being broadcast. According to Barnouw, the Radio Act of 1912 was "written and passed without thought of the possibilities of broadcasting" (Barnouw, 1966: 32), and was primarily written as a means of ensuring that amateurs who were experimenting with home built radio broadcast equipment did not interfere with official (predominantly military) communications. The principle that government should intervene to divide the available radio spectrum between different classes of users had already been established in many European jurisdictions following the 1906 Berlin Convention, and one of the objectives of Congress' 1912 Radio Act was to make the United States technically compliant with the standards adopted by the international community.

While the 1912 act had little to say about the use of radio as a means of mass (as opposed to point-to-point) communication, it remains significant in that it established in American law the principle that the government had the constitutional right to regulate broadcasting, and created compulsory licenses for anyone wishing to broadcast (but not receive) radio signals. This right to regulate was philosophically derived from the fact that the broadcast spectrum is (or rather was, in the pre-digital age) a scarce public resource that required government management to ensure its proper use. It is on this scarcity, therefore, that the American government's justification for intervention rested during this early period. Were the available frequencies more abundant, then the government may have found itself forced to retreat from interventionism, in fear of violating the First Amendment to the American Constitution. Once the principle had been established as constitutional, it allowed for the expansion of the idea that broadcasting should and would be regulated in the public interest.

The 1912 Radio Act remained the only piece of legislation that would govern the use of radio in the USA for the next decade. However, civilian broadcasting had been severely restricted during the course of the First World War, and by the time that these restrictions were lifted in 1919 it was becoming increasingly clear that government would need to reconsider its relationship with the

medium. Despite the 1912 act's provisions to protect government communications from interference, the act contained no effective mechanism to regulate the sections of the spectrum reserved for non-governmental use. This had been of little concern at the time, but by 1919 the need to bring order to the airwaves was increasing daily. In the pre-war period, radio receivers were self-built, but during the war the Westinghouse company had patented the SCR-70 – a radio set designed for non-specialist operation – and saw an opportunity post-war to exploit this patent commercially. By November 1920, the Westinghouse company was broadcasting an hour of programming each evening from its Pittsburg headquarters, as part of what is now considered the first modern radio station in American history, KDKA. These broadcasts were initially made to sets that had been given away to its staff, but with the aim of creating market demand for its product (Barnouw, 1966: 68-70). By June 1920, Westinghouse had joined forces with the RCA-AT&T-GE communications cartel, and the next two years saw an explosion in the number of stations applying for broadcasting licenses, from one in 1920 to more than 500 in 1922 (Barnouw, 1966: 4).

In response to this growth, the Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, convened a series of Radio Conferences with the aim of developing a new regulatory framework. The four conferences that were held between 1922 and 1925 are of importance in that they "established the basic principles upon which our great American system of free broadcasting.........has been built" (Jansky, 1957: 241). My argument is that this is only partially true. If we look closely at the recommendations of the four radio conferences that occurred between 1922 and 1925, what we see is a clear ideological shift from left to right. Contrary to what Jansky argues, the First Radio Conference offers a vision of American broadcast regulation that stands in stark contrast to the free-market model that underpins the later American System. Over the course of four years, what we see is a vision of radio regulation driven by progressive notions of the public interest gradually being replaced by a system of broadcasting designed to favour the interests of the commercial broadcasters who had a clear influence over the policy-making process.

3.3 The First Radio Conference of 1922

While the significance of the four radio conferences taken together is recognised within the academic literature, there is a tendency for the First Radio Conference of 1922 to be overlooked, or for its significance to be de-emphasised. This is, I suspect, due to the fact that the recommendations which emerged from this conference would never be implemented; while there

were attempts to draft legislation based on the outcomes of the First Conference, they were never realised, and a Second Conference was soon convened to re-examine some of the key questions raised. Despite the fact that the work of the First Conference was never codified in law, I believe that these often-neglected recommendations are valuable in that they offer insight into the discursive construction of the normative principles that would re-emerge time and again when discussing broadcasting and the public interest.

The general resolutions passed by the First Conference include the clear declaration:

> That it is the sense of the conference that radio communication is a public utility and as such should be regulated and controlled by the Federal Government in the public interest (Department of Commerce, 1922: General Resolutions).

This is a re-affirmation of the constitutional position established by the 1912 Radio Act, and therefore taken by itself is not of huge importance. It it worth noting, however, that the Radio Conferences were an attempt by Hoover to bring together representatives of both the public and the private sector, in order to forge consensus around regulatory policy - an approach that reflected Hoover's fundamental belief in the "associative state" (Dempsey and Gruver, 2009). In the case of the First Radio Conference, the re-affirmation of the right of government to regulate the airwaves in the public interest underlined the fact that the emergent commercial broadcasting industry (as represented at the First Conference) saw no immediate reason to challenge the constitutionality of this position, an important message for Congress.

Having established this fundamental principle, the proceedings of the conference then go on to make recommendations regarding how to divide of the available radio spectrum. The aim of the conference was not to award licenses to individual broadcasters, but rather to agree on a framework to govern the future awarding of licenses. Different types of broadcasters were to be allocated their own broadcast frequencies, theoretically ensuring that each would not interfere with the other. Yet, the report includes additional stipulations regarding the priority to be given to licensees, in the event that this system of spectrum division be unsuccessful Should the Department of Commerce find itself in a "case of conflict between radio communication services" then "first consideration be given to the public not reached, or not so readily reached, by other communication services." (Department of Commerce, 1922: Section III. A). For the First

Conference, therefore, one of the key considerations when granting licenses was how best to address failures in the existing communications marketplace. Having established this basic principle, the report then goes on to argue that in the event of a conflict between services, then each of the different types of broadcaster should be placed in order of priority – government communications coming first, followed by public broadcasting, then private broadcasting, and finally toll broadcasting[10] (Department of Commerce, 1922: Section III.B).

The recommendations of the 1922 conference went on to argue that not only did the Department of Commerce have the constitutional right to regulate broadcasting, but that it should restrict the number of services that could broadcast to any single geographic location (Department of Commerce, 1922: Section III.F). Having given priority to government and public broadcasters, the portion of the spectrum allocated to private broadcasters should be portioned out, with "the degree of public interest attaching to a private or toll broadcasting service...[being] considered in determining its priority in the granting of licenses" (Department of Commerce, 1922: Section III.C). Moreover, private license holders should be "absolutely prohibited" from broadcasting direct advertising, and permitted only to broadcast the "the name of the concern responsible for the matter broadcasted" (Department of Commerce, 1922: Section III.E).

McChesney argues that the early- and mid-1920s was a period in which the idea of a non-commercial model of radio broadcasting was being given serious consideration. His view is that much of the scholarship that preceded his *Telecommunications, Mass Media and Democracy* (McChesney, 1993) over-emphasised the commercial nature of early radio broadcasting. During this early period "a significant percentage of the stations were operated by nonprofit organizations" (ibid.:14), which included religious groups, unions and higher education institutions. Morover, McChesney points to the favourable consideration given to establishing American Public Broadcasting on the model adopted by the BBC, during this early period. The highly influential RCA executive, David Sarnoff, is cited as being broadly supportive of a "national nonprofit and noncommercial network, to be subsidized by 'those who derive profits' from radio set manufacturing" (ibid.: 15). Despite all of this, however, McChesney does not cast his eye over the events of the First Radio Conference, offering only an overview of the context in which the first

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[10] Toll broadcasting refers to a system where a company owns and operates a radio station, but does not broadcast any content. Airtime would be sold by the toll broadcaster to individual organisations on a commercial basis.

conference was held.

Barnouw (1966: 94-96) in his authoritative history of the period, dedicates no more than three pages to the First Radio Conference, and pays no attention to the discussion of the public interest, or of the categorisation of broadcasters. Slotten elides the distinction between government and public broadcasting, and argues that the First Conference recommended a dual system of broadcasting - "one consisting of private commercial stations mainly providing entertainment, and a second consisting of public and government stations broadcasting useful information, news and educational programmes" (2009: 93-94). Ashley, however, (2011: 141-142) notes that the First Conference was instrumental in establishing the principle of the radio spectrum as a public good, and includes some discussion of the system of categorisation, but does not see any great significance in the conference. It is only Benjamin (1996) that sees the outcomes of the First Conference as being of fundamental importance, arguing that they "define the parameters of the medium", establishing the principle areas in which government would regulate: "public interest in the sale of equipment, public interest in programming, public interest in curbing interference, and the public interest in setting up a regulatory authority."(1996: 91-92). These parameters would, according to Benjamin, help set the discursive limits of what would then be discussed in greater detail during the remaining three conferences, and ultimately begin to shape the Radio Act of 1927.

I would argue, however, that the First Radio Conference is of greater significance than is acknowledged even by Benjamin. There is no doubt that the Radio Conferences as a whole are important for the reasons that have already been outlined; most notably for establishing the public interest as a key consideration in broadcast regulation. However, I believe that the recommendations are of greater importance, due to the sophisticated and multi-faceted definition of public broadcasting that they offer. To appreciate the advanced nature of this definition, it is perhaps worth looking at the report of the First Radio Conference in the context of what was happening contemporaneously in the United Kingdom.

The first point to note is that the First Radio Conference pre-dates the establishment of the British Broadcasting Company by almost six months, and pre-dates its conversion to a public corporation by a full five years. John, later Lord, Reith – the self-styled father of public broadcasting - remained,

at this point in time, a civil engineer with William Beardmore and Company (albeit an unhappy one casting around for other work). The Post Office, which regulated radio communications, and the companies that held British patents on various components essential to broadcasting were in discussion regarding the future of broadcasting in the UK, but they were at a far less advanced stage than the Americans. According to Hilmes (2012: 39), their discussions had led to consensus only on three points: that the patent holders needed to form a co-operative arrangement similar to that of the Radio Corporation of America, that the influence of the Marconi Company needed to be checked, and that there needed to be restrictions placed on the development of commercial radio. The first co-ordinated attempts to formulate a broadcasting policy in the UK would not take place until the following year, under the aegis of the Sykes Committee on Broadcasting. This is in contrast to the relatively advanced and sophisticated nature of the discussions that had already been completed at the First Radio Conference. A brief comparison of the recommendations of the First Conference with those of the Sykes Committee demonstrates the way in which American policy-makers stole a march on their British counterparts in anticipating some of the challenges of public broadcasting, and in positing solutions.

The recommendations of the First Conference offers a definition of public broadcasting based on three factors that would later be accepted as fundamental to our understanding of the concept. The first of these is the notion that public broadcasting is a category distinct from government broadcasting, and that, by extension, public broadcasters should be independent from direct government control. According to the First Conference, public broadcasting is:
 broadcasting by public institutions, including State governments, political subdivisions thereof, and universities and such others as may be licensed for the purpose of disseminating informational and educational service (Department of Commerce, 1922: Section 1, Note 2)

While this definition does include state governments, and therefore leaves the door open to some direct government control, it is significant because it places public broadcasting outside the control of the federal government and its agencies. It is also important in that it clearly envisages state government as one possible institution that might function as a public broadcaster, but is not prescriptive – there is no stipulation here that state governments must be involved in public broadcasting, merely that they *may* be.

One of the conclusions of the First Radio Conference, therefore, was that the protection of the public interest in broadcasting involved a structural dimension. To set this in the theoretical context that I established in Chapter 2, policy-makers recognised that a system of broadcasting that adequately served the public interest needed institutional safeguards to insulate it both from commercial and government intrusion - a "space for rational and universalistic politics distinct from both the economy and the State" (Garnham, 1990: 107). Moreover, the First Radio Conference also realised the importance of pluralism, arguing that the appropriate institutional framework for broadcasting be made up of multiple agencies, rather than a single, centralised source. Like Karppinen (2013), they appreciated that genuine pluralism demanded not only a diversity of private actors, but also institutions that had the capacity to compensate for power inequalities, such as public universities.

It is also significant that the proceedings of the First Radio Conference recognise the relationship that exists between public and private broadcasting, and the ability of some organisations to sit astride the two categories. Private broadcasting, according to the report, is:

> broadcasting without charge by the owner of a station, as a communication company, a store, a newspaper, or such other private *or public organization* or person as may be licensed for the purpose of disseminating news, entertainment, and other service (Department of Commerce, 1922: Section 1, Note 3) [Emphasis added].

As we shall see in Chapter 4, as American broadcasting regulation developed, this notion of public organisations offering news, entertainment and general programming would be pushed aside. Public broadcasting would be forced into a narrowly defined remit based exclusively on providing educational material. Yet, as we see here, this was not always the case; in 1922 the notion of a public organisation that could provide, where necessary, a service similar to the commercial broadcasters was accepted by a policy forum such as the First Radio Conference.

Educational programming did feature in the definition of public broadcasting that was adopted by the First Radio conference, however. "Disseminating informational and educational service"(Department of Commerce, 1922: Section 1, Note 3) was regarded as a core part of the public broadcaster's remit, although precisely what was meant by "informational" is not entirely

clear - Slotten (2009: 94) suggests that it could refer to fairly prosaic information, such as weather reports for farmers. The inclusion of educational broadcasting within the remit reflects the fact that American universities were already playing a prominent role in advancing the case for the public interest in broadcasting, but also that the development of land-grant universities provided an institutional model that could be adapted for use in broadcasting. Throughout the latter half of the 19th Century, Congress had passed a number of acts that provided the states with land, to be used to establish public universities. Slotten (2009) argues that the precedent set by the land-grant universities was used as the philosophical justification for public broadcasting. The federal government had control over a resource - land in one case, the airwaves in the other - but was willing to relinquish control where it could be demonstrated that it would lead to public benefit. In the minds of many, the notion of the public good was intrinsically linked to that of education, cementing the relationship between public and educational broadcasting that would endure for decades.

Contrast the work of the First Radio Committee with the situation in the United Kingdom at around the same time. In his account of the work of the Sykes Committee, Briggs (1961) argues that in 1922 the idea of re-constituting the British Broadcasting Company remained at a very early stage in its development. Those witnesses giving testimony to the committee on behalf of the press industry could not "see beyond the present structure of the BBC as a combine of commercial firms" (ibid: 174). Despite representations from the London Labour Party that the BBC be nationalised, the final report of the committee recommended only that an advisory 'Broadcasting Board' be created to assist the Postmaster-General in licensing the company. Significant concerns had been raised before the committee regarding the BBC's independence from government. Responsibility for licensing the service remained with the Postmaster-General, a cabinet minister, and licenses were awarded only for two years at a time. Briggs argues that:
 the BBC and its General Manager knew that they had to 'behave well', however nicely the Postmaster-General might refer to his own powers. 'You might misbehave once' Sir William Noble told the Sykes Committee, 'but the Post Office under this License could come down on us very severely and take our License away(1961: 170)

While the British were clearly aware of the pitfalls of allowing government to control broadcasting too closely, another four years would pass before policy-makers – another parliamentary

committee, this time under the chairmanship of the Earl of Crawford – sought to create an institutional structure to control this risk. The BBC would remain the British Broadcasting Company until 1927, operating under the system that had existed since it's inception five years previously.

The tendency within the academic literature to downplay the significance of the First Radio Conference is understandable, particularly since its recommendations would not be implemented by the government, and its work would soon be overtaken by that of the Second Radio Conference. While the recommendations of the First Conference had little immediate impact on American broadcasting regulation, my contention is that the ideas that were first discussed at the conference have longer-term significance. Indeed, in the concise recommendations of the First Conference we see the very first articulation of some of the key principles of public service broadcasting that were outlined in the previous chapter.

When taken together, the recommendations of the First Radio Conference articulate many of the core principles of public service broadcasting as we understand it today. We find in the work of the conference a commitment to serving the public sphere, both by emphasising the importance of pluralism, and also by establishing the need for independence from government and commerce - mirroring Tracey's (1998: 31) argument that "public broadcasting should be distanced from vested interests" and "produced from within a structure of independence". By emphasising the role of decentralised public institutions - state governments and public universities, most prominently - the conference recognised the central importance of localisations. In addition, the proceedings of the conference recognise the desirability of providing a broad range of programming, with public organisations given the opportunity to provide news and entertainment, as well as commercial broadcasters. And finally, it establishes the central importance of educational provision, and the desirability of using the new technology to break out of the classroom.

If the First Radio Conference is important in helping to establish first principles, it it is also significant in its ability to illuminate some of the difficulties inherent in the principles that it outlined. While it offers a definition of public broadcasting that is multi-institutional, and which embraces the entertainments of commercial broadcasting, it has little to say regarding where its limits should lie. It is recommended that public broadcasters be given primacy over the private (Department of Commerce, 1922: Section III B), and "the public interest" be a consideration when

awarding private licenses (Department of Commerce, 1922: Section III C), yet there is no clear mechanism for resolving disputes, and no clear definition of what might constitute the public interest in private broadcasts. This lack of resolution regarding these issues would, in part, result in the constitution of a Second Radio Conference less than a year after the conclusion of the first.

3.4 "Blocked with chaos": The Second and Third Radio Conferences

While the outcome of the First Radio Conference of 1922 was to propose a definition of public broadcasting that was both surprisingly advanced, and premised on key progressive principles, then in many ways the development of radio policy during the Second, Third and Fourth Conference represents a retreat from these principles, and the emergence of a conception of the public interest that would prove to be far more amenable to commerce than to the citizenship. Within the academic literature, it is the Fourth Conference that has been the subject of greatest scrutiny, for understandable reasons. It is here that we see the culmination of a process by which the commercial broadcasting industry tightens its grip on the regulatory framework governing broadcasting. By 1927, the progressive ideals of the First Radio Conference would be all but forgotten, and the federal government and the commercial radio sector would sketch out a broad framework of regulation that would dominate the American system of broadcasting for the next four decades.

Between 1922 and 1923 the number of broadcast stations in the USA had grown from around 60 to 588 (Slotten, 2009: 98), and the focus of policy-makers had begun to shift from relatively abstract questions regarding the potential future shape of radio broadcasting to more pressing concerns regarding how to prevent the proliferation of new stations from interfering with each other's transmissions. Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover had already attempted to adjudicate between competing stations broadcasting in the New York City area under the 1912 Radio Act, but had been instructed in a court decision of February 1923 that his Department of Commerce had no legal right to deny a license to the Intercity Radio Company on the basis of insufficient spectrum availability There was therefore a pressing need to pass legislation that would give the Hoover and his successors the necessary powers to properly regulate the airwaves. Benjamin (1998: 224) argues that the failure to turn the recommendations of the First Radio Conference into legislative action was largely due to the fact that the proposals lacked the support of the radio industry who feared that they would jeopardise their interests. Hoover's response was

to shift the focus of the Second Conference in order to address the concerns of the major commercial companies that were already exerting a major influence on the legislative process. A series of meetings were held between Department of Commerce officials and representatives of the larger radio companies in order to outline possible compromises. The administration's main concern by early 1923 was on establishing a regulatory system that would allow it reasonably deny licenses to some broadcasters, so that it could maintain some semblance of order on the airwaves. Following these informal meetings, the Second Conference of 1923 met, with the aim of formally agreeing on some of the areas of compromise that had been identified. Benjamin notes that Hoover publicly appealed to those attending the Second Radio Conference of 1923 "to give him powers to deal with radio's problems" (1998: 225), emphasising in particular the problem of interference.

While many of the policy actors that had participated in the First Radio Conference of 1922 were invited back the Second Radio Conference a year later, it is worth noting that the Second Conference had an expanded membership. Where the Department had seated only a single member at the 1922 Conference, DB Carson from the Department's Bureau of Navigation, by 1923 Carson was accompanied by three of his colleagues. More significant, however, was the inclusion of AH Griswold, AT&T's influential Assistant Vice-President in charge of radio, and to a lesser degree Leo Fitzpatrick. Fitzpatrick is listed as the radio editor of the Kansas City Star, but the Star was one of the newspapers which had invested heavily in radio – Barnouw lists their station, WDAF, among the three "leading newspaper-owned stations" (1966: 114) of the period – and Fitzpatrick was a popular presenter on the station. He would go on in 1925 to take the general manager's position at Detroit's ailing WJR station, ultimately having a hand in launching the career of the notorious Father Charles Coughlin. While it is difficult to argue that the presence of these two men alone had a decisive influence on the direction of the Second Radio Conference, their presence as serving members of the Conference suggests that the influence of the commercial radio industry on legislation was growing.

The Second Radio Conference marks the beginning of policy-makers' long retreat from the progressive, multifaceted definition of public broadcasting that had been proposed during the First Conference. While the proceedings of the Second Radio Conference seem superficially to be involved with strictly technical questions, these questions had been deliberately framed to create a

distinct set of market conditions. By 1923 the Department of Commerce found itself facing a three-pronged problem. The broadcast spectrum was becoming increasingly cluttered leading to complaints from listeners (Slotten, 2009: 98), yet the judiciary had ruled that the Department lacked the legal authority to deny licenses to new broadcasters. To break the deadlock, new legislation was needed, but Congress had refused to legislate on the basis of the public interest standard adopted by the 1922 Radio Conference, most likely because of pressure from the commercial radio industry. The Second Radio Conference therefore sought a compromise that allowed the Department of Commerce to prevent the further proliferation of new broadcasters, but on a basis that would be amenable to influential actors within the radio industry.

This compromise involved the opening up of new broadcast spectrum that had previously been reserved for naval use, between 550 kHz and 1350 kHz. This was in addition to the 749.6 kHz band which had been made available to broadcasters in the summer of 1922. However, in exchange for making more spectrum available, the Second Conference argued that broadcasters should be divided into different classes, based on the power (and therefore geographic range) of their broadcasting equipment. Stations broadcasting on the existing 833.3 mHz band could continue to do so, "but they will necessarily be subject to some interference at best" (Department of Commerce, 1923), and would be known as Class B stations. The newly available bandwidth would be divided between Class A and Class B stations. Class A stations were relatively limited in range, and was a designation intended for local stations serving smaller regions. Class B stations would be reserved for more powerful broadcasters with the ability to reach a larger geographic area.

What the Second Radio Conference was aiming to do was circumvent the legislature's prohibition on denying licenses by dividing the available spectrum into regulated and largely unregulated portions. The 833.3 mHz band, and the Class C stations that continued broadcasting on it, would in effect be a dumping ground for any stations that would otherwise have been refused licenses. Only Class A and B stations would be given access to parts of the spectrum where they would be guaranteed exclusive space on the radio dial. To be awarded a Class A or Class B license, stations would have to meet both minimum technical specifications, and provide "a quality of program that will warrant assignment of a territorial wave frequency" (Department of Commerce, 1923: Resolutions).

The result was that the new Class A and Class B licenses would be made available only to those stations willing to invest both in the technical equipment necessary to meet the new specifications, and to produce high quality content. Smaller, less well-resourced stations would be forced to battle for spectrum with their competitors. The implication of these new rules were clear; listeners would eventually grow tired of wading through the interference to try to listen to poor quality programming, and the Class C stations would die their natural deaths. Meanwhile, Class A and particularly Class B stations would be given access to market conditions that would allow them to attract larger audiences.

Significantly, the Second Radio Conference did not call for the passage of any new legislation. However, it offered its explicit support to the Department of Commerce in enforcing the new rules, stating that the adoption of these new conditions gave the department

> such authority to withhold or rescind licenses where such interference will result or does result; and that the Second National Radio Conference believes that a decision by the courts validating the above views will be greatly in the public interest; and that the Second National Radio Conference expresses its willingness to advise and assist the Department of Commerce in the support of the above resolutions in the event of litigation (Department of Commerce, 1923: Resolutions).

In order to reach a consensus on licensing that would satisfy the powerful commercial radio lobby, we see the Department of Commerce retreat from the pioneering conception of broadcasting as a public service that had been agreed upon during the First Radio Conference. While programme quality was listed as a criteria for awarding Class A and Class B licenses, there is no indication of how quality might be defined, or what weight the Department of Commerce would place on programming when awarding licenses. There is no requirement to carry education or informational programming, no limitations on the broadcasting of advertising, and no specific spectrum allocation for public institutions who wished to broadcast. The Second Radio Conference succeeded in laying the foundations of a broadcast policy that was amenable to commercial interests, but only by significantly undermining the broader public interest. Plurality, one of the core values identified by the First Radio Conference had been abandoned by the Second Conference. While the debate of 1922 had led to a pioneering, progressive vision for American radio, by the next year policy-makers were in full retreat.

The Second Radio Conference, therefore, re-stated the principle that government had the constitutional right to regulate radio broadcasting, but also shifted the conversation about how it should be regulated. The First Radio Conference had argued that scarcity of broadcast spectrum should be addressed by giving precedence to public over commercial broadcasting. By the Second Radio Conference, licenses would be allocated first to those stations able to meet new technical demands - and to meet those demands would involve substantial investment in new technology, placing the best licenses beyond the financial reach both of the amateur, and often the public broadcaster. This is an example of what Murdock (1990) describes as a process of re-regulation. Rhetorically, politicians and policy-makers will claim to be de-regulating, or reducing the regulatory burden. What happens in reality, however, is that the regulatory burden shifts, creating opportunities for some at the expense of others. While Murdock's work discusses shifts in European media policy in the 1980s, the exact same process can be seen in operation here, in 1920s America. Between 1922 and 1923, using an ostensibly technical - and therefore seemingly value-free - rationale, the core principle which American policy-makers would use to allocate broadcast spectrum shifted. The fundamental question was no longer "what does the public need to hear?", but rather "who can best make themselves heard?".

The significance of the Second Radio Conference is that it represents an ideological shift in American media policy, diminishing the importance of the public interest. It did not, however, lead to any change in legislation, and necessitated calling another conference a year later. The proceedings of the Third Radio Conference of 1924 mirror those of its predecessor, with a clear emphasis on advancing the regulatory agenda through technical means. It is worth noting, however, that the published recommendations of the Third Conference do include a short recommendation on censorship, which merely reads:

> The conference thoroughly discussed all angles of program directing and heard a great many arguments on this important subject. As a result it recommends that the policy of the department of non-interference in programs sent out by broadcasting stations should be upheld. Any other attitude would necessarily involve censorship in some degree. (Department of Commerce, 1924).

Minutes of the "great many arguments" are not included in the published report, but Benjamin states that the representatives of AT&T, RCA and Westinghouse - representing three of the largest

commercial broadcasters - each pushed for the adoption of a public interest standard that was based upon "quality programming of a general nature" (1998: 230). This shift in the definition of public interest (and according to Benjamin "public service") away from specific types of programming - educational and informative - towards a more nebulous notion of "quality" stands somewhat in contrast to the lofty aims declared by Hoover in his opening address to the Conference, which was broadcast to 17 stations from the East Coast to Denver. In this address, Hoover emphasises that radio has "has passed from the field of an adventure to that of a public utility" (Department of Commerce, 1924: Opening Address), and goes on to emphasise that the usefulness of this new utility is wholly dependent on the material being broadcast:

> Our telephone and telegraph systems are valuable only in so far as the messages sent from them contribute to the business and social intercourse of our people. For the first time in history we have available to us the ability to communicate simultaneously with millions of our fellow men, to furnish entertainment, instruction, widening vision of national problems, and national events. An obligation rests upon us to see that it is devoted to real service and to develop the material that is transmitted into that which is really worth while. (Department of Commerce, 1924: Opening Address).

Yet within that self-same opening address, Hoover also argues that the Radio Conferences should be understood as "an experiment in industrial self-government". Comparing the airwaves to the sea, he argues that the role of government is to enforce "traffic rules" designed to prevent the ether from becoming "blocked with chaos". Moreover, he identifies four freedoms that the government should protect if it is to ensure that the airwaves are used for the public good: freedom from monopoly, freedom in programming, freedom in speech and freedom from "malice and unwholesomeness".

Taken together, Hoover's vision for a system of broadcasting dedicated to "entertainment, instruction [and a] widening vision of national problems and national events" seems to be one that should be shaped by the marketplace, rather than the state. His role, as the de facto regulator of radio was not, it seems, to guarantee the realisation of this vision, but rather to create market conditions which would allow radio's consumers to do the same - by preventing the formation of monopoly, reducing interference, and preventing the broadcast of "malice and unwholesomeness". The obligation to ensure the transmission of worth while material rests not with the narrow "us" of the Department of Commerce, but rather with the collective "us" of the

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American people, expressing its preferences through market mechanisms.

What we see during the Third Conference, therefore, is a further retreat from the ideal of public broadcasting laid out two years earlier during the First Radio Conference of 1922. Discussion of the role of public or educational institutions, abandoned during the Second Conference, is not revived. Neither is there any attempt to flesh out the meaning of quality programming, and its relationship to the notion of a public interest in broadcasting. Rather, the Third Conference merely advances the argument presented by the commercial radio industry that the aim of regulation should be to guarantee market conditions best suited to their interests.

3.5 Laying the foundations: The Fourth Radio Conference and the Radio Act of 1927

It is this vision of the role of broadcast regulation that is carried over into the Fourth and final Radio Conference, and which is ultimately enshrined in law via the Radio Act of 1927, and which lays the foundations for the commercially-dominated 'American System of Broadcasting'. Once again, Hoover opens the conference with a lofty statement of ambition, emphasising the responsibility of broadcasters to the American public. Yet it is clear that by 1925 Hoover does not consider it his role to hold the broadcasters to account. His opening address makes clear that the relationship between the broadcasters and their public is a direct, commercial one, stating that

> The ether is a public medium, and its use must be for public benefit. The use of a radio channel is justified only if there is public benefit. The dominant element for consideration in the radio field is, and always will be, the great body of the listening public, millions in number, countrywide in distribution. There is no proper line of conflict between the broadcaster and the listener, nor would I attempt to array one against the other. Their interests are mutual, for without the one the other could not exist. (Hoover in Department of Commerce, 1925)

The Forth Radio Conference would not consider how the government might best regulate the use of the airwaves for the public good. Rather, it would consider how best to create market conditions that would minimise conflict between listener and broadcaster.

The final Radio Conference was, by far, the most well-attended of the four; back in 1922 fewer than 30 had attended, by 1925 this number had grown to over 500 (Benjamin, 1998: 223). The conference delegates were split into sub-committees, tasked with examining specific areas of

policy development. The most important of these was the legislative sub-committee, tasked with looking at the question of how to turn the principles agreed by the conference into legal propositions that might gain the support of Congress. In the findings of this sub-committee we can clearly see the ideological distance travelled during the course of the four Radio Conferences, and also the emergence of the foundations of what would later come to be known as the American System of Broadcasting.

These key findings contained a number of pragmatic recommendations related to the practical implementation of a new system of regulation. It stated clearly that the 1912 Radio Act was outdated, and that new legislation was needed, before going on to delineate the powers that should be delegated to the Secretary of Commerce as part of such a system: that he should be granted the power to deny any new licenses (Department of Commerce, 1925: Committee Number 8, Section 4i), and that he also be granted the power to revoke the licenses of any broadcaster who breached their terms (Section 4l).

Of greater significance, however, is the expressly ideological recommendations of the legislative sub-committee. In the text of the report, the sub-committee notes "that the doctrine of free speech be held inviolate" (Department of Commerce, 1925: Committee Number 8, Section 4c), "that no monopoly in radio communication shall be permitted" (Section 4f) and "that those engaged in radio broadcasting shall not be required to devote their property to public use and their properties are therefore not public utilities in fact or in law" (Section 4d). In these three recommendations, the sub-committee lays out its clear opposition to government intervention both in the ownership of radio broadcasters, but also in the content of that being broadcast.

The sub-committee did concede the need to license broadcasting in the public interest, but in doing so relied on a definition of the public interest that remained vague in the extreme. License holders need only satisfy the Secretary of Commerce that their programming was capable of "rendering a benefit to the public, or are necessary in the public interest" (Section 4d), but contained no further explanation of what might constitute such a benefit. The only recommendation that contained any degree of specificity was that a license could be awarded to those "contributing to the development of the art" (Section 4d), but again the report contained nothing to guide the administration on how the development of the art of radio might be

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measured or judged.

To understand the significance of the Fourth (and final) Radio Conference, its proceedings need to be read alongside the proceedings of the First conference. Back in 1922, those gathered to set out the future direction of broadcasting policy had set out a progressive vision, based upon some of the core principles of public broadcasting. A vision of broadcasting that would nurture the public sphere, broadcasting in the public interest, protected from the excesses both of commerce and central government. Where different broadcasters competed for the scarce resource of the spectrum, the First Conference argued that the government should give priority to those that best served this progressive vision of the public interest (Department of Commerce, 1922: Section III.C). By the Fourth Conference this had been completely overturned; the best licenses, in the clearest portion of the spectrum, would now be reserved for the most powerful voices – those able to invest serious capital to build the strongest transmitters. To ensure a return on their investment, they would sell advertising – prohibited by the recommendations of the 1922 conference, integral to the broadcasting landscape that would emerge from the conference of 1925.

Finally, the pioneering concept of the public broadcaster as a separate institutional actor, the protector of the public interest, was abandoned. Where, back in 1922, there had been a recommendation that spectrum allocation should be reserved for defined class of public broadcasters – state governments, universities, other organisations removed from commercial influence – the recommendations of the Fourth Conference's legislative sub-committee argued that any legislation should define broadcasting according to only four categories "Commercial stations, broadcasting stations, amateur stations, and experimental stations." (Department of Commerce, 1925: Committee Number 8, Section 4k). It is here, at this precise point, that the lofty ideals of the First Radio Conference meet their end. The notion of public broadcasting as a separate category from commercial broadcasting has been removed completely from the regulatory picture.

Ashley argues the Forth Radio Conference

> marked the shift of the meaning of the public interest to give it a clear pro-industry
> connotation, to divorce broadcasting from any notion of public utility service, and to

establish a preference for existing commercial broadcasters who already possessed the technology necessary to provide a national broadcasting service (Ashley, 2011: 148)

and while this accurately summarises the situation by the end of 1925, it was not a shift that happened during the Fourth Radio Conference of that year. The erosion of a progressive notion of the public interest in American broadcasting occurs gradually during the years 1922 to 1925. Using technological arguments, commercial broadcasters chip away at the primacy of the public interest in policy debates. The Fourth Radio Conference of 1925 is merely the culmination of policy debates that took place between 1922 and 1925, and would ultimately be enshrined in the Radio Act of 1927.

Following the conclusion of the Fourth Radio Conference a new Radio Bill was introduced to the House of Representatives in March 1926 by Representative Wallace H.White (R-ME), and swiftly passed. White had worked alongside Hoover since the First Radio Conference of 1922, and his bill sought to codify the position arrived at by the Fourth and final Radio Conference at the end of 1925. The bill passed by the House was soon joined by a separate Senate bill in June 1926, primarily authored by Clarence Dill (D-WA) a first-term Senator that had closely allied himself with the progressives. Dill, working with "The Lion of Idaho" Senator William E. Borah (R-ID) and Senate Minority Leader Joseph T. Robinson (D-AR) disagreed with White, Hoover and the Radio Conferences on the fundamental question of who should regulate broadcasting. Dill's bill included a provision for the establishment of an independent regulatory agency, as well as anti-monopolistic clauses. While the anti-monopolistic clauses fell, Dill's insistence on the removal of direct regulatory control from the executive branch of government survived the reconciliation process and was enshrined in the Radio Act of 1927[11]. This represented a very modest legislative victory for the progressives; the act, reflecting the view of the Radio Conferences, was overwhelmingly favourable to commercial interests, and reflected the dominance of free market thinking on Washington in the years preceding the Great Depression. The regulatory powers that had been denied the Secretary of Commerce were instead handed to specialist administration commissions, the Federal Radio Commission (FRC) between 1926 and 1934, and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) from 1934 onwards.

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[11]   For a fuller account of the passage of the Dill-White Act, see Godfrey (1979)

There exists two views of the 1927 Radio Act, and what it represents in the broader context of American political history. Some (Bensman, 2000; Goodman and Gring, 2000; Goodman, 2001) have argued that the bill passed by Congress in 1927 was an encapsulation of the ideals that had unified Dill, Borah, Robinson and other Progressives. The regulatory regime established in 1927 were based upon a concept of free speech that recognised the positive duty that government had to protect the "marketplace of ideas", was awake to the dangers of monopolization, and saw independent governance – as opposed to direct control by the Executive Branch – as the best way of protecting positive free speech on the radio. Possession of a license was a legal requirement for anyone wishing to broadcast under the terms of the Radio Act of 1927. Moreover, the powers granted to the FRC in the Act enabled them not only to regulate the technical aspects of radio broadcasting – that is, to allocate specific frequencies to individual stations – but also, theoretically, to regulate the content of what was being broadcast. Section Four of the Act gave the FRC the power to "Prescribe the nature of the service to be rendered by each class of licensed stations and each station within any class" while Section Nine stated that individual licenses should be granted "if public interest, convenience or necessity will be served thereby". In addition to these relatively broad clauses, Section 18 made it a legal requirement for any licensed station to provide equal air-time for every candidate running for public office (often called the Equal Time Doctrine).

Others (Dempsey and Gruver, 2009; Benjamin 1998) see the Radio Act of 1927 as a largely ineffectual piece of legislation. While it encoded a nominal public interest standard, it included little that could form the basis of a practical regulatory regime. Herbert Hoover, who had steered the debate throughout the 1920s clearly desired a system of broadcasting that would advance the public interest, through the provision of high-quality programmes – indeed, Dempsey and Gruver (2009: 106) go as far as arguing that a public interest standard in American broadcasting would not have come into existence if not for Hoover. However, his desire to see such a standard be adopted by the broadcasters had to compete in his fundamental belief in limited government. Hoover simply did not see that the desirability of public service broadcasting warranted government intrusion into private commerce. This was a view based upon his faith in the 'Associative State', that worked in concert with business, rather than by imposing regulation upon it. In the context of broadcasting, it was a view that had crystallised during the Radio Conferences of 1923-1925.

The consensus that arose from these conferences was that broadcasting was a privilege, not a right; that this privilege should be afforded only those able to fulfil a public interest test; but, crucially, that this public interest test be limited both by the First Amendment and by a legal guarantee that the broadcast institutions themselves be subject to the minimum of government regulation. With the passage of the Radio Act of 1927, these principles would be enshrined in federal law, and serve as a precedent that would inform regulatory design throughout American broadcast history.

3.6 Interpreting the public interest standard: The Federal Radio Commission
The passage of the Radio Act of 1927 would create a new regulatory body to govern the licensing of broadcasting, but as had been the case for the Department of Commerce between 1912 and 1926, the Federal Radio Commission was given regulatory power over aspects of broadcast content, but without clarity as to how it might exercise that power. The result was that during the 1920s and 30s what constituted the public interest in broadcasting - particularly in broadcast content - would be defined by regulatory interpretation. Having marked out the boundaries of their own theoretical understanding of the public interest, the FRC would then test the theory by applying it to the circumstances of individual license applications.

During its first year of operation, the FRC stood firm against any accusation of acting as a censor, but argued that there were inherent limits on First Amendment rights as exercised by all citizens, and that these limits would necessarily extend to the airwaves (FRC, 1928: 160). The FRC maintained that the First Amendment did not protect the right of individuals free speech in public spaces in a manner that would cause a nuisance to others – by, for instance, the use of broadcasting to advance private disputes. Four stations in Pennsylvania had their licenses suspended for a period of 90 days, as the FRC felt that they were being used to broadcast material that was intended to advance personal grievances that their owners had against each other – a form of speech that the commission did not consider to be protected by the First Amendment (ibid). For the FRC, not only could the public interest standard be used to regulate broadcasters whose broadcast signals infringed on the broadcast signals – and therefore the speech rights – of their rivals, it could also be used to prohibit broadcast content that was insufficiently respectful of the airwaves as a public space. In the Pennsylvania decision, the FRC commissioners stated that:

> Two neighbours may indulge in any verbal dispute they may please in their own back yards when no-one is within hearing distance. Let them try and conduct the same dispute in a public place, such as on a busy street or in a theatre, and they soon find that they are not protected by the constitution….The right of the public to be free of disturbances of this sort are superior to those of the individual (ibid)

This decision represented a small but significant extension of the public interest standard. The FRC was not restricted to simply being a policeman of the airwaves, ensuring that one signal did not interfere with another. Its jurisdiction, following the Pennsylvania decision, also extended to what was being broadcast under the terms of the licenses that they awarded. Yet this extension of the public interest standard, remained limited, and was based on the concept of demonstrable harm. That is, the FRC stepped in to suspend the licenses of the Pennsylvania stations only because they were of the opinion that the material being broadcast represented a public nuisance, in the same way that the manager of a theatre might eject an audience member that was disrupting the performance, for the benefit of the other paying customers. At no point did the FRC argue – to extend the metaphor – that it had the right to decide what should appear on the stage.

In practice, the FRC's extension of the public interest standard was largely restricted to this narrow prohibition of the use of the airwaves for airing personal grievances. Goodman (2012) argues that the same justification was used to deny licenses to on-air fortune tellers, whose programming was considered to exclude all but the fortune teller and his paying customer. But on the whole it was a regulatory step that impacted only a small number of largely amateur broadcasters. While in principle it represented the extension of the FRC's remit, in practice it threatened only the most marginal of broadcasters, and arguably helped cement the dominance of the larger, more professional commercial broadcasters.

There are indications, however, that the FRC's sought to expand their understanding of the public interest even further. Several early decisions were intended not only to limit the output of the 'nuisance broadcasters', but also to ensure that the broadcast spectrum be allocated in a way that provided maximum value for the public. Writing, again, in 1928 the FRC expressed the opinion that the public interest would be best served by following "a few general principles" related to programme content (167). This proposed approach involved licensing a mixture of different stations, including those broadcasters that offered specifically local content, and those that sought

to provide a full portfolio of programmes. Under the criteria proposed by the FRC in its 1928 report, all license holders were expected not only to avoid programming that was excessively narrow or private in its appeal, but were also often required to ensure that they provided a certain diversity of offering that appealed to a general audience. How consistently this rule was applied during the age of the FRC is unclear, and Goodman (2012: 200) makes the point that "the public" that the Commission worked so hard to protect excluded those who may have chosen to communicate in languages other than English, implying that the revocation of the licenses of stations that served ethnic minority communities may have been one of the purposes of this aspect of the public interest. Protecting the public interest in broadcasting also included taking action against stations that broadcast material that was deemed vulgar or offensive – another category where it may be assumed that ethnic minority and working-class broadcasters would come under greater scrutiny than their white, middle-class counterparts.

In addition, the FRC showed itself willing to grapple with one of the issues that the Radio Conferences of 1923 - 1925 had failed to resolve, that of advertising. Dempsey and Gryuver (2009) have outlined Hoover's dilemma regarding the broadcasting of adverts. He had a personal dislike of advertising which he found vulgar, and worried that listeners would tune out if they were forced to listen to too much of it; on the other hand, his ideological belief in the free market limited the range of alternative sources of funding. The Fourth Radio Conference had passed a resolution in support of the prohibition of direct (i.e. the marketing of specific products to listeners) but not indirect (i.e. the sponsorship of programmes by commercial interests) advertising. Crucially, however, this prohibition had not been enshrined in the 1927 Radio Act, and the regulation of advertising was yet another aspect of regulation that the FRC would need to delineate on a case-by-case basis. The FRC's view was that advertisers, while recognised as a vital source of income, should not be allowed to dominate the stations that they sponsored. Adverts were to remain incidental to the public service being rendered, rather than being "the main object of the program" (FRC, 1928: 168) and programmes should be scheduled in advance so that listeners were able to make informed decisions about when to listen (169). Goodman (2012: 193) cites the example of FRC Commissioner Robinson expressing his concern to the Senate Committee on Interstate Commerce that allowing stations to broadcast selected adverts that advanced a private commercial interest while denying other, competing, advertisers access to their listeners would endanger fair and effective consumer competition.

During the FRC's earliest years, therefore, the commission indicated its willingness to define the public interest according to criteria that arguably went beyond the minimal intent of the Radio Act of 1927. However, these were relatively conservative attempts at regulatory activism, and crucially did not infringe on the interests of the larger commercial broadcasting companies. Decisions to strip individual stations of their licenses were rare, and the definition of the public interest that was used to justify these decisions was not always clear.

Goodman (2012: 196-7) argues that the majority of these cases were based upon the 'public nuisance' standard that had been established in the 1928 Pennsylvania decisions (FRC, 1928: 160). Yet there remained a smaller number of cases where the FRC justified their decisions not on the basis of a nuisance, but on the broadcaster's failure to meet an acceptable standard of programme content. In delivering his verdict in the case of Norman Baker – who had used his KTNT station to attack the American Medical Association and promote his own quack remedies – FRC Chief Examiner Elliot Yast unequivocally stated that:

> A proper respect for the rights and privileges and opinions of all peoples should be observed and maintained by all licensees. Since the home is the principle listening post in the broad field of radio reception, nothing which tends to vulgarity, immorality, or indecency has any place in radio communications. Anything that tends to unjustly destroy or injure the legitimate business of any person or group should not be broadcast by a licensee. A licensee may be entirely mistaken as to what constitutes a genuine public service (Yost, quoted in Wolfe, 1968: 397).

While this approach is predicated upon moral values (rejecting "vulgarity, immorality, or indecency"), it nevertheless represents a further extension of the FRC's understanding of the concept of the public interest. Baker's broadcasts did not involve the airing of private grievances – an attack on the American Medical Association being quite different to a dispute with a neighbour – the manner in which he used the airwaves was considered to be in contravention of standards of taste and decency that while protected by the First Amendment, were contrary to the advancement of the public interest.

Baker's case is significant in that it is one of three FRC decisions that came under legal challenge.

The first of these, KFKB Broadcasting Association v. Federal Radio Commission (1931), was an appeal by the "Goat Gland Wizard" (Branyan, 1991) Dr John R. Brinkley against the revocation of his license, and was similar in many ways to that of Norman Baker – both men being quacks that used the radio to attack the medical establishment in virulently hostile terms. The third of the three decisions was arguably the most significant, however, taken by the Court of Appeals of District of Columbia in 1932. Coming in the wake of the Near v. Minnesota (1931) case – which had established that the government had no power of prior restraint in matters of free speech – Trinity Methodist Church, South v. Federal Radio Commission (1931) established that the FRC did possess the Constitutional power to revoke the licenses of stations that had a past record of failing to broadcast material that was in the public interest, stating that:

It may therefore be set down as a fundamental principle that under these constitutional guaranties the citizen has in the first instance the right to utter or publish his sentiments, though, of course, upon condition that he is responsible for any abuse of that right....But this does not mean that the government, through agencies established by Congress, may not refuse a renewal of license to one who has abused it to broadcast defamatory and untrue matter. In that case there is not a denial of the freedom of speech, but merely the application of the regulatory power of Congress in a field within the scope of its legislative authority. (Trinity Methodist Church, South v. Federal Radio Commission, 1931)

Indeed, as the Great Lakes Broadcasting vs Federal Radio Commission (1929, affirmed in 1931) decision established, not only would punitive steps be taken against licensees that were cavalier in their disregard for questions of public interest, but the public interest test would be utilised when deciding how to allocate new licenses for stations that were competing against each other for the same radio wavelength allocation.

While the license renewal process that occurred during the FRC period of regulation helped to define the notion of the public interest in broadcasting, it is fair to conclude that the FRC's actions as a regulator did not fulfil the lofty ambitions contained in its 1928 report. Where cases were subject to judicial scrutiny, they tended to be battles between the Commission and smaller, marginalised stations that existed at the extremes of a broadcasting culture that was increasingly becoming homogenised. Kalven argues strongly that while the FRC – and later the FCC – possessed regulatory powers that could have pushed at the limits of the First Amendment, they put them to

limited use:

> If one reviews the legal developments under the Radio Act of 1927 and the Communication Act of 1934, one cannot quite suppress the feeling that what is lacking is one good case of injustice by government – which has been corrected by the courts...The greatest obstacle to the development of a vigorous tradition of freedom of speech in broadcasting may well have been the placidity and the decency of the FCC. The Commission has claimed the widest powers, but it has exercised them with discouraging circumspection. (Kalven, 1967: 18)

3.7 Commercial radio, the FCC and the activist response

The notion that broadcasting in the public interest entailed offering a wide range of programmes, some of which had clear social aims, had been articulated by the FRC as early as 1928, but little had been done to enforce this notion through the regulatory process. The late 1920s had seen the emerging commercial radio broadcasting sector coalesce into two nationwide chains, the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) and the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). Between them, these two networks controlled the vast majority of the 'clear channel' stations (i.e. those broadcasting at higher wattages, providing greater range and clarity of signal). As NBC and CBS drew an increasing number of stations into their networks, the presence of non-commercial and non-profit broadcasters was also diminishing. Between 1927 and 1930 the total number of educational broadcasters fell from 95 to less than half of that figure. The total number of nonprofit broadcasters would fall from 200 to 65 between 1927 and 1934 (McChesney, 1993: 30). Public broadcasting, of the sort envisaged at the First Radio Conference of 1922 was, by the end of the 1920s, being shouldered aside by a new form of commercial broadcasting - coordinated by national networks that spanned from coast to coast, and funed primarily by the sale of airtime to commercial advertisers.

This process of commercial takeover did not happen by accident. While the FRC had been willing to act in defence of the public interest when it was under threat from 'nuisance' broadcasters like Dr Brinkley, it had not been as vigorous in its defence of the public interest when under attack from larger commercial players. Those involved in non-profit broadcasting expressed frustration that the FRC's licensing decisions seemed, time and again, to favour larger commercial stations. Educational broadcasters' time and effort was increasingly being spent defeneding their licenses from commercial challengers, often to no avail (McChesney, 1993: 31).

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This process of commercial consolidation and the decline in non-profit broadcasting led to a resurgence in public concerns regarding the place of radio in American public life. Many within the educational community felt that commercial broadcasting squandered the promise of the new medium, and began to lobby government for a change in broadcasting regulation. These lobbying efforts were initially driven by The Payne Fund, a private initiative funded by the Frances Payne Bolton and her siblings. The work of the Payne Fund led to the establishment of the The National Committee on Education by Radio (NCER), a forum that drew together a number of existing higher education associations (McChesney, 1993: 46). The NCER was joined, in 1930 by the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education (NACRE); this new council was funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and John D Rockefeller Jr., and included on its board Robert M Hutchins of the University of Chicago (see Chapter 6).

McChesney (1993) argues that the NCER and the NACRE approached the issue of media reform in two distinct ways. The NCER held the clear view that for radio to be able to serve a public purpose, the FRC needed to allocate portions of the spectrum specifically for the use of educational broadcasters - something that it had not done under the terms of the Radio Act of 1927. NACRE, on the other hand, saw that radio could fulfil a public purpose by bringing together the educational and the commercial. Its focus was on ensuring that the commercial broadcasters provide educational programmes within its schedule. While the NCER focused its efforts on lobbying policy-makers, the NACRE's activities also included the production of educational programmes to be broadcast on the commercial networks, primarily NBC. The two committees that had their roots in educational broadcasting were also joined by broadcasters and broadcast campaigners that drew their support from civil society more generally - including trades unions, religious groups and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

By the early 1930s, there was considerable momentum building in support of the media reform movement's attempts to shift broadcast regulation in a new direction; one more closely aligned with the vision of public radio articulated in the First Radio Conference of 1922. However, the organisation of commercial radio into national networks consolidated the power of the media reformers' main enemy, and placed a huge obstacle in their path. While elements of civil society were organising to lobby for a new regulatory regime, the radio industry itself was also organising,

and lobbying with equal ferocity - mainly through the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), commercial broadcasting's trade body.

The commercial broadcasting industry suceeded in frustrating legislative attempts to reform broadcasting in the early 1930s. The Roosevelt Administration, that assumed power in 1933, contained a number of individuals associated with, or sympathetic to, the media reform movement (McChesney, 1993: 179). While the new administration did entertain the possibility of fundamentally transforming American broadcasting, they eventually settled on the much more modest reforms found within the Communications Act of 1934. This legislation replaced the FRC with a new Federal Communications Commission (FCC), that had regulatory power over telecommunications as well as radio broadcasting. There was an attempt to include provisions in the 1934 act that would have reserved a quarter of channels for non-profit broadcasters, the Wagner-Hatfield amendment. In the face of determined opposition from commercial broadcasters, the amendment was defeated, and the unamended act passed.

McChesney argues that the media reform movement effectively died with the passage of the 1934 act: "Proponents of the status quo were uniformly delighted with the legislation.........The crystalization of capitalist broadcasting was now on the home stretch" (1993: 209). The FCC had been awarded limited discretionary powers when awarding individual broadcasting licenses, but when the opportunity came - in the Autumn of 1934 - for the FCC to avail themselves of these powers, they chose to do so in defense of the status quo.

It is true that the Communications Act of 1934 failed to provide a long-term legislative basis on which to build a public media system. However, the regulatory system that emerged after did provide media reformers with a new forum in which to fight their battles. And it was a forum that would, during the 1940s, prove to be much more amenable to their cause than the old FRC.There is little to distinguish the legislative remit of the two commissions, in so far as it applies to the public interest aspect of licensing, a fact that Kalven (1967: 25) interprets as an indication that the consensus that had driven the Radio Act of 1927 still held sway in Congress. However, the fact that a government agency was given the power to take away the apparatus that would allow the citizenry – in the form of broadcasters – to express their First Amendment rights was by no means uncontroversial and there were numerous voices that disagreed with the decision of Trinity

Methodist Church, South v. Federal Radio Commission (1931) that legalised the FRC's public interest test[12].

While the FRC had attempted to define the meaning of public interest from its inception, it had settled for a relatively vague and general definition that was based around principles rather than specific policies. The actions of the FRC are key to understanding the development of the public interest in American commercial broadcasting largely because they were responsible for setting precedents that would direct the course of regulation for decades to follow. These precedents would point the FCC in a general direction of travel, but they do not represent the furthest limits of regulatory activism during this era. Lichty demonstrates that while the FRC had largely been populated by technocrats, by the so-called "cleaning up" period of 1934-38 the FCC had become dominated by men who had a legal or political background and who were prominent New Dealers, appointed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1962: 100-102). The politicisation of the FCC that begun under Roosevelt and that continued into the Truman era led to a period of regulatory activism, concentrating primarily on the role of network dominance, but that also looked at the question of programme standards and the public interest. The outcome of this attempt to define the demands that the FCC would place on stations was the publication of a report entitled Public Service Responsibility for Broadcast Licensees (Federal Communications Commission, 1946), known colloquially as the Blue Book.

The Blue Book did not have any force in law, and was an advisory document that sought to define the commissioners' view of what broadcasters should consider when formulating a schedule of programming that would be in the public interest. Pickard (2011: 174, 178) argues that there was a public demand for greater regulation of American broadcasting during the 1940s, that arose in response to the increasing commercialisation of the medium. Commissioner Clifford Durr, working under two progressive Chairs of the FCC – first James Lawrence Fly, and after 1944 Paul Porter – led the charge against a license renewal process that had by the mid-1940s lapsed into a mere formality. Durr discovered that while broadcasters were promising to uphold certain standards in their license applications, there was no independent measure of these standards, and a review of the broadcasters own records showed that there was no relationship between "promise and performance" (Pickard, 2011: 180). Durr, working with British-born American Charles Siepmann –

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[12] See Coase, 1959: 7-10

who had experience of working at the BBC – amongst others, compiled the Blue Book during 1945, publishing it the following year.

The content of the Blue Book provides us with a startling riposte to those who would argue that the American System of broadcasting is, and always has been, a manifestation of a laissez-faire American Exceptionalism. Split into five chapters, it emphasised the need for FCC license holders' to abide by a number of core principles that would serve as sharp market correctives. To meet the FCC's regulatory approval, broadcasters were expected to: demonstrate a commitment to broadcasting "sustaining programmes" (which they defined as unsponsored programmes, that were also uninterrupted by advertisements); carry local, live programmes; discuss public affairs; and limit the length and frequency of advertisements Anticipating challenge from the political Right, the Blue Book's second chapter was unequivocal in arguing the legal basis of the FCC's power to enforce these public interest standards, concluding:

> not only that the Commission has the authority to concern itself with program service but that it is under an affirmative duty, in its public interest determinations, to give full consideration to program service (Federal Communications Commission, 1946: 12).

Not only did the Blue Book outline broad principles for license renewal, it also included detailed definitions of what it expected to see and hear over the airwaves. Most contentious was their insistence on sustaining programmes, which the commissioners saw as a counter-balance to the purely commercial programmes that were often demanded by advertisers – the book's authors drew attention to the fact that in 1940 the four national radio networks had dedicated 55 hours a week to soap operas, from a total of 59½ daytime sponsored hours. The question of sustaining programs was therefore not simply a matter of ensuring that these programmes existed, but also of ensuring that they were given due prominence in the schedule, so that they would reach a considerable share of the peak-time audience. Individual stations could make the case that they were a specialist broadcaster, as long as their specialisation contributed to a diverse and balanced offering within transmission range (Federal Communications Commission, 1946: 12-13). Alongside the general heading of "sustaining programs", the FCC also stipulated that broadcasters should offer programmes specifically tailored at "significant minority tastes and interests" (15). It should be noted, however, that their definition of "minority tastes" differs from our contemporary understanding of the term, referring to high culture such as literature or classical music, rather

than marginalised social or cultural groups. However, the Blue Book did stipulate that "sustaining programs" should also involve experimental programmes, "by which experimentation and innovation might have fullest scope, undeterred by the need for immediate financial success or the imposition on writers of restraints deriving from the natural, but limiting preoccupations of the advertiser" (17). In addition, the FCC noted that the FCC had previously rejected calls for specific spectrum allocations for non-profit organisations, arguing that the public were best served by a partnership between non-profit organisations and the license holders. However, the Blue Book emphasised that their recommendation rested upon the good faith that they had shown the license holders, implying that a failure to uphold their end of the bargain would force the FCC to return to Congress to demand legislative guaranteed to ensure access for non-profits. As well as arguing that commercial programmes should, occasionally, yield their place in the schedule to make room for "sustaining programs", the FCC was also of the opinion that some programmes should be wholly exempt from commercial sponsorship. The commission was reluctant to stipulate exactly which programmes should fall into this category, but noted that matters of political or religious controversy were amongst the subjects that should only be discussed on sustaining, rather than commercial, programmes (FCC, 1946: 14-15).

While the FCC took great pains to emphasise the fact that the Blue Book was little more than the formalisation and codification of existing practice, its publication led to an outcry from the commercial broadcasting industry. These powers may well have been in the hands of the FCC (and the FRC before it) since 1928, but the truth of the matter was that they had rarely been used. The "placidity and decency" that Kalven (1967:18) draws attention to was, in essence, a reluctance – or even a refusal – on the part of the FCC to exercise their legal and constitutional power. Now that the New Dealers had shaken the Commission out of its decades-long slumber, the Blue Book suggested to the radio networks that they would finally have to directly reckon with that power.

Had the FCC decided to act upon its constitutional power ten years earlier, then the story of American broadcasting might have been very different. By 1946, however, Roosevelt was dead and the climate of progressivism that had shepherded America out of the Great Depression and the Second World War was rapidly giving way to the paranoia of the Cold War. Fear of communism abroad mutated into hatred of communism at home, that was soon used to demonise those that were perceived to the communist sympathisers and fellow travellers. While Joseph McCarthy may

have been no more than a Circuit Court Judge in rural Wisconsin in 1945, the climate of fear that would propel him to national prominence was already well established. Congressman Martin Dies' (D-TX) special investigating House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was already pursuing investigations against a number of cultural institutions that had been established by the New Deal, including the Federal Theatre Project and the Federal Writers' Project. The Republican Party began to raise concerns about communist-directed economic sabotage in 1946 (Long, 1981: 52), and the Truman Administration soon grasped the brand of anti-communism both at home and abroad[13]. New Dealers in prominent public positions soon fell under popular suspicion, and the broadcasting industry saw that this suspicion could be turned against the FCC's new regulatory regime. Pickard (2011: 182-184) catalogues the sustained attack, led by the commercial broadcasters' trade body the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), that was directed towards the FCC following the publication of the Blue Book. The notion that the airwaves were public property and that unfettered commercialism was damaging were painted as dangerously un-American viewpoints, and their author, Clifford Durr, was demonised as an anti-democratic elitist that had "a hint of pink" (quoted in Pickard, 2011: 184) about him. Under pressure from the broadcast industry and its allies, Paul Porter left the FCC in early 1946, with Durr following in 1947 – leaving, according to his wife, because he refused to enforce the loyalty oath that the Truman Administration had made compulsory for all federal government employees that year (Pickard, 2011: 185). Without its author and champion present to promote and enforce it, the Blue Book sat on the shelf as a document that presents a tantalising glimpse of how public broadcasting might have developed in the pre-television era of American broadcasting.

While the era of New Deal activism at the FCC may have ended with the resignation of Durr, there remained significant pressure for the reform of commercial broadcasting to ensure that it better served the public. Pickard (2012) argues that the history of the radio reform movement in the 1940s has historically been under-emphasised, and that the period 1946-47 – following the abandonment of the Blue Book – was typified by a broad-based campaign for the protection of the public interest in radio broadcasting made up of an alliance of Trade Unions, Civil Rights groups, and dissident intellectuals. Despite the failure of the Blue Book, the FCC continued in its attempts to define the public interest in broadcasting, holding a series of hearings during 1948 that would ultimately result in a report entitled *In the matter of editorializing by Broadcast Licensees* (FCC,

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[13]   For a full examination of the Truman Administration's repression of communism in the USA, see Freeland (1972)

1949) that would result in the establishment of a set of guidelines known as the Fairness Doctrine.

Where the Blue Book had attempted to provide licensees with a comprehensive overview of how the public interest should govern their overall programme offering, the guidance offered in the 1949 report would concentrate on a single, specific area of regulation: that of news. *In the matter of editorializing by Broadcast Licensees* (henceforth The Fairness Doctrine Report) clearly established two core principles of how the public interest should be served by the provision of news. The first of these principles was that each license holder had a clear duty to "devote a reasonable percentage of their broadcast time to the presentation of news and programs devoted to the consideration and discussion of public issues of interest in the community served by the particular station". This duty was rooted in the core justification for the allocation of broadcast licenses in the public interest, that "the most vital questions of mass communication in a democracy is the development of an informed public opinion through the public dissemination of news and ideas concerning the vital public issues of the day" (FCC, 1949: 1249). So while the FCC may have retreated from the detailed prescriptiveness found in the Blue Book, it held on to the core principle that it had the constitutional and legal right to force license holders to provide content that would make a positive contribution towards free speech in the public arena. In addition to re-affirming this core principle that both the FCC and FRC had held onto for over two decades, the Fairness Doctrine Report of 1949 sought to guarantee that not only would license holders be expected to make a meaningful contribution to public debate, but that they would do so in a manner that protected a plurality of voices. In its 1949 Fairness Doctrine Report, the FCC placed a duty on each license holder to ensure that these discussions of the vital public issues of the day were conducted in a balanced manner. License holders were instructed not to use their stations to advance a specific point of view, and that any broadcast which offered a partial account of these public issues should offer airtime to those who wished to advance a contrary view. The FCC was clear that the strictures of the 1949 report placed a positive duty on the stations; Not only were they expected to allow contrary viewpoints airtime, but they were also expected to actively seek out dissenting voices. The Fairness Doctrine Report was explicit in stating that license holders had a duty to discuss news and current affairs, and to do so in a manner that presented the viewer with as broad a range of views as possible. Once again, this regulatory approach was founded on the notion that effective regulation of the airwaves was vital to the fostering of free speech in a democratic nature, rather than a limiting of First Amendment rights, with the FCC stating that "full

effect can only be given to the concept of freedom of speech on the radio by giving precedence to the right of the American public to be informed on all sides of public questions over any such individual exploitation for private purposes" (1949: 1257). The FCC's approach to constitutionally protected free speech would be validated both by Congress – in Section 315 of the 1959 Communications Act, that contained an implicit recognition of the Fairness Doctrine – and the Supreme Court decision in the case of Red Lion Broadcasting Co., Inc. v. Federal Communications Commission (1969). In the Red Lion case, the Supreme Court recognised the FCC's legal authority to enforce the Fairness Doctrine through the licensing system, and rejected the notion that the Fairness Doctrine itself represented a violation of the broadcaster's right to free speech under the First Amendment (Ruane, 2009: 4).

As I have previously argued (see Chapter 1), there is a tendency within the existing literature to see American public broadcasting as something that comes into existence only in 1967, with the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act. This tendency is driven by a view of public broadcasting that is primarily based upon models of ownership and funding – public broadcasters are broadcasters that are either publicly-owned, or publicly-funded. Yet, as I argue in Chapter 2, this is an overly narrow view, and one that excludes many well-established European public broadcasters. Public Service Broadcasting (PSB), in its broadest sense, includes regulatory arrangements in which holding a broadcast license is contingent upon meeting content standards. While such arrangements go beyond the minimal public interest standard that dominated American public broadcasting in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, this period was typified by attempts to expand the remit of regulators to allow them to place greater emphasis on broadcast content. In practice, the FRC and FCC's licensing arrangements tended to focus on technological standards designed to prevent channel interference. Where content became a key consideration in the awarding or revoking of licenses, it was usually in relation to egregious examples of broadcasters that used the airwaves to cause a public nuisance. Despite the attempts of the FCC in the 1940s, American broadcast regulators were ultimately frustrated in their attempts to establish a system of content-based licensing that would meet the definition of PSB that I set out in Chapter Two. To use Siebert, Schramm and Peterson's (1954) terminology, the system that was used for most of the early 20th century was a libertarian one, restricting government intervention to a minimum. The adoption of the standards laid out in the Blue Book (in addition to the Fairness Doctrine), however, would arguably have represented a significant shift media policy, setting the American commercial

broadcasters on the same regulatory footing as commercial PSB in some European countries (such as the UK). While the Fairness Doctrine was enacted, and remained a core principle governing the norms of American broadcasting until 1985, it is difficult to justify describing the American system of broadcasting as PSB on this basis alone. Had the recommendations of the Blue Book been enforced, the situation would have been radically different. Despite the failure to put into practice the ideas of Durr, Fly and others, it is important, however, to emphasise importance of PSB values to the development of American media policy long before the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967.

3.8 Conclusion: The myth of the "American System of Broadcasting"

When we look at the state of the American broadcasting industry today, the temptation may be to explain the development of large, globally dominant media organisations by making reference to a (supposedly) distinct strain of American capitalism that emerged in the Reconstruction Era and – nurtured by a small federal state, weak public sector, strong property and contract rights, and a laissez-faire regulatory climate – grew to dominate the global economy during the the 20th Century. This is the 'American System of Broadcasting' described by Kellner (1981: 35) as a

> commercial system of television production and distribution, governed by the profit motive and so-called market competition, relatively free of government regulation. A product of American capitalism, its structure and programming are deeply embedded in the capitalist mode of production and American power structure (1981: 35)

This view of the American System of Broadcasting is, in many ways, rooted in a deeply ideological notion of American Exceptionalism; a creed that the USA occupies an unique place in the world but that also

> connotes the notion that America's canonical commitments to liberty, equality, individualism, populism, and laissez-faire somehow exempt it from the historical forces that have led to the corruption of other societies. (Koh, 2003: 1481n).

It is a reading of history that speaks to a particular world-view, an "ideologically charged interpretive template" (Novak, 2008: 765). Its use is not historical as much as it is political, making use of a mythical yesterday to resist any new regulatory impulse today, and to argue for the further weakening of the state. There is, as Novak (2008) has argued, a "myth of the weak

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American state", and this myth is often used to advance a notion of a wholly commercial, libertarian ideal of the 'American System of Broadcasting'.

Picard (2011) argues that the USA chose a radically different path to that chosen by European nations when establishing its first tranche of broadcasting regulation. Picard's argument rests on the fact that while a number of European governments – including the British – created state-owned or state-funded apparatus to deliver early radio programming, the USA chose to establish a system in which private companies were granted licenses, free of charge, to provide radio services. This was a reaction, in part, to the technical and logistical challenges of establishing a single federal broadcasting service in a country as sparsely populated as 1920s America. Yet his argument is also that the decision to turn over broadcasting to the private sector was an ideological one, driven by the policies of pro-business Republican presidents, Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover. The foundations of the system were not laid by historical inevitability, but rather by deliberate political decisions.

Yet, as we have seen in this chapter, despite the fact that the Republican presidential administrations of the 1920s decided to establish a system of minimal regulation, the question of how to protect the public interest in broadcasting remained unanswered for decades. Their regulatory system was much more than an adjudicator on purely technical matters - a traffic cop of the airwaves, as it is sometimes put. On the contrary, both the FRC and the FCC engaged with significant philosophical debates surrounding the role of government, the media and the citizen in a liberal democracy. During these debates, regulators, broadcasters and civil society more broadly advanced arguments that the government had a responsibility to facilitate public debate by protecting a right to hear, as well as a right to speak. In addition to contributing to the debate about the place of broadcasting in American society – an expression of regulatory soft power that should not be under-emphasised – both the FRC and the FCC took active steps to protect the public interest by the regulation of programme content.

Within the literature on the media reform movement cited in this chapter, there is a general consensus that concerted efforts to reform America media regulation came to an end in the late 1940s, and were not revived until the mid-1960s, under the aegis of the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television. The precise point in which the media reform movement was defeated is

rarely pinpointed - both Slotten (2009) and Pickard (2015) point generally to the late 1940s, but do not identify a specific event. Glenda Balas, however, argues that the years 1950 and 1951 were of crucial importance, representing a "moment of possibility" (2003: 66), an opportunity to challenge the dominance of commercial broadcasting that had become increasingly entrenched during the 1930s and 1940s. The following chapter looks in detail at the events of these years, stretching from the television freeze of 1948 to the FCC's license allocations in 1951.

Chapter 4 – The television freeze of 1948- 1952

4.1 Introduction

4.2 A note on sources

4.3 Historical context: The post-war media reform movement

4.4 Educational allocations and the television freeze of 1948-1952

4.5 Ending the freeze: Educational v Public television

4.6 Conclusion: New foundations

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I traced the development of the idea of the public interest in American broadcasting from the emergence of radio at the beginning of the 20ᵗʰ Century, through to the middle of the 1940s. The main focus of the chapter was on the period from 1922 onwards, and my argument that over two decades, from the radio conferences of the 1920s to the beginning of the Second World War, what we see is a narrowing of the definition of the public interest. At its origins, this term is understood to have an expansive meaning, which provides government with a justification for regulating not only the content of what is being broadcast, but also which kind of organisations should be given priority when allocating broadcast frequencies. During the First Radio Conference of 1922, it was agreed that those broadcasters that best served the public interest be given priority access to the airwaves, creating a category of "public broadcasters" (Department of Commerce, 1922: Section III.B), owned by "State governments, political subdivisions thereof, and universities and such others as may be licensed for the purpose of disseminating informational and educational service" (Department of Commerce, 1922: Section 1, Note 2) who would be awarded broadcasting licenses in the place of commercial entities. Moreover, these public broadcasters should involve themselves not only in the broadcasting of an "informational and educational service" but were also justified in "disseminating news, entertainment, and other service" (Department of Commerce, 1922: Section 1, Note 3).

This concept of a public broadcaster – given primacy over its commercial rivals, independent of federal government, and tasked with the provision of a broad programme offering that combined education, information, news and entertainment – was a remarkably progressive one, well in advance of that found in the UK at the same time. Yet it was also one that would not survive its

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infancy. As I demonstrate in the previous chapter, the history of the public interest in broadcasting following the First Radio Conference of 1922 is one typified by the narrowing of the definition of public broadcasting. This narrowing definition occurs in response to pressure from commercial broadcasting companies, whose power increases from the mid-1920s onwards, and who succeed in advancing an idea of the public interest in broadcasting that is broadly based on a negative conception of liberty. The argument that they make, time and again, is that the public interest is best served by market mechanisms. Attempts by regulatory bodies to protect the public interest standards by placing duties on the broadcasters to conform to standards in their programme offerings come under sustained assault, both within the legislature and the judiciary. The result is that by the mid-1940s, there exists a set of standards outlining how American broadcasters should best utilise their broadcast licenses in the public interest, but they are seldom enforced, and have little impact on the commercial operation of radio licenses.

In this chapter, I will look at a period in American broadcasting history that has been largely neglected in the academic literature, that of the late 1940s and early 1950s, the period of the FCC's television freeze. It had not been my original intention to look in great detail at this period, but as I looked at the scholarship that exists, it became evident that this is a vital period in the history of the public interest in American broadcasting. The emergence of television as a new medium demanded that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) re-visit the system it used for the allocation of licenses to broadcasters. Having seen its arguments in favour of a strong public interest standard defeated during the preceding decades, what is termed the media reform movement (Pickard, 2013, 2015) saw the new medium as an opportunity to argue anew that government should take firmer steps to protect and advance the public interest.

During this chapter, I will look at the discussions that occurred between 1948 and 1951, as part of the FCC hearings on new television license allocations. Boddy argues that these hearings, and the *Sixth Report and Order* that was published at their conclusion, put in place "economic structures and routines that would remain substantially unchanged for twenty-five years" (1993: 28). My argument here is that the media reform movement, under the influence of FCC member Frieda Hennock, advanced an argument designed specifically to counter the legal strategy adopted by the commercial broadcasting sector in their previous dealings with government. This argument proved to be successful, ensuring a victory for the media reform movement, and the allocation of a limited

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number of channels for non-commercial television broadcasters. However, in order to secure this short-term legal victory, the media reform movement were forced to concede some of the fundamental arguments that the commercial broadcasters were making. Rather than arguing for the broad-based conception of public broadcasting that had been the goal as far back as 1922, the media reformers in 1950 and 1951 fought for a narrowly defined Educational Television (ETV) license allocation, that excluded any programming that did not have a clear instructional basis. More importantly, for the first time, the media reform movement accept a negative freedom basis for broadcast regulation, shifting the core ideological territory on which future discussions would take place.

4.2 A note on sources

As has been discussed in Chapter 3, the pre-war media reform movement has been the subject of significant, recent academic research of a high quality (Ashley, 2011; Goodman, 2011, 2012; Pickard, 2012, 2015; Slotten, 2009). However, the history both of media reform, and more broadly of the public interest in broadcasting in the immediate post-war period has not received the same degree of scholarly examination. General histories of American media during this period (Barnouw, 1968, 1990; Edgerton, 2007) have tended to focus on the rapid growth of the commercial television networks, making little reference to non-commercial television and radio. Even work that is specifically dedicated to the history of what might broadly be termed public media have tended to overlook the significance of this period, arguing – as Horwitz (1997) does – that the history of media reform in the US can be divided into three categories; the pre-war movements discussed in the previous chapter, attempts to reform the press in the late 1940s (through the Hutchins Commission), and the emergence of federally funded public media in the 1960s.

Rowland (1986: 252) argues that to understand the development of American public broadcasting after the 1960s, you must look at the "persistent underlying policy difficulties" that pre-date federal involvement in the institution. Yet, few contemporary researchers have taken serious interest in what might be termed the pre-history of public broadcasting in the US. The single major exception to this is Engelman, whose (1997) political history of public radio and television does include a section on this period that provides a clear overview of the main developments that occurred between the end of the war and the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act.

In piecing together the history of the period between the end of the war and the early 1950s, which is the focus of this chapter, I have had to rely on a relatively small number of sources, which include some early scholarship, autobiographical and semi-autobiographical accounts of key events, and some FCC reports that are available online. Blakely (1979) and Day (1995) have both written detailed accounts of the period that draw on their own experience of working in educational and public television from the 1950s onwards, and offer valuable personal insights coupled with an understanding of key events. Both books have proved to be invaluable in clearly outlining a narrative account of the period that is the subject of this chapter. Being personal accounts, however, original source materials are not properly cited, and it is sometimes difficult to trace the origin of some of the assertions that they make. John Walker Powell's (1962) history of the period offers a similar level of detail, and has the advantage of being one step removed from the autobiographical accounts offered by Blakely and Day; it was "written at the behest of....The Fund for Adult Education" (vii) (one of the key funders of educational television during the period in question), Walker states that while he had access both to the FAE's files and key staff members "it is not 'its' [i.e. the FAE's] book. We both believed that the field deserved an objective chronicle; and I have exercised the privilege of independence throughout" (viii). Unfortunately, like Blakely and Day, Powell does not clearly reference his source material, making it difficult to independently verify or test claims that are made in the book.

The other major secondary source that has proved to be invaluable while writing this chapter is a PhD thesis written in the late 1960s by William T Schmid (1970), specifically on the FCC hearings that are so central to this chapter. I was not, on this occasion, able to travel to the USA to view the original transcripts of the hearings, but Schmid's thesis quotes extensively from the record, giving a detailed account of many key points made to the FCC, and also includes original interviews with some of the key policy actors involved in the hearings. Parts of my own analysis rely fairly heavily on a re-interpretation of the material found in Schmid, coupled with a small number of other primary sources that I analyse. While I am confident that this approach provides an accurate picture of this period, I think that it is important to note that it is methodologically imperfect. As a result, the conclusions that I draw at the end of the chapter are, perhaps, less emphatic than those found in subsequent chapters, which have a stronger evidentiary base. Further research into this particular period, to test the tentative conclusions that I draw here, would be warranted.

4.3 Educational allocations, the television freeze, and media reform after the war

In deciding on how to allocate new television licenses, the FCC would be forced to rehearse many of the arguments that had dominated the previous two decades of its existence. But, as Pickard (2015: 201-203) has argued, both the media reform movement itself, and the broader political climate had changed by the end of the 1940s. The gulf between progressive policy makers in Washington and their grass-roots supporters had grown throughout the 1940s. James Lawrence Fly's Chairmanship of the FCC had ended in 1944, and by 1947 the recommendations of the Blue Book had been abandoned by his successor, Charles Denny. Clifford Durr, the FCC's most vocal progressive commissioner resigned in 1948, in protest at Truman's Federal Loyalty Oath Order. The loyalty oath was a symptom of the rising anti-communist hysteria, that was often used by conservatives to target public figures on the political left. Broadcasting would come under increasing scrutiny during the final years of the 1940s, culminating in the 1950 publication of *Red Channels: The Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television* a pamphlet naming 151 supposed "Red Fascists". Barnouw describes those named in the report as "people who had helped make radio an honoured medium, and who were becoming active in television" (1990: 122) - including, unsurprisingly Clifford Durr. The political climate of the late 1940s, therefore, was not particularly amenable to progressives. Pickard (2015: 203) argues that "political repression created a discursive environment that was hostile to criticizing existing power relationships.......The erosion of a structural critique tracks with a late 1940s decline in media reform activism".

Balas (2003) argues that the events of 1950 and 1951 can be linked back to earlier debates surrounding the nature of radio broadcasting that took place in the 1930s. During debate on the Communications Act of 1934, an amendment - the Wagner-Hatfield amendment - had been proposed that would have reserved a quarter of the broadcast spectrum for non-commercial use. The amendment was defeated, and the newly created FCC awarded licenses on essentially the same basis as had its predecessor, the FRC. However, the issue of reserving a portion of the spectrum for non-commercial use had been a totemic issue for many broadcast reformers. The emergence of broadcast television provided the reformers with an opportunity to rehearse some of the arguments that had been aired back in 1934. The new medium would serve as new ground on which to fight old battles.

The allocation of licenses to broadcast television programmes in the years immediately following the end of the Second World War followed the model that had been used for radio regulation a generation previously (see Chapter 3). There was a presumption in favour of awarding, rather than denying, licenses; this allowed larger commercial entities that had the access to capital necessary to invest in the new technology to stake their claim to the airwaves. Television provided a more complex challenge than radio, however; broadcasting a television signal demanded a greater portion of the available spectrum than radio, placing a greater technical restriction on the number of channels that could be broadcast in any geographical area. The FCC initially authorised full commercial operations on 12 TV channels on March 18th, 1947, a decision that led to a "race for licenses" (Blakely, 1979: 75). The commercial (radio) networks had, by the 1940s, developed both an organisational structure and a business model that could easily be applied to the new technology. While the early years of radio broadcasting had been typified by a diversity of broadcasters - public, private and amateur - the early years of television would be dominated by the attempts of the major commercial networks to secure as much of the spectrum as they could.

By the summer of 1948, it became clear to the FCC that it could not accommodate the demand for new licenses, on the 29th of September it announced that it would not process any applications for new licenses to broadcast television "pending determination of future TV channel allocations" (FCC, 1948: 6). Engineering conferences were scheduled for 30th November to the 2nd of December, where it was hoped that initial agreement surrounding spectrum allocation could be agreed. By the end of 1949, the work was still ongoing, with the FCC's focus on determining

> as nearly as possible, the effects of variations in transmitter and receiver antenna height and directivity upon coverage, the amount of transmitter power required for satisfactory service over any given area, the extent of service degradation caused by tropospheric and ionospheric propagation, the amount of variation in signal strength with different types of terrain, and the relative effects of frequency on the above factors. (FCC, 1949: 146)

As this quote illustrates, the focus of the FCC's initial work was initially overwhelmingly technical, with the commission noting that the research undertaken during 1949 was "the most highly scientific study which the Bureau of Engineering has ever undertaken" resulting in "over 130 pages of highly complicated calculations, derivations and extrapolations with resulting formulae, charts, tables, curves, etc." (FCC, 1949: 146). Thanks to the lobbying efforts of what remained of the

media reform movement, however, 1949 would see a shift in emphasis, forcing the FCC to consider not only the technical challenges of licensing television, but also the normative values that would underpin the licensing process. As Schmid (1970: 147) argues

> "The freeze was primarily a study of technical problems in television. A request for educational television reservations took the hearings in a new direction where social responsibility, enlightenment and culture were explicit and technical problems were implicit" (Schmid, 1970: 147).

Two events occurred in 1948 which helped to revitalise the media reform movement, providing it with fresh impetus to fight for the public interest in American broadcasting. The first of these was the appointment to the FCC of Frieda B Hennock; a Jewish immigrant from the Ukraine, she was a prominent liberal New York Democrat, and the first woman appointed as a Federal Communications Commissioner. She was appointed to replace Clifford Durr, and assumed his mantle as the commission's outspoken progressive voice. Her biographer would describe her as "educational television's most vocal and primary champion" (Brinson, 1998: 412), and she would prove to be a vital force during a period when public television had few vocal champions. In the hearings that took place during 1950 and 1951, Hennock would ally herself publicly with the media reform movement, not only serving as their champion on the FCC itself, but often directing their attempts to lobby her fellow commissioners.

The second instrumental event of 1948 was the National Association of Educational Broadcasters' (NAEB) convention, held in Urbana, Illinois between October 10-12. The NAEB had its roots in the 1920s, when a group of educational broadcasters attending the ill-fated Fourth Radio Conference of 1925 (See Chapter 3) decided to form the Association of College and University Broadcasting Stations (ACUBS), to lobby for three aims: the reservation of channels for educational broadcasting, the establishment of a national headquarters to coordinate educational broadcasting, and a system to enable the sharing of programme material between individual educational broadcasters (Blakely, 1979: 4). The ACUBS changed its name to the NAEB in 1934, coordinating the lobbying and development activities of a relatively small membership, made up of educational institutions that held broadcast licenses. Blakely describes the NAEB as a "weak organization" (1979: 9) during these early years, but one which had gradually drawn together a number of prominent individuals with an interest in, and vision for, educational broadcasting.

During 1948, Wayne Coy, the FCC Chairman, had expressed concern that while his commission had, in the past, agreed to allocate broadcast spectrum for educational use, many of the educational broadcasters had been slow to make use of these frequencies (Powell, 1962: 34). The commercial broadcasters saw the educational broadcasters as a dog in their manger, and were arguing that the FCC should not reserve spectrum for educational broadcasters, insisting that those educational institutions capable of actually running a broadcast operation could make their case for licenses on the same basis as the commercial sector. Concerned that the FCC would buckle to pressure from the commercial networks, at its 1948 conference the NAEB, under the Presidency of Richard Hull, resolved to pursue its core aims with renewed vigour. It would work to expand its membership, take concrete steps towards establishing a programme exchange system, and re-state in public the arguments regarding the importance of educational broadcasting in the age of television.

These arguments regarding the core justification for the existence of educational broadcasting were advanced during a series of seminars organised by the University of Illinois, and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Held at the university's Allerton House conference centre near Urbana in both 1949 and 1950, these seminars were described by Robert B. Hudson - then Director of University Broadcasting at the University of Illinois, and one of the seminars' conveners - as a watershed moment, stating that at Allerton House

> educational broadcasters......discovered that they are not faint, isolated whispers in the broadcasting world. They have discovered for the first time that they are a part of something of great significance in America. Furthermore, among them is a general recognition not only that their role is important (they have always believed it to be), but that now there is some prospect of their controlling their own destiny. (Hudson, 1951: 237)

This sentiment that was echoed by Richard Hull, who described the Allerton House seminars as "the single time and place where the educational broadcasting movement finally 'found' itself" (US Office of Education, 1962: 339).

The conclusion of the 1949 Allerton House Seminar coincided with the publication of a new table of proposed television spectrum allocation by the FCC. In contrast to the FM radio allocations of 1940 and 1945, this table did not include any reservations for education broadcasters, and Frieda

Hennock, the only FCC commissioner to dissent from the allocation decision, urged those with an interest in the future of educational broadcasting to participate in the commission's hearings on the subject, to lobby for educational allocations (Beadle and Stephenson, 1997: 46). This led to the formation, in 1950 of the Joint Committee on Educational Television (JCET), an "organization of organizations" (Blakely, 1979: 13) created (initially) on an ad-hoc basis to coordinate the task of presenting to the FCC the argument that it should reserve specific portions of the television broadcast spectrum for educational television, in accordance with its statutory remit. The JCET would make joint representations to the FCC on behalf of a broad coalition of interests, including the American Council on Education, the Association for Education by Radio, the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, the National Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, the National Association of State Universities and the National Educational Association.

4.4 Ending the freeze: Educational vs. Public television

Barnouw argues that the JCET was a body made up of "political amateurs, but with the zeal that can occasionally make such efforts effective" (1968: 293). What Barnouw's description ignores, however, is the support that was afforded these supposed "amateurs", not only by the membership of the various bodies that made up the JCET, but also the philanthropic foundations that funded its efforts. Initially funded by the membership itself, with additional support from the Rockefeller Foundation (US Office of Education, 1962: 338), the JCET would, from early 1951 onwards, receive significant financial support from the Ford Foundation's Fund for Adult Education (FAE) (Engelman, 1996: 138). Indeed, Day (1995: 19-22) typifies the lobbying efforts of the educational broadcasters between 1948 and 1952 as a "military engagement", led by influential men from outside the educational world such as Scotty Fletcher - former director of the Committee for Economic Development - and Telford Taylor, former prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials, as well as former counsel to the FCC itself. Contrary to Barnouw's assertion, the JCET was a remarkably well-organised body that was able to draw upon significant human and financial resources to make its case to the FCC.

During the final months of 1950, and the beginning of 1951, the JCET gave its evidence to the FCC over a marathon 13 days. During these sessions, witnesses were called to give evidence, and to be

cross-examined by counsel for both the JCET and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), the group that lobbied on behalf of the commercial broadcasters. This was followed by a mere three days of testimony from witnesses called by the NAB itself, making arguments against the reservation of educational licenses. At the heart of the JCET's case was the demand that "at least one VHF educational channel in every standard metropolitan area and every major educational centre, and also at least 20 percent of all UHF channels" be reserved for educational television (Blakely, 1979: 15).

In making its argument for these allocations, the JCET explained how the individual educational broadcasters intended to make use of the licenses in each of the geographical areas in question, and how educational allocations were of vital importance to the business model that underpinned educational television. More importantly, however, the JCET re-stated the fundamental normative principles that justified their argument for allocation. This re-statement of principles would, in part, draw upon arguments that had been made in the pre-war years regarding the public value of the broadcast spectrum. But they would also have an effect on the future development of public broadcasting in America. Indeed, what becomes evident is that while the educational broadcasters of the late 1940s and early 1950s played an important role in keeping alive the idea of an alternative to the purely commercial broadcasting, they did so by dramatically narrowing the definition of the public interest to one that was easier to defend from the objections of the commercial sector.

Fundamental to the argument being advanced by the JCET was the idea that the regulation of broadcasting, both by the FRC and the FCC in the pre-war years had been a failure. During earlier discussions of broadcast licensing, it had been argued that the laissez faire system of regulating broadcasting would, in and of itself, ensure that the public interest would be served due to market pressure. Listeners would demand high-quality programming, and stations who failed to deliver would see their audience – and as a result their advertising income – diminish. In its evidence, the JCET sought to clearly demonstrate that this was not the case, and did so by a combination of expert testimony and empirical data. Dallas Smythe of the University of Illinois and Donald Horton of the University of Chicago undertook a hastily designed content analysis study of commercial television between the 4th and 10th of January 1951, demonstrating that the programming on offer in New York city "was unsatisfactory in terms of informational, educational and cultural

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programming" (Blakely, 1979: 23). Schmid (1970: 161) notes that a number of witnesses drew the FCC's attention to the commercial broadcasters' lack of quality programming in various other areas; Mrs Charles Weeks - president of the Radio and Television Council of Greater Cleveland - described the paucity of the offering in Cleveland, while Mrs, John E. Hayes, representing the National Congress of Parents and Teachers decried the quality of programming aimed at children.

The JCET also pointed to previous attempts to improve the quality of material broadcast, using voluntary arrangements between educational and commercial broadcasters. In 1935 the FCC had refused to make allocations for educational radio stations, insisting that educational radio producers would be allowed access to the commercial stations, coordinated by through the Federal Radio Education Committee (FREC). Since the FCC had not stipulated minimum hours as part of the commercial stations licenses, this approach had failed to deliver educational content as part of a general programme offering (Schmid, 1970: 155). Later expanding on this point, the JCET pointed specifically to the fact that the FCC had been reluctant to deny or revoke licenses on the basis of the programme offering (McCarty, quoted in Schmid, 1970: 163).

In addition, JCET witnesses repeatedly noted that where commercial broadcasters had provided educators with airtime, this was usually under unfavourable conditions. Educational programmes were frequently moved around in the schedule, used to fill slots that the broadcasters had not been able to sell to advertisers (Schmid, 1970: 164). It was therefore essential that entire channels be given over to educators, so that they could control not only the content of individual programmes, but also the entire schedule.

It is understandable why the JCET pursued this argument. The existing regulatory regime had, undoubtedly, failed to deliver the kind of media that they thought the American people deserved. Commercial broadcasting had, time and again, promised a diverse programme offering that combined entertainment with sustenance. And time and again, it had not only failed to deliver on its promise, but had withstood any attempts by the FCC to force it to deliver. Frieda Hennock and the JCET saw that by demonstrating the extent to which commercial broadcasting had failed to offer sustaining programmes of its own volition. They anticipated, correctly, that the NAB would rely on the same arguments that it always had – that the market was the best mechanism for protecting the public interest – and saw that if they could, with the force of evidence, demolish

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that argument, the FCC would have no option but to award spectrum allocation to the ETV stations.

Tactically, it was a master-stroke; when the FCC came to a conclusion, it stated unequivocally that "the need for non-commercial educational television stations has been amply demonstrated" on the basis that they had the ability to produce a "high quality type of programming........of an entirely different character from that available on most commercial stations" (FCC, 1951: 181). Yet this victory concealed an underlying shift in the principles which drove the media reformer's arguments. In anticipating the line of attack that the NAB would take, and then deciding to challenge them on this basis, what the JCET did was to accept an entirely new philosophical basis on which to argue the public interest standard. The American public deserved access to educational television not because it was the best model for protecting the public interest; rather, they deserved access to ETV because the alternative model – that of an unfettered free market – had been shown a failure.

Market failure may have worked tactically, but as Freedman (2014: 72) argues, to adopt this position is to accept the core normative principle that the free market is the best possible mechanism for delivering public value. It shifts the burden of proof away from the commercial sector, who no longer have to offer a justification for their own existence, on to the public itself, who now have to demonstrate the failings of the status quo. Fundamentally, the adoption of market failure standards for public interventions in broadcasting shift the entire debate away from a positive conception of liberty, on to a negative one.

As Pickard (2013: 9-12) has demonstrated, the commercial broadcasters' lobbying against broadcast regulation had consistently relied upon this negative conception of freedom throughout the pre-war period. Yet media reformers had, historically, responded to this "corporate libertarianism" with arguments that were based on a positive conception of freedom, arguments that can be found in lobbying and policy initiatives that run from the early 1920s to the late 1940s (see Chapter 3). They may well have been blind to this fact, focussed as they were on the specific aim of securing spectrum allocations for ETV. But in advancing market failure as one of the core justifications for broadcast regulation, the media reformers of 1950-51 fundamentally shifted the terms of the debate regarding how best to protect and foster the public interest.

Equally problematically, the arguments that the JCET advanced to the FCC were that the status quo had failed to provide the viewers with an adequate amount of *educational* programming, rejecting any attempts to broaden the discussion to include other forms of public interest broadcasting. Indeed, when many of the JCET's witnesses gave evidence, they explicitly framed their demands in very narrowly educational terms. As had happened a generation previously, the media reformers of the JCET argued that the airwaves were a public good, and should be regulated as such. The key difference in 1950 was that the witnesses called by the JCET repeatedly linked the notion of the public good to the history of education in the USA. A number of the witnesses who gave testimony to the FCC hearings made arguments that relied on historical precedent dating back as far as 1659; their core argument was that the American government had consistently allocated public resources to facilitate public access to education. Much of their argument rested on the tradition of granting public land to build educational institutions, from the schools built in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts back in the 17th Century to the land-grant colleges and universities that had been established following the passage of the 1862 Morrill Act (Schmid, 1970: 150).

This justification for the reservation of the spectrum represented a narrowing of how the media reformers conceived of the public interest in American broadcasting. As has been argued in Chapter 3, the debates surrounding the public interest in broadcasting that took place between the 1920s and the 1940s consistently revolve around a relatively broad notion of broadcasting dedicated – in the words of Hoover – to "entertainment, instruction [and a] widening vision of national problems and national events" (Department of Commerce, 1924: Opening Address). Broadcasting's ability to entertain was hardly a matter of debate, but the question of how it should provide "a widening vision of national problems and national events" had been at the heart of much of the debate that had raged during the 1930s and 40s. The FCC had attempted to use its regulatory power to force commercial broadcasters to include 'sustaining programs' in their schedules, through the publication of the 'Blue Book' (see Chapter 3). However, the period of regulatory activism that had been driven by Clifford Durr and James Fly had come to an end by 1948 (Pickard, 2011: 184). The JCET's own analysis of the programming offered by the commercial broadcasters illustrated the paucity of 'sustaining programs' on offer, yet unlike in earlier years, their arguments for spectrum reservation did not rest on non-commercial television's ability to

address the wholesale failings of the commercial sector. Rather, their argument was that a portion of the airwaves, like other public resources, should be set aside for the specific task of broadcasting educational material.

Not every witness called, or every member of the JCET committee, agreed with this narrowing of focus. Within the coalition of interests that lobbied the FCC during the winter of 1950-1951 there remained individuals who saw the need for the Commission to regulate in favour of a broad-based programme offer that would bridge the demands of education and entertainment. Some witness took relatively modest steps in this direction; there had been suggestion that ETV function as a fairly prosaic way of extending the capacity of the classroom, helping to meet the increased demand for access to higher education by broadcasting lectures out to a wide area, rather than – for instance – building larger teaching facilities – in the words of one witness "extending the boundaries of the campus to the borders of the state" (McCarty, quoted in Schmid, 1970: 189). This was not a view shared by the witnesses called by the JCET, however. They saw television as a means not of relaying course materials to a greater number of students, but rather as a way of enriching and expanding beyond the core curriculum. ETV offered innovative methods of teaching subjects such as musical performance, foreign languages, and philosophy - subjects that Schmid describes as "the luxuries of education" (1970: 203).

Expanding further on the possibilities of non-commercial television, representatives from libraries and museums suggested ways in which they could support ETV by providing free or low-cost content. Edward T. Schofield, representing the Educational Film Library Association, and John Mackenzie Cory, executive secretary of the American Library Association both suggested that ETV stations could make use of filmed material found in their members' collections, which included films on "science, hobbies, industry, public affairs, health and welfare" (Schmid, 1970: 197). Charles Russell, representing the American Museum of Natural History in New York suggested that ETV could be used to allow the public to view the substantial parts of its collection that had been placed in storage, due to a lack of space at the museum itself (198).

Robert Lewis Shayon, a writer and producer for commercial radio and television went as far as to suggest that once ETV had found its feet, it would represent a draw for programme makers

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working in the commercial sector who wished to experiment with the televisual form, leading to an "exploration of new and untried art forms which present commercial television restricts" (quoted in Schmid, 1970: 199). Shayon also argued that ETV should carry news and current affairs, subjects that he argued had suffered "harassment of time and space limitation" (quoted in Schmid, 1970: 205) on commercial television.

The main proponent of expanding the remit of educational television so that it more closely resembled Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) was the President of the NAEB itself, Richard B Hull. Hull was responsible for running one of the few ETV stations that were already licensed, pre-1948, WOI in Iowa. Due to the limited spectrum available, WOI was the only television station broadcasting to its geographic areas, and as a result offered a combination of educational and commercial programmes. Schmid describes Hull's philosophy at WOI as one where the station aimed to

> develop, produce and broadcast instructional and informational programs with cultural and entertainment value; to provide professional training for students interested in program techniques and audience measurement; and to explore the effectiveness of television as a new medium of communication and education.(Schmid, 1970: 190)

This was, however, an area where Hull would come into conflict with the educational broadcaster's key ally on the FCC, Frieda Hennock. She was utterly opposed to the idea that the allocations being proposed by the JCET be used for anything other than narrowly educational purposes. When discussing Hull's experiences at WOI, she alighted on the question of audience size, arguing that educational broadcasters had no reason to want to attract audiences, and that this was the exclusive preserve of the commercial broadcasters (Schmid, 1970: 191). In this she was joined by Belmont Farley, an influential member of both the NAEB and JCET, who directly appealed to the FCC:

> that 'non-commercial educational television' be so carefully defined that when the allocations are made for educational use, they will be licensed only for truly educational purposes (Farley, quoted in Schmid, 1970: 166)

Again, the arguments for focussing so narrowly on ETV are understandable for tactical reasons. For

two decades, the commercial broadcasters had been arguing that the creation of sustaining programmes was something that they would provide, and that there existed a market for such programmes. Despite the fact that they had devoted little in the way of resources or screen time to public service programming, there were many within the industry who held on to the belief that it remained part of their core mission. Moreover, there remained the possibility that such sustaining programmes could, at some point in the future, draw substantial audiences. Allowing the non-commercial broadcasters to define their remit too broadly ran the risk of bringing them into direct competition for audiences with the commercial networks. If the non-commercial allocations were sufficiently narrowly drawn, then it was one more way of addressing the complaints of the NAB.

This tactical rationale was supplemented with a genuine fear on the part of Hennock and others that to define the remit too broadly would be to dilute it. There existed among the educationalists a tendency to see commercial television as beyond redemption, that dated back to the early 1930s and the original emergence of the media reform movement. McChesney outlines similar debates that raged within the movement during this early period "advertising over the air was a loathsome activity" (1993: 101) that would serve only to chip away at the integrity of educational broadcasting from within Ouellette (2002: 47) argues that during this period, American cultural elites constructed problematic binary categories of high and low culture that carried through into the principles that informed ETV. This attitude can clearly be seen in Commissioner Hennock's response to part of the evidence presented by Dr Kenneth Baker, Head of Research for the NAB. Dr Baker suggests that Westerns could have positive influences on the children that watched them, stating that "children might learn how US Army officers were dressed at that time. They might learn how people travelled across the prairies at that time" (quoted in Schmid, 1970: 267). For Hennock and Taylor, the JCET counsel, such views were not only laughable, but undermined their whole case. According to Taylor "such an all inclusive
approach to educational content destroyed the whole purpose of program categories" (quoted in Schmid, 1970: 268). If they were to broaden the definition of what was allowable on the new non-commercial services, then they ran the risk of undermining the entire venture.

This refusal to consider the possibility of alternative approaches to educational broadcasting undermined attempts by Hull to forge new models of ETV that were arguably closer in spirit and intent to PSB, more economically viable, and less compromised by the need to distinguish clearly

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between commercial and non-commercial television.

When the JCET was preparing its evidence to the FCC, Hull argued that the WOI model was one that could be adopted by other stations. Powell (1962: 45) notes that during the period preceding the JCET's testimony to the FCC, Richard Hull "and some others" had proposed that they lobby the FCC for spectrum allocation on a non-profit, rather than a non-commercial, basis. Non-commercial stations would not carry any advertising, or allow sponsorship, meaning that the cost of production and broadcast would have to be paid from other funds, usually the budgets of the universities that owned them. Hull's own station, however already operated on a non-profit basis, "broadcasting both educational programming and the best offerings of all the commercial networks" (Blakely, 1979: 19). The income from selling advertising alongside programming from the commercial networks was used to subsidise the production of the educational programming, but of equal importance was the fact that the non-profit model provided viewers with a comprehensive service, a 'full portfolio' approach to public broadcasting (see Chapter 3).

The JCET's initial position was to lobby the FCC for a portion of the spectrum to be reserved for "non-profit and/or non-commercial" stations (Powell, 1962: 46), but by November 1950 the JCET had shifted its position to favour lobbying almost exclusively for non-commercial designations. According to Schmid (1970: 140) both Telford Taylor and Frieda Hennock were resistant to the non-profit designation. Taylor later argued that this was a pragmatic view, and that an application for non-profit allocations would be unlikely to succeed (quoted in Schmid, 1970: 140). Commercial broadcasters were already clamouring for all of the available broadcast spectrum, and were likely to object to the JCET call for allocations. Their objection would be dramatically intensified, however, if the educational broadcasters were allowed to compete with them for advertiser funds, as they would be under a non-profit model. However, during his testimony Belmont Farley added a more traditionally normative argument for the rejection of the non-profit model, stating that if educational broadcasters were to draw revenue from advertising then it would inevitably influence programme content, presumably to the detriment of the service (quoted in Schmid, 1970: 166). The JCET's position was therefore modified, requesting only that spectrum be allocated for non-profit educational television in those areas that could accommodate only one channel. (See Schmid, 1970: 210 for Hull's arguments in favour of this model).

After they had concluded taking evidence from both the JCET and the NAB, the FCC deliberated for two months, finally publishing on the 21st of March 1951 the *Third Notice of Proposed Rule Making* (FCC, 1951), which laid out their basic proposals for allocating television spectrum. This document outlined their core case, which was that in communities that had three or more assignments (that is, where the available spectrum could accommodate three or more TV channels), one of these would be reserved for non-commercial educational use. Communities that were "primarily educational centers" (FCC, 1951: 182) - that is, college towns - and where there were fewer than three assignments were the exception, since they would, theoretically, be granted a non-commercial educational assignment regardless of the number of assignments available.

These new allocations came with two important caveats, however. First, where the three (or more) assignments were split between VHF and UHF, commercial broadcasters would be offered the VHF allocation. Images broadcast on the UHF band were of a significantly lower quality than those broadcast on VHF, but more importantly many television sets in 1951 could not receive an UHF signal. Secondly, the FCC did not propose using the new allocations to revoke any existing licenses. The rules laid out in the Third Notice would apply only to new applications, which meant that the educational broadcasters were already locked out of many communities where the spectrum had already been allocated to commercial broadcasters.

Interested parties were given a year in which to prepare applications for new licenses on the basis of the Third Notice, and on April 14th, 1952, the FCC published its final decision on the allocations, ending the television freeze that had come into effect in 1948. This decision, the Sixth Report and Order (FCC, 1952), represented the FCC's settled position on many of the issues raised during the hearings of 1950 and 1951. While the FCC's position did not fully reflect the demands of the JCET, the fundamental principle on which the JCET had argued can be found preserved in both the Third Notice and Sixth Report. Schmid (1970: 209) argues that:

> Very little educational testimony was seriously challenged by the Commissioners. The major FCC inquiries dealt with clarification of the record and actual implementation of the suggested non-commercial channel reservations.

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How closely the FCC's final position reflects the compromise that Hennock had brokered can be seen in one of the individual license applications that were submitted between the Third Notice and the Sixth Report and Order. A single VHF allocation had been awarded to Columbia, Missouri, and the University of Missouri had applied for a license to run a hybrid, non-profit service on the model pioneered by WOI in Iowa – an educational television service that broadcast some commercial programming, with the commercial income used to subsidise the educational production costs. The FCC response notes that the University of Missouri had sufficient capital funds to establish a station, but lacked revenue funding to maintain programme production. Their application requested that they be awarded a license that allowed them to broadcast a 50/50 mixture of educational and commercial material, on a non-profit basis, with the commercial revenue being used to fund educational programme-making. Their request was denied, following the objections of KFRU, the commercial license-holder for the same area "on the grounds that such an operation would give the educational institution unfair competitive advantages over a commercial licensee" (FCC, 1952: 189). Hull may well have been the president of the JCET, but it was Hennock's views that dominate the final outcomes of the deliberations of 1950 and 1951.

4.6 Conclusion: New foundations

In one sense, the outcome of hearings of 1950 and 1951 represented a significant victory for the media reform movement. Fifteen years earlier, the Wagner-Hatfield amendment had failed to ensure any allocations for non-commercial radio broadcasting. While the Federal Radio Commission had been replaced by the Federal Communications Commission, there had been little structural change in the manner in which government sought to protect the public interest in American broadcasting. Despite the best efforts of some progressive FCC commissioners, broadcast licensing throughout the 1930s and 1940s had managed to place few restrictions on the activities of commercial broadcasters. The FCC allocations awarded in 1952 arguably reversed this trend, putting in place for the first time a regulatory framework that dedicated a portion of the spectrum for non-commercial broadcasting.

In reality, it was a qualified, compromised victory. While the JCET had hoped to secure some 20% of the spectrum, the final allocation was 11.7%. Moreover, a large part of this allocation was in the UHF band, which at the time was used only for experimental broadcasting. A quarter of the

country's metropolitan areas were not awarded any allocations, placing a significant portion of the American public beyond the reach of any new educational developments.Most damaging of all, however, were the compromises that the JCET - under Hennock's direction - had adopted in order to strengthen their case. The allocations that the FCC awarded were strictly for non-commercial broadcasting with a narrowly educational remit. The result was that ETV would become what Glenda Balas calls an

> electronic blackboard....A static image woven into traditional pedagogy, the blackboard metaphor positioned educational TV in the classroom, not the neighbourhood, and privileged the speech of teachers instead of students (2003; 82)

Since the very earliest discussions of American broadcasting policy - since the First Radio Conference of 1922, in fact - some policy-makers had made the case for a broad-ranging model of public broadcasting. It would have a strong connection to universities and colleges, but would offer much more than a means of extending the classroom. This was public broadcasting that offered a full-portfolio of programming, designed to serve the needs of citizens, rather than the demands of consumers. Some within the JCET had clung on to this vision, arguing that this expansive view of public broadcasting, constituted on a non-profit rather than non-commercial basis, was the one that should have been presented to the FCC. But it was a view that was abandoned in favour of advancing the cause of narrowly defined ETV.

Balas (2003: 81) argues that the outcome of the 1950-51 hearings was a hollow victory for the media reformers. At best, it was a heavily qualified success; one that severely compromised the vision behind the media reform movement. Yet while these hearings may have represented a final defeat for the movement, they were saw the emergence of a new force in broadcasting policy, one that would come to dominate the debate surrounding public television for the next twenty years. Philanthropic foundations had contributed to the development of education broadcasting during the pre-war era; Goodman (2011: 7) notes that both the Rockefeller and Carnegie Foundations awarded grants to support the work of the Federal Radio Education Committee as far back as 1934. From the late 1940s onwards, however, the influence of philanthropic foundations on the media would grow to the extent that Engelman (1996) would describe the period between 1948 and 1967 as "The Foundation Years" (135)[14]. While the newly-endowed Ford Foundation did not

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did not have a significant input into the JCET's testimony before the FCC, it did provide funding that enabled advocates for ETV to present a robust case before the commission. And in the years that followed the end of the television freeze of 1948 to 1952, the foundation would seek to play a much more central role, attempting to rejuvenate and reinvigorate a movement that seemed close to collapse.

Engelman borrows the term from *The Fourth Network* a monograph authored and published in 1971 by The Network Project, a lobbying group based at Columbia University. There is little information in the Columbia University archive regarding the project, but they offer a radical left-wing critique of public broadcasting.

Chapter 5: Paul Lazarsfeld and the Ford Foundation

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Background: The Ford Foundation and Educational Television

5.3 Paul Lazarsfeld and the Television Advisory Committee

5.4 The Ford Foundation, anti-communism and the study of television after 1954

5.5 Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

In his political history of Public Broadcasting in America, Ralph Engelman argues that

> The Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York wrote the book, chapter and verse, on non-commercial television in both its incarnation as educational television prior to 1967 and as public TV thereafter (1996: 135).

The contribution of the Carnegie Corporation to the establishment of public broadcasting has been relatively well documented (Avery, 2007; Balas, 2003; Hoynes, 2007; Ledbetter, 1997). This emphasis on the work of the Carnegie Corporation is entirely understandable, since there is a direct link between the work that they did, partly at the instigation of President Lyndon B Johnson himself, and the Public Broadcasting Act signed by Johnson in 1967. But less attention has been paid to how the ideas enshrined in the act were developed, in the years preceding the establishment of the Carnegie Commission. Oulette and Lewis argue that "the policy makers who debated the 1967 Public Broadcasting Act drew from, and reproduced, a history of broadcast reform discourse cast in a top-down framework" but that while "numerous critics have noted that PBS was created without adequate or politically insulated funding…. fewer have examined the dominant cultural assumptions that guided public television" (2000: 100). My argument in this thesis is that there exists a continuity of thought and action that runs from the early 1920s to the late 1960s, and that the institutional design of public broadcasting that was legislated upon in 1967 reflects the historical debate over the public interest in broadcasting that runs back to 1922. This is a view that is, partially, drawn from the work of Engelman, who argues that the notion of

American broadcasting as being inherently commercial in nature is merely a case of "history…..written by the victors" and that the history of the media reform movement "is a critical factor in understanding the subsequent development of public radio and television" (1996: 12). As outlined in the previous chapter, there exists a substantial body of high-quality research on media reform during the 1930s and 1940s which supports this argument (McChesney, 1993; Slotten, 2009; Balas 2003; Pickard, 2011, 2015;) but the development of non-commercial broadcasting in the 1950s and – to a lesser degree – the 1960s is an area which has not received the same degree of academic scrutiny.

A particular area of neglect has been the work on broadcasting that was funded by the Ford Foundation, a crucial gap in the early history of public television. A chronological gap, where specific events are not discussed in any detail, but also a philosophical gap. How educational broadcasting evolved into public broadcasting in the United States is not sufficiently explained in the existing academic literature. In the preceding chapters, I have broadly outlined the way in which the notion of a public interest in broadcasting was articulated during the period from the early 1920s to the mid-1940s. I then went on to look at how ETV became a vessel for the public interest in the late-1940s and early 1950s. In this chapter I will offer a critical account, based on the analysis of archival material, of how ETV began to evolve into public broadcasting, at the behest of the Ford Foundation. My analysis will focus on attempts to establish a television advisory commission the Ford Foundation, and the frustration of those attempts during the period in which Paul F Lazarsfeld, of Columbia University, was primarily responsible for this initiative.

5.2 Background: The Ford Foundation and Educational Television

While philanthropic foundations had played a part in the development of educational broadcasting before the 1950s, their role had been relatively limited, offering financial support to individual educational establishments to develop broadcast stations, as well as giving some support to media reform campaigners and others working more generally to develop educational radio. However, from the late-1940s to the late-1960s, the support provided by two philanthropic foundations would dramatically increase, and prove to be instrumental in the development of non-commercial media in the USA. The first foundation to make a major contribution to the post-war development of public television, and the focus of this chapter, was the Ford Foundation. This foundation had

been in existence since 1936, but operated on a relatively modest scale. Following the death of of Edsel Ford in 1943, and his father Henry Ford in 1947, 90% of the (non-voting) stock in the Ford Motor Company was transferred into the ownership of the Ford Foundation, making it the largest philanthropic foundation in the world (Ford Foundation, 2016). Following this endowment, the foundation committed itself to pursuing five aims:

> (1) to contribute to the establishment of peace; (2) to strengthen democracy; (3) to strengthen the economy; (4) to strengthen, improve and expand education; and (5) to increase knowledge of individual behaviour and human relations (quoted in Blakely, 1979: 83)

In order to pursue the fourth of these aims – "to strengthen, improve and expand education" – the Ford Foundation established two subsidiary foundations, The Fund for the Advancement of Education (TFAE) and the Fund for Adult Education (FAE). According to Powell (1962: 55) the "first act" of the FAE in 1951 was to award a grant to the Joint Committee on Educational Television (JCET), which was at that point preparing the case that it would present to the FCC (see Chapter 4). Following the grant to the JCET, Robert J Blakely – who worked for the FAE between 1951 and 1961 – argues that the fund then began to work on forging a longer-term strategy for the development of educational broadcasting. According to Blakely, the FAE identified three tasks for itself: to persuade the FCC to reserve spectrum allocations for ETV, to support individual institutions to develop ETV stations capable of presenting high-quality license applications, and most importantly examining ways n which the work of the individual stations could be coordinated into a coherent, national system of broadcasting (1979: 87).

This third aspect of the FAE mission combined two different elements, one practical, the other more philosophical. On a practical level, the FAE was concerned with the logistical challenges involved in bringing together educational broadcasters who were – unlike the three commercial networks – entirely independent of each other. This resulted in a number of initiatives, most notably the development of the Educational Television and Radio Center (ETRC, later NETRC) during the late-1950s, and the People's Satellite plan of the late 1960s. Before pushing forward the idea of a national system of educational broadcasting, however, the FAE was forced to consider the political, social and cultural context in which such a system would exist.

It is on this aspect of the foundation's work that the remainder of this chapter will concentrate its attention. In one sense, this is a counter-intuitive approach; as I will demonstrate in this section, much of the work done by the FAE on this broader philosophical context would have little direct impact on the development of the medium. Yet while the work done on the philosophy of broadcasting may not have had as much impact as, say, the foundations' work on programme production, it is of value in that it provides a stepping stone between one period and the next. Indeed, one of the themes that recurs throughout scholarship on American public broadcasting (Balas, 2003; Day, 1995; Ledbetter, 1997; Mitchell, 2005; Smith, 2002) is that of unrealised potential, of a "Vanishing Vision", to borrow the title of James Day's account. The argument that I make throughout this thesis is that the disappearance of this vision is not accidental. The principles that drive the media reform movements are firmly grounded within an ideological conception of the role of the media in society, and present, in turn, a threat to the realisation of another ideology, and its vision for radio and television. What I aim to do throughout the thesis is show how and why one ideology defeats another, the process by which one vision takes the place of another. In this sense, therefore, the focus on the frustrated Ford Foundation initiatives of the 1950s are clearly linked to earlier arguments that I have made regarding the regulation of radio in the 1920s, and educational television in the late 1940s.

Beyond the old dichotomy: the Ford Foundation in the early 1950s

The history of American broadcasting during the final few years of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s is typified by the struggles over whether, and how, to allocate broadcasting spectrum for use by educational television (ETV) broadcasters. As I have shown in the previous chapter, one of the outcomes of this struggle was the entrenchment of a dichotomous view of broadcasting. Television spectrum would be divided between commercial and educational television (ETV), and never the twain shall meet. Some of the media reformers involved in lobbying the FCC for ETV reservations in 1950 had argued for the licensing of non-profit, as well as non-commercial broadcasters. The non-profit model, as pioneered by Richard Hull at the University of Iowa, was predominantly a means of delivering educational television, but one which funded this work by broadcasting advertising, along with some non-educational programming provided by the commercial networks. The rationale was that not only would the advertising revenue be used to fund higher-quality programming, but also that viewers tuning in to watch commercial programmes would stay tuned to the educational fare. However, influential voices within the

media reform movement – most prominently progressive FCC commissioner Frieda Hennock – had objected to this model, and the JCET lobbied instead for ETV to be licensed on a purely non-commercial basis. This view was driven partly by pragmatic concerns, since Hennock and others were concerned that it would only increase the commercial television industry's objections to spectrum allocation for ETV, as it would have competed with them for advertising revenue under the non-profit model. However, the media reformers' objection were also based, in part, on cultural snobbery; a fear that commercial programming would somehow sully the purity of ETV's mission.

The Ford Foundation's Fund for Adult Education (FAE) was established towards the end of the television freeze. Its first act, according to Powell (1962: 65) was to agree to come to the rescue of the Joint Committee on Educational Television (JCET). The JCET had taken the lead in presenting evidence to the FCC throughout late 1950 and early 1951, but by the end of the hearings it was "out of funds and in debt", and Scott Fletcher of the Ford Foundation agreed that the FAE would offer sufficient finance to ensure its continued existence (ibid.: 65-66). The National Association of Educational Broadcasters (NAEB) and the JCET were awarded funding in April 1951 to undertake further lobbying activities, to help secure the gains made during the FCC hearings. The FCC had, in March 1951, announced in its *Third Notice of Further Proposed Rule Making* in which it broadly accepted the principle of spectrum reservations for ETV. Educational broadcasters were invited to bid for the individual broadcast licenses that had been made available, to begin broadcasting in 1952. The JCET felt, however, that this was a fragile victory, and that it was necessary to "[continue] this agency in action to protect the reservations that had been won" (ibid.: 66). The grant awarded by the Ford Foundation would therefore allow the JCET to encourage individual universities to bid for the reserved licenses, and to support them as they did so. A Ford Foundation grant was also awarded to a third body, the National Citizen's Committee for Educational Television (NCCET), to undertake work with civil society to build popular support for ETV (Engelman, 1996: 137-140).

While the FAE would be a highly influential player in the world of ETV throughout the remainder of the 1950s, it had entered the fray too late to be able to influence the course of the discussions that had taken place during the television freeze, and the money that it awarded was used in service of a strategy that it had not been instrumental in developing. In adopting the plan outlined by

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Blakeley (1979: 87) – secure allocations, secure licenses, develop a national system – the FAE was able to cement the alliance of progressive regulators and existing educational broadcasters, who had come together at the end of the 1940s to lobby for the allocations. Yet, while the first two parts of the FAE's strategy ensured that the fund was marching in step with the JCET, their work on developing a national system of non-commercial broadcasting had ambitions far beyond those of the JCET.

Internal Ford Foundation documents from 1952 reveals that senior figures within the FAE were keen to move beyond a narrow focus on ETV as a distinct and separate category of television. Minutes of a meeting of Ford Foundation staff on February 26th 1952 – three months before the FCC had published its *Sixth Report and Order* – record that C Scott Fletcher (the President of the FAE) and Robert M Hutchins (a Director of the Ford Foundation, and previously the Chair of the Hutchins Commission on the Press) were in discussions regarding the establishment of a Television Advisory Committee "to take a fresh look at the medium before it freezes into a commercial pattern as unfortunate, perhaps, as that of radio" (Ford Foundation, 1952). One of the suggested aims of this new committee was not to protect the FCC allocations, as the JCET wanted, but to hold off on making any new license awards – to extend the television freeze beyond 1952, in order that the Ford Foundation be able to develop alternative proposals. Minutes of the meeting held on February 26th note that "the very establishment of such a group [the Television Advisory Committee] might well cause FCC to postpone allocations[15]" (ibid). In early 1952, there were individuals within the FAE – most notably Robert M Hutchins – who clearly saw the need to revisit the entire debate regarding the place of television in American society. They would be too late to prevent the allocation of licenses under the terms of the settlement that had ended the freeze – the FCC announced a new tranche of licensees on the 11th of April, 1952 – but they would continue to press for a new, long-term, broad-ranging FAE funded investigation into television in the hope that they would be able to alter the course of its development. Despite their attempts, however, and despite two years of work funded by the FAE, this long-term investigation would not be established. Americans would have to wait until the late-1960s, and the intervention of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, before it would be given a forum to debate the state of

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[15] "Allocations" here refer to the licenses that were to be allocated to individual broadcasters, both ETV and commercial, under the terms of the settlement announced in March 1951's *Third Notice of Further Proposed Rule Making*.

television and radio in the US, and to discuss alternatives to the American System of Broadcasting.

5.3 Paul Lazarsfeld and the Television Advisory Committee

Work on developing proposals for a commission on television, funded by the Ford Foundation would take place throughout 1952 and 1953, and culminate in the June 1954 submission of a set of recommendations to Rowan Gaither, then President of the Ford Foundation (Ford Foundation, 1954). These recommendations were made in the name of the Citizens' Group on Television[16], a body chaired by the Columbia University professor Paul F Lazarsfeld. The final recommendations made by Lazarsfeld in 1954 were a significant departure from the vision outlined by FAE Board members in 1952, however, and did not result in the establishment of a longer-term commission, as originally planned. In this section I will examine the influence that Lazarsfeld himself had on this work, how and why his aims and objectives differed from those of the FAE board, and how this affected the development of American broadcasting policy during the 1950s. My analysis of the work of the group will revolve around three questions: What was the original intent of the Ford Foundation when it first proposed an advisory committee on television? How did the work develop under the chairmanship of Paul Lazarsfeld? And how successful was the Citizens' Group in meeting the original aims and objectives of the Ford Foundation?

The original aims of the Television Advisory Committee

The precise origins of the FAE proposal are not entirely clear, but the notion of establishing a commission to look generally at the future of television appears in the minutes of the FAE board meeting held on the 26th of February, 1952 (Ford Foundation, 1952). These minutes record that it was Robert Hutchins and C Scott Fletcher who relayed the idea of the commission to the Board. Fletcher was the President of the Fund for Adult Education, while Hutchins was one of three directors of the Ford Foundation. Both men had a been involved with the media in the past. Fletcher as the former president of Encyclopedia Britannica Films, but Hutchins' contribution has arguably been much more sustained and significant. He had been a director of the National Advisory Council on Radio in Education (NACRE) as far back as 1930. During the battles between

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[16] What begins as the Advisory Committee on Television undergoes a number of name changes between 1952 and 1954, and is variously known as the Television Council, the Public Policy Commission on Television, and the Television Development Center, although the report submitted to the Ford Foundation is in the name of the Citizens' Group. To further complicate matters, there is also a sub-committee within the Citizens' Group known as the Implementation Committee, and some of the documentation in the Ford Foundation Archives notes the Implementation Committee as its author.

the media reformers and the commercial broadcasters in the early 1930s, NACRE had been viewed with suspicion by some educational broadcasters, due to its links both with the large philanthropic foundations - it was funded by the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller family - and the commercial broadcasters. More significantly, Hutchins had served as the Chair of The Commission on Freedom of the Press, which had collectively authored *A Free and Responsible Press* (Commission on Freedom of the Press, 1947) a major work in the development of what Siebert, Peterson and Schramm would later call the "Social Responsibility theory" of media regulation (1956). Established by Henry Luce of Time Life, The Commission on the Freedom of the Press had been a wide-ranging inquiry into print, but also broadcast media. Over three years, evidence had been taken by a wide range of key thinkers, including prominent media reformers such as former FCC commissioner James Fly and American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) founder, Morris Ernst. The commission spent a great deal of its time considering the issue of press freedom from a positive, as well as negative position. Serious consideration was given to the problem of media industry concentration, with the commission seeking to find "an acceptable compromise between aggressive government intervention and absolutist laissez-faire libertarianism" (PIckard, 2015: 165). While it may be a stretch to describe Hutchins as a fully paid-up member of the media reform movement, he was certainly someone who was well-aquainted with, and sympathetic to the aims of, the movement.

Hutchins would go on to be a highly influential, and equally controversial, member of the Ford Foundation throughout the 1950s and considering his background, it is likely that he was instrumental in proposing the idea of a new commission to study television, and he was tasked with driving the idea forward; the minutes of the board meeting (Ford Foundation, 1952) recommend that he discuss the proposal with James Young, and a memorandum issued on the 3rd of March, fleshing out the idea, is authored by Hutchins (Hutchins, 1952).
While Hutchins was a man who had come to the Ford Foundation from the world of education - he had been President, and then Chair of the University of Chicago - Young had a very different professional background, a Ford Foundation staff member who had been recruited from the J Walter Thompson advertising agency. What bound these two men together, however, was an understanding that the challenge of improving the quality of broadcasting in the USA could not be met while regulators continued to maintain this division between educational and commercial television, with one side tasked with offering nothing but 'sustaining programmes', and the other

absolved of any responsibility to do the same. Hutchins' Commission on the Freedom of the Press had, six years previously, argued forcefully that more needed to be done to improve the quality and diversity of the media in the US, and had recognised the potential contribution that non-profit institutions could make to achieve this aim. But for this to work, it needed to be a partnership between commerce and education, with non-profit institutions restoring "an element of diversity to the information and discussion reaching the public by organising the demand for good things and by putting out good things itself" (Commission on the Freedom of the Press, 1947: 98). The suggestion that Hutchins discuss the proposal with Young (Ford Foundation, 1952) was significant, since Young had already established himself as a leading advocate of this 'full portfolio' approach to broadcasting. In a 1951 letter to the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters (NARTB) – one of the bodies that represented commercial broadcasting – Young had implored them to broadcast Ford Foundation funded 'sustaining' programming "at appropriate favourable and continuing hours" (quoted in Powell, 1962: 61) within their schedules. Young's entreaties had fallen on deaf ears, however, and at the conclusion of the FCC hearings in 1951, it seemed that commercial and educational television were moving further apart, rather than closer together. The proposal that Hutchins and Young developed, therefore, sought to take step back, to look at the root causes of the malaise which had permeated commercial radio, and which was in danger of possessing television. Once again, this idea had its roots – partially at least – in the work of the Commission on the Freedom of the Press. It had recommended the creation of a commission "independent of government and of the press" (Commission on the Freedom of the Press, 1947: 101), with a broad remit to advise and pressure the media, its regulator and the government. This commission was never established, but we see elements of it in the FAE proposal of 1952. The new commission proposed by Hutchins and Young would not focus on narrow questions of educational value, but would rather look at:

> problems of organization, management, control, regulation, and finance……It would examine the possibilities of subscription television, of non-profit stations, of the allocation of time to education or educational institutions, and of a permanent commission, either public or private, to advise the government and the people periodically of the state of the medium. The commission might want to look into the adequacy of the basic law under which the FCC operates. (Hutchins, 1952)

Not only does the work undertaken by Hutchins and Young during the early part of 1952 establish the need for the committee to have a wide-ranging remit, but it also establishes the principle that

the committee should be one that is protected from undue influence by vested interests, arguing:
 that no one who has taken a public position on television or is connected with the television industry or with education should be a member……….a commission on which either was represented would not be regarded as objective (ibid.)

Within this short memorandum, we see two principles established that are fundamental to the work of the proposed commission. The first of these is that should be broad, rather than narrow, in scope; its aim is to develop "a national policy with regard to television" (ibid.) It was to look at the entire medium, rather than proposing specific, separate, ways of developing ETV. The other principle that is stated forcefully and unequivocally is that the commission should be an independent one, without ties either to commercial television or to ETV. Such a proposal, formulated while the FCC was still deliberating over the award of new licenses under the allocation system agreed in response to the hearings of 1950/51, went far beyond the limits of the strategy being pursued by the JCET. What was being proposed by Hutchins was a committee that could, and should, engage in a wholesale re-evaluation of the philosophical basis of the American system of broadcasting, reviving some ideas that had only a year earlier been rejected not only by the commercial broadcasters but also the majority of the media reformers, and the FCC itself.

The first concrete steps towards establishing this committee were taken at a conference held in April 1952. I was not able to locate the minutes of this meeting in the Ford Foundations archive, but there is a document entitled *Proposed Agenda for Round Table Discussion on Television* (Ford Foundation, presumed 1952), which I presume[17] was prepared for this April conference. This document outlines in far greater detail than the previous memos the FAE's proposal to bring together "a group of thoughtful, informed people [to discuss]…… whether and how the Foundation might make such further contribution" to the field of television (ibid.: 1), before going on to outline the basic assumptions which inform the committee's discussion. These basic assumptions recognise the dominance of a "commercial, competitive, but regulated system of television, sustained by advertising", but ask whether there is a need for supplementary facilities "either of an

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[17] My presumption is based on two factors. First, the file in which this document can be found is organized chronologically, and its relationship to other documents in the file suggest that it was written in late March or early April. Secondly, and more importantly, the arguments laid out in the document are far closer to those being made by the FAE Board members in early 1952 than those made by Lazarsfeld, who began coordinating the work of the group sometime during the summer of 1952.

alternate commercial, or non-commercial nature" to help "develop the full social potentialities of this medium" (ibid.: 2). The document then goes on to identify areas in which there might be a need for television's development. Eschewing a narrow, purely educational or instructional focus, the memo suggests that the commission consider the potential weakness of areas previously considered within the purview of commercial broadcasting including entertainment, news, "interpretative journalism – comparable to editorials, commentators and special articles in magazines", the arts and "crusades – for religions, charitable causes, social reforms, political programs etc." (ibid.: 4).

Having identified areas in which commercial television might be considered lacking, the discussion paper then goes on to consider possible remedies, including the provision of subscription television, commercial non-profit television and non-profit educational television (ibid.: 5). Once again, we see the difference in the vision being articulated by the FAE, and the settlement reached by the FCC. It is clear that at this point, the dominant view within the FAE is that for television to reach its full social potential it was essential that it looked beyond what was possible within a narrow educational remit, and emphasised the necessity of exploring the possibilities of developing new legal, commercial and institutional forms that involved breaking down the commercial/educational binary.

This desire to explore options other than those available within the strictly instructional world of non-commercial ETV did not mean that the Ford Foundation turned its back on the media reformers and the educationalists, however. When the FCC published its Sixth Report and Order on April 14th, 1952, the FAE committed itself to supporting the outcomes of the spectrum allocation decision. A sum of $3.5m was set aside as fund-matching grants for station building, which would help individual institutions hoping to apply for one of the reserved licenses – universities for the most part – to fund the construction of new television stations. In addition, $1.5m was allocated from the FAE budget to pay for a national program exchange centre, to furnish the new broadcasters with high-quality television programmes to show their viewers (Ford Foundation, presumed 1952a: 3). However, in agreeing to support the FCC decision on ETV, the FAE made it clear – in internal documentation, at least – that this was not a conclusive settlement. In their *Statement on Educational Television*[18] (marked "Confidential: Not for distribution or

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[18] Again, this document is undated. It begins by making reference to the FCC's *Sixth Report and Order,* published on

announcement") the funds allocated are described as being "clearly of modest dimensions relative to the magnitude of the problem" adding that "they permit a start, but only a start". The FAE clearly intended to undertake significant further work in the field of television, but "expending the proposed funds wisely will require continuing study" (ibid.: 7). What represented a final victory for the media reformers of the JCET and their supporters on the FCC, was for the FAE an opportunity to begin work on the next stage of television's development.

The view of television that is articulated by the FAE in during the first half of 1952 bears the distinct stamp of Robert Hutchins. Indeed, the aims and objectives of the proposed commission closely mirror those of the Commission on the Freedom of the Press that Hutchins had chaired a few years earlier. Following the April 1952 meeting, however, Hutchins' influence over the committee begins to wane. At some point during the late spring or early summer, Paul F Lazarsfeld, of Columbia University was appointed to Chair the committee that the FAE had established to develop its proposal for a commission on television. Lazarsfeld would work on this proposal for close to two years, and it was under his leadership that the work of the committee would change dramatically.

Paul Lazarsfeld's chairmanship

How and when Paul Lazarsfeld came to chair the work of the Television Advisory Committee is not entirely clear, and is an area of this chapter where there is a need for further research. The conclusions that I draw here are based on the documents held at the Ford Foundation archives, along with a limited amount of existing scholarship on the subject, primarily the work of David Morrison (2000, 2006, 2008). When undertaking archival research, resource limitations meant that I was only able to look at official documentation, including correspondence, memoranda, and drafts of various reports. I was also able to look at the personal correspondence and papers of Paul Lazarsfeld, but not any of the other individuals that play key roles in this chapter. Some of the conclusions that I draw at the end of this chapter are better supported by the evidence than others, and there is scope for further research to test the claims that I make.

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the 12th of April 1952, and its contents suggests to me that it is a direct response to the findings of this report. Due to the fact that it, again, takes a stand that is in stark contrast to Lazarsfeld's views, I presume that it would have been circulated late in the Spring or early in the Summer of 1952, before Lazarsfeld became involved with the group.

Based on the material that I have seen, it is clear that Lazarsfeld assumed the chair of the committee at some point following the April seminars. In Hutchins' memo to the FAE Board in March 1952, it is noted that Ford Foundation President, Paul Hoffman, "has invited Mr McCabe to become chairman of the commission if it is established" (Hutchins, 1952: 1); "Mr McCabe" is presumably Gibson McCabe, publisher of Newsweek. He was not a figure that had clear links to either commercial television or education, thus satisfying James Young's desire that the proposed commission be independent of both. There is no further mention of McCabe in the correspondence, however, and by August of 1952, a memo notes that Paul Lazarsfeld has "agreed to bring together……broadcasters, educators and citizens generally interested or experienced in problems of this kind" (Ford Foundation, 1952a: 3). In an interview with Morrison (1976: 486) Lazarsfeld claims that it was Hutchins who asked him to take over the chairmanship of the committee, at the suggestion of Frank Stanton of CBS, but he does not tell us exactly when this happens. In the document pertaining to the August conference (Ford Foundation, 1952a) Lazarsfeld is named only as a coordinator of the August conference, but it seems that he was appointed to the Chair around this time, and continued in this role until the committee concluded its work in mid-1954.

Lazarsfeld is a key figure in the history of communication research; an Austrian émigré, he had first come to the USA in 1933 on a one-year fellowship, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. While he was in the USA, the Austrian government fell to a fascist coup, and Lazarsfeld, a Jew, decided against returning. (Scannell, 2007: 12) He had been introduced by Robert Lynd of Columbia University to Frank Stanton, then Director of Research at CBS, and Hadley Cantril, who suggested that Lazarsfeld be appointed director of the Princeton Radio Project (Socolow, 2008: 536). Lazarsfeld was not, at this point, a specialist in the field of communications. Rather, he was a sociologist whose primary interest was public opinion, and who concentrated of the development of new methodologies in the fields of opinion polling, voting behaviours and market research (Scannell, 2007: 13). His methodological innovations were closely linked to his pioneering use of "administrative research" as a model, which he described as conducting research "in the service of some kind of administrative agency of public or private character" (Lazarsfeld, 1941: 8). Scannell describes as Lazarsfeld's "first enduring creation" the independent research institute "hosted by a university but funded by income generated from projects commissioned by industry and government" (2007: 13). Yet from its very inception, this research model proved to be highly

controversial for many of Lazarsfeld's colleagues within the academy.

Many of the criticisms focused on the degree of influence that Administrative Research afforded the commissioners of the research; that in operating outside the centralised structures of the university, some researchers were merely swapping dependency on their host institutions for dependency on their funders. Objections to Administrative Research were raised by Lazarsfeld's friend and benefactor, Robert Lynd, as early as 1939. Lynd expressed concern that academia would cease to be a source of knowledge for the public good, and that its endeavours would instead be subservient to the demands of commerce. Lazarsfeld's response to this criticism had a tendency to be somewhat naïve, at times. Asked about conflicts of interest in an interview in 1976, shortly before his death, he argued that work carried out for a specific funder often led the researcher to insights that had broader social applications. He uses the example of work that he undertook on voter preferences in the 1940 presidential election which resulted in advice that he passed on to the trades union body the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) . His research had found that the wives of traditional Democrat voters were being prevented from voting by their husbands, and his conclusions led him to suggest that increasing female turnout would boost the Democratic Party's vote (Lazarsfeld and Stehr, 1982: 153).

The problem with Lazarsfeld's defence of Administrative Research is that while it considers – and offers a limited response to – questions of influence over the process and outcomes of the research, it pays no heed to the role of the funders in setting the research agenda, of choosing which subjects were deemed worthy of study and which not. As Adorno – who Lazarsfeld briefly recruited to work with him at the Princeton Radio Project – would later argue, "the objectivity of empirical social research is an objectivity of the methods, not of what is investigated" (Adorno [1957] 2000: 178). Here, Lazarsfeld's published work has less to say, but he did offer a response during the 1976 interview, arguing that lack of research funding was less of an issue that the cultural biases of the researchers themselves. Lazarsfeld saw the universities as being bastions of the middle-classes, populated with researchers who lacked the ability to generate research projects that addressed the needs of the working classes, and working class organisations that were, in turn, poorly equipped to access the research funding that Lazarsfeld considered to be abundant (Lazarsfeld and Sterh, 1982: 153). This justification, as bizarre as it might seem on the surface, is consistent with Lazarsfeld's general world-view. While he described himself both as a

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socialist and a Marxist, he also argued that his politics were personal, and did not have any bearing on his work. As early as 1942 he stated that "it is not the task of the research student to express an opinion on matters of policy" (1942: 42), and later said – in response to Lynd's criticism – that "from nine to five I am organizing empirical research and after five o'clock I am talking politics" (Lazarsfeld and Sterh, 1982: 152).

This question of apoliticism represents one of the major cleavages that separate Administrative Research from the alternative approach, Critical Research. Lazarsfeld himself attempted to outline the differences between Administrative and Critical Research in a 1941 essay, but with limited success. Attributing the concept of Critical Research to Horkheimer, another erstwhile colleague, he defined it as being:

> distinguished from administrative research in two respects: it develops a theory of the prevailing social trends of our times, general trends which yet require consideration in any concrete research problem; and it seems to imply ideas of basic human values according to which all actual or desired effects should be appraised. (Lazarsfeld, 1941: 9)

This definition identifies the way in which the Critical paradigm seeks to locate research within its broader context, but in doing so reduces it to questions of "general trends" and "human values". Genuine critical research, of the sort practised by some of Lazarsfeld's European colleagues, was far broader in scope, interested not in simple trends and values but in understanding the function of power structures within their historical context - what Adorno poetically described as that which "secretly holds the machinery together" ([1957] 2000: 176). For Lazarsfeld, critical research was an entirely valid form of academic enquiry, but one in which the limits of criticism were narrowly defined. As Hardt puts it, "the role of the critical in this context of Lazarsfeld's writings was still one of providing a scientific rationale for *an adjustment to* the dominant forces in American society" (1992: 110. Emphasis added). Research could serve the cause of reform, but not of revolution.

Critical elements within Lazarsfeld's own work were limited and marginal, and despite his assertion that he was a privately Marxist but professionally apolitical, his defence of Administrative Research is grounded in a liberal-pluralist and strongly market-driven world-view. Lazarsfeld's position, essentially, was that Administrative Research would generate public value by insights drawn from incidental or supplemental analysis of data generated in the course of research carried out for their

primary (usually private) funder. The more Administrative Research carried out, the greater the opportunity for the generation of public value. Any areas of research that were being neglected, he treated as easily corrected market failures – by recruiting researchers from more diverse backgrounds, for instance, or by facilitating greater access to the (supposedly) abundant sources of available funding. Examining fundamental questions about the structural conditions that underpinned the generation of knowledge was an unnecessary intervention in the (literal) marketplace of ideas.

Crucially, it is a view of education and research that Lazarsfeld carried over into his work on television. Since the focus of his research was on audiences, he avoids entering into detailed discussions of legal or regulatory matters, and only broadly sketches out his view of the political and economic structures which support broadcasting law and regulation. Yet in these broad sketches we see, once again, evidence of his market-driven liberal pluralism - an ideological position broadly aligned with what Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956) describe as a Libertarian[19] approach to media systems.

In his 1959 testimony to the FCC, Lazarsfeld (1960) makes reference to a conference that he had organised, along with Frank Stanton, to discuss ways in which the FCC's Blue Book might be implemented by the radio industry, but I have not seen any record of the discussions that were held. Notwithstanding this attempt to engage with the Social Responsibility[20] theory of broadcasting, most of Lazarsfeld's work clearly favours a system where commercial media is able to function within a minimal regulatory framework. Again, appearing before the FCC, he proclaimed that it is a "fact that Americans want the television industry to be a private business, not subject to government control" (Lazarsfeld, 1960: 30). Such "facts", derived[21] from commercially funded research and shorn of their structural context, were Lazarsfeld's bread and butter, and he would make similar assertions regarding popular attitudes towards broadcast regulation many times throughout the 1940s and 1950s. A study that he co-authored in 1946 (Lazarsfeld and Field, 1946: 90) concludes with the words "People say radio is fine; they want it to develop ever more so" – a

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[19] Market-driven liberal pluralism being something of a mouthful, I will use the term Libertarian (as defined by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm) for the remainder of the chapter.

[20] Again, I am returning to Siebert, Peterson and Schramm's classification of media systems.

[21] Or, to clarify, *presumably* derived from commercially-funded research, since Lazarsfeld does not point to the source of this fact – although work that he had undertaken almost a decade and a half earlier (Lazarsfeld and Field, 1946) did find low levels of support for government intervention in radio.

phrase that Lazarsfeld could well have adopted as his motto.

Previous to his appointment by the Ford Foundation, Lazarsfeld had been marginally involved in some of the discussions regarding the development of ETV, as a consultant at the 1949 seminar at Allerton House (see Chapter 4). Balas argues that Lazarsfeld made a potentially significant contribution to the discussion at Allerton House, but that his views had failed to find an audience. He had emphasised the importance of understanding radio listeners as audiences, "multiple publics" rather than a single "mass audience" (2011: 8). He also expressed a need for educational radio to move away from a top-down model that was dominated by middle-class cultural tastes (ibid. 6), and to be more attuned to the needs of marginalised groups, such as immigrants (ibid. 9). The views expressed by Lazarsfeld at Allerton House build upon those that he outlined almost a decade earlier, in *Radio and the Printed Page* (Herzog and Lazarsfeld, 1940), a volume that had looked at the question of how radio could best present 'serious' subjects to audiences whose listening patterns varied greatly according to social class and level of formal education. These views are, to Balas, indicative of Lazarsfeld's progressiveness, and she expresses frustration that such views were not given greater consideration by the advocates of ETV. Following his departure from Allerton House in 1949, he did not return a year later to participate in the second seminar. So, while Lazarsfeld had engaged, to a degree, with some of the questions that were of concern to the Hutchins and the FAE, they did not form a prominent part of his work by the early 1950s.

If we were to look for a figure that was the polar opposite of Lazarsfeld, then we could scarcely do better than Robert Hutchins himself. While Lazarsfeld was obsessed with methodology and data, understanding the details of lived experience through empirical means, Hutchins had little time for such approaches, and – according to Reeves – "expressed a personal distaste for 'fact-grubbing'" (1969: Location 3744). Hutchins was interested only in the big philosophical questions, ones that could usually be answered by putting a dozen academics in a room together for a few months to write a report. While President of the University of Chicago, he had radically overhauled the curriculum, designing a method of learning that revolved around Socratic debate of the 'Great Books', much of it replacing the empirical approach that was so central to Lazarsfeld's work.

Lazarsfeld referred to the differences between their approaches in a letter to Hutchins in March 1953. In it, he laments that more was not being done to combine the methodological and

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philosophical approaches favoured by the two men, and says that the Television Advisory Committee might "if properly developed" be the forum to bring together "systematic reflection such as your commission sponsored and the kind of factual analysis now available in the mass communications field" (Lazarsfeld, 1953: 1). Concluding the letter, however, Lazarsfeld writes that "occasionally I wake up at night wondering why it is I find myself suddenly organising a television commission" (ibid.). Yet, organise the commission he did, and according to a later account that he gave (Lazarsfeld quoted in Morrison, 1976: 486), it was Hutchins himself that invited him to do so. It was a curious choice, and one that would have far-reaching implications both for the committee itself, and the development of television policy in the USA.

The work of the committee under Lazarsfeld

The material found in the Ford Foundation collection offers only a partial picture of the work of the committee between April and August of 1952. Following the two-day seminar that was held in August 1952, however, there is ample evidence of Lazarsfeld taking a more active role in steering the direction of the television advisory committee. This is done in consultation with some of the participants from the August seminar, who expand in writing upon their responses to the four questions posed at the seminar:

1. Should an independent commission be established to deal generally with the role of television on the American scene, taking into account the questions raised above?
2. What should be the program of such a commission?
3. How should such a commission be made up, in regard both to Trustees (or directors) and staff?
4. How much would it cost to execute the program of such a commission? (Ford Foundation, 1952a: 3)

While the written responses to these questions are addressed to Lazarsfeld himself, it is clear that they were circulated amongst the respondents, so that individuals were given an opportunity to respond to the views of their colleagues. For example, in his letter to Lazarsfeld, dated October 23rd 1952, Gilbert Seldes states that he has read Wilbur Schramm's comments, which had been sent to Lazarsfeld a few weeks previously, on October 6th (Seldes, 1952: 1). What else is clear, and of greater significance, is that Lazarsfeld was drawing upon the expertise of a group of close friends and colleagues. The Ford Foundation archives contain letters to Lazarsfeld from Robert D Leigh, who worked at Columbia University (albeit in a different department from Lazarsfeld); Wilbur

Schramm and Leo Lowenthal, both of which had worked with Lazarsfeld at the Office of War Information in the early 1940s; Marjorie Fiske, a prominent sociologist who was, for a time, married to Lowenthal; and Herta Herzog, who had been Lazarsfeld's PhD student in Austria, and later his wife (although they had divorced in 1945). Much of this correspondence deals with the establishment of the committee, its remit, and how to organise its work. The question of how the television industry should be involved in the work is discussed in much of the correspondence, and while there is a divergence of opinion, the clear majority view is that Lazarsfeld's committee should proceed along the lines originally suggested by Young and Hutchins – that is, without any direct involvement from representatives of commercial or educational television.

Some of the correspondents had significant experience of working on past public commissions on the media. Robert D Leigh, Lazarsfeld's colleague at Columbia, had been the Director[22] of Hutchins' own Commission on the Freedom of the Press, and Charles Siepmann had been the primary author of the FCC's 'Blue Book'. Leigh is clear and unequivocal that any commission should be wholly independent of vested interests, arguing that the membership of the commission should consist "of persons distinguished for public spirit and seasoned experience……and not directly representative in its membership of industry, the government or organised consumer groups" (Leigh, 1952: 2). These groups would, however, be offered the opportunity to present their views through permanent panels established to represent their interests, but not be given seats on the commission itself. While Siepmann is less prescriptive about the exact form of the commission, he states that:

> The broadcasting industry (for understandable reasons) lacks the imagination and present incentive, and the FCC the moral courage, the proper personnel or the practical know-how to improve the current situation. Both await – and will ultimately respond to – the influence of a catalytic agency such as I conceive of the Commission to be (Siepmann, 1952: 2).

From which it is clear that he conceives of the commission as standing apart from both industry and regulation, although he also warns against it becoming "a pressure group……. It should pursue no ends which could, with any justice, be interpreted as attacks upon the industry by a bunch of

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[22] The commission director, in this context, was a chief executive officer, responsible for the overall administration of the commission, rather than being involved with steering its discussions or helping to form its conclusions.

intransigent intellectuals" (ibid.:1). Others, with less direct experience of commissions, make statements that are broadly sympathetic. Leo Lowenthal, while conceding that he lacks the expertise in the area to advise Lazarsfeld on the constitution of the commission, notes that what is needed is "an organised top-level body *of public conscience* on television" (Lowenthal, 1952: 1. Emphasis added).

Of the recommendations made to Lazarsfeld, the most detailed is that made by Schramm (1952), who offered three potential models for how the commission might be constituted; "the commission militant, the judicial commission and the working commission". The militant commission, according to Schramm, would be a pressure group that would "have no industry membership, indeed would try to mobilize all relevant forces to put pressure on industry", and act as an advocate for the public interest in legislative and regulatory hearings – much as the JCET had done in 1951. The judicial commission would be more objective, collecting evidence and making recommendations for others to implement (Schramm, 1952: 1). The working commission – favoured by Schramm – is a novel hybrid of both, with an emphasis on collaboration and consensus, "a kind of focus for industry, public and perhaps government, in their efforts to improve television". However, while Schramm sees the working commission as offering an opportunity for industry to be part of the discussion, he is clear that it should be a place "where problems can be discussed and studied without the shadow of any vested interest" (ibid.: 2). Much like Leigh, Schramm argues that industry, viewers and educations should be able to feed into the work of the commission, but only through an arm's length arrangement of representative panels (ibid.: 4-5). The "commission proper….should probably not include representatives of anything – industry, educational television, labor, racial groups" (ibid.: 5. Emphasis in original). Marjorie Fiske, who would later work for the Citizens' Group on Television that Lazarsfeld Chaired for the Ford Foundation, was equally clear on the need for independence, stating that the television commission's "personnel would be composed of public-spirited citizens who are greatly concerned with the problems of television *but who have not taken a position in advance*. Its approach in all matters would be objective." (Fiske, 1953: 2. Emphasis added).

Despite these strong entreaties to protect the work of the committee from vested interests, a minority of the correspondents took the opposite view, arguing that direct representation of industry was essential if any commission was to be effective. Herzog argues in favour of drawing in

the commercial television sector, saying "A council which included commercial people would, in my opinion, not only have more effect, but in utilising their orientation and experience, should also be able to produce a better piece of work. Can one get commercial people?" (Herzog, 1952: 4). The strongest view in favour of ensuring industry representation on any commission, however, is the one expressed by Sidney Kaye. Kaye was a lawyer who had worked extensively for the entertainment industry, and had been instrumental in the 1930s in challenging the dominance of the ASCAP (The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) (Sanjek, 1988: 174). His firm was also on retainer to CBS and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB), the trade body of the commercial broadcasters, and his view of broadcasting strongly favoured commercial interests. Indeed, he takes a libertarian view of television, arguing that it is no different to any other existing medium:

> As you are better aware than any of us, precisely the same things that we are now saying about television programs have previously been said about radio, motion pictures, the theater, periodicals, newspapers and indeed the very art of printing (Kaye, 1952.: 2).

No heed is paid to the notion of the airwaves as a public resource that needs to be put to the best public use. This was a point that had been used to distinguish radio and television from other media for decades, and one that had been well-established in theory, if not in practice, since the first attempts to regulate radio in 1912 (see Chapters 4 and 5). Kaye concludes his letter by stating that "television does not need another pressure group. 'Better programming' will not be achieved by exhortation, but by 'better programs'" (ibid.: 3). He argues not only for giving commercial television a voice on the commission, but for a system that would, effectively, allow them to dominate it:

> any commission would require the active participation in its work of telecasters, advertising agencies and sponsors…they would want to be assured that they would have an opportunity to express their views on all points, and, if there were dissemination of any conclusions, that they would have sufficient advance notice so that they could, if they wished, simultaneously express concurring or dissenting viewpoints(ibid.:1)

In fairness to Herzog and Kaye, the idea of commercial representation on the committee does not originate with them. It is recorded that the first meeting to discuss a possible commission, held in April 1952, before Lazarsfeld was appointed to the Chair, included "television industry

representatives, educators and others interested in TV" (Ford Foundation 1952a: 1). In addition, when Gibson McCabe was originally approached to chair the committee, he too suggested that the views of the commercial television industry should be canvassed, and proposed a list of names that the FAE should approach to participate (Hutchins, 1952: 3). It is worth noting, however, that the April meeting was merely an informal discussion of the possibility of establishing a commission, and that McCabe only recommended that the television industry be informed of the committee's existence. The recommendation made by Kaye, and to a degree Herzog, go a step further by proposing that representatives of commercial television be given a formal role in the work of the final commission.

During the winter of 1952, Lazarsfeld worked on a set of recommendations to present to the board of the FAE, regarding the establishment of a longer-term commission on television. His own views are first articulated in a draft resolution dated January 21st, 1953[23]. In this document (Ford Foundation, 1953), Lazarsfeld suggests a model that is partially based on Schramm's notion of a "Working Commission", being neither a pressure group nor a wholly objective "Judicial Commission" (Schramm, 1952: 1). One of Schramm's key objectives was to create a commission that could serve "industry, public and perhaps government" serving as "a source of interpretation of one of these groups to the others, [and] a source of facts and wisdom concerning the problems at hand" (Ibid.). This aim features prominently in Lazarsfeld's proposal for the Public Policy Council, which he describes by saying that:

> sometimes these councils play the role of mediators, by providing a forum for quiet discussion between various interest groups. At other times they provide factual information that could only have been collected over a considerable period of time, and outside the arena of controversy (Ford Foundation, 1953: 2).

Having established this very broad constitutional framework for the commission, Lazarsfeld then moves on to discuss in detail how it would conduct research, of what kind, and in which areas. Here we see, for the first, time, a clear shift in emphasis, from the kind of broad-sweep, deliberative forum envisaged by Hutchins to a much more narrowly research-focussed body that Lazarsfeld favoured. The normative element is not lost completely, at this point. Lazarsfeld still

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[23] This document does not have an author's name attached, but the final report of the Citizens' Group on Television notes that following the exchange of correspondence discussed above "the Chairman then worked out a proposal for a 'Public Policy Council on Television' which was submitted……on January 26, 1953" (Implementation Committee on Television, 1954: 2).

talks of the need to consider questions such as "Should the state operate television stations?" (ibid. 6), but even then this issue is discussed in terms of formulating questions for others to consider, rather than in answering those questions themselves.

Lazarsfeld's Public Policy Council is also similar to Schramm's Working Commission in its approach to the crucial question of vested interests. Although the Public Policy Council would be involved in discussing matters of importance to the industry, Lazarsfeld remains supportive of some degree of separation between them. He notes that the council should bring together "groups of citizens, who are greatly concerned with a particular problem *but who have not taken a position in advance*" (Ford Foundation, 1953: 1. Emphasis added). Later in the proposal he discusses how the council would undertake its analytical role "by inviting expert opinions and by carefully interviewing the proponents of various ideas" (ibid. 7). This work would be "handled in close concert with other organisations……….but it would not necessarily take a specific stand" (ibid. 8).

While the proposal pays lip-service to the importance of independence from vested interest, there is cause to be a sceptical about Lazarsfeld's true intention, however. Within this document we begin to see a gap opening up between Lazarsfeld's view of television, and that of Hutchins, the council's originator. The fundamental need for the committee, according to the FAE, was "to take a fresh look at the medium before it freezes into a commercial pattern as unfortunate, perhaps, as that of radio" (Ford Foundation, 1952). These concerns were not shared by Lazarsfeld, who noted that "at first sight, there seems to be nothing in the present condition of television in the United States which would make it a major social problem" (Ford Foundation, 1953: 3). Indeed, where the preparatory work undertaken by Hutchins, Young and the FAE board is clearly grounded in the 'Social Responsibility' model of the press that underpinned so much of Hutchins' work (Siebert, Peterson and Schram, 1956), Lazarsfeld approaches the "problem" of television from a very different perspective. His concerns about the social impact of the medium are that there is not enough information about its effects on children, and that it poses challenges for striking "the right balance between mass culture and elite culture" (ibid. 5). Structurally, however, his concerns are not that commercial broadcasters will dominate, to the detriment of the public interest. Rather, he worries that there is not enough available spectrum to enable a plurality of private broadcasting ("it is as though only a few trains a day could leave the New York stations, giving rise to continual debate as to whether they should go to Albany, Boston or Philadelphia"), and that state

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intervention in broadcasting might be an encroachment on the freedom of the press (ibid. 4), reflecting the market-driven liberal-pluralism that is evident in much of his work on the medium.

It is in this proposal of January 1953, therefore, that we first see evidence of two significant changes occurring in the work of the committee. First, there is a shift of emphasis, from looking at broad normative questions - "problems of organization, management, control, regulation, and finance." (Hutchins, 1952) - to considering far more specific, functional questions; Lazarsfeld describes the work of the committee as tackling "specific problems which do seem to permit concrete solutions" (Ford Foundation, 1953: 5). This is accompanied by a shift in methodological approach, from Hutchins' Socratic dialogue to Lazarsfeld's empirical data collection. And these two changes happen in a context in which the membership of the committee goes from being strictly protected from the influence of vested interests to being dominated by individuals drawn from the field of commercial broadcasting.

At which point, exactly, the commercial television industry becomes part of the work of the group is a matter of some conjecture, and there is a lack of clarity within the primary documentation. The report that was presented to the Ford Foundation in June 1954 outlines the historical development of the Citizens' Group's work, stating that Lazarsfeld was, personally,

> interested in developing something in the nature of a television commission, provided that members of the television industry would lend formal or informal support to such a plan. After consultation with staff members and others, but basically on his own responsibility, he then invited a group of interested individuals, whom we shall hereafter refer to as the Citizens' Group, to come together to see whether a workable formula could be developed." (Implementation Committee on Television, 1954: 2).

The report then goes on to state that this group *first* met at the seminar of August 21 and 22, 1952 "with Mr Lazarsfeld as Chairman" (ibid.). Yet, in correspondence between Lazarsfeld and his colleagues following the meeting in August, the question of industry involvement in the work of the committee is still a matter of discussion. Indeed, in the her letter, dated November 4th, 1952 Herta Herzog makes the case for involving representatives of the commercial television industry, and asks Lazarsfeld directly "Can one get commercial people?" (Herzog, 1952: 4).

Read alone, the report of the Implementation Committee (1954: 2-3), presents the membership of

the group as being consistent throughout the latter half of 1952 and into 1953. A meeting held on the 26th of January 1953 is described as the "second meeting of the Citizens' Group" (ibid.), following the first that was held in August 1952. Yet at some point during this period, the membership of the Citizens' Group changes dramatically. None of those who correspond with Lazarsfeld in late 1952 are named as members of the group in the 1954 report. Most of them do continue to contribute to its work, primarily as researchers preparing research reports deemed relevant to its aims. Sydney M. Kaye is appointed counsel to the Implementation Committee, and Marjorie Fiske is made Executive Secretary. But none of those who corresponded with Lazarsfeld following the August 1952 meeting are members of the committee by the time that it reports in June 1954. It seems that at some point during early 1953, the group of friends and colleagues that had advised Lazarsfeld in late 1952 are replaced by men drawn from the world of commercial broadcasting and education – the very people whom Hutchins and Young had stipulated should not be involved in the work of the committee.

The final report of the Citizens' Group, delivered to the Ford Foundation in June 1954, was co-signed by both David C. Adams, Staff Vice President of NBC and Frank Stanton, President of CBS, as well as Robert D Sewey, Executive Vice President of WDSU New Orleans (an NBC affiliate). The group also included Gardner Cowles, of Cowles Magazines, who would go on to purchase KCCI Des Moines, Iowa – a CBS affiliate station – in 1955. Two other members also had ties to commercial media; Wayne Coy, who was then President of the Albuquerque Broadcasting Company, owner of KOB Albuquerque (another NBC affiliate, albeit one that had been founded in the 1920s as an educational station), and Norman Cousins, Editor of the Saturday Review. Cousins was a prominent liberal, a vocal advocate of nuclear disarmament and internationalism, which bought him into the natural orbit of the Ford Foundation[24]. Coy's appointment was more significant, not because of his connections to KOB, but because he had very recently been Chair of the FCC, heading the organisation between 1947 and 1952.

In selecting these men to serve on the commission, Lazarsfeld was drawing upon existing relationships, both professional and personal. In fact, it is difficult to draw a clear distinction, when

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[24]Cousins would later join the boards of both Educational Television for the Metropolitan Area (ETMA) and the Educational Television and Radio Center (ETRC, later NETRC). Both ventures were partly-funded by the Ford Foundation, and would prove vital in the later development of American public television.

it comes to Lazarsfeld, between the professional and the personal. As has already been noted, he had supervised the PhD written by Herta Herzog in Austria, before going on to co-author a book with her before they married and then divorced. However, it is not Herzog that is the key figure who ties together the individuals who eventually made up the membership of the Citizens' Group, but rather Frank Stanton.

It was Stanton who had given Lazarsfeld his first permanent job in the US, during the war, working on the Princeton Radio Project. Stanton claims that the original idea for the Radio Research Project came from him and Hadley Cantril, who submitted a funding proposal to the Rockefeller Foundation in or around 1937. The proposal wasn't immediately funded, and both Stanton and Cantril moved on to other projects. According to his account, Stanton later passed the proposal to Lazarsfeld, who re-worked it into a successful bid that led to the establishment of the Radio Research Project at the University of Newark (Buxton & Acland, 2001: 196). Stanton speaks of being in awe of Lazarsfeld's work, describing his re-working of the Radio Research Project as "New Testament" compared to the "Old Testament" proposal that he and Cantril had originally submitted to Rockefeller (ibid.: 196), before going on to say that he and Cantril "were holding on to a rocket when Paul was at his top performance" (ibid.: 197).

Stanton in turn was connected to many of the other eventual members of the Citizens' Group. He had worked with Elmo Roper at the Office of War Information in 1941 (Buxton & Acland, 2001: 223 n74) and in 1942 Roper had offered Stanton a partnership at his polling company (Buxton & Acland, 2001: 223 n73). Roper – later the founder of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut – had also part-funded a study by Lazarsfeld in 1948 (Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet, 1948), to which Stanton made an "essential contribution" (Socolow, 2008: 527). Stanton had also played an instrumental role in the career of another member, Ralph Tyler. Tyler was the founding director of the Center for the Advanced Study in the Behavioural Sciences in 1952, a Ford Foundation think tank that would later become part of Stanford University (Finder, 2008). Frank Stanton served as its first Chair of the Board of Directors, and in a 1991 interview claimed responsibility both for establishing the Center, and for appointing Tyler as its first Executive Director (Buxton & Acland, 2001: 194).

Exactly when Frank Stanton became involved with the work of the committee is unclear. Morrison

points to the influence of Henry Ford II, claiming that Ford II had been "opposed to the [television commission] project on the grounds that it was too controversial" (2000: 144), and that he had personally invited Frank Stanton to sit on the Citizens' Group in an attempt to head off this controversy. Lazarsfeld also claims that Hutchins had invited him to take the Chair of the group at Stanton's urging (Morrison, 1976: 486), which would have happened at some point between April and August 1952.

The problem with this version of the chronology is that there is nothing in the Ford Foundation archive to support it. Ford's invitation to Stanton was made in a phone call, according to Morrison (2000: 144) and is therefore not recorded. Stanton's name is not documented in relation to the Television Advisory Committee until long after Lazarsfeld was appointed as Chair. More problematic is the inconsistency in the evidence that is contained in the archive, specifically Lazarsfeld's assertion that the members of the Citizens' Group had been appointed in August 1952, which is directly contradicted by his correspondence with friends and colleagues in the autumn of 1952, particularly the letter from Herta Herzog where she specifically asks Lazarsfeld whether it might be possible to bring in representatives of commercial television. My impression is that Lazarsfeld did not always have a strong grasp on details . When interviewed about his career in 1991, Frank Stanton typified Lazarsfeld as a chaotic character, saying that "He didn't know budgets. He didn't keep appointments. He couldn't find the mail he had received, nor the letters he had written" (Stanton quoted in Buxton and Acland, 2001: 197). Considering the fact that inconsistencies had crept into his account of how members of the Citizens' Group had been appointed as soon as 1954, I am inclined to believe that his 1973 explanation of how Stanton came to be involved may not be a definitive account. This is one area in which further archival study is necessary.

Whichever way we arrange these events, what is indisputable is that between April 1952 and the Spring of 1953, the commission proposed by Fletcher and Hutchins fundamentally changed from being one in which those with an existing interest in broadcasting would be excluded, to being one dominated by commercial interests. The presence of prominent and powerful individuals from the field of commercial broadcasting as members of the Citizens' Group left an indelible mark on the outcome of their work. Stanton himself continued to exert an influence throughout the period in which the group was working on the report. In June 1953, he wrote to Lazarsfeld, expressing

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dissatisfaction that Siepmann, Leigh and Lowenthal were involved in the group's work, arguing that the inclusion of their work in the final report will jeopardise the project. Siepmann is singled out by Stanton, presumably because of his past involvement with the FCC's Blue Book (Stanton, 1953: 2).

More problematically, Sidney Kaye, who acted as counsel for the group, continued to press for greater involvement from the commercial broadcasters, and at times acted as a conduit between the group and the industry. Writing to Lazarsfeld in July 1953, Kaye notes that he had lunch with Hal Fellows, President of the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters (NARTB), and that the NARTB expected to be able to veto any proposals resulting from the group's work that "seemed biased or threatening to them" (Kaye, 1953: 2). When the group's report is finally published, its introduction clearly states that "Television as a private business enterprise has not been questioned" (Implementation Committee on Television, 1954: 5), signalling the inherently conservative defence of the status quo that could be found within its pages.

While the recommendations of the Citizens' Group superficially mirror some of those first articulated by Hutchins (1952), at heart their vision for a commission to guide the development of television is far more limited. They recommend the establishment of a permanent body to offer a longer-term view of the needs of the new medium, which they call the Television Development Center (TDC). The key difference between the original vision, and that articulated by the Citizens' Group is in the scope of the TDC's remit. Fletcher and Hutchins had envisioned a commission that could question the fundamental direction of television policy, discussing "problems of organization, management, control, regulation, and finance" (Hutchins, 1952), offering guidance to government and proposing new legislation. This approach closely mirrors that adopted by Hutchins' previous Commission on the Freedom of the Press, which adopted a very positive approach to broadcast freedom, emphasising the need for the media to exercise its power responsibly. The work of the Citizens' Group takes the opposite view, concentrating on the dangers that it sees inherent in placing too many burdens on commercial television, and the effect that this could have on free speech: "The mass media should respect the morals and norms of the community, but on the other hand, a certain watchfulness is necessary lest intolerant pressure groups exercise censorship." (Implementation Committee on Television, 1954: 5).

What is produced by the Citizens' Group is far more narrow in its scope than that envisaged by

Hutchins and the FAE; a TDC focused on three aims: Basic Research, Review and Analysis, and Service Functions (Implementation Committee on Television, 1954: 6). The Service Functions suggested by the Group would be targeted at outside groups, helping them to develop their understanding of television. Suggestions include collating information on recent developments, helping develop good quality research into television, and establishing a training programme (ibid.: 22) – although it is clearly noted that "Service functions are those involving the use of present knowledge and experience to improve the use of television *in situations where the goals are uncontroversial*" (ibid.: 6, emphasis added). Service functions should not, therefore, be critical of existing institutional structures.

Likewise, *Review and Analysis*, would be steered away from the kind of prescriptive, normative work that Hutchins suggested the committee undertake. This aspect of the group's endeavours would involve the gathering together, by experts, of existing knowledge and synthesising it, to help inform policy discussions regarding television. He concedes that this aspect of the TDC's work would be driven by the demands of policy-makers, but suggests that initial areas of study might include:

> (a)The problems of program standards and mass culture; (b) the possible consequences of television for the political life of this country; and (c) the question of how television can be used for educational needs (ibid.: 16-17).

This work would not, however, involve making any recommendations; its job would be to outline a "clear formulation of the problem; identification of possible consequences; and the proper role of available factual evidence in the decision-making process" (ibid.: 17).

Basic Research was the area of the proposed commission's work that allowed it greatest latitude to undertake the kind of critical, normative work that was closer to Hutchins' vision. This would involve"the clarification of more current television issues by systematic reflection and by the use of data and objective information". (ibid.: 6). It is important to note two things about the proposed *Basic Research* function of the commission, however. The first of these is how closely the proposed areas of research mirror the specific academic interests of Lazarsfeld himself, containing suggestions for studies on the effects of the media on child development, and a localised study on the effects of the media on political opinion (ibid.: 14). While these are, of course, important and

valid areas of study, they are not grounded in the need for a broad, critical overview of the philosophical basis for the American system of broadcasting. When discussing the areas of Basic Development that demand further attention, the report does not consider how these areas might serve the fundamental aims of the committee. Rather, what has been done is "review the present state of communications research" more generally to identify the "type of research in which, for various reasons, neither universities nor commercial agencies have engaged" (ibid., 8-9). Further research is, therefore, driven not by the critical and normative demands of the committee, but by the gaps in existing research. From an academic perspective, this is understandable, but the committee as envisaged by the FAE was not an academic exercise.

During his correspondence with friends and colleagues in the Autumn and Winter of 1953, Lazarsfeld was warned by Siepmann that the commission should not become "a financing house for impoverished professors to pursue research of their own choosing and to advance their own status." (Siepmann, 1952: 1), yet is seems that this is what happened, to a degree, to the Citizen's Group under Lazarsfeld's chairmanship. Lazarsfeld (1953a), writing to Marjorie Fiske, was quite brazen about this, noting that "I always try to kill several birds with one stone" before going on to suggest that material produced by the committee be shared with Herbert Hyman, a colleague at Columbia who was in need of new teaching materials. He was entirely within his rights to do so, having secured the right to publish this work was retained by the original authors "under University auspices without ascription to the Committee" (Implementation Committee on Television, 1954: 7). Lazarsfeld, therefore, managed to secure funding for research in areas of interest largely defined by himself, with the publication rights to this material awarded to Columbia University.

The final report published by the Citizens' Group under Lazarsfeld is typified by two key qualities The first of these is that it is a report that bears the imprint of those powerful individuals from the world of commercial broadcasting who had been recruited to serve as its members. Directly contradicting the views expressed to Lazarsfeld by colleagues like Lowenthal, Siepmann and Schramm, the report claims that "most persons who were consulted felt that no program of activity in this area would be likely to be effective unless it had the active cooperation of leading figures in the television industry" (Implementation Committee on Television, 1954: 1). Once they had overcome the objections to their presence on the Citizens Group, the representatives of

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commercial television lobbied to increase their influence, noting that the group was "particularly concerned about three points [including] the role which individuals connected with the industry would play on the board and whatever other units would compromise the TDC" (ibid.: 3). This resulted in a report in which "Television as a private business has not been questioned" (ibid.: 5), and which made no effort to address the "problems of organization, management, control, regulation, and finance" (Hutchins, 1952) which had been at the heart of why the group had originally been established.

The question of who was responsible for the corporate takeover of the work of the Citizens' Group is impossible to answer definitively, on the basis of the evidence that I have seen to date. It may have been Henry Ford II, keen to steer the Ford Foundation away from the areas of controversy towards which it had increasingly been led by Hutchins, among others. Stanton might well have been Ford II's means of achieving his aim, a man who was intimately connected to the worlds of commercial television and education. Or, alternatively, Stanton might have been recruited to the group by Lazarsfeld, following a lifelong pattern of 'administrative research' that often used private capital to serve public ends. What is beyond doubt is that the final report that was delivered to the board of the Ford Foundation in the summer of 1954 bore the indelible mark of Lazarsfeld himself. It was a document that prioritised his own research agenda, to be explored using methodologies that he had pioneered, within a context of 'Administrative Research' that he had created.

The report that the Citizens' Group delivered to the Ford Foundation recommended the establishment of a commission to explore these issues in the longer-term. In this much, the report that Lazarsfeld delivered met the original aims of Hutchins and the FAE. Yet once Lazarsfeld's work had been completed, the Citizens' Group was disbanded, and no commission was established to take its place. This was evidently a source of some frustration, both to Hutchins and to Lazarsfeld. Morrison (1976) argues that the failure of the Ford Foundation to build on Lazarsfeld's work after 1954 represented a significant setback for the production of knowledge regarding television during this era. It is a conclusion that I concur with, in part, and will discuss in the final section of this chapter. However, I would argue that this setback had a different impact to the one identified by Morrison, and for different reasons. Before going on to look at how the development of television in America was affected by the failure of this particular initiative, I wish to examine the reasons for the initiative's collapse, beginning with the explanation offered by Lazarsfeld himself.

5.4 The Ford Foundation, anti-communism and the study of television after 1954

In the dying days of the television freeze of 1948-1952, the Ford Foundation, through the FAE, committed itself to establishing a Commission on Television, broadly modelled on Hutchins' previous commission on the freedom – or rather the responsibility – of the press, which had reported a few years previously. Having dedicated two years to developing a proposal for this commission, however, it disappears without a trace after the submission of the Citizens' Group report of June 1954. What could have been a substantial intervention in the development of broadcasting policy was lost to history. With the exception of the work done by Morrison, Lazarsfeld's biographer, the contribution of the Ford Foundation in developing television policy during the mid-1950s is almost entirely absent from the (admittedly few) accounts of this period. Their contribution is reduced to one of practical rather than philosophical support for the medium.

Publicly, Lazarsfeld has stated that the Ford Foundation decided to retreat from the study of television due to political pressure, and that the work of his Citizens' Group fell victim to the anti-communist witch-hunts of the period that Fried (1990) describes as the Mid-Century Red Scare[25]. Lazarsfeld's view, or a modified version of it, is shared by Morrison – the scholar who has produced by far the most substantial body of work on Lazarsfeld's life and career – yet I have serious doubts about its plausibility. In this section I shall take a critical look at the argument made by Lazarsfeld and Morrison, pointing to some of its main weaknesses, before going on to offer an alternative explanation for why the report authored by Lazarsfeld did not result in the formation of a longer-term, Ford Foundation-funded commission on television.

Lazarsfeld's core argument is that the Ford Foundation refused to fund the commission on television because it was coming under increased scrutiny from right-wing members of Congress, who were investigating philanthropic foundations that they perceived to be soft on communism. This much is beyond dispute; during the early to mid-1950s, there were two separate (but interconnected) Congressional investigations on the subject, the first chaired by Rep. Edward E. Cox (D-Ga.), the closely followed by another chaired by Rep. B Carroll Reece (R-Tenn.). Giving evidence, in 1955, to the Kefauver Committee on Juvenile Delinquency, Lazarsfeld was asked about the work that he had done for the Ford Foundation on television, and answered that:

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[25] The question of when exactly this period begins and ends is discussed later in the chapter, but Fried talks of attacks on constitutionally protected free speech being at particular risk during the period between 1945 and 1955 (1990: 37).

> just as our committee submitted a detailed plan endorsed by industry and well as by critical reform groups, the attacks on foundations began and the sponsoring organisation decided to drop the whole matter (quoted in Morrison, 2000: 141)

Lazarsfeld elaborated on this view in an interview with Morrison conducted in 1973, going on to claim that Beardsley Ruml – a member of staff at the Ford Foundation who had been appointed to sit on the Citizens' Group – had "torpedoed the whole project" (quoted in Morrison, 2000: 143) by persuading Ford Foundation Vice-President William McPeak to discontinue support. Morrison is sceptical of Lazarsfeld's claim that the permanent commission was deliberately "torpedoed" by a single individual, but agrees that pressure from right-wing politicians was a decisive factor, arguing in another publication that "the foundation withdrew support when it came under attack by right-wing voices" (2008: 180).

This was a view that the Ford Foundation itself explicitly rejected, at the time. Lazarsfeld wrote to William McPeak on the 10th of May, enclosing a copy of the testimony that he had given (Lazarsfeld, 1955). McPeak responded on the 6th of June, thanking Lazarsfeld for his supportive comments regarding the work of the foundations generally, and also his criticism of the Reece committee, before going on to say:

> I want, however, to correct one part of your story to the Committee. The Ford Foundation did not 'drop' consideration of your citizens committee's plan for television programming and research because of the launching of the Reece Committee hearings, and I should have thought that this was clear at the time (McPeak, 1955)

It was evidently not clear, because Lazarsfeld wrote to McPeak on the 16th of August to request a meeting to "straighten out" the matter (McPeak, 1955a). Minutes of this meeting are not in the Ford Foundation files, but correspondence between the two men continued into the autumn of 1955, with McPeak insistent throughout that the Reece Committee was not the reason for the foundation's refusal to establish a full commission.

It is important to place the work of the Citizens' Group, and the Congressional investigations into the philanthropic foundations, in their historical context. The driving force behind, and popular face of, right-wing anti-communism in the early 1950s had been Senator Joseph McCarthy (Rep.-

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Wis.). McCarthy had risen to prominence in 1950, partly as a result of the Alger Hiss case, in which many prominent members of the Truman Administration testified in support of Hiss, widely believed to be a Soviet spy. This led to charges that the Democratic Party was soft on (or even a front for) communism. One of Hiss' character witnesses, Adlai Stevenson, was the Democrats' candidate for the presidency in 1952, which he lost to Dwight D Eisenhower, the first Republican to hold that office for almost two decades. Eisenhower had secured the Republican nomination in 1952 as the candidate of the liberal wing of the party, but had realised that to win the general election he needed the support of the party's right. This had partly been achieved by selecting Richard Nixon as his Vice Presidential candidate − a man "who practised McCarthyism before McCarthy had thought of the idea" (Perlstein, 2008 :743) – but also involved reaching accommodation, of sorts, with McCarthy himself. Eisenhower hated him, and had been critical of McCarthyism (if not McCarthy personally) before and during 1952. Strategically, however, the charge that the Truman Administration was soft on communism proved too effective a weapon not to deploy during the campaign. Eisenhower backed away from a plan to criticise McCarthy publicly during a campaign visit to Wisconsin, an event that helped create the perception that McCarthy had endorsed Eisenhower – or vice versa (Oshinsky, 2005: 237). Following the election, however, relations between the President and the Senator deteriorated rapidly. In early 1953, President Eisenhower nominated Charles E 'Chip' Bolen as Ambassador to the Soviet Union, a crucial strategic appointment. When the nomination was sent to the Senate for confirmation, McCarthy led the opposition, attempting to paint Bolen as a communist sympathiser, based on his links to the Truman administration (Oshinsky, 2005: 286). McCarthy failed to block the nomination, but it represented the first battle in a war with the administration, that would ultimately lead to his downfall.

Against this backdrop, others were emboldened to openly challenge the actions of McCarthy. 1953 was the year that Ed Murrow chose to use his award-winning programme, *See it Now,* to directly criticise McCarthy on prime-time television. And while public support for McCarthyism remained strong in some parts of the country, he was becoming increasingly unpopular among the elites, particularly in the North East – the home of liberal Republicanism, and of the great philanthropic foundations. Oshinsky cites a survey taken at "New York city's exclusive Links Club in June 1953 [which] had three quarters of the members expressing disapproval of McCarthy" (2005: 304). More importantly, the business community was turning against the senator – including Henry Ford

II himself (ibid). Attacking Truman and the Democrats for their communist sympathies was one thing, but once McCarthy turned his fire on members of the Republican establishment, it was a different matter.

Relations between McCarthy and the Eisenhower Administration – and by extension, much of the Republican establishment – continued to decline throughout 1953. By 1954, the year in which Lazarsfeld submitted his report to the Ford Foundation board[26], McCarthy was embroiled in the Senate Subcommittee on Investigations' hearings on the Army, that would lead to his downfall. Broadcast live on ABC between mid-May and mid-June, these hearings succeeded in seriously denting McCarthy's credibility and popularity. Field describes 1954 as the year in which "several developments combined to check the momentum of anti-Communist extremism" (1990: 171), while Morgan notes that by 1955 many in Washington were saying that "It's no longer McCarthyism, it's McCarthywasm" (2003: 505).

By the end of 1954, Senator McCarthy had been censured by the Senate, effectively putting an end to his career as Witch-finder General. This is not to say that right-wing anti-communism had ceased to matter; it would continue to be a key component of American political discourse for the remainder of the Cold War. But from the mid-1950s onwards McCarthyism would have to contend with the increased influence of liberal anti-communism, much of it driven by the institutions of the Eastern Establishment – the Republican Party, the Ivy League, and the philanthropic foundations. So, while McCarthyism did not disappear with the censure of McCarthy, it is important to understand the anti-communism of the early- and mid-1950s as an arena of contest between right-wing populism and elite liberalism. This is the context in which the work of the *Select Committee to Investigate Tax-Exempt Foundations and Comparable Organizations* – that Lazarsfeld blames for scotching the development of his work on television – took place. In describing 1953 as "the height of the McCarthy reign" (2008: 193), Morrison does not convey quite how quickly McCarthy had risen from obscurity, nor how steep and sudden his decline had been. And while his censure in December 1954 was partly a result of personal antipathy towards him, it was also made possible by a broader decline in right-wing anti-communism as a political force that occurred throughout

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[26] Morrison states that the work was completed in 1953, but the memorandum that was sent to H Rowan Gaither (President of the Ford Foundation) presenting the report to the foundation board is dated June 11th, 1954 and clearly states that the Citizens' Group on Television voted to adopt the report of its Implementation Committee on the 14th of May of the same year.

1953 and '53.

The Select Committee to Investigate Tax-Exempt Foundations and Comparable Organizations involved itself in two investigations into the philanthropic foundations during this era; the first chaired by Representative Edward 'Eugene' Cox (Dem.-Geo), began its work in April 1952, and reported in January 1953, despite the fact that Representative Cox had died in December of the previous year. That first report had been "compelled by the repetitive impact of the evidence to admit that the foundations had rendered enormous public service" (Gidonese, 1955: 1), contrary to what the McCarthyites had hoped for. Unsatisfied at this conclusion, Representative Brazila Carroll Reece (Rep.-Tenn.) resurrected the Select Committee later that year, undertaking another investigation that ran between November 1953 and April 1954. While Lazarsfeld places great emphasis on the significance of Representative Reece's pursuit of the Ford Foundation, the truth is that his investigation and report had minimal impact. Reeves, in his detailed and comprehensive history of the Ford Foundation's Fund for the Republic argues that "The 432 page Reece report, published in late December……received widespread disclaim as a weird conglomeration of immoderate charges and ultraconservative diatribes" (1969: Location 1886). The negative public reaction to the report was noted even by the committee itself. The Reece Committee's Director of Research, Norman Dodd, had written a preliminary report in April 1954, which he had published commercially shortly after presenting it to the committee. In an appendix, he attempted to weave the public "disclaim" into the imagined web of communist conspiracy, while making a quick buck at the same time. For Dodd, the opprobrium heaped on the work of the Reece Committee was evidence of its "electric" effect. "Moves were launched within a matter of hours [of the report's publication] to block an effective probe" according to Dodd, and "the Committee found itself confronted with obstacles at every turn; the Nation itself was deluged with stories which openly or by inference suggested that the investigation was futile, if not worse." (Dodd, 1954: appendix). His remedy was not only to encourage citizens to write to Congress demanding further action but also the "immediate, widespread reading of this report" (ibid.). For the sake of convenience, he ended the report with the address of his publisher, noting that his report was available at 25 cents per copy, with 100 copies available at the reduced price of $17.50.

Not only was the impact on the public minimal, it seems that – again, in contrast to what Lazarsfeld believed – its impact on the Ford Foundation was fairly insignificant. At an event held on the 26th of

January, 1955, Robert Hutchins – by then President of the Fund for the Republic, and the bête *noire* of the right-wing anti-communists – addressed his audience while B. Carroll Reece sat a few seats away from him. He attacked the contents of the Reece Committee Report in unequivocal terms, claiming that its "aims and methods are another example of the exploitation of public concerns about Communism and subversion to further political ambition and to work off political grudges" (quoted in Reeves, 1969: location 1915). According to Reeves, "no employee of a tax-exempt corporation had ever so boldly condemned a congressional committee, let alone one authorized to pry into the legitimacy of philanthropic foundations" (ibid.).

Hutchins was the nemesis of Reece and his ilk for a number of reasons, but by the mid-1950s he had become a target because he was in charge of a fund that was openly and unabashedly hostile to McCarthyism, the Fund for the Republic. This was a Ford Foundation fund, but one that was autonomous of its parent organisation; there was a tendency within the foundation at the time for new funds and committees to proliferate, often at the whim of individual directors. Engelman describes this process as "conceal[ing] by an organizational maze" (1988: 235) arguing that it was – in part at least – designed to provide coverage from right-wing attacks. In this case, the intent behind creating the Fund for the Republic may not have been to conceal, but rather to distract; focussing the opprobrium of right-wing anti-communists on a specific aspect of the Ford Foundation's work, in the hope that the broader work of the foundation be the target for less harassment

If this was the intention behind the creation of the Fund for the Republic, then it may well have been a success. While the Reece Committee report had been summarily dismissed as the work of the extreme right, it had the effect of drawing attention to the work of the Fund for the Republic. Reeves notes that Henry Ford II had long been uncomfortable with the attacks on the work that was being undertaken in his family's name. Increased scrutiny of the Fund for the Republic's work, particularly from rabble-rousing columnist Fulton Lewis Jr., only increased this discomfort, and it culminated in Ford publicly expressing his dissatisfaction with the fund in December 1955 (Reeves, 1969: Location 3257). This was in part in reaction to the news that HUAC was to hold public hearings on the Fund for the Republic in early 1956; dismissing Reece as a crank was not difficult, but it was harder to swat away the attentions of the congressional committee where the current Vice President had made his name. Yet despite Ford's displeasure at this development, it was, in

one sense, a victory. This was not an investigation of the Ford Foundation as a whole, but of the Fund for the Republic.

My intention here is not to diminish the importance of right-wing anti-communism, nor to downplay its influence on the historical development of the Ford Foundation. Indeed, it is possible to understand much of the work of the foundation during the 1950s and 1960s as an attempt to develop an anti-communist alternative to McCarthyism[27]. But the mid-1950s was not a period in which the Ford Foundation was a cautious or timid organisation. After his defeat in 1952, Adlai Stevenson had remarked that the New Dealers had been replaced by car dealers (quoted in Hofstadter, 1962: 4). What Stevenson had intended as a snobby put-down of Eisenhower's supporters contained a much larger truth, however; the intellectual life of the US in the 1950s was to be dominated by the biggest car-dealer of them all.

In this context, it is difficult to see how right-wing anti-communism can be blamed for the failure of the Ford Foundation to implement the recommendations made by Lazarsfeld as Chair of the Citizens' Group. Chronologically, the work of the Citizens' Group was presented to the Ford Foundation board not at the height of the persecution of the foundation – the HUAC investigation of 1956 – but rather at something of a lull. While the Reece Committee was doing its best to exert pressure on the Ford Foundation, the summer of 1954 was hardly the ideal time for them to do so. This was, after all, the summer in which Joe McCarthy's relentless cruelty was being exposed to the American people on prime-time television. As B Carroll Reece was doing his best to badger foundation officers, and as Paul Lazarsfeld was drafting the final version of his report, the Army-McCarthy hearings were being broadcast live on ABC, and the public's view of McCarthy was changing radically. Oshinsky (2005: 464) cites a series of opinion polls conducted by the Washington Post between January and June 1954. At the beginning of the year, McCarthy was viewed favourably by 50% of the surveyed population, unfavourably by 29% and a further 21% had no opinion. Six months later, these figures had almost been reversed, with 45% now holding unfavourable views, compared to 34% who still saw 'Tailgunner Joe' in a favourable light.

The argument that Lazarsfeld presents – that the Ford Foundation backed away from supporting

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[27] Both Wilford (2008) and Saunders (1999) provide an excellent overview of the "Cultural Cold War" that outlines the extent to which the Ford Foundation, among others, worked with the CIA to extend American soft power as a bulwark against communism at home and abroad.

the television commission due to pressure from right-wing anti-communists – needs to be considered in the light of a number of facts. First of all, the Select Committee to Investigate Tax-Exempt Foundations and Comparable Organizations was a largely ineffectual attack on the work of the Ford Foundation, that occurred during a lull in the persecution of those perceived as being soft on communism. Whereas McCarthyites clearly targeted the Ford Foundation in the mid to late-1950s, this did not have a discernible effect on the work of the foundation until much later than the period in question – it was not until 1956 that Henry Ford II publicly expressed concern about aspects of the foundation's work. Moreover, from 1956 onward the focus of the right-wing attacks were not on the Ford Foundation in general, but specifically on the work undertaken by the Fund for the Republic.

This view is one that is supported by evidence found in the Ford Foundation archives. Regardless of how they might have felt about the attacks from Reece, they did not think that Lazarsfeld's work was likely to cause them any problems. William McPeak wrote to Lazarsfeld on September 29th, 1955 to attempt to disabuse him, once again, of the notion that the television commission fell victim to the Reece Committee. Here he reports the foundation's board's "guess that the implications of the committee's proposal would have left Mr Reece indifferent" (McPeak, 1955b).

What is, perhaps, most significant in the context of Lazarsfeld's work, however, is the fact that the Ford Foundation did not retreat from funding work on television. Indeed, the period following 1954 saw the Ford Foundation commit significant funding to the field of television, much of it in the exact areas that Lazarsfeld had identified as key to the remit of his proposed commission. In November 1955, a grant totalling $6,263,340 was awarded to the Educational Radio and Television Center (Ford Foundation, 1959: 3). Much of this grant was to be used for programme production costs, and to support the development of new ETV stations, but a significant portion of it was to be used to "undertake studies of audience evaluations and other research" (Newburn, 1955) - a key plank of Lazarsfeld's proposal.

Looking at the work being funded by the Ford Foundation in the period between 1954 and 1956, it is impossible to see the justification for Lazarsfeld's assertion that the foundation had somehow retreated from its mission, as a result of right-wing pressures. In fact, during the period in which Lazarsfeld first made this assertion, the Ford Foundation not only made the significant investment

in television detailed above, but also increased its support for the most controversial of its activities, those carried out by the Fund for the Republic. At its 1955 annual meeting, the Fund for the Republic approved requests for appropriations and grants for the forthcoming year, totalling $861,000, a sum that included $50,000 to fund a two-volume history of the American Communist party from 1917 to 1945, written in collaboration with Earl Browder, the former leader of that party (Reeves, 1969 :Location2106). Admittedly, the Fund for the Republic was autonomous of the Ford Foundation, and may have been willing to take risks beyond those considered by its benefactor. But even then, the impression that one gets from the activities of the Ford Foundation in this period is not of an organisation cowed, but rather of one still willing to pursue its core mission with fervour.

Reeves' description of the Fund for the Republic annual meeting of 1955 also makes mention of one agenda item of particular interest. Included in the many projects funded by the fund, was an appropriation of $25,000 "'to appoint a working party to explore the possibilities' of a commission [on mass media]" (Reeves, 1969: Location 2158). Less than a year after Lazarsfeld had delivered to the Ford Foundation board his recommendations for a commission on television, the man who had originated that work was proposing a do-over. Again, it is difficult to square Lazarsfeld's argument that the foundation had been scared away from implementing his proposed commission with the fact that the Ford Foundation's biggest communist sympathiser was now attempting to resurrect the idea. Exactly what came of Hutchins' 1955 proposal is unclear, and one of several leads that deserve to be pursued further. However, I believe that it opens the door to two alternative explanations as to why Lasarzsfeld's recommendations were never put into practice, neither of which paint him in a particularly flattering light.

5.5 Conclusions

The first alternative explanation is perhaps the most speculative, but also the most prosaic. The Citizens' Group on Television was not the only Ford Foundation project that Lazarsfeld was involved with at the time. This second project lay outside the scope of my original archival research, and therefore I am forced to rely on the account given in Reeves' book, where he makes reference to another study that Lazarsfeld was undertaking, this time for the Fund for the Republic rather than the main Ford Foundation. This was a study of "fear in education" that involved surveying university lecturers and high school teachers regarding the ways in which fear of anti-communist

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witch-hunts infringed on their academic freedom (Reeve, 1969: Location 1977; Location 6220 n28). This report was completed in early-1956, when the Ford Foundation was under far more pressure than in 1954, both from HUAC and the Internal Revenue Service which was by now beginning to question the legitimacy of its tax-exempt status. A report presented to the board of the Fund for the Republic on November 17th, 1955 drew their attention to a number of projects nearing completion that were likely to cause public controversy, a list that included Lazarsfeld's study on fear in education (Reeve, 1969: Location 3071). As previously noted, Lazarsfeld could be something of an unreliable witness when it came to details (Stanton quoted in Buxton and Acland, 2001: 197)[28]. Could it be that Lazarsfeld was confusing the two studies that he had undertaken for the Ford Foundation? That his study on fear in education was the one which had fallen victim to anti-communist fervour, rather than the Television Advisory Committee? This seems unlikely, partly because of the chronology; Lazarsfeld gave evidence to the Kefauver Committee in the spring of 1955, but did not complete work on the fear in education study – later published as The Academic Mind (Lazarsfeld and Thielens, 1958) – for another year.

Blaming Lazarsfeld's poor grasp of chronology might not stand up to scrutiny, but it is, perhaps, worth considering the effect that Lazarsfeld's character might have had on his interactions with the Ford Foundation. Stanton paints a picture of him as being not only poorly organised – he claims that he would occasionally lose data – but also as very sensitive to his status as an outsider, a left-wing European Jew in a world dominated by Republican WASPs (Stanton quoted in Buxton and Acland, 2001: 197). This concern with status can be seen in his letter to McPeak, demanding an explanation for why the recommendations of the Citizens' Group were not implemented. This demand is framed as coming not from Lazarsfeld himself, but from the individual group members. He writes to McPeak to say that:

 Whenever I was in New York some member of the Citizens' Group was likely to ask me about it. The most reasonable interpretation was that the matter had been forgotten about in the turnout created by the Reece Committee. This formulation saved me from embarrassment from my colleagues who had worked so hard on this assignment, and I thought it also saved the foundation from the reproach of being discourteous to this distinguished group of men (Lazarsfeld, 1955 quoted in Morrison, 1976: 484)

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[28]   Lazarsfeld's lack of reliability as a witness may also explain his claim that the work of the Citizens' Group was "Endorsed by…..critical reform groups" (quoted in Morrison, 2000: 141). There is nothing in the record to suggest that any outside reform groups saw the final report.

I am reluctant to place too great an emphasis on the anecdotes of a friend, recounted four decades after the event, or to attempt to psychoanalyse a man based on a few lines in a letter. But I do believe that Lazarsfeld's assertion that in blaming the Reece Committee he saved himself from embarrassment is significant. His interpretation of events might not have been the "most reasonable" one, but rather the one that was most likely to preserve his sense of personal and professional dignity.

If, as seems likely, the Ford Foundation did not buckle under pressure from right-wing anti-communists, how then can we explain its decision not to implement the recommendations of the Citizens' Group on Television? My view is that the the failures of the television advisory committee can be best understood by looking at the influence that both Hutchins and Lazarsfeld themselves had on its work. Here, I tend to concur with Morrison (2000: 145) when he points to Hutchins' departure from the FAE as a key factor in the decline of the Ford Foundation's support. The committee had been established largely at his instigation, and was constituted along lines very similar to his previous Commission on the Freedom of the Press. When he left to work for the Fund for the Republic, the television advisory committee lost its main sponsor within the main Ford Foundation.

However, even had Hutchins stayed on, I am uncertain whether the report delivered by Lazarsfeld would have led to the formation of a longer-term commission on television. This is because of the nature of those recommendations, and the extent to which they differed from the original aims of the committee. In 1952, the Ford Foundation had set out to create a commission on the model proposed by Hutchins; one that would bring together a group of citizens with no vested interest in the medium, to sketch out a new philosophical direction for the medium. What Lazarsfeld did instead was assemble a group of men who were deeply entrenched in the business of commercial television, to work on a committee that was narrowly focused on developing new models of audience research. Indeed, when responding to Lazarsfeld's questioning as to why the Ford Foundation did not intend to fund the work beyond 1954, McPeak described his proposal in precisely these terms: "to establish and underwrite a long-term and comprehensive program of research" (McPeak, 1955b).

Lazarsfeld took the Chair of a committee originally established to undertake a broad-ranging

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critical, philosophical look at the problem of television, and turned it into a forum for narrowly empirical work on subjects in which he had a personal interest. The final report touched on a small number of the areas originally identified by the FAE as being of importance, and managed to draw narrow, conservative conclusions that supported the status quo - that is, the continuation of the American System of Broadcasting that was operated in the interests of commercial broadcasters. The report functions an example of the entrepreneurial approach to research adopted by Lazarsfeld (Morrison, 2006: 52) and illustrative of the limits of this approach. The answer to the question of why the conclusions of the Citizens' Group did not lead to the establishment of a permanent commission may well be that Lazarsfeld had hijacked the original aims of the FAE in order to serve its own needs. The lack of support from the Ford Foundation may not reflect political cowardice as much as it reflects a frustration that the project had ended up so far from its intended destination.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

When I began to write this thesis, I was primarily interested in understanding the difference between the way in which American and British systems of public broadcasting had been constituted. If, as Hallin and Mancini (2003) argued, the UK and the USA were so similar, why was there such a difference of scale between the mighty BBC and its American cousins, PBS and NPR? As I set out to try and answer this question, my instinct was to being at the beginning; to try and see if I could explain the situation today by looking at how it had developed over the past century. I was relatively well-aquainted with the history of British broadcasting, but as I began to delve into the history of American broadcasting I became aware not only of how little I knew, but also of the gaps in existing research. The battle for the public interest that had raged during the pre-war years was well documented, in a body of high-quality research. The story of public broadcasting from the mid-1960s had also been documented and analysed. But between the two periods there existed a gap, and as I began to investigate this absence, I became increasingly convinced of its significance to the story of American broadcasting. In this thesis, therefore, I have tried not simply to account for some of these missing years, but also to explain how they help to tie one period of activism to another.

My account began, in Chapter 2 with a definition of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) based both on existing media scholarship, and on some theory drawn from the field of organisational sociology. In Chapter 2, I argue for a broad definition of PSB, that recognises the significant diversity of form that the term encompasses. Philosophically, I argue that PSB can be understood as one manifestation of a 'Social Responsibility' approach to the media, that combines deep-rooted liberal paternalism with a Cold War urge to find a third way between totalitarianism and libertarianism. This urge is manifested in a range of institutional and organisational forms across Western Europe and North America. At one pole sits an organisation **like** the BBC, afforded a national monopoly position for much of its existence, and generously funded from the public purse. At the other extreme sits the American model, made up of hundreds of individual local stations, loosely grouped together into a network, and only provided with a minimum of government funding. What binds them together is a set of shared values and - to a lesser degree - organisational practices. These shared values - offering parity of access; a comprehensive, pluralistic and high-quality programme offering; and which is committed to serving the public

sphere - are sometimes embedded in the content that Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs) produce, but also shape professional practices, and policy debates.

Having established the theoretical foundation of my thesis, I then went on to look at the historical development of PSB in the United States of America (USA). In doing so, my focus was on the period that pre-dated the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967, which established the system of federally funded public broadcasting that exists to the present day. My rationale for this approach is based in the theoretical arguments presented in Chapter 2, specifically my contention that PSB is a broadly defined institution that is not confined to a single organisational form. In Chapter 3 (and 4) I argue that while it took until 1967 for the federal government to establish a single organisation dedicated to the provision of public broadcasting, this was not an entirely novel or unprecedented development. My argument in Chapter 3 was that during the very earliest years of American broadcasting history, policy-makers in the USA gave serious consideration to media policies that were more closely aligned with the principles of PSB than those being considered by British policy-makers involved in drawing up a legislative framework for the British Broadcasting Company (as the BBC remained during the period in question). However, as the discussions regarding American broadcast policy advanced during the 1920s, the influence of the commercial broadcasting company grew, crowding out the viewpoints of the nascent media reform movement. By the early-1930s, commercial broadcasters had come to dominate the policy-making process, arguing in favour of an 'American System of Broadcasting' where regulation and legislation placed their interests above those of the general public. McChesney (1993) argues that this is where the media reform movement comes to an end, and that the passage of a weak Communications Act in 1935 puts an end to any attempt to include within the American system something approximating Public Service Broadcasting. This is an account that is reflected in Boddy (1993), who also sees the 1940s as a period in which the commercial networks consolidated their dominance. More recent scholarship, however, has challenged this account, and argue that the media reform movement lived on throughout the 1940s. Pickard (2015) argues that while the legislation passed in 1934 was weak, it opened the door to a period of regulatory activism that would have a profound impact on the development of broadcasting in the USA. The early- to mid-1940s saw the FCC attempt to extend the definition of the public interest in broadcasting, through regulatory initiatives such as the Blue Book.

In Chapter 4 I presented a thorough account of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) hearings of 1948 to 1952. In his history of the media reform movement, Pickard (2015: 205) concedes that FCC activism continued throughout the late 1940s and on into the 1950s, before being subsumed by a political conservatism that was largely based in anti-communist hysteria. However, in Chapter 3 I contend that the FCC hearings of 1948 to 1952 are of greater significance than has previously been realised. It is entirely reasonable to see these initiatives as the media reform movement's swansong, but in doing so we should not ignore the implication that the media reformers' victory had on the later development of American media policy. In their attempt to persuade that the FCC set aside a portion of the broadcast spectrum specifically for Educational Television (ETV), the media reformers had adopted a narrow definition of non-commercial broadcasting. In their evidence to the FCC, and despite the views of some dissenting voices, the media reformers did not advance the case for non-profit broadcasting, which would have allowed ETV stations to combine educational and commercial programming to provide a general programme offering along a Public Service Broadcasting model. Not only did they refuse to present an argument in favour of non-profit broadcasting, but they also chose to define non-commercial ETV along narrowly educational lines, rejecting the idea that ETV could be anything other than a classroom on the airwaves. In adopting this strategy, the media reformers of the late 1940s and early 1950s succeeded in securing spectrum allocation for ETV only by narrowing the definition of the public interest in broadcasting to such a degree that it no longer posed a challenge to the dominance of commercial television over the audience.

It is at the conclusion of the FCC hearings in 1952 that we are faced with the gap in the existing literature, which is the focus of Chapter 4. The majority of the work on the media reform movement (Goodman, 2011; Pickard, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015; Slotten, 2009) tends to focus on the 1930s and 1940s[29], and there is little work on the question of the public interest in broadcasting during the 1950s. The exception is Balas (2003) who selects the 1950-1951 FCC hearings as a case study. However, while Balas offers a detailed account of this particular chapter, she too concludes that the 1952 saw the "abandoning [of] old concepts of public service" (2003: 119). In the existing

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[29]

    Slotten (2009) is the exception, who explores the period between 1900 and 1930 in considerable detail.

literature, the period between the mid-1920s and 1952 is one in which the media reform movement did battle with commercial interests, sometimes working alongside the FCC, at other times in opposition to the regulators - but the story comes to an end with the FCC allocations in 1952. A decade and a half passes before there are renewed calls for the establishment of public broadcasting, involving "all that is of human interest and importance which is not at the moment appropriate or available for support through advertising, and which is not arranged for formal instruction" (Carnegie Commission on Educational Television, 1967: 1). This new impetus would ultimately leading to the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. But, what of the period in the middle? Ralph Engelman (1996: 135) has argued that these are the 'Foundation Years', where large philanthropic foundations - the Ford Foundation, and the Carnegie Corporation of New York - provided patronage, and shaping broadcasting policy during an otherwise fallow period in the history of non-commercial media in the USA. Yet, this is a period that has not been the subject of any sustained academic scrutiny. How, exactly, did these foundations foster public media policy during the 1950s?

My account of the work of the Ford Foundation's Television Advisory Committee (TAC) in the early- and mid-1950s does not bridge the entire gap between the end of the age of media reform, and the establishment of federally-funded public broadcasting in the USA. What it does, however, is offer a critical account of a key development in the history of the 'Foundation Years'. In Chapter 5 of this thesis, I examined in detail how the Ford Foundation contributed to the development of public media policy in the years immediately after the FCC hearings of 1951. Based on documents held at the Ford Foundation archives, I traced the development of the Television Advisory Committee, a foundation initiative established at the behest of Robert Hutchins, formerly of the University of Chicago.

To recap, Hutchins had been a prominent figure in the media reform movement of the 1940s, chairing the Commission on Freedom of the Press between 1945 and 1947. Following his resignation from the Chancellorship of University of Chicago in 1951, Hutchins had been appointed to an associate directorship of the Ford Foundation. Hutchins suggested in early 1952 that the foundation's Fund for the Advancement of Education (FAE) undertake a review of television's place in American society. My argument is that Hutchins envisaged a grand philosophical undertaking, of the kind he himself had conducted through the Commission on the Freedom of the Press.

However, the figure appointed to lead the Television Advisory Committee (TAC), Paul Lazarsfeld, did not share Hutchins' vision. While Hutchins was primarily concerned with normative questions regarding the ideal place of television in American life, Lazarsfeld was a sociologist and an empiricist, primarily concerned with understanding audience behaviour. Lazarsfeld had pioneered a model of public-private collaboration that he called 'administrative research', partnering with private companies on research projects that would yield findings that served both Lazarsfeld's own research agenda, but also the commercial needs of the companies.

Having assumed the chair of the TAC, Lazarsfeld gradually steered it away from Hutchins' original vision. Despite being originally conceived as an independent group, without ties to existing broadcasters, Lazarsfeld almost immediately packed the committee with colleagues from the commercial broadcasting industry. The original objective of the committee – to undertake a wide-ranging, structural review of broadcasting – soon gave way to an agenda that closely mirrored Lazarsfeld's own research interests. Under Lazarsfeld, the committee focussed its efforts not on the normative foundations of broadcasting policy, but rather on the generation of empirical data that would allow others to formulate policy. Fundamental questions regarding how the broadcasting industry should be organised and regulated were completely ignored, despite being central to the original vision of Hutchins and the Ford Foundation. Furthermore, the committee stated that research would only be conducted in areas free from controversy, and that it would not question the privately owned nature of American broadcasting.

My thesis is not the first time that the work of the TAC has been the subject of academic scrutiny. David Morrison (1976, 2000, 2006, 2008) has written extensively on Lazarsfeld's life and work, including the period that he spent working with the Ford Foundation. However, Morrison's work almost exclusively views the work of the TAC in the context of Lazarsfeld's scholarly career. Seen from this perspective, the collaboration between the Lazarsfeld and the Ford Foundation was a relatively fruitful one. While Lazarsfeld complained that the TAC should have been established on a permanent basis, there is no denying that even in its temporary form it provided him with two years of generous funding to pursue his own research interests. The Ford Foundation's refusal to fund the TAC beyond these two years did not have an adverse effect on Lazarsfeld's work. Following the dissolution of the TAC in 1954, Lazarsfeld's career continued on its upwards trajectory; one of his major publications, *Personal Influence* (Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1955), appeared a

year after the submission of the TAC's final report. Not only was Lazarsfeld's academic career unaffected by his work with the TAC, his relationship with the Ford Foundation seems to have emerged from this period unscathed. In his own account of the events - in testimony before the Senate, as well as in later interviews with Morrison - Lazarsfeld insisted that Ford Foundation staff had refused to support the TAC's recommendations, due to pressure from right-wing politicians. Yet despite this supposed act of internal censorship, Lazarsfeld continued to work for the Ford Foundation throughout the 1950s and on into the late 1960s.

Seen from Lazarsfeld's perspective, the TAC was minor diversion; it did not lead directly to any significant findings, and merely provided some short-term resources that allowed for the development of ideas that would influence later publications. In the broader context of American public media, however, I argue that the events that I discuss in Chapter 5 have far greater significance. Hutchins had been a prominent figure in the media reform movement of the 1940s, his views on the ideal role of the press rooted in his broader philosophy. For him, Western civilisation seemed to be taking "a plunge into the abyss" (Hutchins, 1952a: Preface xii) and could only be saved by re-integrating the "Great Conversation" of Western philosophy into the daily lives of a people who "lead lives comparatively rich in material comforts and very poor in moral, intellectual, and spiritual tone" (ibid: Preface xiii). While much of his professional life had been spent pursuing this mission within higher education, by the early 1950s his crusade had expanded beyond the walls of the university. In establishing the TAC, Hutchins sought to build upon the arguments that he had begun to advance in 1947 - that American media should be free, but that it should also responsible for improving the moral, intellectual and spiritual tone of the nation.

In establishing this venture, under the aegis of the Ford Foundation, Hutchins was attempting to sustain the public-spirited mission of the decades-old media reform movement. Moreover, he sought to give it fresh impetus, pushing back against the narrow, educational compromises that had been arrived at during the FCC hearings of 1948 to 1952. This was an opportunity to reassert the American public's claim to the airwaves, a chance to fundamentally re-assess the "problems of organization, management, control, regulation, and finance" (Hutchins, 1952) that had bedevilled broadcasting since its inception. Yet this great vision was not shared by the man that was tasked by the Ford Foundation with putting it into practice. Lazarsfeld was not of the same philosophical bent as Hutchins; he did not see his work in the same terms, it was not for him to re-shape

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American society. Quite why and how he was appointed to Chair the TAC remains something of a mystery. My view is that when the TAC was initially established, the commercial broadcasting industry did not look favourably upon the initiative. Lazarsfeld was a figure that helped dampen their hostility, drawing them in - contrary to Hutchins' original advice - as members of the committee, allowing them to steer it away from the structural critiques that were part of its original remit.

There is no evidence in the Ford Foundation archives to support Lazarsfeld's later assertion that the recommendations of the TAC were left deliberately un-actioned due to external political pressure. Indeed, William McPeak - Associate Director and Vice President of the Ford Foundation, who Lazarsfeld blamed for the Ford Foundation's lack of support - wrote to him repeatedly to disabuse him of this notion (McPeak, 1955, 1955a, 1955b). Yet Lazarsfeld continued to insist that his work had been suppressed by the foundation for decades afterwards. My own view, as I argue in Chapter 5, is that Lazarsfeld clung on to this story of the Ford Foundation's cowardice in the face of anti-communist persecution because it provided cover for his own failings. Quite simply, he had been the wrong man for the job. Hutchins' original vision, of a commission that would contribute to his great crusade, simply wasn't the kind of work that Lazarsfeld was suited to undertaking. He didn't see himself as a crusader, or even as a philosopher; he was a scientist, concerned with the production of data, rather than the shaping of society. And to assume the mantle of crusader here would not only have been contrary to his nature, it would also have placed him in a difficult position, both professionally and personally. His entire career had been spent working hand-in-glove with the commercial broadcasters. They were his friends and colleagues, and to have engaged in a structural critique of the American system of broadcasting would have endangered too many friendships, too many partnerships.

In turning Hutchins' original vision into one more amenable to the status quo, however, Lazarsfeld cut the thread that ran backwards from 1952 all the way to the Radio Conference of 1922. The media reform movement had gradually weakened throughout the 1940s, and had few powerful champions by the end of the FCC hearings in 1952. Hutchins established the TAC with a view to continuing the work of the media reform movement, supported by the wealth and power of the Ford Foundation. But Lazarsfeld - temperamentally unsuited, professionally uninterested - simply could not, or would not, drive the media reform movement on beyond the early 1950s. Pickard

(2015: 201) argues that the media reform movement enters a period of terminal decline in the late 1940s. I would argue that following a long illness, and many attempts at revival, the movement finally died with the end of the Television Advisory Committee in 1954.

It is perhaps unwise to think too much of what might have been, but in concluding I will suggest one impact that this particular episode might have had on American media policy. Following the failure of the TAC in 1954, a further decade would pass before media reform was back on the political agenda. In 1965, another philanthropic foundation - the Carnegie Corporation of New York - would establish another committee - the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television - to ask precisely the kind of questions that had been on Robert Hutchins' lips a decade earlier. Their recommendations would form the basis of the Public Television Act of 1967, creating for the first time a federally funded system of broadcasting in the USA. Yet the act came at the tail end of Lyndon B Johnson's presidential administration, and by the time its provisions had been enacted, Richard Nixon was in the White House. Barely a year after it had been established, the Nixon administration "launched its offensive against public television" (Engelman, 1996: 168). The new president, driven by paranoia and an absolute intolerance of dissent, vetoed the 1972 funding authorisation bill, driving out the board members of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, to be replaced by his own cronies. It set a precedent of Republican hostility towards American public broadcasting that continues to this day.

Had Hutchins' original vision been seen through to its conclusion - driven ahead by Hutchins himself, perhaps - then the history of American public broadcasting might well have played out differently. The vision that the Carnegie Commission articulated in the mid-1960s might well have been on the political agenda much sooner. President Kennedy's New Frontier might have dared to push beyond the relatively meagre limits of the Educational Television Facilities Act of 1962. Johnson might have been the president to shepherd public television through its infancy, allowing it to find its feet before Nixon's onslaught. Perhaps, perhaps.....

In this thesis I have given an account of the work of the TAC that is written from Lazarsfeld's perspective. He was, after all, the committee's Chair, and the figure that had the single greatest influence over its work. The primary sources that I have drawn upon in this thesis include letters, reports and memoranda written by a number of different individuals that were involved with the

TAC, yet this represents only a portion of the written record. Some will be lost to history, but there remains a possibility that relevant material is being held in archives other than those that I have had the opportunity to visit. Due to their geographic proximity, I have been able to look at the material held at the Ford Foundation archive itself, and as part of Paul Lazarsfeld's personal collection at Columbia University. Doing so has allowed me to compare the official record with the personal one, and although I have found little to distinguish them, this approach strengthens the basis on which I draw my conclusions.However, I believe that there is an argument for conducting further research on this topic, emphasising Hutchins' role, and placing the work of the TAC in the context of his wider contribution to the American media reform movement, as well as his involvement with the Ford Foundation more specifically. My account of Hutchins' involvement with the Ford Foundation is based on material held at the foundation's own archive, where - due to Hutchins' long-standing association with the foundation - there is a wealth of material to draw upon.Unfortunately, I have not been able to research the personal papers of Robert Hutchins, which are held at the University of Chicago. Further research on Hutchins' media reform work within the Ford Foundation, drawing upon his personal archive, would complement that found in this thesis, adding to our understanding of this period in American broadcasting history.

In identifying avenues for further research, it is important to emphasise that the gap in the existing literature is significantly larger than that which I have been able to address. In this thesis, I have accounted for a major policy initiative that emerged directly from the conclusion of the FCC hearings in 1952, and continued on into late 1954. I argue that the conclusion of this initiative represents not only the end of this two-years' worth of work, but rather the end of a period of policy development that is rooted in the emergence of broadcast regulation in the 1920s. Yet while the Ford Foundation's attempt to reinvigorate the debate regarding broadcasting in the public interest did not come to fruition, the foundation continued to fund educational television throughout the 1950s. While they did not support the kind of normative discussions favoured by Hutchins, they did spend significant amounts of money on building production capacity. This activity, and its relation to the broader philosophical questions regarding educational, public and

commercial television have not been the subject of detailed academic inquiry. Likewise, the process by which the Ford Foundation gradually withdrew from funding educational television, passing the baton to the Carnegie Corporation, is not comprehensively accounted for in the academic literature. While a fair deal of darkness remains to be explored, however, I hope that in this thesis I have been able to cast some light on the events of this previously neglected period of American public television history, and contribute new understanding to the history of public service broadcasting in the USA.

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