COMMUNICATION HISTORY

by John D. Stevens, University of Michigan
and Hazel Dicken Garcia, University of Minnesota

The history of communication is a new subject in mass communication and journalism curricula, one for which there has been only scattered published research and no adequate text. Communication History attempts to remedy both of these problems by providing a challenging new approach to the study of communication over time. Moving away from a tradition that focuses merely on major communication personalities or institutions, the authors instead encourage the reader to see the interrelated processes by which information is diffused. The authors utilize social science concepts and techniques to enlarge and enrich our understanding of communication in historical perspective.

In this volume Garcia first develops a macrosystem of communication—encompassing information channels and processes, transportation modes and routes, and printed and written content. She then focuses on conceptualizing and formulating research problems. Stevens looks at non-traditional elements of mass communication, and builds history upon that foundation. These elements include the impact of public opinion on mass media and the development of distribution systems of both print and non-print media.

Communication History is both a challenging textbook and a contribution to the literature in social science history. It should be of use in classes on history of communication, journalism history, cultural and intellectual history, mass communication theory and methods, and other similar courses.

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John D. Stevens
Hazel Dicken Garcia

COMMUNICATION HISTORY

The SAGE COMMTEXT Series

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Volume 2. **The Sage COMMTEXT Series**

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For H. L. N.

COMMUNICATION   HISTORY

The SAGE CommText Series

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Director, School of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of Minnesota

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Communication history has stagnated, not for lack of diligent research, but for lack of conceptual models, or conceptualization of the discipline beyond the familiar temporal boundaries. The two authors represented in this book address two very different problems; in sum, they are looking at the history of communications through different eyes, seeing it in its richness and diversity and as a part of the mosaic of American and world history.

No field ever has enough stimulating ideas, certainly not general history. Communications, and especially communications history, seems especially short on them. One landmark was the publication in 1973 of *New Models for Communication Research.* Peter Clarke edited the second volume of the Sage Annual Reviews of Communication Research and presented nine alternative ways of interpreting aspects of the field. History was noticeably lacking, and the omission was understandable. Historians are more comfortable with description than with explanation, and even those who accept the social science concepts and techniques often back off when it comes to talk about models or even constructs, pleading lack of training or lack of data.

The work presented here is more suggestive than exhaustive; but suggestions are precisely what the field of communication history scholarship needs so desperately.

As James Carey (1975) wrote, there is nothing wrong with the Whig interpretation of history, the framework within which virtually all American journalism history has been written. In brief, this view sees American history as a success story, wherein institutions (including the press) become more democratic as the nation urbanizes and industrializes. The problem with the theory is not that it is incorrect (necessarily), but rather that it is tired. It has done its work. It need not be discarded, but it needs companion theories.

In Part I: Toward a Redefinition of the Discipline, Chapters 1 and 2, Professor Hazel Dicken Garcia redefines the field, moving away from obsession with men and media institutions toward a broader communications history. If communication is defined as an integrated system of

components (routes, channels, and carriers of information, and printed and written content), then it is apparent in surveying the existing literature that little of it has gone beyond narrow personal and temporal boundaries. Figure I.1 illustrates the kind of macrosystem one might envision, and it shows at the same time how few elements of the model have received even rudimentary historical attention. Some, admittedly, defy such study because there are no physical traces; but most can be studied by the scholar who sets his mind to the task.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on conceptualizing and formulating research problems; the latter chapter offers a brief example of a study conceived at a macroscopic level—examining all sorts of communications to, from, and within the Kentucky frontier during the settlement period. Conceptualization is an extremely important stage of a project. It can be a slow and painful one. Those who report their projects have an obligation to the reader to spell out the assumptions that went into the conceptualizations. The value judgments cannot be avoided, but too many researchers do not share them. In this day of relativism in all fields, hardly anyone believes with Henry Adams and a few others who wrote at the turn of the century that there is such a thing as "scientific history," history free from value judgments. But much history is written as if the authors believed it.

In Part II: Media Effects from an Historical Perspective, Professor John Stevens takes a different tack, attempting to synthesize information about the history of the mass media through unconventional foci. For example, historians have spent a great deal of time suggesting the influences of the mass media on public opinion; however, they seldom consider how public opinion or toleration influences the media. They talk in general terms about "feedback," and were doing so even before the influential mathematical models of communication which can be traced back at least to Shannon and Weaver (1949). Chapter 5 looks at public opinion, then, from the other direction.

In the simplest of models, there is a sender, a message, a channel, and a receiver. Historians have focused on the senders, and to a lesser extent, on the effects of the messages on voters and other receivers. They almost never consider the way the messages are transmitted.

Chapters 6 and 7 concentrate on distribution of print and nonprint media. A transmission or distribution system is far more than a neutral medium; it shapes the messages it carries. Those who operate the mass media (or other economic institutions) pay attention to the distribution phases, knowing that there they can enjoy the greatest economies of scale. To cite but one example from Chapter 7, the history of the motion picture industry makes most sense when viewed as a struggle by the producers and the exhibitors to control the distribution of the films.

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                    COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

        INFORMATION                      TRANSPORTATION

    Processors      Channels        Routes        Modes of Travel

Institu-    Non-
tional      institu-
            tional          PRIMARY   SECONDARY

Government
Public Relations

                Public          Print       Electronic
                Opinion
                Media
                                    Newspapers
                        a           Books
                Editors             Magazines
                Printers
                Publishers              Radio
                Reporters               Television
                                        Wire Services
                                        Telephone
```
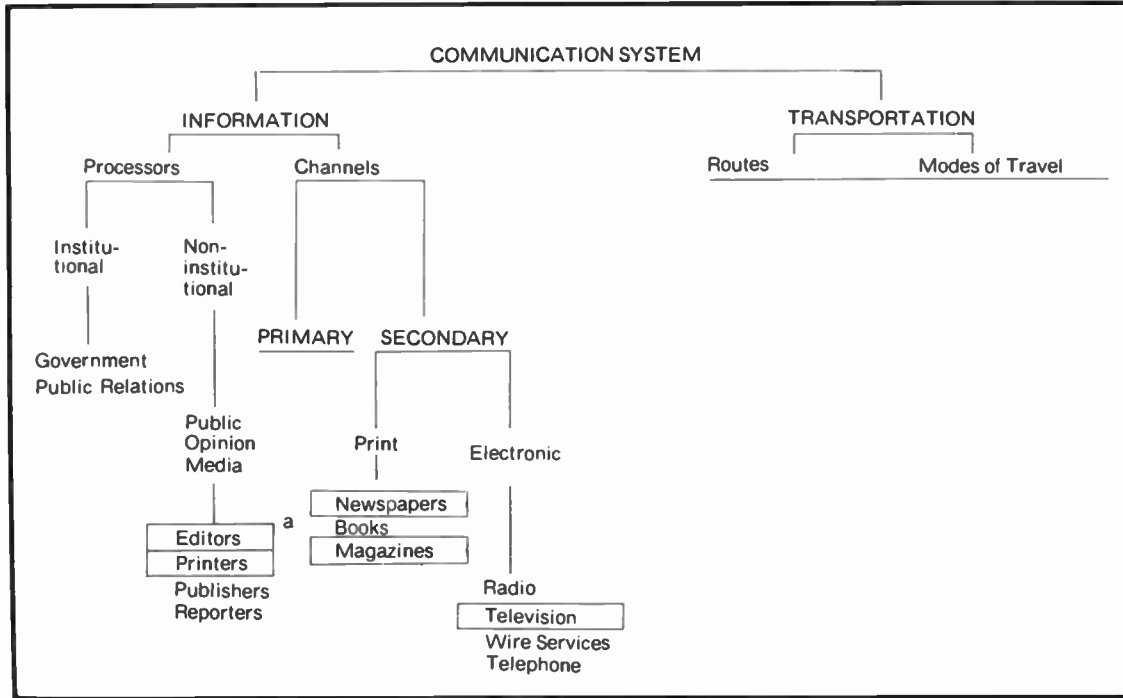
NOTE: [a] Boxed areas represent subjects of journalism history concentration.

FIGURE I.1   Journalism Versus Communication History

The studies in this book are, to make the distinction which Daniel Boorstin (1976) invented, an exploration, not a discovery. "The discoverer simply uncovers, but the explorer begins a search; he is a seeker. And he opens the way for other seekers."

PART I

TOWARD A REDEFINITION OF THE DISCIPLINE

PREFACE

Attempts to assess the journalism history discipline, particularly the way the field has been conceptualized, quickly point up the absence of critical historiography. The following four chapters treat both conceptual and historiographic needs, as well as research problems, methods, and models. These discussions are offered as a potential basis for generating ideas for other inquiries, diverse conceptual approaches, and the development of a body of evaluative literature in the discipline.

While critical historiography can help reveal gaps in the field, isolate broadly applicable questions, and possibly provide an impetus to theory generation, it is fraught with pitfalls. An evaluative body of literature which parallels in form and effect those works it analyzes will not serve the discipline well. Historian Allan Nevins said several years ago that one reason the discipline lacks good newspaper histories is that those perhaps most capable of writing them (reporters, media professionals) too often fall in love with their medium. Thus, they lose the objectivity needed to write a truly critical history. The same pitfall awaits the historiographer. One probably does not attempt historiography if one does not already love the history in his own field; loving the history often means admiring the historians too much to be objective—or to apply the critical analysis that is

historiography's reason for being. Further, the historiographer may be susceptible to "taking sides," as it were, when studying the schools of thought which have shaped interpretations of the past at differing times. Falling into that pitfall will not serve the discipline either.

The historiographer's task is rather analyzing the historians' concepts of the subject—human behavior—and trying to determine what their views contributed to the discipline. Similarly, rather than allowing what he may view as the "rightness" or "wrongness" of a school of thought to distract him, the historiographer's task is to analyze those schools for what they contributed to, and what their existence caused to be omitted from, knowledge in the field. Beyond that, the historiographer's most difficult task is to search into broader cultural backgrounds, to try to account for the schools' existence in the first place—their emergence, peak, decline, and demise.

The following four chapters certainly do not go that far. They were conceived, and are offered, for the purpose of calling attention to the need for development in this critical area.

—Hazel Dicken Garcia
University of Minnesota

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JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION HISTORY

The lack of critical historiography stands as a serious barrier to improving research and advancing new approaches to communications history. In addition to the direction that ongoing evaluation provides, there is a need for assessment of models, methods, research questions, and applications by historians.

One of journalism history's gravest deficiencies is critical historiography. Of the few efforts, "The Limits of Progressive Journalism History" (McKerns, 1977) stands out. But much remains to be done. Any discipline suffers without ongoing evaluation. But new approaches, especially, cannot readily develop in a discipline lacking the fund of knowledge and experience worked out through years of critical analyses.

Critical historiography provides guidance for avoiding past mistakes. And it provides stimuli for discovering new avenues of inquiry and designing appropriate research questions, methods, and models. A reading of journalism histories produced over the years reveals successive layers of repeated form, content, perspective, and intellectual orientation. All divide media history into eras, and virtually all emphasize the product (newspaper). The chapter headings vary only slightly from *The History of Printing in America* (Thomas, 1810) through *The Press and America: An Interpretative History of the Mass Media* (Emery, 1954). James Melvin Lee, in *History of American Journalism* (1917) criticized errors in *Journalism in the United States* (Hudson, 1873), but although he labored to verify facts, Lee ultimately produced similar form and content.

Lee wrote that Hudson's book "contains many interesting sketches of editors and their papers, but is so full of errors, and is so biased in its point of view, that it cannot be accepted as an authority even for the period with which Mr. Hudson was most familiar." Yet Lee's first chapter, "Precursors of American Newspapers," presents only a variation of Hudson's introductory chapter, "The First Newspapers in the World." Similarly, compare Hudson's chapters under the heading, "The Political Party

Press," to Lee's chapter, "Party Press Period, 1812-1832," or Hudson's
section titled "Journalism in a Transition State" to Lee's chapter titled
"Transition Period, 1832-1841."

Criticism without evaluation generally camouflages potential new areas
for research. Such efforts address symptoms and neglect analyses of
underlying problems. The lack of critical historiography means researchers
have failed not only to assess the ways written history has conditioned
thought about the past, as discussed in Chapter 2. It means they have
failed to assess what the discipline has produced and what it lacks. New
approaches require looking at the past in new ways, developing new data,
and carefully defining new directions. But that process may best begin
with assessment of where the discipline has been, where it is, where it
needs to go, and how it should proceed. The best results of such efforts
will come after many individuals have addressed the problem. This chapter
will touch only some of these areas in an overview of both journalism and
communications history.

Communications history includes the product (newspaper, film, and so
on), producer (printer, publisher, corporation), process (mix of ideas and
procedures), context (ideological, political, economic, and social), and—
out of the interactions of these—the mechanisms of persistence or dissolu-
tion. All at once influence each other, as suggested in the diagram in
Figure 1.1. Additionally, each arrow point in Figure 1.1 indicates a
process, and research could focus on any phenomenon named in the
diagram.

Journalism histories have seldom focused on interactions, processes, or
mechanisms of persistence (or dissolution). Continual emphasis on the
product or producer has obscured analyses of the context or interactions.
Few histories present clear conceptual frameworks. Research questions are
seldom clear. Where data do suggest research questions, they appear
substantially the same for successive histories. Generally, the histories
follow the views of the past described in Chapter 2, and none maintains a
single clear perspective until *The Daily Newspaper in America* (Lee, 1937)
focuses on the media as an institution within a sociological approach.

JOURNALISM HISTORIES

Journalism histories, which may be grouped into descriptive and
explanatory (or interpretative) designs, demonstrate two broad uses of
data. The descriptive research, generally confined to *only* print or *only*
electronic media, basically lists salient features over time. The explanatory
research, generally emphasizing content, addresses reasons behind the
salient features.
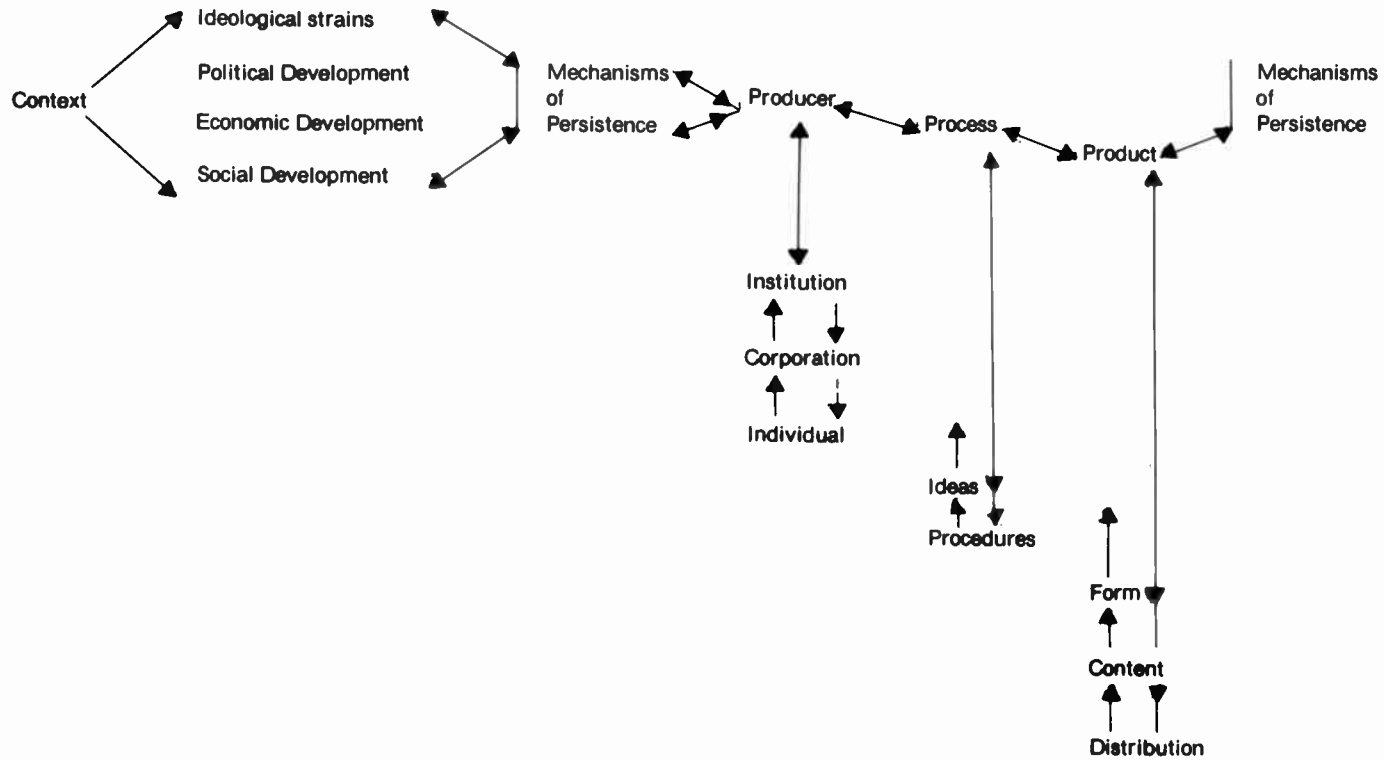
FIGURE 1.1 A Communications History Model

Descriptive Designs

Descriptive studies trace the nature, growth, and evolution of newspapers, broadcasting, and film media—and constitute the bulk of written journalism history. *The History of Printing in America* (Thomas, 1810) began this trend with two volumes devoted to biographical sketches, locations of booksellers and the printing trade, and locations and descriptions of newspapers. Some sixty years later, *Journalism in the United States* (Hudson, 1873) continued the trend, but emphasized New York journalism. Hudson's attention to the penny press contributed needed data, but his emphasis inflated the importance and style-setting impact of New York newspapers. Since Hudson, New York has been treated as representative of United States journalism; penny press innovations remain typed as the indelible imprinters of subsequent reporting style and newspaper structure. And research interest has remained largely focused on the product.

A subsequent history added a significant dimension, but its anchor in growth data largely obscured its larger implications for research. *The History and Present Condition of the Newspaper and Periodical Press of the United States* (North, 1884) correlated growth trends with consumer demand and urbanization. Compiled as census data, this book emphasized the media as "mass" phenomena which reflect and shape society. This contribution, now manifest in mass media and society courses, emphasizing media operations, uses, effects, and social contexts, stimulated research of contemporary communications problems. But historians have hardly advanced such possibilities beyond North's introduction. Although North suggested evidence of media and society as interactive forces, historians have yet to isolate the links, stimuli, responses, and ultimate effects of the one on the other.

A little more than a century after Thomas's work, James Melvin Lee updated it with *A History of American Journalism* (1917). Lee included a stronger assertion of the initial and continuing importance of the British background—connecting, for example, the American penny press development to a similar, earlier one in England. For the rest, however, like Thomas, Lee cataloged newspapers by origin.

Lee's work and a subsequent one, *History of Journalism in the United States* (Payne, 1920), coincided with the near peak of general history's Whig interpretation. Payne, in fact, literally propounds the view. His introduction states:

> Since Turgot wrote his memorable essay on progress, we have learned to look on man's state as progressive so long as there is a development in man's intelligence. . . . So, where there is an intelligent people there will be a will to be free, and where there is a will to be free there will be a desire to be right.

> The history of journalism in America cannot be separated from the development of the democratic idea. The very first editor in this country . . . represented that idea, for his fight was for freedom of expression.

> To journalism, then, democracy owes, not only its strength, but, in whole or in part, all of its important victories . . . it was the press that made the battle for the extension of the suffrage and that wrested from the minority the power which, in a democracy, must be with the people.

This history closely followed the form and content of predecessors, but added a dimension in emphasizing political conditions. Chapter 7, "The Assumption of Political Power," Chapter 12, "The Editor and the Government," and Chapter 17, "Newspapers and the Capitol," also emphasize the press's political role. Finally, the work demonstrates the near peak of the press-as-omnipotent view. Robert Emmet MacAlarney wrote in the preface:

> More powerful than public school or college, more vitally affecting destiny than all churches of all the sects, it [the newspaper] thrusts its well or ill conceived messages into the homes and minds of millions.

Subsequent journalism histories continued to defer to the emphasis on political conditions, but the view of the press as omnipotent faded. Still, the discipline's closest claim to a political history is *A History of the National Intelligencer* (Ames, 1972).

Seven years after Payne's book drew attention to political conditions, *Main Currents in the History of American Journalism* (Bleyer, 1927) represented the culmination of previous emphases—and added a dimension in its attention to technological developments affecting the press. This book synthesized Thomas's and North's attention to newspaper growth with Thomas's biographical and Hudson's New York emphasis. Claiming that the press's size precluded thorough analyses, Bleyer emphasized only newspapers he deemed outstanding. The result, with eight of sixteen chapters devoted to New York newspapers, further entrenched the exaggerated view of that city's influence. However, Bleyer's greatest contribution lies in his amplification of North's concern with media in a societal context. The final chapter, relating technological growth to unprecedented press industry developments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, continues to undergird most journalists' understanding of the relationships of media to society.

Bleyer's attention to technology prepared the way for *The Daily Newspaper in America* (Lee, 1937), which centered on press-society relationships. While Bleyer's work has been characterized as institutional

primarily because of his last chapter, Lee's work—called sociological by himself—more closely approaches an institutional focus. Indeed, Lee's book merits considered attention by those interested in recovering and isolating interactions of social forces in journalism history. In a preface titled "A Social Instrument," Lee wrote:

Changes in human institutions—in religion, government, and economic life, in the family, education, and communication—are due . . . to the operation of impersonal, automatically acting forces which transcend altogether the range of individual powers and control and produce effects characteristic of themselves alone. . . . The individual cannot be left utterly out of account any more than can the molecular composition of an ivory ball, used in a physics experiment; but if the object of the study is the ball, or the society, it is just and proper to deal with it as an entity.

This approach to society and its problems is far from popular. Man, the great adjuster *to* nature, prefers to dramatize himself as the great adjuster *of* nature. Although the astronomer has succeeded in removing the earth from the center of our mental picture of the universe, the social scientist has far to go before men will listen patiently to descriptions of the "ivory ball's"—of society's—activities without shouting, "Yes, but what about me?"

Continuing the argument, Lee wrote: "As society changes, the press adjusts to the new conditions; if it remained stationary, it would soon be superceded." And then, he swiftly deflated the great man theory of history:

These assertions emphasize what several newspapermen have stressed, namely, that the blind forces of society and not appreciably the creative urge of a few Greeleys, Danas, and Hearsts mold the future of the industry. Augustus Maverick . . . noted that the "rapid growth of knowledge, and the continual increase of the facilities of travel and intercommunication, are followed in regular order by the expansion of the Press and by the enlargement of its legitimate power. . . . The American newspapers which failed to interpret obvious signs died, as they should have died, when they became unrepresentative, useless, dull, and bankrupt.

Lee condemned "those for whom a tree obscures the forest, and who fail thereby to achieve an adequate perspective. . . ." Then, citing *The Science of Society* (Keller, 1927), his progressivism broke through:

The way to get at the nature of an institution, as of anything else that is alive, is to see how it has grown. . . . When we know how institutions have come to be what they are, we shall have valuable information as to the expediency of discarding, retaining, or modifying them.

Lee's efforts to "get at the nature of an institution" emerge in chapters on labor, ownership and management, chains and associations, distribution methods, syndicates, staffs, and the American media's place in the world news scheme. While interest in the product remains implicit, this history demonstrates less concern with its nature than its implications—both the process of producing it and society's shaping, assimilating, and using it. Thus, in addition to the strong institutional focus, this work shifted attention toward the media's social context.

Subsequent journalism histories improved on the older themes, but except for the interpretation in *The Press and America: An Interpretative History of the Mass Media* (Emery, 1954), added dimensions do not rank with those provided by Bleyer and Lee. Qualitatively, however, *American Journalism* (Mott, 1941) and *The Press and America* (Emery, 1954) brought more comprehensive and balanced syntheses to the discipline. *American Journalism* does catalog data, divides press developments into time periods, and provides biographical sketches, but with much new information and in greater depth than previous works. Also, Mott expanded on Payne's attention to politics, adding scholarly development of contexts. Still, the book's most important contribution lies perhaps in the revisionist approach to early nineteenth-century journalism. Where others presented that period as the negative result of rampant partisanism, Mott detailed positive technological and qualitative press developments, again adding considerable new information. The careful scholarship of this book, which dominated as a text for more than twenty years, makes its value as a reference source timeless.

Another dimension emerged in *The Press and America: An Interpretative History of the Mass Media* (1954)—the use of interpretation to parallel journalistic developments within national historical boundaries. This book synthesized dimensions introduced by Hudson, Payne, and A. M. Lee, expanded on qualitative additions of Mott, and went beyond to interpret press developments in social, political, and economic contexts. As the most comprehensive synthesis to date, this work remains a standard text, revised and now in its fourth edition (Emery and Emery, 1978). While the book continues the linear view and Whig interpretation, the 1978 edition incorporates attention to progressivism and consensus revisionism, echoing strains of the New Left. The 1978 edition also incorporates more history of broadcasting than other surveys.

Other recent histories include *Broadcasting in America* (Head, 1956; revised, 1972, 1976), *Development of American Journalism* (Kobre, 1969), *The Newsmongers* (Rutland, 1973), *The Media in America* (Tebbel, 1974), and *Tube of Plenty* (Barnouw, 1975).

Both Head and Barnouw treat only the electronic media. *Broadcasting in America* (Now in its second edition) traces development of radio and

television in abundant fact, treating technical aspects, regulation, and censorship problems. Head's greatest contribution, however, is his scholarly attention to the electronic media's financial structure. Barnouw's work, a composite update of three earlier ones, traces the electronic media's evolution through corporate struggles culminating in its big-business position in society and relationship to government. Both Head and Barnouw, while emphasizing institutional aspects of electronic media, really focus on the producers (corporations) more than on process, product, context, or interactions.

Sidney Kobre's *Development of American Journalism* (1969) emphasizes the press in relation to the changing fabric of American society, giving attention to significant social developments. His attention to details of American life which affected the press, especially through the nineteenth century, adds an important perspective and brings into focus other areas needing research.

Tebbel also emphasizes the nineteenth century, and his chief contribution in *The Media and America* (1974) probably lies in his conceptual focus—on a common media function. Though, like Kobre, Tebbel gives little attention to the electronic media, his focus should remind historians that virtually all common media attributes—distribution systems, economics, institutional complexes, organization, administrative policies, reporting purposes, newsgathering practices—remain unexamined across media.

The Newsmongers (1973) merits notice for its mix of New Left politics and consensus revisionism with the Whig interpretation. Although the latter dominates, strains of the New Left appear in such chapter headings as "Daring Men and Their Printing Machines," "Rich Man, Poor Man," "Headlines and Breadlines," and "The Making of a President: Andrew the First." The book also frequently sweeps from the story of the "great" newspapers and editors to sketch in the lesser known papers and editors and to speak of the interests, habits, and lives of people at large. Further New Left strains emerge in Rutland's emphasis on the big-business stance of journalism; a consensus bent appears in the lively details, scattered throughout, of events which happened for no great historical or theoretical reason—such as how some editors moved to the Western frontier "because their eastern welcome had worn out." However, progressivism emerges in the book's pursuit of the interplay between profit motive and consumer taste, and neither the New Left nor consensus stance carries through.

Two other histories, though not general surveys, deserve mention. *Up From the Footnote* (Marzolf, 1977) and *The Black Press, U.S.A.* (Wolseley, 1971) attempt to fill the gaps in journalism history created by omission of women and blacks. Marzolf surveys women in American press history from

colonial times through the twentieth century, treating them with scholarly scope and depth. The relationships of women to the product (medium) and the adjustment of the latter to changing concepts of women are explored, along with the role of women as producers in the media. Similarly, Wolseley provides a comprehensive view of the history of black journalism—the early producers, their hardships and ideals; contemporary journalism, its producers, contributions, and problems; contemporary specializations; and an analytical evaluation of black journalism in light of past criticisms and future implications. While Marzolf's book remains in the descriptive category, Wolseley's combines descriptive historical background with analysis of issues affecting black journalism. Both contribute much invaluable data on topics heretofore almost completely neglected.

In summary, the descriptive studies, including those addressed to subfields—Presbry's *The History and Development of Advertising* (1929) and Rosewater's *History of Cooperative Newsgathering in the United States* (1930), for example—primarily emphasize print media. In fact, journalism historiography reflects two strong tendencies: emphasis on print media and dissection of media into isolated parts. More work concerns print (it *has* a longer history), and surveys overemphasize it. Sections on print are more thoroughly treated, better researched, organized, and presented. Sections about other media, sketchily presented, often come across as vaguely conceived appendages to the real story—that of print. Part of the problem may lie simply in the abundance of previous histories from which to draw data concerning print.

Dissecting media into isolated parts for presentation in histories obscures commonalities among them. It deters researchers from examining situations which might be common across many media. And that, in turn, inhibits development of strong conceptual frameworks, models, or theoretical applications. While convenience of organization and clarity of focus may shape the tendency to compartmentalize, the result perpetuates a way of thinking about the past.

Emphasizing print and dissecting media into isolated categories obscures research gaps and diverts attention from media-society relationships. And such approaches virtually preclude thought channeled toward interactive forces. In short, these tendencies abet the continuation of a pattern reproducing form and content. They inhibit development of an integrated view based on broader principles; they stifle development of intellectual, institutional, economic, sociological, or cultural histories of communications.

The Explanatory Designs

Works fitting the second dominant type of journalism history—explanatory—address reasons behind the nature, growth, and evolution of

media. Dominated by what is often called the "great man" approach, this design emphasizes the nineteenth century and generally treats individuals (producers) as shapers of American media. Though Thomas and subsequent historians included biographical sketches, full biographies seldom appear before the twentieth century. Biographers of such men as William Randolph Hearst (Swanberg, 1961) and Joseph Pulitzer (Swanberg, 1967) examined their subjects' philosophies as sources of press developments. According to the biographers, the ideas of such men defined news, shaped newspaper format, style, and content, and molded the industry as well as consumer tastes.

One other type of explanatory study should be noted, although no historian has fully developed it. Many authors note nineteenth-century expansion of technology and its influence on media. Bleyer's final chapter, for example, and North's data imply that argument. Portions of other surveys, particularly where concerned with journalism of the 1830s, stress urbanization and technological growth as shapers of media. But the authors have done little more than note such forces in passing, and no historian has developed a conceptual framework for the study of technological growth related to media.

Another type of explanatory history departs from the great man and nineteenth-century emphasis. *Freedom of the Press from Hamilton to the Warren Court* (Nelson, 1967) emphasizes selected historical documents about press freedom to show evolution of its meaning after 1800. A companion book, *Freedom of the Press from Zenger to Jefferson* (Levy, 1966), uses court cases, private papers, and other documents to explain press freedom during the colonial and early American period. Nelson's book follows the Whig interpretation while Levy's follows the consensus view. Both books, however, demonstrate the value of scholarly synthesis based on documents as a way of revealing the past; they point up that little of this kind of history has been produced in the discipline.

Another important explanatory work, *Film: The Democratic Art* (Jowett, 1976), departs from perspectives discussed thus far. Treating movie development through social history, this book relates changing audiences and consumer tastes to the growth of a medium. This scholarly book incorporates a thorough analysis of growth phases with examination of relationships between the medium and society, morality, economics, politics, and the cultural settings of an art form.

Exploratory Studies

Exploratory journalism histories are rare. Perhaps the most important single one thus far, *Mass Media and the National Experience: Essays in Communications History* (Farrar and Stevens, 1971), exposes a wealth of topical gaps in the discipline. This book explores research approaches,

particularly to journalism history and freedom of expression. But equally important, it points up the discipline's inattention to politics, economics, and technology; regional, black, photographic, and local journalism; broadcast history; and the roles and functions of the journalist (for example, in his role as social critic).

Two other studies have a mass media and society emphasis, but their potential value to historians merits comment. So far, neither those concerned with journalism nor communications history have effectively mined the knowledge and data compiled by contemporary mass communications researchers. "The Development of Political Cognitions" (Becker et al., 1975) summarizes much of that work in a way which suggests historical applications. "Occupational, Organizational, and Institutional Models in Mass Media Research: Toward an Integrated Framework" (Hirsch, 1977) presents valuable distinctions, assessment of differing foci, and careful evaluation of their implications. The work challenges communications historians to look at previous eras from similar points of view.

OTHERS' CONTRIBUTIONS
TO COMMUNICATIONS HISTORY

Another group of studies fitting the explanatory design comes from outside journalism and more properly belongs to communications history. However, the work concerns print and therefore provides a transitional link from journalism to communications research designs. The major contributions include emphases on ideas as history, projection of broadly applicable principles, and promulgation of holistic views. Additionally, the work is oriented toward process—as opposed to emphasis on product or producer.

Emphasis on Ideas

Histories using publications as components linking ideas and events are recent and primarily concern colonial and early America. Each focuses on ideas (seeking larger principles) and pursues them through political developments. The inquiries search colonial publications for evidence of impending revolution, for example, or for colonists' views and uses of the press, or for the relationship of democratic principles to practices of press freedom.

Bernard Bailyn's *Pamphlets of the American Revolution* (1965) and *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (1967) explore the growth, combinations, interactions, and forces of ideas leading to the American Revolution. *Propaganda and the American Revolution* (Davidson, 1943) explores the colonists' understanding and use of propaganda through the range of communications, including sermons, broadsides, and

pamphlets. *Prelude to Independence* (Schlesinger, 1957) examines newspaper propaganda and the colonists' use of the press to win uncommitted minds to the patriot cause.

The Legacy of Suppression (Levy, 1960, 1963) cast in a consensus interpretation, relies on court and legislative records to argue that colonists maintained a narrow view of press freedom before and after the Revolution. *Freedom's Fetters* (Smith, 1956), a Whig view, focuses on the political events culminating in the 1798 Alien and Sedition Acts.

Emphasis on Principles

Other contributions to communications history are largely exploratory and explanatory. The approaches, central foci, and interpretations vary widely; and the historical periods treated range from beginning speech and writing to print and electronic media. The special importance of these works lies in attention to broadly applicable principles. For an overview, such works may be divided according to attention to the four communications revolutions: speech, writing, print, and electronic signals. Again, print has received most attention, though some works survey two or more communications forms.

Among the latter are Harold Innis's *The Bias of Human Communication* (1951) and *Empire and Communication* (1972). These explanatory/ exploratory designs search history from ancient times for communications' place in events. The arguments unfold in an evolutionary interpretation suggested by emphasis on technological advances which increased communications speed, convenience, and efficiency. These surveys, however, present a sociological perspective in their attention to communications' force in setting trends in motion, shaping organization of societies, government, and power centers.

Another general, related survey is *Understanding Media* (McLuhan, 1964). Influenced by Innis, and extending his thesis, this exploratory study focuses on communications forms (visual or auditory) and argues that they, as much as content, if not more, merit study for their influence on thought processes and life orientations.

A more recent book, *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers* (Schudson, 1978) provides a sociological exploration of objectivity as a standard and goal for the presentation of news. By focusing on "objectivity" as a cultural phenomenon, Schudson's work promises to stimulate research into culturally bound, or sociologically grounded, attributes of the news profession and media institution.

One group of scholars has concentrated on European origins and growth of printing. Of particular importance is *The. Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Eisenstein, 1978), a process-oriented exploration of early printing history. Posing a wealth of research topics, Eisenstein urges

that printing effects "should not be thought of in terms of periods that open and close"; she asserts that they emerged "always unevenly, always continuously and cumulatively from the late 15th-century" and have "persisted, with ever augmented force, right down to the present." Surveying broad questions, she "fills gaps with logical inferences" and asserts that "explicit theories . . . are now overdue."

Speculating about initial changes in cultural, psychological, and sociological realms, Eisenstein calls for a revolutionary interpretation of print origins. She conjectures about how print transformed concepts of self and the world, thought processes, and human relationships. Her most convincing inferences, however, come from the sociological perspective, as she ponders printing's effect on economic and family structures, educational and religious institutions and roles, nationalism, laws, and military policies. Space does not permit lengthy examination of the research, but some examples will illustrate the attention to process.

Noting that printing markedly increased book production while reducing man-hours of labor, Eisenstein ponders how overproduction and "drives to tap new markets" changed economic structures, as compared to previous scribes' and manuscript dealers' inabilities to meet demands. Areas needing study, she asserts, are shifts of book production from universities to small towns and villages; developments of trade networks, fairs, competition for privileges and monopolies, publishing controls; appearances of new roles (as, for example, the scholar-printer becoming indexer-abridger-lexicographer-chronicler); and the growth of a "new esprit de système" now called organization.

From the psychological perspective, Eisenstein speculates that changed mental habits had sociological effects as "printers' products reshaped powers to manipulate objects, to perceive and think about varied phenomena." Book consumption bred "unevenly-phased social and psychological changes," as exposure to diverse ideas created combinations of old and new—often rigidifying both—and spawned new systems of ideas. Learning-by-doing changed to learning-by-reading; proliferation of guides and manuals facilitated one's getting ahead in life and redirected attention from the hereafter to more immediate individual purposes.

In the institutional area, Eisenstein focuses on legal developments caused by printing. She suggests that study of licensing and privilege laws spawned by printing might clarify the dissolution of guild controls and conflicts over mercantilist policies, the shift from reliance on guild protection to individual initiative, and development of new bureaucratic policies. On another level, she ponders the intensifying struggles over rights as corollary to laws becoming fixed in print, making legal precedents more permanent and more difficult to break.

Eisenstein also offers convincing speculation about printing's spur to nationalism; Protestantism's strength (rooted in reading) versus Catholicism's decline; the reshaping of education and institutionalizing of accompanying roles; the effects on family structure, child-rearing practices, and concepts of authority. In effect, she suggests that the introduction of printing brought a revolution which remains to be studied.

Eisenstein's process-oriented research should appeal especially to journalism and communications historians. She imparts her own challenge in the following statement:

> I have cut across fields properly cultivated by specialists and made sweeping assertions that have not been substantiated. ... If my conjectures have alerted some readers to how much remains to be done and aroused some concern about doing it, they have fulfilled their purpose.

Of particular interest should be her attention to disjunctions created by changes and innovations; the reverberating effects through economic structures of new technologies; effects in psychological and sociological spheres of new roles related to communications. These broad outlines suggest questions applicable across space and time and for a variety of communications phenomena. For example, journalism historians might pursue, in a manner represented by "News Bias and the Telegraph: A Study of Historical Change" (Shaw, 1967), the process and ramifications of any innovation at any time in media history. Such research might trace the new roles, meanings, or professions produced by such innovations through society.

Another work, also about early European printing, imparts too much to summarize briefly, but it emphasizes structures rather than process. *Livre, Pouvoir et Societé à Paris au 17e Siècle* (Martin, 1969), a two-volume descriptive/explanatory study, also raises questions applicable across space and time. Focusing on printing as an institution, Martin examines its growth, development, structure, products, constraints; the demographics, status, social mobility, and influence of publishers; publishers' specialties and titles sold; titles in some five hundred private libraries, including demographics of owners; and ultimately, the industry's relationships to government, society, and culture.

Almost any aspect of this research could be replicated for periods of American communications history. In particular, the data about French understanding and use of propaganda could well have implications for study of colonial America. Virtually no one has tried to determine books owned by individuals or sold by booksellers—or the demographics of either—for any period in American history. (Cultural implications inhere in such a finding as Martin's that lawyers and doctors owned virtually no religious books compared to other professionals.) Nor has much research focused on the early American printing industry structures its relationship

to power centers, economics, financial status, income sources, or distribution methods.

Another important descriptive/explanatory study of early French printing is "Reading, Writing, and Publishing in Eighteenth-Century France: A Case Study in the Sociology of Literature" (Darnton, 1972). Asserting that books have a social life, economic value, literary and political attributes, Darnton speaks of a "sociocultural" history which could apply to communications.

This research drew on official archival documents and illegal publishers' papers to expand on three hypotheses: (1) The way books were produced and distributed determined what eighteenth-century Frenchmen read; (2) a legal and an illegal production/distribution system existed; and (3) "the differences between the two were crucial to the culture and politics of the Old Regime."

Tracing developments and effects of publishing controls, Darnton especially emphasized economics and explored the state-imposed monopoly's force. Member printers, for example, to keep their special status and assured income, worked at self-policing and quashing illegal competition which undersold them. At the same time, they would not risk their status and income through violations of controls. Consequently, legal publishing provided only a safe, traditional reading diet. Meantime, illegal, less safe, libelous, nontraditional books flowed through France via a complex distribution network.

Detailing that network, Darnton concluded that it helped reduce books "to the common denominator of irreligion, immorality, and uncivility," and prepared the way for revolution. To stamp out libels, France classed "its most advanced philosophy with its most debased pornography" and thus "sapped itself" by draining authors' self-restraint and "commitment to the culture of those on top." The foreign printers' lack of "loyalty to France, the Bourbons, or often, the Catholic Church" had its effect on French consumers of the illegally distributed books. The dealers distributed the books via a bribe system—an underworld operation which flouted the regime while itself relying on a widely dispersed organization existing for that purpose. The authors lived as "quasi-criminals"; the books, many of which concerned human rights, included those gossiping about, satirizing, and ridiculing the royal family. The latter, according to Darnton, alienated people from the rulers along lines of morality, until the 1789 revolution made the division permanent.

Darnton's work, like Martin's, points up the general lack of attention to communications as the force of ideas and their sources, manifestations, and interactions surrounding most American historical events. While Darnton's hypotheses about legal and illegal publishing may be inapplicable to most of the American setting, it might be adapted to study of colonial

American ideas or the party press era. And America has always had its nonestablishment press (at times "underground"), a phenomenon which merits study for its place in intellectual communications history and the processes which produced it. Finally, Darnton's research presents a good summary and analysis of other work, largely quantitative attempts, which focus on books as depositories of, or clues to, culture.

Holistic Views of Communications History

A reluctance among journalism historians to deal with or develop theory in part accounts for the discipline's great deficiencies in conceptualizing research problems. Theoretical frameworks are unlikely to emerge until researchers begin to consider the place of communications in a total scheme of societal organization. Two works, which otherwise elude neat categorization, illustrate to varying degrees such a perspective. *The Mind Managers* (Schiller, 1973) and "Communications in History: An Initial Theoretical Approach" (Jowett, 1976) suggest the importance of a holistic view of media and communications, thus contributing a valuable perspective from which to direct future research efforts.

Schiller poses a critical view of what may be inadvertent consequences of the totality of Western communications—history, structure, form, processes, content. His work may more appropriately belong with mass media and society studies. However, because of its evolutionary interpretation of American media as manipulative, and because it represents a New Left view, it invites historians' scrutiny.

Schiller argues that manipulation, not suppression, of information has been the eminent means of social control in America. He traces the growth of manipulation as the institutionalization of a process. He relates manipulation to perpetuation and reinforcement of American concepts of freedom, individualism, market economy, and educational goals. Claiming that media ownership, "available to those with capital," establishes power to manipulate and effect control, he argues that ever-increasing refinement of those techniques supercedes other intellectual activity. In sum, Schiller says media managers shape Western people's views of reality. Such manipulation, he implies, has directed the course of American history. Though manipulation is not a deliberate conspiracy, Schiller argues:

[It] is embedded in the unquestioned but fundamental socio-economic arrangements that first determine, and then are reinforced by, property ownership, division of labor, sex roles, the organization of production, and the distribution of income. These arrangements, established and legitimized over a very long time, have their own dynamics and produce their own "inevitabilities."

Schiller's exploratory research reflects a sociological approach. He conceives of media manipulation as gradually effecting cultural change, along

with social control, as he ponders the implications of American mass media exportation. Such a critique raises questions and should prod historical studies of cross-cultural media similarities and dissimilarities over time, as well as examinations of crosscurrents of communications-related concepts.

Jowett's work adheres to an innovative interpretation which reflects a broad orientation toward process, cutting across sociological and cultural perspectives. In 1975, Jowett stressed three broad issues, with detailed subquestions: (1) the interrelationship between society's needs and available technology; (2) actual social and cultural changes effected by general adoption of new media systems; and (3) the extent to which communications innovations alter social self-perception.

A more provocative 1976 article drew heavily on Deutsch's (1968) and Innis's (1951, 1972) works, and Carey's (1967) exegesis of the latter. Significantly, the article focuses on communications systems and proposes a scheme for analyzing their interrelationships with society. Setting out a six-part summation of human communications activity (message reception; memory, storage, recall; retrieval; feedback, reformulation; correction) along a four-category set of dimensions (physical, structural, cultural, social), Jowett formulated a matrix for analysis of relationships. Both articles, however, emphasize communications innovations.

Jowett's broad theories may seem to resist operationalizing at first glance. However, he sets out detailed questions which make a convincing guide for others to follow. Of particular value, Jowett's work draws attention to the scholarly effort incumbent upon journalism historians in formulating research theories. His holistic view, instructive and stimulating, points up relatively unexplored territory in communications research. Equally important, while he seems concerned with total systems (the broad canvas), he raises issues translatable into questions across lesser units. A study over time of any one media innovation along any one line, he proposes, would enlarge knowledge of communications' social and cultural history. In sum, the challenges in these studies could occupy serious historians for a very long time and contribute immeasurably to knowledge in the communications history discipline.

SUMMARY

Surveying the journalism history discipline points up the need for a body of ongoing critical literature. Critical historiography would stimulate ideas for other inquires, reveal gaps in previous work, call attention to broadly applicable questions, and provide an impetus to theory generation.

An overview of journalism and communications history reveals a lack of types of history, models, and clear perspectives. In addition, a survey

reveals lack of attention to common attributes of communications to topical areas. The discipline has produced virtually no intellectual, political, economic, cultural, sociological, and intellectural histories. Explanatory and exploratory methods dominate; analytical methods (that is, the study of relationships of two or more variables are conspicuous by their absence.

Perspectives, commonalities, and topical areas are often clouded for lack of clear focus or distinctions; often many of these criss-cross a study. Virtually no histories demonstrate a clear sociological or cultural grounding, for example. And where these perspectives do appear, they often seem to be interchangeable concepts in the writer's mind. Research examining communications (or media) along a continuum (or process) of common attributes remains undeveloped—reporting purposes, economics, structures, institutional complexes, policies. Later chapters in this book draw attention to important new questions concerning distribution systems and other pressures shaping the media. Recent interest in varied subjects has also developed, but much remains to be done concerning local media history, regional differences, roles of journalists. Finally, the lack of theory should inspire communications and journalism historians to approach any work, whether the purpose comprehends theory-building or not, with exposure to theory construction and its uses.

Beyond these gaps, historians might profit from carefully considering the work of those outside journalism. Particularly, histories show a need for critical consideration of implicit purposes and foci of research, sorts of dynamics inherent in events, and best procedures for elucidating them.

2

HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

The new approaches to communications history require atten-
tion to underlying assumptions of research and to terminology
and historiography. Assumptions about human behavior and
events shape research questions and determine whether gener-
alizable models will emerge. Specifying such assumptions and
terminology will produce better conceptualizations within
which to study problems and formulate models.

Several problems underlie current historiographic orientations among
journalism historians. One orientation, a cultural history of journalism
(Carey, 1975), came approximately thirty years after other historians
began to wrestle with the same problem (Ware, 1940). Thus, in addition to
demanding considerable knowledge of general history, cultural explana-
tions also require attention to the intellectual effort already expended on
the concepts involved. The second orientation—a discipline called "com-
munications history" (Jowett, 1975)—implies a holistic approach: evolu-
tion of systems, functions, forms, patterns, channels, institutions, events;
interactions of ideology with economic and social forces; and particularly
communications' place in historical processes. This requires knowledge and
some understanding of systems theory and the dynamics of societal forces.
And this in turn, requires some grounding in varied disciplines. But both
orientations ultimately require training in the discipline of history per se
and considerable conceptual work.

On one level, conceptual problems revolve around terminology. Some
researchers see cultural explanations as antithetical to a communications
history approach. In other words, they seem to argue that cultural expla-
nations require depth study of a topic within well-defined time bound-
aries, and a holistic or systems approach precludes such an intense investi-
gation of one phenomenon. Other researchers, perhaps because of the
near-simultaneous emergence of the two orientations, confuse cultural
explanations with communications history as concepts. The assumption

seems to be that any topic falling within the definition of "communications history" will constitute a "cultural" study—and vice versa. Finally, perhaps most researchers view both constructs as too comprehensive and vague for productive academic definitions. Consequently, though journalism historians seek new approaches, departure points seem uncertain and the promise of new research models remains unfulfilled.

Getting beyond this stymied state calls for examination of it. New historiographic approaches usually entail "new" language and new ways of looking at the past. Until historians arrive at some agreed-upon meanings for that language and some analysis of the deficiencies of former ways of looking at the past, new approaches may not readily advance. Toward that end, this chapter will examine some research problems involving terminology and discuss barriers to alternative historical approaches.

RESEARCH PROBLEMS: TERMINOLOGY

Some generally agreed-upon definitions aid in research and discourse. But, just as importantly, they facilitate examination of researchers' assumptions. Generally, journalism historians give too little attention to assumptions underlying research, and yet every researcher approaches data with certain beliefs about the nature of individuals and the way events unfold. The following discussion, therefore, will concern both definitions and the importance of assumptions to research and model development.

Some Definitions

Some words, such as "interactions," seem especially troublesome to historians concerned with new approaches. In essence, an interaction consists of stimuli and responses reacting upon each other; in the process, each transforms the other over time. To demonstrate this concept and to introduce, identify, and discuss terminological issues, the following story appears as a reference point.

In his first Kentucky job after moving from Massachusetts in 1814, Amos Kendall tutored Henry Clay's children. Two years later, he owned part of the Frankfort *Argus of Western America,* (Daniels, 1978; Stickney, 1872). As a forceful editor who made his paper a vehicle for his political views, he ultimately destroyed his friendship with Clay. Typical of his style, a new partnership announcement on October 17, 1822, emphasized that the paper would continue "uniformly to support" the principles of "the Republican party of 1798" and of people as "possessors of every contested power." In state affairs, he urged that people

> must continue to protest and reason against the late decisions of our
> Judges, declaring our endorsement and replevin laws unconstitu-

tional, because we think them not only calculated to prevent the so much desired appreciation of the currency; but to strip our state government of some of its most important and dearly cherished powers. It is by the prevalence of sound principles, not by a surrender of those rights which were reserved to the state on the adoption of the Federal constitution, that we wish to see Kentucky delivered from the evils under which she confessedly labors.

In a statement which may have reflected confidence in his political clout as much as an appeal to government officials, Kendall asserted, "On these principles we rest our hopes for the contrivance and even an increase in public patronage. . . ." Kendall had won patronage annually. But his outspokenness disturbed Clay supporters. In early 1823, Kendall noted that the *Argus* had been labeled "too democratic," but said he preferred "erring on that side," adding: "People better have too much power than too little. . . ." In 1825, Kendall explained in a news column that he had gained disfavor and did not expect to be elected public printer. His partner, Robert Johnston, applied alone, because, as Kendall explained, he had no outside business interests while Kendall did. Johnston lost, however, because, in Kendall's words, "he is guilty of the *unpardonable sin* of being a *democrat of the old Jefferson School.*"

Kendall and the *Argus* fell on financial hard times. Kendall blamed Clay and increased his support of Andrew Jackson for the presidency. In late 1827, Kendall began publishing letters addressed to, and designed to undermine, Clay. The first resounded with anger about lost patronage:

Sir:
When you took from the Argus the publication of the Laws of the United States . . . I took occasion to express the gratification I felt at that mark of your personal displeasure. . . . Permit me . . . again to thank you for your kind proscription, which has empowered my heart to follow the dictates of my understanding, without exciting the painful reflection, that I would a bosom which retains the least friendly feeling towards myself.

The letter charged Clay with improprieties in obtaining the Secretary of State post under John Adams. Claiming he had evidence, Kendall presented persuasive information to support his charge.

Kendall accomplished his purposes, and more. His newspaper became revitalized. He filled it with pro-Jackson sentiments: letters, biographical sketches of Jackson, defenses of Rachel Jackson, and reports of national Jackson support. When Jackson became president, Kendall received a government appointment and went on to greater fame. His Kentucky newspaper lost its vitality; under a new name and editor, it folded within ten years.

The story may be used to raise issues important to new approaches in journalism history. And it can be analyzed for what it does and does not do as history.

First, charting each action in the story as a stimulus or response produces a picture of an "interaction," as demonstrated in Figure 2.1. The story, however, is a narrative, highly simplified, emphasizing the newspaper as the unit of analysis. Therefore, it obscures "forces" which acted as additional stimuli and responses. Political ideologies and purposes, economics, and the particular groupings of wealth and political clout, for example, interacted in this instance. Further, they were probably more responsible for the story's outcomes than either the newspaper or individuals. Such forces' interactions can be charted just like those of individuals. Isolating and studying them, however, presents a more complex task. They must be precisely defined, usually in terms of their attributes or characteristics. For example, the industrial Revolution (a societal force and stimulus) interacted with institutions such as the family, whose responses became stimuli affecting the Industrial Revolution. Ultimately, these forces' interactions transformed both familial roles and industry. Defining the Industrial Revolution and familial roles, however, remains

Henry Clay—
Influential
with
Presi-
dential
hopes

Amos Kendall—
tutor

Friendship

Newspaper Support

Public patronage

Outspoken political views

Cooling of friendship

Critical of Adams

Pro-Jackson

Political patronage

Withdrawn

Jackson Support

Critical of Clay

Clay influence declines

Presidential
Aspirations gone;
Political clout
severely weakened

Head of Jackson's
"Kitchen Cabinet"
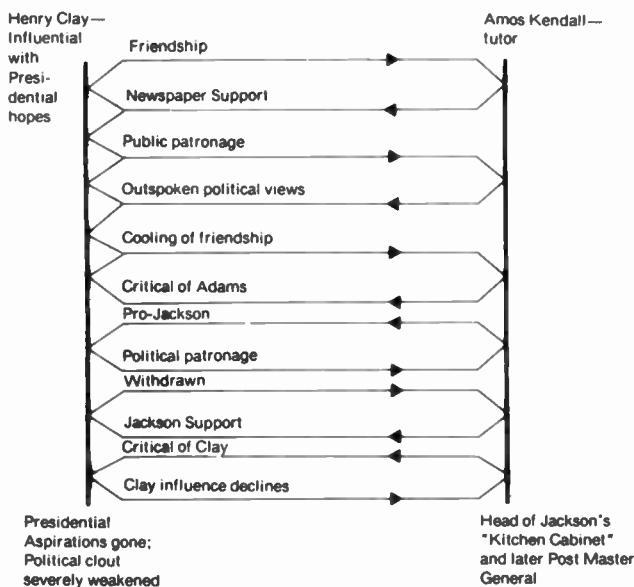and later Post Master
General

FIGURE 2.1   Interaction Diagram

perhaps the greatest task for the researcher who attempts to document such interactions.

Second, the story helps raise questions about historians' assumptions; those, in turn, lead to analysis of models and conceptual frameworks. For example, the story assumes individuals are purposeful, motivated by self-interest, and manipulate environments. And it assumes Kendall perceived himself as someone to be reckoned with, someone with power to shape politics and policies in his own society. Further, the story has a hint of cultural elements: Its emphases rest on individuals' perceptions of how they should behave as well as their behavior.

As history, however, the story fails to provide a cultural explanation, or any other kind of perspective. It lacks a conceptual framework, and no research model applies to the data. As a linear narrative, the story does not relate events to any broader theoretical assumptions than those stated above.

To consider these problems more fully, other definitions are called for. Journalism and communications history must be defined before a return to the issues of models and cultural explanations. In this discussion, journalism history is defined as a subfield of communications history, confined to print and electronic media and their operations. Communications history, borrowing Jowett's (1975) definition, encompasses:

> the development of man's ability to transmit thoughts, symbols, and messages, both in the immediate and spatial dimension and trans-temporally; and it is essentially concerned with changes in quality, quantity and means of the transference of information, and the effect of such changes on the development of human society.

Other terms, particularly "models," need clarification. Researchers have used "model" variously to refer to perspective, central focus, or unit of analysis, research design, and overall direction of data. For example, some refer to the cultural approach as a "cultural model"; some use the unit of analysis to mean model—that is, a focus on institutional structure becomes an "institutional" or "structural" model; some refer to the research design and ordering of data (exploratory or descriptive) as a model; finally, some characterize the direction of data or events (evolution, revolution, innova-tion) as a model.

The following, not intended as a comprehensive definition, suggests some attributes of a model. A model (1) rests upon certain assumptions about human activity and events, (2) is determined by the research questions (and vice versa), and (3) is generalizable. At the very least, a researcher approaches data with assumptions that human beings either manipulate or are manipulated, are primarily rational or are governed by emotion, are motivated by self-interest or concern for the greater good. As Berkhofer (1969) noted:

No matter how theorists try to escape it, they must hypothesize a model of how man works in order to account for their data regardless of how "Scientific" some of them attempt to be in . . . eliminating such empirically unobservable entities from their experiments of analysis.

To return to the Kendall story above, when assumptions are unclear in the researcher's mind, the problem under study may lack a conceptual framework or the validity required for generalizing to other contexts. Further, a model is shaped not only by how the researcher perceives his relationship to his own society and the world, but also by how he views his subjects, as observed about the Kendall story.

A researcher's views of these relationships influence his assumptions about the way events unfold and therefore largely determine the nature of research questions. Had the Kendall story assumed that individuals are manipulated, the events would have been treated differently, and probably would have lacked a cultural implication. For example, research emphasizing culture assumes people manipulate their environments. But research emphasizing structure assumes that human beings are manipulated. An analysis which does not conceptually separate "culture" from "structure" thus rests on conflicting views about human behavior. Further, the one analysis treats events as static, while the other treats them as dynamic.

This discussion defines "model" as a generalizable description of the process one seeks to explain. For example, a "transitional" model assumes that one method, idea, trend, or manner of behavior gives way to another at a specifiable point. Thus, to discover or explain what occurred in the transition from hand-operated to steam-driven presses, one focuses on the ending phases of one process, the beginnings of another, the mechanisms, trends, justifications, and attributes of both—and how these interacted or overlapped with, reinforced, supplemented, or diminished each other. Such a model is not limited to one view of human behavior; but the researcher's view will shape the questions asked.

Other terms can be defined more briefly. "Research design" is defined here according to Selltiz et al. (1967) as "the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data" (descriptive, exploratory, explanatory). The researcher's perspective or primary interest and presentation constitute the "approach" (cultural, sociological). The "unit of analysis" is the attribute or entity addressed as a focus of study (institution, organization). Direction revealed by data, or what the author says is revealed, (evolution, revolution, diffusion, innovation) is the "interpretation."

Use of "cultural," "sociological," and "psychological" will be guided by Parsons (1972) and Berkhofer (1969, 1972). *Culture* depends on collective perception of appropriate behavior; thus, it includes how people believe they are expected to behave as well as the behavior. *Sociology*

includes interactions of groups, institutions, structures, and relationships in structured situations. *Psychology* refers to the force, nature, choice, and susceptibility of individual personality, independent of external qualities.

The Kendall story does not represent a cultural approach, because although it emphasizes one individual's perceptions and consequent behavior, it does not deal with collective or recurrent behavior. A sociological study would emphasize the political groups, their relationships, and how the newspaper and other institutions fit into that structure. Attributes of a psychological study appear in the story's suggestion of Kendall's personality. But a true psychological study would require development of background from which to speculate about Kendall's motivation, including the collective perception and his own perception of his role.

To summarize, then, *cultural* approaches emphasize perceived sanctioned behavior. *Sociological* (structural) approaches emphasize interactions and relationships. And *psychological* approaches emphasize personality, its attributes, manifestations, and effects. .

Finally, terms such as evolution and revolution imply rate and direction of events, ideas, trends, processes. *Evolution* implies gradual, cumulative growth and transformation. *Revolution* implies explosive, abrupt, far-reaching societal disruptions occurring through a series of precipitative events. *Innovation* implies change (usually sudden) compelled by new elements. *Diffusion* implies a natural, gradual impact-flow through an environment unlikely to undergo abrupt disruption because of the phenomenon.

Justification for an Integrated View
of Journalism and Communications History

At least three recent developments seem to call for an historiographical inclusion of both journalism and communications. These reflect deeper academic trends which have grown out of the emphasis on, and division of, the humanities and social sciences. Higham (1970), in tracing this development, noted that humanities as a term was almost unused before World War I. But as social science grew, humanities became defined. Federal policy produced these divisions, Higham wrote, but many leading thinkers believe the cleavage between them "is the very condition the contemporary intellect most needs to overcome." Higham further noted that although humanities and science do suggest differences in method, aim, and habit of mind, "most, if not all, scholarship needs some proportion of humanistic and scientific thinking. . . ."

Increasing interest in process-oriented research in recent years reflects such thought; trends affecting communications studies exemplify it. The first trend emerged from increased interest in communications by people outside the field, particularly historians who examine broad issues across

various categories. The second trend, implicit recognition of communica-
tions as more than media-centered processes, appears in the growing
number of university schools and departments bearing "communications"
as part of their formal titles. Finally, the third trend, growing interest in
media-environment relationships, assumes basic processes implicit in
diverse communications situations.

BARRIERS TO NEW HISTORICAL APPROACHES

The last trend, part of a larger one toward process-oriented research in
many disciplines, begs for exploration, articulation, and development by
communications historians. Although espoused by journalism historians, it
cannot be developed within the confines of previous journalism history.
Conceptualizing the problem as one of communications, and thus broader
than journalism, entails assessing and modifying or eliminating intellectual
barriers to alternative views or history.

Some barriers inhere in the journalism discipline. These include (1) the
way written history has organized thinking about the past, (2) general
neglect of historiography, and (3) traits peculiar to the profession.

Journalism and Historical Thought

Virtually all written journalism history has organized the past as (1) a
linear progression; (2) an evolution of progress; (3) a series of time-bound
events; and (4) discrepancies or distances between principles and practices.
While these views have advanced knowledge, their implications merit
assessment before processes can be defined and clear methodologies
worked out for new inquiries.

Viewing the past as a linear progression dictates a narrow investigative
pattern. It also predisposes a researcher to look for events in a straight line
over time, and it produces data construed to fit foregone conclusions. As
Berkhofer (1969) pointed out, such a view sees variation, not variables. It
describes characteristics instead of analyzing principles. And it focuses on
uniqueness rather than continuity, complexity, disjunction, or change.

Such history reveals a catalog, not a process. It portrays events as static,
without elements of dynamism, and may be likened to studying the
alphabet as a straight line and describing each letter in turn. The alphabet,
however, could be examined for elements of continuity: Each letter
repeats some aspect (line, curve, or open space), added dimension, and
related attributes. It also reveals disjunction and disharmony: Circles,
half-circles, triangles, curves, and blocks interrupt straight lines and angles.
And variables always include the tools with which the letters are written,
the background against which they are perceived, and who manipulates the
tools and background.

Ignoring variables, principles of continuity, and added dimensions produces a static picture of the past. For example, journalism historians have recorded press characteristics of the 1840s, 1880s, and early 1900s and described the variations among them. Presenting each as a unique stage of the press, historians have failed to examine such principles as contemporarily conceived purposes of news and reporting or the elements of continuity in the varying contexts. They have examined neither the conditions under which continuity or discontinuity adhere nor those which produce added reportorial dimensions.

While the linear view produces important data, its implications obscure areas important for further inquiry. Ignoring process, the view diverts attention from questions about rate, direction, and magnitude of *what* variations, dimensions, characteristics emerge or recur under *what* conditions. It ignores ramifications of events, trends, and characteristics which end, get interrupted, reemerge in altered form, set other trends in motion, or depend on some unexplored combination or unique set of circumstances. Further, since it neglects disjunctions and discontinuities, it obscures variables which might aid researchers in producing general explanations or hypotheses. By structuring and perpetuating a view of the past as linear, the interpretation diverts attention from interactions and relationships, from attendant, contributory, and necessary conditions which might be generalizable.

Interpreting history as evolution of progress produces similar implications. But while the linear interpretation may attach no varying weight to different events, the latter assumes each subsequent event is an improvement. Also, while the linear view does not necessarily entail a consistent conviction about data beyond its linearity, the progress interpretation does. It predisposes the researcher to select data or trends demonstrating the validity of progress over time. This leads to neglect of the principle that progress in one area virtually always brings decay, decline, or transformation in another.

This view's implications are doubly undesirable because it sacrifices identities of historical strains antithetical to progress, along with opportunities to follow them through their own histories and repercussions. For example, a small twentieth-century town, seeking to maintain its quiet and secluded character, hailed construction of a super highway skirting its edges. Townspeople, expecting less through-town traffic, believed their streets would remain quiet, uncongested, and require no expansion. But the highway brought the opposite result. More travelers with more time and inclination to stop in the charming town brought unprecedented congestion, traffic hazards, and even pedestrian deaths. What townspeople may have foreseen as progress required actions substantially altering the town's character. The progress-evolution interpretation, however, would

follow the highway and how it improved traveling conditions; it would ignore the unexpected results. Similarly, virtually any change in press history will produce unexpected results in nonpress areas. But historians have yet to isolate and study those areas.

Like the linear interpretation, the progress or evolution view also neglects variables. For example, journalism historiography needs a study of reporting, as Carey (1975) pointed out. American reporting has evolved through several stages—from bulletin-board type announcements to revolutionary propaganda, to partisanism, to sensationalism, to objectivity, to interpretative, investigative, and (finally) advocacy journalism. These stages easily lend themselves to a progress or evolution interpretation; certainly, the improved characteristics must be described for each stage. But a more productive history might examine the variously conceived purposes of reporting, the contexts which produced them, how those purposes interacted with or transformed their contexts, and how context and purposes differed, correlated, or recurred through the various stages.

Interpreting history as a series of time-bound events produces what Berkhofer (1969) calls periodicity and ignores principles adhering through space and time. Focusing on the press in a given period, for example, may confine attributes and events within artificial boundaries. In such research Berkhofer noted, time becomes the implicitly assumed causal factor, the independent variable. But time does not create events. Ideas, conditions, trends—all dynamic, interacting, flowing from somewhere and going somewhere—create events. And the peculiar junction of these, their sources and paths, not time, should form the boundaries of study. These will not emerge simultaneously, nor from the same sources. They will neither remain static nor diverge or converge in the same matter. More importantly, the historian's task lies in accounting for their existence, persistence, modification, termination, and repercussions.

Time boundaries are not meaningless, of course. A researcher must locate and identify any topic temporally. But time boundaries should be treated as part of the context, not as causal variables. The party press, for example, has been defined within the period from 1789 to the early 1860s. But 1789 did not create the party press. A set of ideas, perceived purposes, and needs created it. Out of those arose mechanisms of persistence, one of which has been isolated as public patronage. Similarly, ideas, perceived purposes, and needs caused the demise of the party press—by undermining and terminating mechanisms of its persistence. These, however, have hardly been studied by historians.

Finally, an analysis of the principles-versus-practices interpretation produces pitfalls similar to those noted for the linear, progress or evolution, and time-bound series-of-events interpretations. While more intellectually demanding and productive, this view's primary fault lies in its

assumption that principles are widely shared. For example, trying to determine the contemporary meaning of the First Amendment produces virtually no hard evidence of what its drafters meant. However, researchers often base work on implicit assumptions that not only the drafters, but every printer, publisher, and citizen understood, shared, and emulated one universal meaning. Such history implies that principles are definite, well understood, and widely shared. And it often assumes that all divergences from the principles have equal weight, result from the same ideological beliefs, and occur for the same reasons to accomplish the same ends. The interpretation thus obscures groups holding differing concepts of the principles, what complies with them, and whether compliance is appropriate. Ultimately, such history ignores the importance of disparate groups in shaping events.

Neglect of Historiography

These views—linear, progress or evolution, time-bound, and discrepancy—have been framed by a Whig portrayal of history, as Carey (1975) pointed out. Based in a conflict paradigm of (liberal) good versus (conservative) evil, this portrayal dominates journalism history some twenty years after other historians have moved away from it. This persistence suggests that neglect of broader historiography constitutes a second barrier to developing new research models in journalism history.

General American history has evolved through several debates about purposes and some four or five broad interpretative movements. Written and actual journalism history have at times reflected, diverged from, and seemed totally out of step with those movements. Moreover, in a development perhaps peculiar to journalism, divergences have occurred between the profession and the historiography. The former is process-oriented, but the latter presents the former as static and linear. Furthermore, the profession sustains and reinforces the Whig view in the history. Finally, professional developments seem to have paralleled general historiography more closely than journalism historiography. The extent to which this discrepancy locates journalism history's distance from the mainstream of intellectual effort deserves scrutiny.

The earliest journalism histories appear to contrast favorably with much early general American history. Much of the latter, as Wise (1973) ably summarized, was written for drama and followed a narrative style which sacrificed accuracy for a "good story." Early twentieth-century historians reacted to the dramatization by calling for a "scientific" history based only on facts. American Historical Association President George Burton Adams, in 1908, characterized the historian's task as discovery and "recording of what actually happened" (Wise, 1973). Such a view of

history excluded speculation and study of societal forces. Early journalism histories, on the other hand, relied primarily on facts, not drama.

A closer parallel with general history appears in nineteenth-century news reporting. From the 1830s, much reporting increasingly dramatized and sometimes fabricated events. These traits, plus the muckraking movement at the turn of the century, may have led to the "objective" era in journalism, which also used facts—to define news. To a considerable extent, then, the profession's "cult of objectivity" coincides with the "scientific" history movement. (What should interest historians, of course, is that such ideas did not appear in isolation in either discipline, but were rooted in, and cut across, broader cultural movements.)

The parallel continued until the 1950s. By the 1930s, Wise's summary continues, some historians had begun attacking "factual" history. One problem, they said, lay in one's inability ever *to know what actually happened*; no mind could accurately weigh facts and describe past events. A second problem lay in the historian's inability to separate personal views from history writing. Regardless of the care with facts, many argued, the historian would still "interpret" through selection, organization, and presentation (Wise, 1973).

The same arguments surged through the journalism profession's examination of objective reporting. Because journalists had been restricted to reporting only facts from Europe, some argued, Americans remained unprepared for World War I (Brown, 1936). Asserting that reporters' experiences and perceptions would enhance readers' understanding of events, they called for "interpretative" reporting. By 1947, the Hutchins Commission Report on *A Free and Responsible Press*, after noting the media's failure to present news meaningfully, set out five requirements—all of which entailed interpreting as a function of news reporting.

Meanwhile, in the history profession, Wise (1973) explains how Carl Becker perhaps calmed the scientific-interpretative debate with his 1949 address to the American History Association. He summed up the problem of "scientific" history thus:

> If we had all the data of all events, and a mind capable of grasping the data in their actual relations, everything would be immediately understood and immediately pardoned . . . there would be no occasion for "views" . . . distinction between fact and non-facts, facts and interpretations, meaning and non-meaning, good and bad, being and becoming; everything would simply be, the entire best *what actually happened* would just be there and nothing to write home about. We would have the Truth, and the Truth would make us free—free to do nothing, except to sit and contemplate the Truth.

Whether following Becker's reasoning, giving way to other debates, or concluding the problem was insoluble, historians eased the conflict. Jour-

nalists also eased the objective-interpretative debate. And a trend embracing interpretative reporting was marked by a history text titled, in part, "An Interpretative History of the Mass Media" (Emery, 1954).

Since all written history interprets, such arguments appear academic. But they do stimualte perspectives and new views. One such effect came in historians' recognition that even "scientific" history, with emphasis on facts alone, carried an obvious interpretation. And journalism history has reflected the same interpretation.

Butterfield (1959) labeled previous historiography as a Whig interpretation. Historians of the 1910-1950 era later came to represent a particular strain of that interpretation known as progressivism. In Wise's summary, although they claimed to present only facts, the progressives revealed the past as a constant conflict between societal forces: haves versus have-nots, liberals versus conservatives, freedom versus repression. Economics, in their view, dominated as the source of societal ills and shaped other spheres—religion, politics, literature, ideas, institutions. Reformists at heart, the progressives identified the evil so that society could correct it and avoid repeating mistakes (Sternsher, 1975; Wise, 1973; Berkhofer, 1972; Green, 1967).

The progressive school was challenged by a revisionist interpretation in the 1950s. This was the consensus or counter-progressive movement, focused on enduring qualities and uniting forces. Consensus historians saw past realities as complexes of many strains shaped and masked by symbols. No single force determined an event, they argued, and historians should examine appearances as well as repercussions of various trends. Impatient with reformers, resigned to a view of history as accidental, and believing that true evil could not easily be corrected, the consensus historians pursued their study of the past for its own sake (Wise, 1973).

In the 1960s, the New Left began to emphasize systems of power. They championed the inarticulate and downtrodden who, they argued, had been neglected because historians concentrated on elites. Viewing history as no accident and believing the powerful to be purposeful, the New Leftists drew attention to institutions, political and social systems (Wise, 1973).

Journalism history paralleled this historiography up to the 1950s, although lacking some strains which permeated history debates. For example, intellectual history, which began developing in the 1930s, remains all but absent from journalism history. Concern with a cultural approach emerged in the history discipline in the 1930s too, but only recently among journalism historians. More recently, historians have moved toward sociological approaches, but journalism historians have not yet defined the cultural perspective nor articulated distinctions between it and others. And, of course, no consensus or New Left journalism histories have appeared.

Professional Journalism Traits as Barriers

In effect, then, the Whig interpretation stands as a barrier to development of alternative inquiries in journalism history. But it does not deserve sole responsibility for journalists' views of the past. Its persistence may stem from professional peculiarities, which themselves rest in a conflict perspective and create additional barriers to new historical thought.

A conflict theme, permeating the journalism profession from the beginning, dominates its historical roots, development, role definition, fundamental principles, and educational goals for training recruits. From the first, for example, a struggle for press freedom, representing liberal good versus evil, has defined and undergirded the journalistic tradition. Additionally, major press developments have generally been defined in terms of championing liberal (good) causes, triumphing over constraints, or dispelling repressive forces. Further, the press's traditionally defined role as watchdog perfectly fits the Whig interpretation. A journalist's training stresses maintenance of that role, and no good journalist would welcome alternative views which might obscure or diminish its importance. Finally, the "good" journalist embodies strong conditioning to "crusade" for justice, to investigate, expose (and even reform) the bad, and to direct collective attention to societal ills.

This orientation produces a particular intellectual bent in journalists. Continually reinforced, the orientation easily transfers to the Whig view of history. This alone inhibits alternative interpretations. Further, trained zealously to sharpen and maintain sight of societal conflicts, the journalist must make an unusually big intellectual leap to embrace any other view of the past.

Finally, a minor, but perhaps no less inhibiting, professionalism creates another kind of barrier to developing new historical inquiries. The very words associated with "cultural" approaches repel many journalists. Trained to venerate the concrete, precise word, journalists recoil at such seeming ambiguities as "interactions," "relationships," "cultural contexts," "value systems," and even "communications history." However, journalism historians increasingly use such words, which cannot be conceived without some implicit definition.

To break this barrier and allow research to proceed productively, the definitions must be made explicit. A rough definition of "interaction" has been offered at the beginning of this chapter. Through revision, experimental application, and refinement by critical minds, that definition may become explicit and productive. Similarly, definitions of other troublesome words should be forthcoming, so they too may become refined into codified, agreed-upon meanings which will prove productive for research.

SUMMARY

New research approaches require attention to assumptions underlying terminology and historiography. Not only do researchers' assumptions about human behavior shape their work, so too do their views of the past. Journalism histories have organized views of the past as linear, as an evolution or progress, as a series of time-bound events, and as distances between principles and practices. While these advance knowledge, their implications may inhibit new approaches and alternative views of the past. Overcoming such implications requires assessing historiography and examining other intellectual barriers, some of which appear to inhere in journalism itself, to new historical inquiries.

As noted in previous chapters, cultural research requires looking at the past in new ways, investigating unresearched phenomena, and conceptualizing research problems and applications. In addition, it should include an initial examination of the historiography of cultural studies, the evolution of the meaning of "culture," and possible definitions and operationalizations of it. This chapter will begin with an exploration of (1) some conceptual research problems and applications and (2) model development. Later sections will discuss problems of reconciling research methods and purposes, the historiography of "culture," and some guiding principles for cultural research.

SOME CULTURAL RESEARCH PROBLEMS
AND APPLICATIONS

Attempting to translate cultural research possibilities into communications history highlights the difficulties. The following discussion, suggesting applications to journalism and communications history, incorporates problems suggested by Berkhofer (1969, 1972) and Ware (1940) who approached the issue from a general history perspective. The problems listed below were isolated and ennunciated by Ware in *The Cultural Approach to History* (1940). The accompanying discussion of each problem below attempts to relate it specifically to communications and journalism history.

(1) *Culture has a history, too.* Put another way, every past has an older past. This means that one must attempt to separate one's own cultural assumptions from topics under study at the same time one strives to know the subject's cultural history—and its place in the history of culture. Because journalism historians' primary emphases on events and product have precluded most opportunities to study differences between pasts and older pasts, a special need revolves around making such distinctions.

This problem may be illustrated by intellectual history. Just as culture has a history, so too do communications, professional ideals, ethical standards, and all other aspects of journalism and communications. Objectivity as an ideal for news has a history—and simultaneously forms part of culture, as Schudson (1978) demonstrated. In attempting to chart the history of objectivity in news, Schudson related it to cultural currents affecting media through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While his social history survey omitted much, his attention to such a question suggests applications to other problems. For example, the idea of news functions, what constitutes news, newsgathering goals, news professions, media features—all have histories and simultaneously belong to the history of culture. Imposing one's own cultural assumptions on the subject's context and its history, however, will not improve on previous research.

For example, although the perceived function of newspapers has a history, journalism histories read as if the twentieth-century meaning had always dominated.

(2) *Because culture has a history, past trends continually interact with new stimuli.* The researcher must try to distinguish the new from the cultural heritage in any context. For example, authors have maintained that the concept of news changed with the advent of the penny press. An intellectual history might trace the origins, growth, and the development of that concept. What did the penny press columns and editorials say by way of explaining, defining, and elaborating on news and its purposes? How did that contrast or compare with similar definitions and explanations in previous eras? How did these expressions compare or contrast with those in papers in other parts of the country? How did those concepts relate to other intellectual currents, either accepted or competing for acceptance? If the news concept introduced by the penny press was new, with what did it compete for acceptance? How did it get accepted? And how long did acceptance (institutionalization) take?

(3) *One or all aspects of culture may be in flux at any time,* and insensitivity to fluctuations undermines the validity of research and interpretations. To date, journalism history has emphasized individual intellectual activity—the great man approach. But, as Ware noted (1940), ideas are social products and perform social functions, thereby creating cultural forces. One function is to establish direction for ensuing intellectual activity. That activity, however, is conditioned by a cultural heritage underlying the structure of social relationships, communications, and the emotional meanings attached. New stimuli may come through ideas from outside contacts, research, or investigation, or groups seeking acceptance (sanction, institutionalization) of their special views. One or all may be in flux at any time; together, they form the orientation of intellectual behavior.

What, for example, do we know about the general intellectual dispositions of newspaper editors and publishers through American history? Study of state press association speeches (Holtzhueter, 1965) and activities at various trade conventions should help answer such a question. Investigations then could focus on similarities and differences across regions and time, perhaps determining the salience of ideas and their histories.

The differences between press development in the North and South should be documented. Histories have generally treated press development as one monolithic national progression. But evidence shows that the press developed markedly slower in Southern states. As late as 1792, the South produced less than 13% of the nation's extant publications (Garcia, 1977). What underlying expectations of the press existed in the South and the North? How did the difference affect other institutions? How did develop-

ment of industry and cities relate to the rate of press growth? How did diverse occurrences reflect other areas of development? How was development affected by the distribution system?

In a similar fashion, attention might focus on the West. There, like the South, an absence of towns and a scattered population must have affected not only distribution systems but also consumer interests. And these in turn must have resulted in either lower priorities on secondary communications channels or on communications--or both. Conversely, these may have enhanced confidence in interpersonal communications.

(4) *Cultural forces shape individual character as well as social character of groups.* The results are never even, and research produces distorted interpretations unless study of individuals includes their functions as part of groups. It may be noteworthy, for example, that James Fennimore Cooper, whose return from abroad coincided with the penny press emergence, showed distrust of American newspapers (Schudson, 1978). He portrayed a most unseemly newspaper editor, Steadfast Dodge, in three books published in 1838. In one of those, he wrote that newspapers overthrow tyrants "only to establish a tyranny of their own . . . over publick men, letters, the arts, the stage, and even over private life," that they seek freedom of opinion but allow no tolerance, and that they "parade" patriotism without sacrificing their own interests (Schudson, 1978).

In publishing such sentiments, Cooper implied a news concept of his own. What was the source of that concept? Did his concepts coincide or conflict with those expressed by penny press columns? To what extent did Cooper's ideas get repeated and become the basis for redefining news? To what extent did other literature reflect his ideas? How did these concepts relate to other trends of the era? To what groups did Cooper belong while abroad and after his return? What conditions or ideologies underlay those associations?

Another line of study might pursue the degree to which so-called elite newspapers had been accepted and appreciated by the literati. Was Cooper reacting to the vulgarizing of what had earlier been "proper" purposes of newspapers? Do the origins of America's popular culture coincide with the origins of the newspaper as a mass medium in the 1830s? What is the relationship of the media, or journalists, to the emergence and development of popular culture? At what point were tastes developed which paved the way for the later movie and television eras? Perhaps there are generalizations which might be discovered about the stages through which any medium goes before it becomes accepted.

(5) *Cultural forces operate in disharmony,* and the researcher will be hard pressed always to recognize, isolate, and interpret disjunctions. For example, the official end of the party press has often been attributed to

Abraham Lincoln's refusal to sponsor a paper. But evidence suggests the party press was unofficially dead before Lincoln made it official. The party press began to decline during the 1830s, just when the "second party system" began to gain momentum. According to Hofstader (1972), political leaders of the 1830s were the first "professional politicians." Did they change views and uses of the press? Research might focus on whether the party press became less significant when politics became "professional"; perhaps it merely failed to discover its appropriate role in this new kind of politics.

The growth and importance of the penny press also affected the party press. And so did reporting and newsgathering professions. But so did the 1838 depression. And so, too, did Jackson in gathering around him the more aggressive editors in the early 1830s. Research might reveal whether other papers suffered because of deprived leadership, or whether remaining editors became disillusioned with party politics and flouted party affiliations. To what extent did the phenomenon which boosted the party press to its peak also precipitate its demise?

(6) *All aspects of culture are not equal*, and the researcher must be wary of treating them as such. For example, historians claim the penny press represented the emergence of the newspaper as a mass medium. They have provided the descriptive qualifications—increased circulation, low price, ready availability, increased literacy—and have repeated the general summaries of content. But which of these forces was the most important, the least important, a part of some ongoing, or strongly developing expectation of the functions of news? Further, descriptions have generally ignored what may have been the strongest force—news column content. Research might show, for example, to what extent the columns reflect a medium appealing to the masses, as opposed to elites, and as opposed to the pre-penny press papers. What was "elite," and what was "mass" reading matter? By what standards or definitions? Did the press reflect different trends of thought and a different society (different in what ways?) than the press of 1825, for example? An analysis of news content from 1815 to 1825 and from 1825 to 1835 or 1845 might reveal more about the culture served by the press and more about the press and its perceived functions. To what extent did activities reported by the penny press reflect mass behavior? And to what extent did activities recorded by the pre-penny papers reflect them as *not* mass?

Another line of research might also assess the characteristics attributed to the penny press. It would be worthwhile to discover whether these differed more than in degree from those attributed to the yellow press or later tabloids. Companion questions concern why these forms of journalism emerged when they did and the underlying values and ideas which created conditions for their acceptance and growth.

(7) *Studying any topic*—communications, for example—*in its cultural context always invites distortion of the importance of one or both the context and subject.* At no point is this risk so great as in writing intellectual history. Since journalism histories have emphasized events—perhaps because of the problem—little opportunity has emerged for studying transmission of ideas, how they become transformed or grafted onto older or newer ones.

Too often, history has emphasized the industry components of the media and ignored underlying conditions. Often, the writing reads like a layman's breathless reaction to startling discoveries—enormous differences in press capabilities, for example, from 1830 to 1840, or economic expansion during the 1880s and 1890s. But the conditions and ideas which produced these, or were produced by them, should be examined too. Did the ideas create the conditions which created media components? Or did conditions or components create the ideas? Trying to isolate these factors and how they function across time and space might produce generalizable models and hypotheses.

Because journalism historians have neglected ideas, opportunities have not arisen to study ideas turning into action, or to isolate ideas, trends, or evolutions affecting the news profession across channels. For example, the reporting profession as an idea should be documented, including the context in which the word "reporter" first appeared, when the first reporter was hired, how the duties and perceived functions were understood, how the role was defined, and when the reporter gained acceptance, following by an audience, power and status to bargain, and permanency as part of the industry. In what context did the reporter assert freedom from editorial control? Similar histories might be written of other specialized areas—war correspondence, for example, or business, advertising, columns, features, and editorial developments.

Another kind of intellectual history should examine the editorial, documenting its emergence as a newspaper function, what gave it impetus, how editors viewed the purpose and role of editorials at various stages of press development, and the content of editorials throughout American history. What has been the cycle or evolution of ideas subordinated or elevated in editorials? How do these relate to broader intellectual currents? What did the editorials affect? What thought trends produced them? Such a history, of course, would treat broadcast editorials—their rise and continuing scarcity—and such questions as how thinking among broadcasters differs regarding editorials. What accounts for the near lack of reaction among broadcasters to the 1941 Mayflower decision, for example?

Concerning needs for other kinds of history, institutional research should focus on press growth from news sheet to institution to corpora-

tion to balance sheet. And such research should focus on structures and relationships to other institutions. Histories ought to examine the relationships of the press and city (rural versus industrial) and the corresponding impact in shaping media economics, format, and content. For example, an item in the Frankfort, Kentucky, *Argus of Western America* (1837) reported that foundries produced nearly a fourth of Cincinnati's commercial income, constituting the most profitable industry, in 1836. Book publishing ranked third, after carpentry. Foundries and publishing industries, of course, fed each other. How did Cincinnati's financial health compare with that of other cities? How did it compare with the health of the press in its own and other regions? What other industry interrelationships contributed to this health? Who were these industries' most demanding customers? Research could also examine the press in relation to recurrent values (compatible and conflicting) of religious, military, and educational institutions.

In a similar vein, institutional effects of cross-media influences, such as described by John Stevens in Chapters 6 and 7 concerning distribution systems, should be examined for change. As Stevens notes, the coming of television brought changes in all other media. At the same time, the legal institution complicated the intrainstitutional adjustment with a Supreme Court decision breaking up monopolistic practices by movie companies. To what extent through media history have other institutions produced such jolts?

Newspaper histories of many states remain to be written, as do those of many significant newspapers. For example, Amos Kendall's role in Andrew Jackson's "Kitchen Cabinet" and his later career have been incidentally treated in general histories. But Kendall has been neglected otherwise, and his Kentucky newspaper, which launched him into national politics, and which, according to Daniels (1978), "pioneered" the newspaper role in electing a president, has hardly been studied at all.

State newspaper histories should be written for other reasons. Historians continue to treat New York journalism as the prototype of American journalism, partially because too little is known about other states' newspapers. More important, comparative studies might determine whether other newspapers shared New York tastes or reflected similar or conflicting cultural trends regarding perceived purposes of news. Similarly, local and regional newspaper settings surely contained different (or disharmonious) cultural forces which shaped news policies, content, and format.

Such research might, for example, study the cultural implications of an issue such as the "moral war" on James Gordon Bennett's New York *Herald* in the 1840s. What did that war mean? Contentions expressed by it no doubt came from deeper societal trends. Did other newspapers reflect similar contentions? And what did they mean? Were New York social

trends ahead, behind, or out of step with other parts of the country? If so, what repercussions did this have on development of the press and news professions in other parts of the country?

Newspaper economics are barely studied in the twentieth century, for which data are available. But economic history of the press has been almost ignored. How did the depressions of 1818, 1838, and 1929 affect development of the media, news professions, news ideals? The Kentucky *Gazette*, an important and sound medium for thirty years, suffered severely in the 1818 depression. Its 1809 selling price of $10,000 was reduced to $3,000 by 1824. It did not recover by the 1838 depression, slowly withered, and finally died ten years later (Mikkelson, 1963). Other factors, of course, affected the decline; but research of the economic history of this and other papers might reveal much about the general state of press stability.

Research suggests that other papers also declined during those years. Such a phenomenon might be related to the reform era. What happens to the press during social upheavals? Does its role and health suffer so severely across time? The extent to which the 1830s economic decline relates to the reform era implies questions about both the press and reform. Did other vehicles arise to carry the reform message? Was the press out of step with the times?

There is also a need for histories recounting the rise of daily newspapers across cities and regions to try to account for trends which prepared the way for their beginnings and successes, the industries and distribution systems which supported the earliest ones, how the cities compare with other cities without dailies, how dailies affected industries, and how all these conditions compare with conditions before daily newspapers existed. What cultural context did the dailies' news columns reflect that differed from pre-daily papers? Was the daily merely a weekly issued more often? Perhaps it did not serve markedly different perceived purposes. Similarly, research concerning the peak of dailies might document their locations, peaks, and immediate results in areas where dailies suddenly ceased. For example, focusing on what was gained or lost in job shifts, what news columns reflect about the rate and decline for specific areas, might produce generalizations applicable across areas.

The list of needed research includes ideals in both the news profession and journalism education. For example, the discipline would benefit from a study of the muckrakers which focused on how their professional ideals differed or compared with past and future ideals of the news profession and other professions, where those ideals originated, with whom they were associated, and how widespread they were. What ideals came into conflict with the muckrakers' professional ideals, and how did the conflict affect both sets? Was there a selling out of ideals, as Stevens ponders in a later

chapter of this book, between business interests and exposé journalism? And whether there was or was not, what does it say about perceived priorities in the industrial and media institutions? In society?

Examining such questions should lead to study of professional ideals and goals of journalism education. Research might, for example, examine the history of objectivity, its sources, development, and abandonment—and the relationship to other values in educationed society.

DEVELOPING RESEARCH MODELS

As researchers begin to look at the past in new ways, they will ask new questions about different aspects of communications' past. For example, assume one wishes to study the meaning of crime news during the "new journalism" of the 1840s or the "new journalism" of the 1880s. Choosing Berkhofer's definition of culture (discussed below) might lead to questions about the continuities, discontinuities, transformations, terminations, and new beginnings of the meanings of crime news. One might then look at what newspapers produced and at what people said was and was *not* news—and at how courts defined and dealt with crimes. Then, one could examine which elements in those definitions and manifestations remained constant, which disappeared, which "new" ones appeared, and at what junctures.

Formulating new questions about unresearched areas should in turn lead to developing neglected data and finally to devising new models—and adapting models from other disciplines. An example, based on a recent article, may illustrate. "Frederick Hudson's Nineteenth Century Critics and the Research Agenda for Press Historians of the 1980's" (Thorn, 1978) discusses contemporary reviews of *Journalism in the United States* (Hudson, 1873). The article accomplishes much of value to the discipline: It represents intellectual history and a cultural approach in its treatment of attitudes, definitions, and values relating to journalism. The article also represents development of a kind of data largely ignored in communications research. But the article is lacking in other important areas: The data adhere to no clear model; the research represents a static frame—what certain people said about a given subject at a given time. In this sense, it follows the format of previous history, although it breaks new ground in the approach. Finally, the article lacks a conceptual framework; it stands alone, unrelated to any general principles or other data over space or time.

Significantly, however, the article contributes much in pointing up the need for similar research for other times and places. So far, journalism history has produced little to which Thorn could relate his data. With more data, one could devise a dynamic model. The following, offered as an example, uses only the broadest outlines for such a study.

One might apply a transitional model to Thorn's work and similar research based on prior or later value sets and definitions of journalism. Then one could ask such questions as:

(1) What were the different values attributed to journalism in the different contexts?
(2) How are these identified?
(3) At what point did the earlier values become transformed?
(4) How much of the values were transformed?
(5) From what to what?
(6) In what order?
(7) Which values remained constant?
(8) Who was associated with the transformation?
(9) What was occurring in the journalism profession at the same time?
(10) What societal events occurred at the same time?
(11) Is there any tangible relationship between those events and the transformation?
(12) What was the substance of the relationship?
(13) How did the transformation get instituted (acknowledged, accepted)?
(14) Is there any similarity between that process and what we know about other transformations in the history or profession of journalism?

Conceptually, one might hypothesize that transitions in perceived news functions correlate with changes in societal organization (specifying those, of course). One could apply different models to these data, depending on the thrust of questions asked. And as data result from other research in new directions, areas, and historiographic categories, other applicable models should emerge. Particularly, such models as discussed by Berkhofer (1969) and Wise (1973) should prove readily applicable.

Berkhofer developed a model to explain human behavior more realistically and thoroughly than the old model of "human nature" and successive ones. Called "situational analysis," Berkhofer's model assumes that "human behavior occurs in situations," which connect an individual's interpretation of the situation and his behavior. Individuals' attitudes and beliefs determine how they perceive, define, and assess any situation, and action results from that internal ideation. Berkhofer's model makes the situation the unit of analysis, because it "combines the human organism and its environment into one analytical scheme." Further, the model is dynamic, allowing for study of process instead of objects, because the situation is the stimulus to which an individual reacts. And the reaction forms part of a new situation which also demands action. Berkhofer explains that the model allows for study on two levels: (1) how the individual interprets and reacts to the situation; and (2) "some of the

biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors that produced a given interpretation and the resultant action."

Situational analysis appears adaptable to many historical topics and categories. While it implies attention to immediate events, it could be adapted to long-range ideas, movements, and trends. One might, for example, study reporters' perceptions and reporting of complexes of related events over time. The difficulty, of course, lies in determining reporters' perceptions, which would require searches of cultural strains. One would then be left to speculate about their relationships to the content and omissions in reporting. But data, such as Thorn found about attitudes, surely lie in reporters' own stories, news convention and press association speeches. Omissions would be harder to account for. For example, the migration of blacks to northern cities in the early and middle twentieth century was underreported. What cultural strains underlay that omission? What news received priorities at the same time? *Some* efforts would surely produce more than the record now shows. A similar study, with such a model, and without such serious omission problems, could focus on reporters' treatment of McCarthyism.

Wise (1973) suggests a similar model, called situation-strategy, applied to intellectual history. Focusing on ideas as cultural and social forces, this model assumes that ideas constitute efforts to manipulate (or "maneuver") the environment, and that the perception of the situation shapes those efforts. In Wise's model, the situation is the intervening variable. Treating situations as intervening between mind and environment, Wise's model seeks to answer such questions as:

(1) From what situation did the idea grow?
(2) Through what situations was it affected (changed, transformed, assimilated)?
(3) With whom was it associated?
(4) In what context was it expressed?
(5) And in response to what?

Wise's model tends to follow an idea over a long period and thus might be adapted to news values, communication functions, or ideals of news professions or journalism education. This model and two others were developed along lines similar to paradigms in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn, 1970). Calling the models "explanation-forms" for historians, Wise described them as grounded in sociological and time-place orientations. He labeled his second model, "paradigm-community," as sociological because it focuses on relationships surrounding and socializing an idea. Who believed the idea? With whom were they associated? Through what institutional setting did they communicate? Such a model might be applied to James Fennimore Cooper's news concepts, discussed earlier. With whom did he associate abroad and in America? And did those

individuals hold similar beliefs? On what other relationships did the idea's transmission depend? Or such a model might investigate the sources and transmissions of ideas expressed in the 1840s "moral war," also discussed earlier.

The paradigm-community model describes to some extent *Propaganda and the American Revolution* (Davidson, 1943). In tracing the communication forms which mobilized public opinion, Davidson explained the relationships of individuals to the idea of propaganda and its socialization as a dominant way of thought through the revolutionary crisis. The same model might be used to study the history of propaganda as a communication form or the characteristics of American mass media which may have developed out of other than English roots. Propaganda may well have been one of those characteristics, with roots in France more than in England, for example. Such a model might focus on the relationship of the idea to its origins, transmission, and use in the United States.

Like situation-strategy, Wise's third model, "pivotal-moment," has a time-place orientation and focuses on idea change. The pivotal-moment model assumes ideas become significantly transformed at a particular point which can be isolated. It also assumes ideas are vulnerable and give way to pressures. The model seeks the most vulnerable points, the stages at which disintegration begins and proceeds. Wise says the model allows study of an idea in transition, disorder, disintegration. But because the term "pivotal" implies tension and an equal or stronger pressure, the model also allows for the study of the stronger pressure's emergence, development, and ascendancy. Or one might pursue the conflict of pressures, determining what accounts for the collapse of the one pressure which gives way. (Pivotal does not necessarily imply that the status quo loses in the conflict.) Did pressures brought to bear on the muckrakers, as Stevens suggests in Chapter 5, in fact overcome the ideals they held? Or did the authors merely recede, while the ideals lived on? If one were attempting to study values in conflict concerning the muckrakers, one might find that they brought to the fore latent values which superceded conflicting ones and which have not since disappeared from the reporting profession.

The pivotal-moment model may be adaptable also to study of institutions: economic, social, and political power blocs, movements, behavioral trends, and structural, as well as ideological growth. To return to the party press as an example, one might apply the model to a structural study emphasizing the relationships within which that kind of journalism existed. One would then seek the most vulnerable points in those relationships, what other relationships competed with them, and at what point partisan journalism gave way to other journalism. If, however, one focused on the party press as an *idea* of what consituted the function of journalism, one would study the vulnerable points in that idea, what ideas

emerged to compete with it, and so on. In addition to these models, others, along with the transition model described earlier, include the power-bloc, communications-access, and developing systems models. The power-bloc model assumes that some institutions and individuals control situations. It also assumes that the control persists through maintenance of one kind of relationship with institutions and individuals of similar or superior capacities and another kind with those of inferior capacities. Such a model might describe much of the New Left emphasis on institutions and institutionalized values and ideologies. The model asks: (1) Who controls the situation, (2) using what sources, (3) in what way, and (4) what is the nature and complex of relationships surrounding that control?

While power-bloc explanations constitute a static model, communications-access is dynamic. The latter assumes a result depends on access to the physical capacities and content of a line of communication. For example, the first American presses began in port cities, because, as Stevens notes in Chapter 6, these provided the most efficient communications link for transportation of press needs, including content and equipment. But the model could also apply to the spread of a given type of news or information. For example, until inland postal facilities developed, Southern coastal cities received Boston news in advance of inland Northern towns. The model might also be applied to a study of newspapers' repetition of Washington news from such sources as the *National Intelligencer* in the early nineteenth century. To what extent did that repetition differ among newspapers on direct and indirect communication lines? Did the different settings produce different political strategies, ideologies, voting habits, which might correlate with the input, or lack of it, from the *National Intelligencer*?

The developing communications systems model is more complex than others discussed here and will be elaborated upon in Chapter 4. Generally, however, the model assumes that communications facilities and content become more complex as society's power blocs and institutions develop. Such a model is designed for study of communications development in frontier territories. It asks what physical means allow for communication, from which points to which points. Who conducts the communication? Who communicates with whom, in what context, concerning what? And what is the link between the emerging power blocs (political, economic, and social) and developing communications systems?

METHODS VERSUS RESEARCH INQUIRIES

For new approaches in communications history to advance appreciably, conceptual problems, noted at the outset of this chapter, must be confronted. These include examination of the historiography of culture,

definitions and operationalizations, and the influence of social science on current historical thought—particularly in regard to reconciling methods to inquiries. The remainder of this chapter will discuss these issues and end with some principles guiding cultural research.

Discussions among journalism historians often reflect a dilemma concerning social science versus humanities orientations. On the one hand, the call for new approaches stems in part from disenchantment with previous work, virtually all of which falls within the humanities. On the other hand, arguments advocating these approaches are couched in social science terms, while many who make the arguments resist social science methodology. In fact, however, these new approaches grew out of social science influence on historiography. And if alternative models are to be forthcoming in communications history, then alternative methods will also be required. Continued espousal of the new approaches in social science language, while resisting the necessary methods will only prolong the stymied state of communications history.

The problem of reconciling methods to research inquiries may best be approached through a discussion in *History as Social Science* (Tilly and Landes, 1971). Tilly and Landes discussed the evolved branches of history--social science and humanities. The social science branch relies heavily on quantification methods. But proponents of the humanities branch argue that quantification "reduces" subjects to "digits" and dehuamnizes or subordinates "personages" or individuality.

The editors also noted two extreme types of historiography: (1) the "simple chronicle that strings events one after the other like separate stones on the strand of time" and (2) "the account that tries to explain each event as a result of what went before, including . . . such enduring circumstances, environmental and internal, as influence behavior of the actors." Noting that most history is narrative and descriptive and lies between the two extremes, Tilly and Landes added that "social science history is problem-oriented." In this argument, then, social science history falls within the second type, for it must produce more than "a simple chronicle." And that is precisely what journalism historians have been arguing must be produced in the discipline—more than simple chronicles of the past.

Another related problem inheres in the continued resistance to social science per se. Such resistance, however, belies all current trends and the best thought in several disciplines. A strict demarcation between humanities and social science in historical thought no longer represents reality and should not be forced, if researchers wish to assimilate and remain in step with intellectual developments. As noted by Higham (1970), the demarcation sets up a barrier which the "contemporary intellect most needs to overcome." Most especially in the area of conceptualizing

research problems, historians can benefit greatly from social scientists who have long practiced the art of precision. Furthermore, the influence of social science on historical thought is readily apparent in the historiography of culture.

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF CULTURE:
DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

The historiography of culture changed considerably in the twentieth century; yet current discussions often imply a definition unchanged since the eighteenth century. The definition, however, shifted with the historiography, and historians have long wrestled with the implications of each for the other.

Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century historians treated culture as a set of components: family life, arts and sciences, literature, economics, religion, philosophy, customs (Bagby, 1959). Cultural historians described the structure, content, or functions of one or more of these units for a given society at a given time, but as Bagby pointed out, they always excluded government or war. Twentieth-century historians, on the other hand, have increasingly emphasized patterns or recurrent elements, not isolated components, as culture. Nye's *Cultural Life of the New Nation* (1960) presents an integrated concept of culture, but still follows the broad outlines of components. His *Society and Culture in America: 1830-1860* (1974), as the title suggests, follows a more integrated approach, reflecting the continued evolution of twentieth-century definitions of culture.

Both Bagby and Berkhofer have traced the evolution of historians' definition of culture, and Berkhofer, in particular, has examined its role in post-World War II historiography (1972). The definitional shift from components to patterns paralleled the rising emphasis on social science in the twentieth century. Researchers increasingly subordinated the importance of individual units or events to the "larger processes." And by 1959, Bagby wrote: "We no longer look at the ripples on the surface of the wave, or even at the wave itself, but rather at the current of which it forms a part."

While Bagby concerned himself more with the historiography of culture, Berkhofer traced the definitional evolution and its role *in* historiography. Beginning with what he called the "first technical" definition, by Edward Tyler in 1871, Berkhofer noted that its enumeration of components "implied the equal importance of mental, behavioral, and artifactual aspects." That definition called culture "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and many other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Berkhofer, 1969).

By the 1920s, American social scientists frequently used Tyler's defini-
tion, according to Berkhofer (1972). But during the 1930s, they modified
it to include "normativeness and pattering." Finally, in 1952, Clyde
Kluckhohn and Alfred Kroeber established the "legitimacy and necessity"
of these elements of the definition:

> Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behav-
> ior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive
> achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in arti-
> facts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., histor-
> ically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values;
> culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of
> action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action.

To recapitulate, social scientists added *patterns* to *components* in
defining culture in the early twentieth century; by midcentury, Kluckhohn
and Kroeber emphasized *patterns* and added *ideas* and their *manifesta-
tions*. And in 1969, Berkhofer emphasized *ideation* and *internal states* plus
their *manifestations*:

> Culture . . . is not the behavior manifested, but the resultant behav-
> ior is a manifestation of the cultural definitions and interpretations
> of the situations.

> Cultural behavior . . . would stress both internal states and external
> manifestations. . . . Culture [is] . . . the socially derived variables
> intervening between the stimuli and the responses in men's behavior.

It is significant that the definitional shift paralleled the growth of social
science emphasis. A 1932 report for the American Historical Association
foretold a concept of history integrating previously neglected social forces.
Among deficiencies enumerated in the report were social and intellectual
history, histories of racial movements, development of morals, commerce,
industry, law, transportation, administration, evolution of national eco-
nomic policies, propaganda, journalism, educational and religious institu-
tions (Fitzsimons et al., 1954). An unstated concern with culture underlies
the expanding social science approach exhibited by the report's recom-
mendations. It is not surprising, then, that the Association devoted much
effort to cultural history at its 1939 annual meeting, and, in 1940,
sponsored a book called *The Cultural Approach to History*, edited by
Caroline F. Ware.

It is also not surprising, considering the expanding social science empha-
sis, that the book's definition of culture relied heavily on anthropology (as
did Philip Bagby's nearly fifteen years later, though he went considerably
beyond Ware). Ware defined culture as

> the nonbiological attitudes and the patterned norms of expected
> behavior which are statistically common to the members of a society

including the technical equipment, all the rules... economic systems... legal systems, social organization of methods of government, the art and ritual, the religion and superstitions.

Where Ware *included* behavior patterns, Bagby *emphasized* them, calling culture "collective ways of life, uniformities and regularities of behavior, techniques and values." Bagby wrote:

Usually, the concept has been rather loosely formulated and often appears disguised under other names, such as 'current of ideas,' 'customs,' 'mores,' 'values,' 'national character,' 'local colour,' 'Geist,' and even sometimes 'Volk.'

But Bagby defined culture as including

not only regularities in the behavior of men towards each other, but also regularities in their behavior towards nonhuman objects, animate and inanimate, as well as towards supernatural objects; art, technology, religion, and so on are all to be included along with social structure under the heading of culture.

Reliance on anthropological definitions, in turn, had another implication for historiography; since such definitions involve the whole of society, historians had to wrestle with distinctions between such constructs as "society," "social structure," "culture," and "role." In doing so, they increasingly used sociological concepts and moved further into the area of social science terminology. Ware made careful distinctions between "society," "culture," and "social structure," for example. She called "society" a group which can maintain and reproduce itself over more than one generation, and whose members exclusively share common behavior, attitudes, and language or dialect. She defined "social structure" as "the meshwork of culturally determined relationships between members of a society" (that is, affecting the basis for sanctioning behavior and ascribing status).

Bagby, though he made distinctions, argued that "society" could not be separated from "culture" as a construct. Calling "social structure" one aspect of culture, Bagby noted that "class" and "political structure" are sociological concepts, but remain aspects of culture. Further, he argued that although culture as a term is vague, it is a more comprehensive concept than "social structure" and "provides a better basis for an initial attempt to make" elusive and complex processes intelligible.

Berkhofer (1969) made closer distinctions than either Ware or Bagby. Emphasizing culture in terms of actors' ideations or internal states, he seemed to maintain that culture could be definitionally isolated as a research focus. He, too, reiterated that society and social structures are part of the culture construct, however:

> To define society as the behavioral interactions of its members only
> without any shared cultural content behind those social relationships
> is as false to observable reality as was the total equivalence of a
> society and a culture.

The implicit thrust of Berkhofer's discussion suggested that the historian's task is to avoid conceptual confusion by maintaining either a *sociological* or a *cultural* focus.

A later analysis (1972) offered a more exacting examination of cultural explanations, including incisive critiques of anthropological definitions. Berkhofer concluded that historians, finding the cultural approach too problematical, have increasingly opted for the sociological (structural) approach. This, in turn, he maintained, has created the current trend "to social history and social interpretation of history. . . ."

Carrying the sociological discussion of culture to systems analysis, Parsons (1972) treated the subject holistically. In delineating cultural and social systems, Parsons defined a cultural system as consisting of *meanings attached to behavior*, while a social system consists of organized action linking meaning to behavioral conditions. Further, institutionalized meanings link the two systems. Parsons defined institutionalization as occurring when cultural meanings (defining desirable patterns of social interaction) become standards by which actions are evaluated.

While Berkhofer (1972) concerned himself with definitions of culture and their implications for research, Parsons defined a *cultural system*. Such a system, in Parsons' view, consists of four categories:

(1) Cognitive—education as a means of social organization, social change, and institutionalization through mass higher education and professionalism
(2) Moral-evaluative—norms and values which define rights, obligations, and expectations within social interactions
(3) Expressive—arts
(4) Constitutive—religion

Parsons asserted that values "constitute the most important zone of interpenetration between cultural and social systems." Thus, defining and studying values for any historical context would be productive to cultural historians.

And perhaps as a symbolic culmination of the nearly forty-year effort to refine the culture construct, the 1976 American Historical Association presidential address emphasized the need for historians to study values as a means of explaining the past. Gordon Wright, dismissing old arguments against injecting a moral dimension into history, noted:

> We historians have clothed our conduct in attractive garb; we speak
> of detachment, open-mindedness, tolerance, understanding. But be-

neath these euphemisms, the critics say, abdication is the essential reality. Twenty years ago . . . Raymond Sontag was already warning us about this trend: "We historians," he wrote, "have worked so hard to eliminate passion and fanaticism from our thinking, that we have forgotten how to describe a way of life dominated by passion and fanaticism, and actions which are evil." And C. V. Wedgewood added a further admonition: "History dispassionately recorded . . . nearly always sounds harsh and cynical. History is not a moral tale, and the effect of telling it without comment is inevitably to underline its worst features: the defeat of the weak by the strong, the degeneration of ideals, the corruption of institutions, the triumph of intelligent self-interest."

SOME GUIDING PRINCIPLES
FOR RESEARCH

What guidance does the foregoing provide communications historians? First, the importance of careful conceptualization and precise terminology should be apparent. Conceptual confusion lends indirection to research from the start. An intended cultural study which becomes a structural analysis promises confused interpretations of findings. At best, the research may produce data; but no clear model may apply—and the data may be unreliable for other purposes. In Berkhofer's analysis, the sociological (structural) and cultural approaches require different concepts of humanity; moreover, the "two strategies of explanation and the two images of man on which they rest seem mutually incompatible." Finally, inherent weaknesses affecting the validity of both are compounded by hazy conceptualization. The sociological approach "eliminates the consciousness of people as explanation," while the cultural analysis is fraught with the eternal difficulties of "knowing and talking about other minds and the attribution of internal states as explanation."

Second, on another level, the definitional evolution shows that writing cultural explanations makes demands on communications historians to which they are unaccustomed. And the field's historiography provides no clear example to be used as a guide. Thus, communications historians need to examine similar efforts in related historiography. Further, as noted earlier, cultural research requires new ways of looking at the past and development of new data.

When researchers begin to look at the past not as a series of static frames, but as a continuous process, investigative purposes become not the matching of problem and resolution, name, date, event, but the search for a set of interactive complexities, as illustrated in Figure 3.1. The question becomes: (1) What trends, behavior (sanctioned or not), conditions, and

ideologies (2) culminated, competed, conspired, terminated, originated (3) with what results, consequences, implications, repercussions (4) for what individuals, institutions, groups, ideologies, trends, behavior, conditions?

Third, communications historians may be guided by concepts worked out by Ware, Bagby, Berkhofer, Parsons, and others. Of course, one may solve the definitional problem by inventing a definition or by borrowing an authoritative one and operationalizing it. But the conceptual effort summarized above should provoke examination of what constitutes cultural, as opposed to sociological, history.

Translating these into journalism history means that a sociological (structural) study might emphasize (1) the relationships of the media to government, military, religion, education (institutional) or (2) the relationships of editors, news personnel, management personnel (individuals) or (3) groups of management personnel to groups of news professionals. A cultural study would emphasize expectations of behavior, the sources and ramifications of these expectations, and their transformations through events.

As a specific example, a structural study of the 1840s "moral war" group (discussed earlier) versus James Gordon Bennett's supporters would examine the bases of the relationships of those groups. Emphasis on conditions ascribing Bennett's newspaper's status and role in journalism before, during, and after the moral war would reveal social structure. Such an inquiry would seek the complex of activities which determined the role and status which sanctioned "right" and "wrong" behavior, how those were brought to bear on Bennett's newspaper, and in what measure. A cultural study would emphasize expectations of accepted behavior which Bennett's newspaper fulfilled or flouted. What was the history of those expectations? Where did they originate? In conjunction with what other values? What were they associated with? How did they relate to religious, educational, civic expectations and their histories? What effect did Bennett's newspaper have on those expectations?

Fourth, the discussion suggests the importance of examining the views of human activity (model of man, in Berkhofer's words) underlying each approach. The cultural approach makes human activity the manipulating mechanism; the structural approach may make human activity the manipulated product of institutions and structure. And any investigation rests, of course, on the researcher's assumptions about whether individuals are guided by reason or emotion.

Fifth, Parson's discussion suggests several focii for research. One might isolate a topic within one of his categories of symbolization. Research, for example, might pursue media's place in education and professionalism, or in the moral-evaluative category which defines rights, obligations, and expectations, or in arts and religion. One might also study the process of

What

{ Individuals
trends
behavior
conditions
ideologies
institutions
groups }

↓

{ culminated
competed
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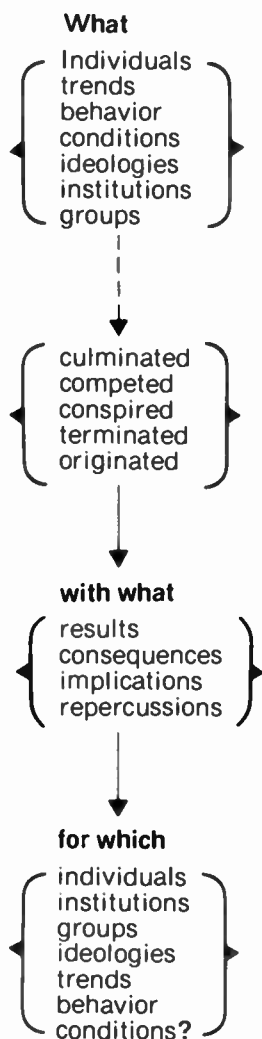institutions
groups
ideologies
trends
behavior
conditions? }

FIGURE 3.1

institutionalization of meanings attached to news, news functions, categories of news in a given context. Finally, perhaps the most exciting challenge lies in Parsons's summation of the role of values. One might attempt to pursue the values in the moral war as the link between the social system of which Bennett was a part and the cultural system which he apparently flouted.

Finally, assessing advantages of cultural research may serve to guide historians. While problems seem infinite, so are the options. For example,

one may study the bases of social relationships or their governing struc-
tures, the bases of technology, politics, economics, and their ramifications.
One may pursue pressures supporting or challenging sanctioned, accepted,
institutionalized activity, where those pressures originate, how they devel-
op, whom and what they involve, and with what effect. One may study,
too, relationships of groups to institutions, or focus on one relationship, a
complex of relationships, or on groups outside that complex. Cultural
research may also examine mechanisms of persistence, patterns of transfor-
mations, mechanisms by which structures lose and reestablish equilibrium.
And it may examine social movements, ideas, the transmission of ideas,
the transformation of ideas into action, or the intellectual milieu surround-
ing an event.

SUMMARY

Journalism historiography lacks works emphasizing political, social,
intellectual, economic, and technological histories. This void, coupled with
the lack of critical historiography, mitigates against developing new ap-
proaches and serves to perpetuate conceptual problems. Among such
problems are the lack of precise terminology, clear methods, models,
research questions, and a resistance to social science methods.

Overcoming such problems requires defining new research problems and
applications and developing models. But it also involves appreciation for the
influence of the social sciences on historical thought, assessment of the
historiography of culture, and examination of definitions and operational-
izations. This chapter, emphasizing intellectual history as an example, has
suggested several possible research problems and applications and offered
some models. In addition, models worked out in other disciplines may be
adapted to communications research.

Some examination of the historiography of culture and the evolved
definitions used by other disciplines will also aid in developing new research
approaches. The academic definition of culture shifted with twentieth
century's growing emphasis on the social sciences. A definition previously
composed of components gave way to one of patterns and recurrent themes.
As the historiography shifted, historians relied first on anthropological
definitions, then increasingly on sociological terms. The resultant influence
means that a strict demarcation between the social science and humanities
branches of history no longer represents reality. While methods, aims, and
habits of mind may differ for the two branches, most scholarship, as Higham
noted, "needs some proportion of humanistic and scientific thinking." Much
integration has already occurred through years of historians' and social
scientists' efforts to examine culture. Thus, communications historians may
approach the wide-ranging possibilities of cultural explanations with thought
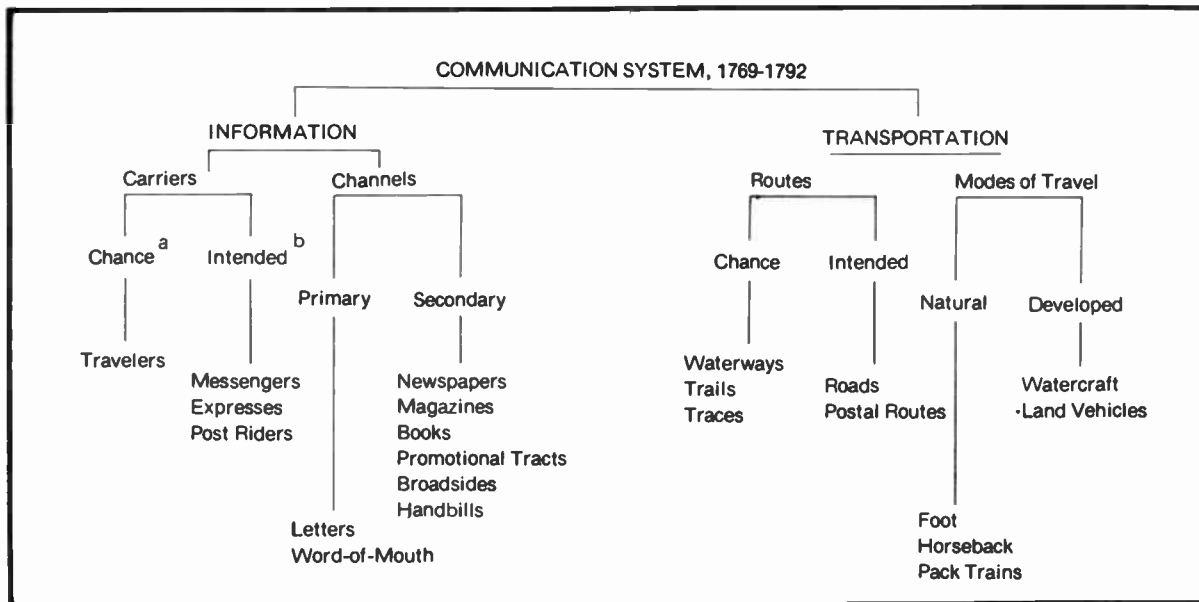seasoned by examination of that integration and effort.

4

COMMUNICATIONS HISTORY: AN EXAMPLE

Researching communications on the Kentucky frontier suggests that one missing element in Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis is communication. Data indicate that communication ties each new community to its former existence and systems.

Perhaps it will be useful to discuss one example of communications history research to show how it differs from what is traditionally called journalism history. This chapter will examine a study of communications in and about Kentucky during the 22 1/2 years when settlers poured in and which ends with statehood. The years are 1769 to 1792 (developed more fully in Garcia, 1977).

The study suggested an interdependent, concurrent development of communications and society. The research defined society as a social system encompassing a set of overlapping processes: economic, political, and social. That is, "when a relatively broad range of such systems cohere around a common population," a society exists. Further, a social system is "an organized set of interdependent social persons, activities, or forms"; it is called a system "because its organization includes mechanisms for maintaining an equilibrium or some other constancy in the relations between units" (Sills, 1968).

Research defined communication as an integrated system of components: routes (over which information can travel), channels and carriers (which conduct information), and printed and written content, as shown in Figure 4.1. Study of components (routes, carriers, and channels) seems to reveal the existence, or the developmental levels, of society. Further, tracing communication structures (frameworks transporting information), patterns (times and places information travels), and content seems to reveal inherent systems processes (social, political, and economic) within a growing population (or society).

COMMUNICATION SYSTEM, 1769-1792

INFORMATION

TRANSPORTATION

Carriers

Channels

Routes

Modes of Travel

Chance [a]

Intended [b]

Chance

Intended

Natural

Developed

Primary

Secondary

Travelers

Messengers
Expresses
Post Riders

Newspapers
Magazines
Books
Promotional Tracts
Broadsides
Handbills

Letters
Word-of-Mouth

Waterways
Trails
Traces

Roads
Postal Routes

Watercraft
·Land Vehicles

Foot
Horseback
Pack Trains

[a] Chance refers to what existed and was taken advantage of simply because it was there.

[b] Intended or developed refers to means of information conveyance or modes of travel which
were developed for those purposes.

FIGURE 4.1   Components of the Communication System

Although research emphasized communication during the migration to Kentucky (1769-1792), a broad outline of pre-1769 colonial communication was necessary as a context. That outline and the data produced by study of the migration show an interrelated growth of society and communication. During the seventeenth century, American colonies were so closely tied to England (or the Netherlands, in New York's case) that they neglected internal communication. As the mideighteenth century approached, an increasing westward movement coincided with growing colonial attention to internal communication facilities. Much of the latter came at England's behest, to be sure, but the colonies then replaced earlier lack of interest with support until, by 1775, their own internal communication facilitated the break with England.

THE COMPONENTS

The research began with 1769, when no one—neither Indian nor colonial—inhabited the area which was to become the state of Kentucky. The seventeenth-century settlers found and used animal traces, Indian trails, and waterways, a few of which they improved for short distances. No roads extended significantly west until the 1750s when the British built roads to Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh) to carry military troops and supplies, and even those roads deteriorated from lack of use. Although the colonists built a few ferries and bridges, wagon train crews usually felled trees for fording streams.

The Appalachian Mountains stood as a barrier, and although the colonists found a valley through them by late seventeenth century, the route was not used much until the major immigration a century later. There were two routes: the more dangerous Ohio River route and the wilderness route through Cumberland Gap. Up to 1793, most settlers arrived by foot, although often parts of their trips had been by horse and boat.

In all outlying settlements, people used messengers and travelers to carry letters overland. Generally, colonists looked to the sea for most communication carriage. No inland postal system linked the colonies until 1739, after the first decade of perceptible westward movement. As villages developed, colonists established intracolonial routes and systems for carrying *public* messages. *Private* letters, however, relied on the chance traveler or a hired messenger (for urgent mail). In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, colonists showed little interest in supporting an inland system, except when collectively threatened. By the early eighteenth century, the South (especially Virginia) still viewed the sea as adequate for communication and refused to support an inland postal system. Maryland agreed, but finally joined the intercolonial system in 1727. The route reached Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1739. But the farthest

westward post office was in Fredericksburg, Virginia, just a few miles from the sea, until the 1780s. When Kentucky became a state in 1792, the farthest westward post extended to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, (established in 1787).

Secondary information channels developed much the same as other communication components. By 1739, the colonies had 11 newspapers, and 30 years later, there were 38. By 1792, when Kentucky achieved statehood, the new nation had 107 newspapers, including one in Lexington and another in Knoxville, Tennessee. All 7 magazines still were published in coastal cities.

Letters and oral interactions were important, and 1000 of the former were examined. Paper and writing supplies were scarce and costly, and those on the edge of civilization had precious little time for correspondence, unless for urgent matters.

The Colonial Communication System

Roads, carrier systems, and transportation to the west began to improve only after the break with England. Any colony, nation, state, or town will develop communication ties with those points important to its political, economic, or social well-being. Seaboard colonies received provisions and financing from abroad and sold their goods to those markets. The printer's presses, type, paper, and ink came from Europe, for example. As long as the colonial population was small, scattered, and dependent on England, it could not provide all its needs nor exist without England's cooperation. New Englanders and Southerners shared little in interests, and neither had much in common with the Dutch who settled New York between them.

Communication in the Migration to Kentucky

Against such a background, the sparse communications concerning Kentucky's development seem understandable. But in studying Kentucky's growth from wilderness to statehood, the interaction of society and communication becomes important. Since the area had no inhabitants until 1775, it presents opportunities for tracing developments. During the 22 1/2 years from exploration to statehood, Kentucky communication increased in levels and diversity. As years passed, as population grew from pioneers to citizens of a new area, and as political, economic, and social bases developed, information flow included more topics and represented more social ranks. However, the changes were less marked than expected, and the reasons seem to lie in the communication system within which Kentuckians behaved.

During the first subperiod under study (1769-1774), system components relating to Kentucky are hardly visible. Only chance routes led

westward, and only chance travelers conveyed information about the area. A few hunters and explorers visited the area and spread some information. But no one had official responsibility for the area until 1772, when Fincastle County emerged and included the Kentucky country. That county's chief surveyor had charge of lands for officers and soldiers of the French and Indian War. In 1773, the first surveyors traveled through Kentucky to lay off the plots. They, too, carried home information. But no two-way information exchange existed until 1775.

As information circulated on a face-to-face level, people outside the area began discussing Kentucky and, by 1775, writing letters about it. As people began settling there, from 1775 on, they wrote to public officials, usually urging some official action.

The migration pattern followed from such external information. People heard about the area, became curious, and went to see it. After exploratory trips, they carried back laudatory tales to friends and relatives. Before migrating, however, they had to procure land there and dispose of home properties and businesses. In the meantime, they usually sent an overseer ahead, or hired one already there, to conduct their affairs. The latter led to information exchange. Eventually, people migrated, took charge of their lives, assumed roles in new communities, and communicated with friends and relatives left behind.

Thus, any system which conducted Kentucky communication existed outside the area. Throughout the 22 1/2 years, people migrated and sought assistance and sustenance from the political, economic, and social systems from which they moved. Any information exchange between residents and nonresidents depended on a chance traveler. As Kentucky population increased, embryonic social, economic, and political bases began. But these also originated in communities from which people had moved. In effect, the communication structure, patterns, and content, as well as components, originated in a society outside the Kentucky country. These same external functions helped transform the area from a wilderness to a face-to-face society, and finally, a large-scale one.

KENTUCKY IN A COMMUNICATION SYSTEM

Determining how external forces transformed Kentucky into a society led to study of (1) the communication system within which people behaved, (2) information content, (3) communication structure, and (4) patterns. As indicated, the Kentucky country (as part of Virginia) belonged to the English colonial communication system in 1769. But westward settlers after 1730 had increasingly weakened European ties. Their communication needs led to their nearest neighbor, equally isolated in the mountains, and the nearest colonial government. The latter only

indirectly tied such settlers to England. For the most part, settlers learned that colonial government assistance came too slowly and too ineffectively. In the meantime, Western settlers learned to rely on themselves. By 1775, the first Kentucky settlers set up their own government and land distribution systems. It may not be coincidence that the first Kentucky settlement occurred just a week before the battles of Lexington and Concord. With the break from England, the colonies had to develop inland carrier and communication systems.

Virginia and Pittsburgh newspapers carried almost nothing about Kentucky during the period studied. In fact, the word "Kentucky" did not appear in a Virginia paper until 1774. The scattered stories emphasized Indian raids on settlements—hardly news to encourage immigration. It seems reasonable to assume, therefore, that such decisions were based on face-to-face communication and letters. Letters commonly were shared voluntarily; others were opened and read along the way. Many were reprinted in newspapers. Since newspapers had not yet reached the news-gathering and reporting stage, news, ideas, and essays from letters often were published. There was only a modicum of local news.

After the Kentucky *Gazette* was founded in 1787, news of the area increased (see Figure 4.2) in other newspapers, most of which reprinted the *Gazette* items.

Communication patterns further support the contention that an outside society conducted the Kentucky country development. Throughout the 22 1/2 years, most letters came from outside the area (see Figure 4.3). However, letters from inside Kentucky to outside increased rapidly after 1782. Though these never overtook letter quantity from people outside *to* Kentuckians, their constant growth suggests internal development with decreased reliance on external help (See Figures 4.4 and 4.5). No true internal letters appeared before 1782. This suggests that Kentuckians lived in a face-to-face society and did not need to write to each other. These letters may signal a transition from a face-to-face society to a large-scale one. However, though internal letters increased compared with external letters, they never overtook the latter. This suggests the decreasing importance of external social, economic, and political processes in the shaping of Kentucky. But it also suggests that Kentucky had not achieved its own self-perpetuating mechanisms for a separate society before 1792. (All letters were analyzed for content concerning political, social, and economic matters, as were all newspaper articles (see Figure 4.6).

These indications suggest that one missing element in Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis is communication. He suggested that each frontier represented a society aborning, and on the surface, Kentucky appears as such. But research suggests that communication ties each new area to its former existence and system. Each new area seems to be part of a growing,

larger society. It does take on peculiar characteristics because of adaptation to its own circumstances. But its origin and propulsion lie in an older system; communication with that system conducts it toward self-sustenance.
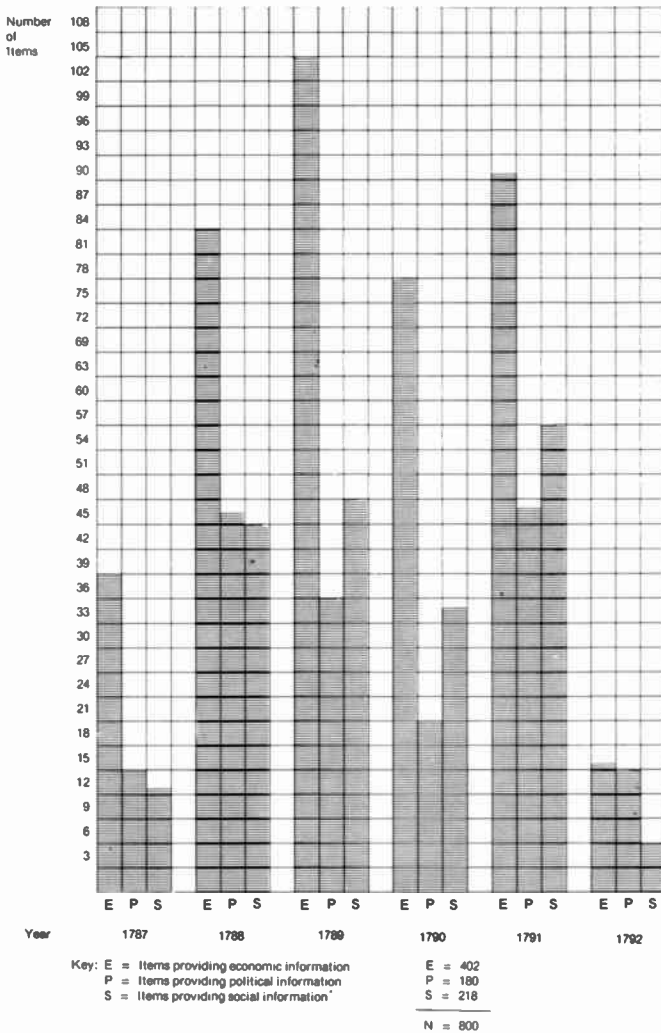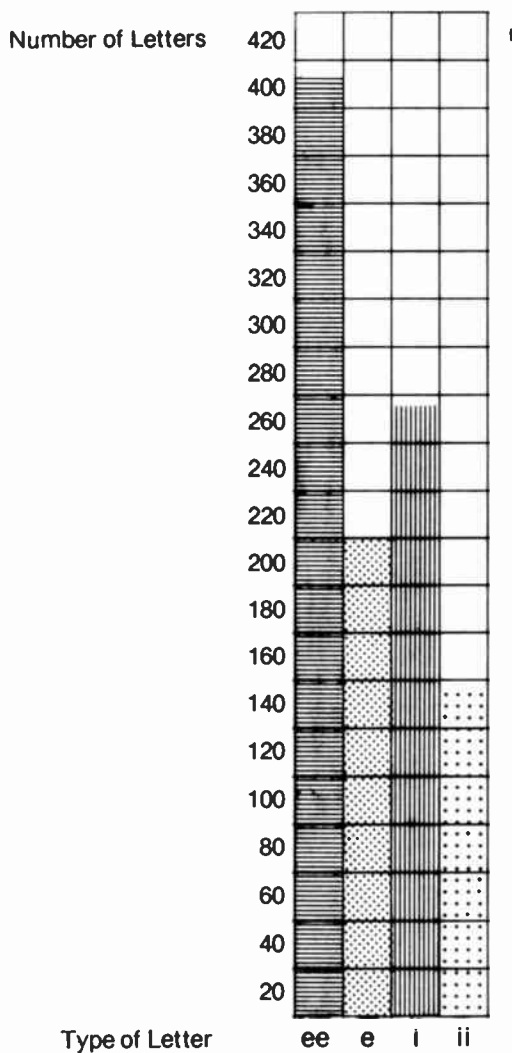

FIGURE 4.2 Kentucky *Gazette* News, 1787-1792

FIGURE 4.3   Geographical Letter Quantities

Key: ee = external-external letters (391)
      e = external-internal letters (203)
      i = internal-external letters (277)
     ii = internal-internal letters (136)
                                     ————
N = 1,007   Total 1,007
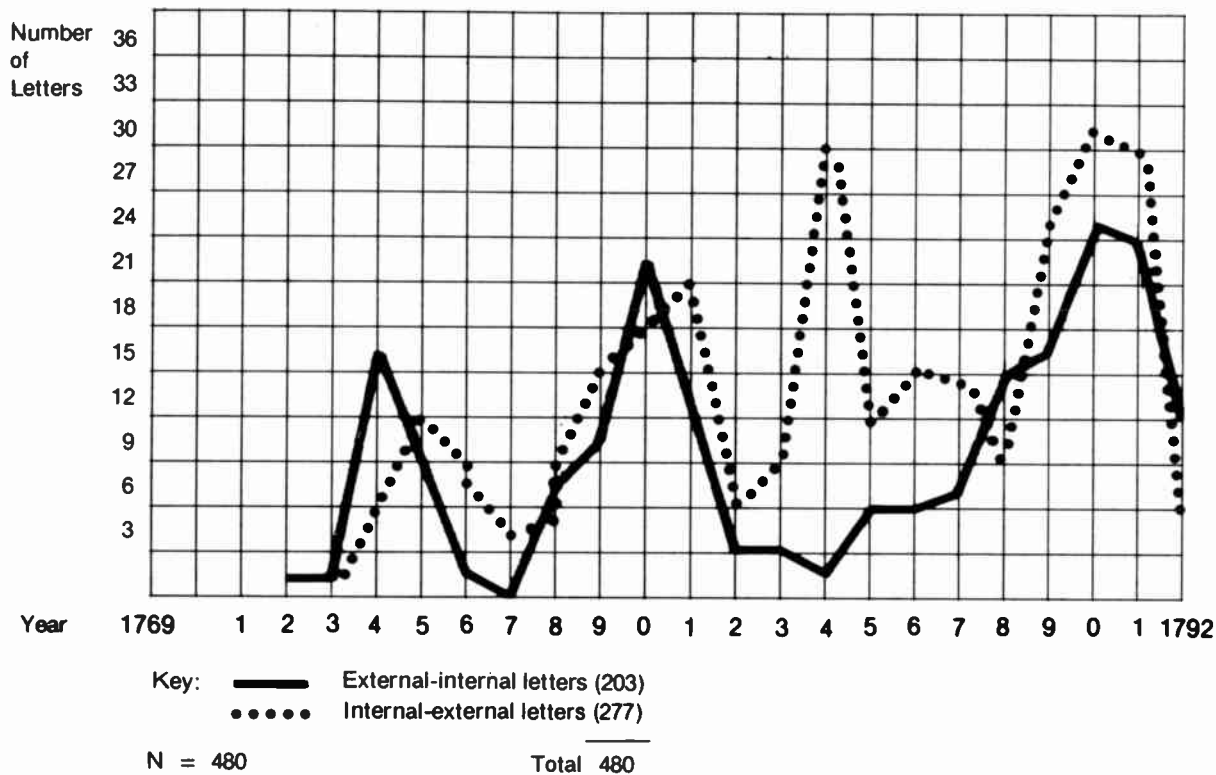
FIGURE 4.4 External-Internal and Internal-External Letters, January 1, 1769, to May 31, 1792

Key: External-internal letters (203)
•••• Internal-external letters (277)

N = 480   Total 480
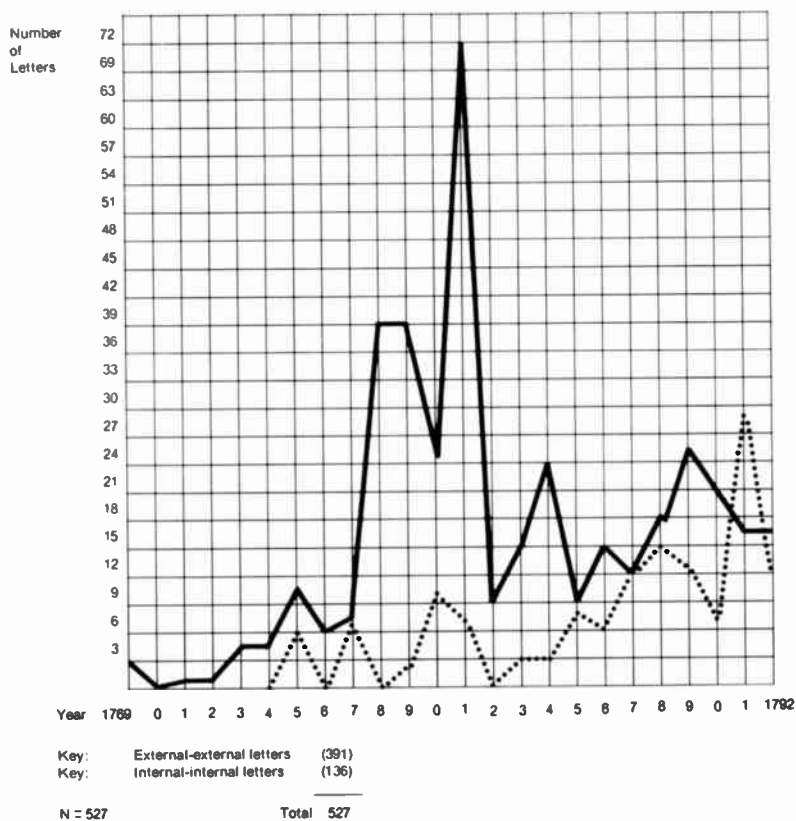
FIGURE 4.5   External-External and Internal Letters,
             January 1, 1769, to May 31, 1792
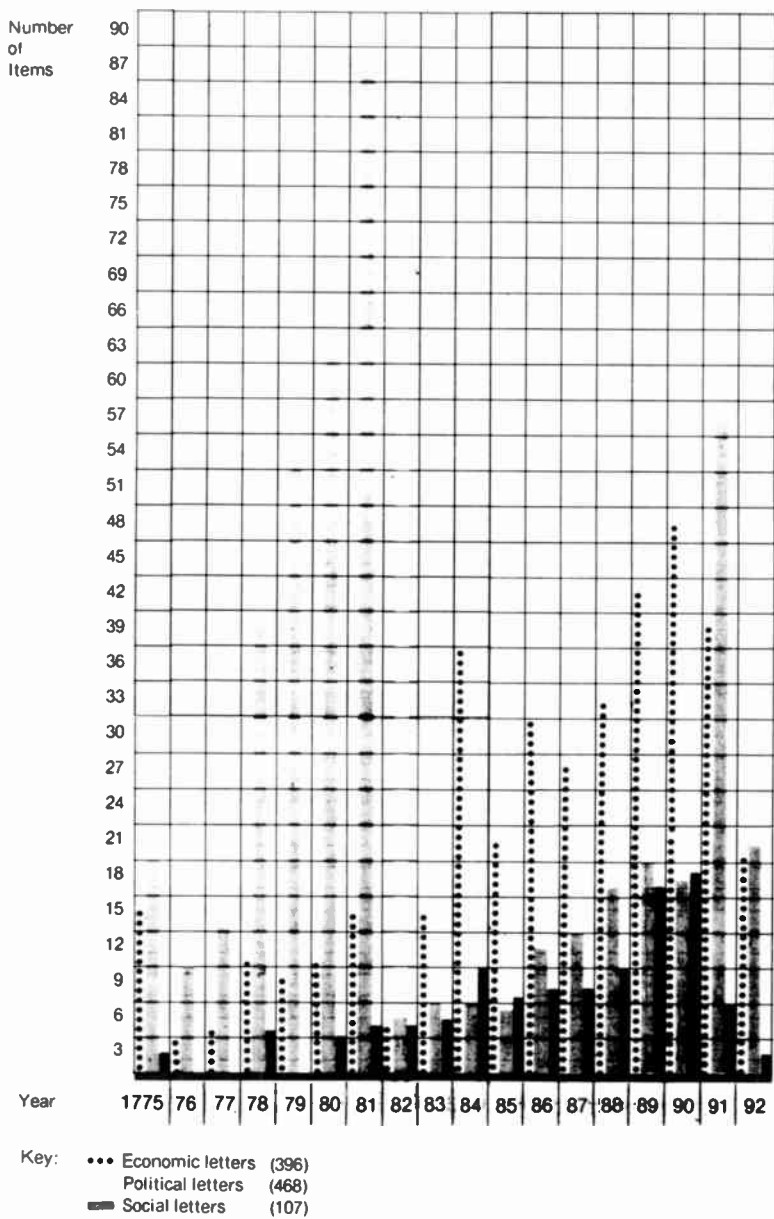
FIGURE 4.6 Economic, Political, and Social Letters,
January 1, 1775, to May 31, 1792

PART II

MEDIA EFFECTS FROM AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

PREFACE

One problem with communication research has been that those primarily concerned with explaining media effects have been neither trained nor interested in history, while those who concentrate on media history have been reluctant not only to assign causation but ill-prepared to do so. The chasm in training has been bridged, at least partly; the differences in interest have not.

Historians, painfully conscious of their lack of data and not being in a position to generate their own with surveys or experiments, feel more comfortable describing than explaining. Knowing history is a seamless web, they seldom risk the hazards of assigning single (or even multiple) "causes" for an event. Still, the generalizers like Arnold Toynbee, Frederick Jackson Turner, and Charles A. Beard have had tremendous impact.

Similarly, Frederick Siebert, Leonard Levy, and James Carey have been provocative for communication historians. Perhaps these three chapters may stimulate a few more.

Media researchers have focused on public opinion for more than half a century, but most have assumed that the media messages affect the public's opinions, whether on candidates, issues, or products, without concerning themselves much about how the public's opinions (or at least

toleration), in turn, shape the media and the messages. Here, we will suggest a few incidents and developments in communication history where it may be useful to look from the other end of the telescope.

Media historians, likewise, have looked on the distribution systems as benign. They have studied the people and the institutions which produce the messages and tried to assess the effects of these messages on the readers and viewers, without giving much attention to how the distribution systems fit in. Looking at the media "from the inside out," so to speak, seeing how producers shape the message so that the system *can* distribute it efficiently and seeing how users are affected by where and how they receive the message, as well as by the manifest content, also may give new insights.

This is not to suggest that these new perspectives are "better" than the traditional ones or that they explain more. The goal, instead, is to provide alternatives.

—John Stevens
University of Michigan

5

PUBLIC OPINION AND THE MEDIA

Americans believe their opinions *should* count, and that may be more important than whether they actually do. Policy makers need at least toleration for their actions, and the media shape that atmosphere. Much of the shaping is done through content not self-consciously related to opinion.

For decades, all sorts of researchers have examined how the mass media affect nearly every phase of life—politics, buying habits, attitudes—without paying much attention to how societal pressures affect the media. Public opinion is not something the media alone create or control, and the media, like all other institutions, respond to it.

Historians have been ingenious in trying to discern past public opinion and in relating it to historical events. Lacking results of opinion polls, they have devised all kinds of indices. Strayer (1957) compared their approaches to those of astronomers who have to deduce the presence of a planet they know is there, but for which they lack direct observation instruments. A more cynical critic might compare it to a blind man, groping his way through a graveyard and trying to describe the people from the feel of the letters on their headstones.

Historians writing about recent periods use poll results, which are "facts" in the same sense as are census or vote data, and subject to the same need to be placed in context. Even if there were extensive and reliable surveys of past public opinion, they would be of limited use to the historian, who usually wants to explain events and therefore is interested only in the opinions of those who directly affected the outcome. He is not much concerned with what the other people thought.

Nor do precise statistics always help us comprehend a climate of opinion. From all kinds of sources, it is clear that large numbers of colonists did not care much about the Revolution. The war did not touch them directly, and when it did, their sympathies probably were with whichever army had not raided their cabbage patches most recently. The

traditional, but totally seat-of-the-pants, estimate that one-third of the colonists were Patriots, one-third were Loyalists, and one-third did not care serves us well. Determining that the "real figures" were 42%, 36%, and 22% would add little to our understanding.

Too much ink has been spilled trying to differentiate public opinion, in the sense of deeply held values, from popular opinion, meaning usually yes-no answers to any question, regardless how salient to the respondent. Because historians are most interested in a prevailing climate of opinion, polls are of limited value. Questions about real opinions elicit beliefs buried deep within an individual. These are difficult to enunciate under the best of circumstances, and polling situations seldom are. Asking a question is intrusive, since it tells the respondent there *is* a question. A peasant, asked by a political scientist in the 1950s what he would do if he were the ruler of his country, responded angrily, "Such things cannot be!" One wonders if that same peasant fought in the uprising against the ruler a few years later.

Lazarsfeld (1957) advised contemporary pollsters that if they wanted to be useful to the historians of tomorrow, they should read carefully the historians of yesterday to see what kinds of questions they tried to answer without opinion data. Most of the questions, he suggested, involved measures of social change.

After surveying the many sources from which to draw information about past public opinion (such as memoirs, letters, sermons, petitions, and news stories and editorials), Benson (1967: 565) concluded that the best single indicator was voting for public office:

> The political realities may not strongly resemble the theory, but being 'a good citizen' to an American means that *he is supposed to make his opinion count*. That supposition is so basic to the democratic ideology that not having the right to vote condemns one to inferior social status. For the vast majority of Americans, it can be assumed, voting has been the only direct means used to make opinions count. (Italics in the original)

In the decade following independence, Americans changed their ideas about the nature of representation. The struggle over ratification of the Constitution of 1787 was to decide how power was to be distributed. State legislators traditionally had been considered largely free agents, selected because of their abilities and expected to use their own judgment; however, during that critical decade, the newspapers, pamphlets, and speeches became filled with complaints about state legislators who voted their own minds, rather than heeding the instructions of their constituents. As Wood (1969) emphasized, it was an important shift. Once legislators became instructed delegates, there was bound to be a struggle over who got to elect them.

The idea of the mass public participating in politics did not gain much currency in Europe until after the French Revolution, and as European nations extended the franchise during the nineteenth century, they always attached residency or property qualifications. Americans of 1776 were not oblivious to the contrast between their talk of equality and the fact that every state limited suffrage by some tax-paying or property qualification. They did not look on such qualifications as a denial of democratic principles but a safeguard for them. Whigs on both sides of the Atlantic feared the influence of the restless urban industrial workers. Jefferson's view that residence or heading a household might substitute in some cases for property as a voting requirement was considered advanced.

The broadening of the franchise was accompanied by the spread of secret voting, designed not to cleanse the electoral process so much as to minimize the dangers of bribing the unwashed masses. In societies where only elites voted, each voter was expected to announce his choice and to stand up for it. Readers expected the same kind of boldness in the politics of their papers, even after they themselves were shielded by a secret ballot.

In recent years, of course, fewer and fewer Americans have been willing to identify themselves as either "Republicans" or "Democrats," relying instead on the "Independent" label. Their newspapers have done the same, until in 1976 only one American daily in four bothered to endorse a candidate in the presidential election.

What would the founding fathers have thought about such newspapers? They would have been baffled. And they would not have been very tolerant of them.

TOLERATION IN SOCIETY

It is easy to be tolerant about what does not matter; it is quite another thing to be tolerant of a person, institution, or idea that challenges a basic value. To see what a person or a society really values, see what it protects. Religion certainly matters less to twentieth century man than it did in earlier centuries. Hardly anyone is prosecuted for blasphemy anymore. The tolerance for antigovernment remarks varies a great deal more.

The media always reflect the nature of the society in which they operate, and that nature changed drastically during the eighteenth century, moving from "a deferential society," which left ruling to men of the better sort, to one eager first to share and then to seize control from the British, and finally to one that saw the masses demand a larger share in the running of the country. American newspapers changed from bulletin boards for the colonial governors to tocsins of revolution to spokesmen for contentious factions.

By the time of the Revolution, readers wanted their journalism like they wanted their tea: strong, unsweetened, and boiling. A New Jersey editor who tried to present opposing arguments found himself despised by all factions and satisfying none. They might curse or even cudgel a firebrand editor like Benjamin Franklin Bache of the Philadelphia *Aurora*, but they at least respected him as a man who expressed his opinions.

The press as watchdog on government developed out of faith in the marketplace of ideas, a concept that antedated John Stuart Mill. It was born and nurtured in an era of competing, often shrill, voices, when nearly anyone with an idea could get it printed in a pamphlet or in a newspaper and before the public. If most of the ideas were rejected, they at least were aired. Theorists of the day believed that if all points of view were aired, the public would choose the wisest. If we have less faith today, it may be because Freud has shown that men act irrationally, often for reasons even they do not comprehend.

One analyst who never was accused of having too much faith in man's nature, Henry Adams, thought the reformers already were in retreat by the time the eighteenth century dawned. The conservatives and their intolerance were in the saddle, said Adams. But somehow toleration, at least for political change, did come to the fore during the next few decades. During this period of rapid newspaper expansion (which deserves better than Frank Luther Mott's label as "The Dark Age of American Journalism"), Americans accepted the idea of an orderly rotation of parties in power. Today's "outs" would be tomorrow's "ins," and the toleration (a far cry from the way Federalists and Jeffersonians had seen one another a scant quarter of a century earlier) was grounded in mutual fear.

Throughout most of their history, Americans and their media have shown little taste for rough-and-tumble clashes of opinion on basic issues. Wood blamed the Federalists for usurping the democratic language that rightly belonged to their opponents in the service of their aristocratic system, thus assuring that the American political tradition would not be based on real class differences. While Wood decried the resulting liberal consensus for obscuring real social antagonisms that needed airing, Daniel Boorstin (1953) saw the absence of ideology as the genius of American politics.

One reason for that absence was the strange set of circumstances which allowed the infant republic to avoid entanglements in foreign affairs for more than a century after the War of 1812. This almost unparalleled streak of good fortune came about largely because the British fleet scared away those who greedily eyed the United States, wanting the country for its own special trade partner. But Americans did not interpret it that way. They became convinced that there was something unique about coming to America that obliterated all differences in background, making all Ameri-

cans share a similar view of the outside world. With the outbreak of hostilities in Europe in 1914, the hollowness of that assumption was laid bare. Americans were astonished to find a substantial portion of the population of German background sympathetic not to our "natural" allies, the French and the English, but to the Central Powers. A myth was shattered, and people do not give up their myths easily.

The ensuing crusade to obliterate all signs of the "Hun" in American life is the darkest chapter in the history of the nation's civil liberties. Newspapers led the cheering, the Milwaukee *Journal* winning the very first Pulitzer Prize for its exposé of alleged disloyalty among German-Americans. The New York *Times* and other prestigious papers complained that the twenty-year sentences for loose "disloyal" talk were not enough and urged the death sentence. Small-town papers publicized proudly actions by local vigilantes in pouring yellow paint over slackers or "trying" in kangaroo courts those who did not buy their share of Liberty Bonds (Stevens, 1969). By comparison, dissenters were treated lightly during World War II and during the Vietnam conflict.

When community opinion is enraged, few editors are going to challenge it. Mobs wrecked Jamie Rivington's print shop because he was pro-Tory, tore up the presses in many allegedly Copperhead newspapers during the Civil War, and dragged editors of papers which were only lukewarm in support of World War I into the streets and made them kiss the flag. Other mobs killed Elijah Lovejoy for printing Abolitionist tracts and bombed a radio station in the South that supported integration in the 1960s.

Some editors are cowed by understandable fear, but others do not challenge the prevailing mood because they share it. The editors are after all part of those communities, and they are no surer safeguards against such spasms of patriotism than are juries. Jeffersonians found they had misplaced their faith in juries to blunt the prosecutions under the Sedition Act. Juries in state and federal courts in World War I almost always convicted defendants accused of seditious talk. Juries, voices of the community by definition, are not likely to be far out of line with prevailing public sentiment. There never is much support for those extolling unpopular ideas. When the governmental enforcer stands with sword poised over a fallen dissident, the crowd is far more likely to turn thumbs down than thumbs up.

Even in peacetime, the editor may pull his punches for "the good of the community." Frontier editors almost never printed anything about shootings or brawls, fearing such stories might discourage new settlers. The editor in Ibsen's *Enemy of the People* did not want to tell the public that the town's mineral water, a major factor in the economy, was polluted. Are they really fundamentally different from the editor who cooperates

with the police by placing false stories to confuse criminals? In all three examples, the editors felt they were acting responsibly.

Other media managers also are affected by community toleration. Public officials, police, and self-appointed vigilantes harass operators of newsstands, bookstores, movie houses, and libraries to handle only materials of which they approve. Public groups also get at broadcasters through complaints to the FCC, particularly at renewal time.

"Community standards" is the fulcrum for determining obscenity prosecutions, although ironically, courts seldom have admitted formal surveys of a community to ascertain those viewpoints. While there is an undisputed increase in what the public will tolerate in the area of obscenity, it is well to remember that while James Gordon Bennett's classified ad columns were studded with thinly disguised ads for prostitutes, many major newspapers in the 1980s will not accept ads for X-rated movies. Bennett's scandalous *Herald* also carried the fullest stock market report and later sent the largest troupe of correspondents into the Civil War.

Postal officials tried to ban *Esquire* in the 1940s, officially for lack of "educational" content, but really because the Postmaster General was offended by the drawings of shapely girls. The Supreme Court blocked that effort. Three decades later, magazines were publishing photographs limited in their explicitness only by the imagination of the cameraman, and with hardly a serious complaint. First books, then magazines, and finally newspapers had begun printing "dirty words." Although the FCC in 1978 upheld its ban on airing those same words, network prime time entertainment was dominated by "tits and ass" programming and daytime by serials discussing illicit sex, abortions, and impotency.

Although they would have been shocked by such stuff, the founding fathers might have realized that the truest test of freedom of expression is the ease with which offensive material can circulate. Real freedom is measured in the restraint a society shows before imposing legal remedies.

Besides, Benjamin Franklin always enjoyed the sight of nubile bodies.

DIVERSITY AND DEMOCRATIC IDEALS

The framers of the Constitution were not sanguine about man's nature. Convinced he was governed by short-term self-interests, they set up all sorts of systems to play one set of self-interests off against another. They were convinced that the public would choose the best people, products, and ideas, if there were freedom of choice. To them, democracy depended on diversity of voices. Our experience suggests that diversity of voices sometimes works against democratic ideals.

There has been competition, of sorts, in the American newspaper scene since 1719. That was the year when John Campbell decided to continue

his Boston *News-Letter* after he had been replaced in his governmental post. The new postmaster's *Gazette* was to have the dubious distinction, five postmasters later, of being involved in the first merger in American journalism history. It may have been hard to tell the content of the stodgy *News-Letter* from the equally stodgy *Gazette*; however, there is no doubt James Franklin sparked the Boston newspaper scene with his *New England Courant* in 1721. He took on the whole Boston establishment, including the ruling theocracy of the Mathers. Probably all that he wrote was already common gossip in the coffee houses, but gossip stings more when it is in print, and Franklin had his troubles. So did John Peter Zenger in 1735 when he lent his columns to the critics of the colonial governor. The only other paper in New York at that time was a tame, administration organ. By the time of the Revolution, there were competitive weeklies in all the major seaboard cities, many of them with much spunk. Thus, we see that even in these earliest journalistic experiments, it is not the presence or absence of competition, but the diversity of content, which contributes to the level of discussion in a community.

The early period in any industry is one of many small entrepreneurs scurrying to get a foothold. Entry costs are low, and competition is fierce. In such an atmosphere, ethics sometimes bow to bare knuckles. The strong units force out or buy out the weak ones.

There seems to be no correlation between excellence (however defined) and competition, since some of the best and worst papers and stations have operated in the most competitive markets. Those who long for the good old days when six or eight dailies battled to stay alive in the same market should spend some time reading the sensational content of those papers. There also was tremendous duplication of information. Forcing people to go to multiple sources for information means that only the most diligent will bother. This has the effect of widening the information gap.

Those who have messages to convey certainly do not like competition among the media. They want to place their announcement or ad where it will reach as many as possible. Bagdikian (1971) found that was one of the principal reasons for newspaper consolidations. If one newspaper has a slightly larger or more desirable circulation than the other, the ads will flow there. Obviously, this has the effect of exaggerating the advantage of the paper which benefits from this policy. The publishers of the New York *Trib* in 1978 found just that, and they blamed this reluctance for the quick death of their tabloid. Its circulation was increasing faster than they had projected.

If more of the same kinds of newspaper do little to diversify opinion and information in a community, other media forms may. These range from black, foreign-language, and underground papers to neighborhood shoppers—a form which has been around since before the start of this

century. Since World War II, the free papers have become common in small towns as well as in cities. Some carry nothing but advertising, but that is useful information, too. Classified ads sometimes are among the best read sections of any paper. City magazines often uncover stories which the local dailies ignore. Occasionally, radio or television stations dig up their own stories which the other media have ignored.

In the suburbs, many lively weeklies, semiweeklies, and dailies compete with the metropolitan dailies, especially for the evening reader. The small-town press, like the small town itself, has been in decline throughout this century. Weisberger (1961: 149) described the plight:

> The country editor might still be a power in the township, but like the country grocers and merchants, he was getting to be more of a retail outlet for nationally made and nationally advertised products. In addition, he had to face the direct competition of the metropolitan dailies themselves. Special dealer associations like the American Newspaper Company, founded in 1864, brought bundles of papers directly from the big-city pressrooms, rushed them to trains, and had them in the hands of local agents 50 to 100 miles away within hours . . . a sharp instance of what one historian has called 'urban imperialism in the cultural sphere.' Long before radio and the movies, the newspaper played a part in infusing the countryside with urban attitudes and habits, dulling the edge of conflict between the two worlds but preparing the inevitable triumph of the city.

There is an undeniable trend toward concentration of ownership of the media throughout the world. If American newspapers and broadcasting seem somewhat bland, it may be because of the nature of their managers. Weston (1978) found them much like top decision makers in politics, the federal government, the military, and the largest corporations, in terms of their social and educational backgrounds. Hart (1976) used collective biography to discover newspaper executives always have come from the upper crust of society, often inheriting their businesses. Although on larger papers, publishers are seldom directly involved in day-to-day editorial decisions, Bowers (1967) found that on small dailies, three-fourths of publishers routinely made some news decisions. Conglomerate and other forms of absentee ownership only exacerbate the trend toward sameness.

From the beginning of broadcast regulation in the United States, diversity both of programming and ownership has been an accepted value. There always have been limits on how many stations an owner could have, and those rules have been sharpened to prevent cross-media acquisitions in the same markets. In 1978, the Supreme Court upheld the FCC's order prohibiting sale to or ownership of a television station to the owner of a newspaper in the same city. The mere ownership arrangement, not proof of coercion or any other aspect of performance, was enough to indicate a

limitation on a community's media fare. The FCC was not allowed to make the order retroactive, except in a few small cities where the only newspaper owned the only TV or radio station. If the same owner operates both an AM and an FM station, he cannot transmit identical programs over both. All sorts of FCC policies have encouraged development of new stations in the UHF spectrum and the FM band. More recently, it has adopted rules to facilitate minority group investment in broadcast stations.

The way control of radio programming shifted from amateurs, to individual stations, to networks, and then back to individual stations, need not be repeated here. The records-and-news format, with all its permutations, did provide diversity in the 1970s, so much so that deregulation of radio seemed a certainty. For once, the market really had operated to insure diversity. The future for domination of television programming by the television networks looks bleak, although the three shows they offer up during prime evening viewing hours still attract more than 90% of the sets which are in operation. Greatly expanded offerings via cable, direct satellite transmission, and videotapes almost certainly will reduce this oligopolistic situation; they might eventually lead to some deregulation in television as well.

Those setting cable television policies around the world must grapple with innumerable questions about diversity versus cost. Requiring too much channel capacity may raise prices so high that franchises will go begging. Should the cable operator assess only a flat rental, or should he be allowed special subscription features? Must he import special interest channels, devoted to minority, foreign-language, or religious programming? Must he originate programs or set aside access channels for the public? Unwise decisions are difficult to reverse later.

Even if one assumes diversity is good, there still are choices among models of the marketplace. Is it to be lots of small stores each selling a specialized product, or is it to be a supermarket, stocking something for everybody? Radio, magazines, movies, and books are more like the stores, while newspapers and network television are closer to the supermarket model. The FCC has avoided this fundamental problem, insisting at times that "fairness" means balancing the presentation of controversial issues within a given program, but more frequently within some specified time period, reviewing only the pattern of programming. Government-controlled broadcasting systems in other parts of the world have been more rigid, either blatantly using the incumbency for advantage or insisting on a strict yardstick equality of presentation.

The courts have used antitrust laws to enforce diversity in other media fields. They prohibited newspapers from requiring advertisers to use both morning and afternoon editions, movie studios from owning theaters, and wire services from employing a blackball against member papers to prevent

sale of services to a competitor. In the Associated Press case, Justice Frankfurter commented: "A public interest so essential to the vitality of our democratic government may be defeated by private restraints no less than by public censorship."

During the 1960s, many writers urged the government to force newspapers to carry information about views contrary to their own. There was nothing new about the idea. It dated back at least to the 1740s in this country. Subscribers began sending in unsolicited essays and articles, and editors were not sure what to do with the controversial ones. Thomas Fleet got himself in hot water in 1741 by reprinting one of John Wesley's sermons in anti-Methodist Boston. He argued that several readers had urged him to air the views, views which he did not share. Benjamin Franklin felt no such compulsion, denying vigorously that "a Newspaper was like a Stagecoach, in which anyone who would pay had a Right to a Place." A century later, the Abolitionists and their opponents were scrambling for newspaper outlets for their views, and one version of the founding of the first black newspaper, *Freedom's Journal*, was that it was started only after the editors found that no existing New York paper would carry even a letter to the editor opposing slavery.

Barron (1967) argued that the federal government had a legitimate interest in insisting newspapers carry certain ads and information and drew the parallel with the FCC's fairness requirements for broadcasters. The Supreme Court subsequently upheld the fairness doctrine and its attendant personal attack provision, but flatly refused to countenance a Florida law barring newspapers from commenting on candidates in the 48 hours preceding an election, based on their inability to respond. It seemed unlikely the court would extend the logic of the fairness doctrine to the print media in the foreseeable future.

Despite claims by the media to special status as watchdogs on the government, courts have been reluctant to protect them from the controls which operate on others. Thus, they are not immune to subpoenas or police searches of their offices. Reporters' rights to protect the confidentiality of their sources are severely limited. Newspapers must pay ordinary taxes and are subject to antitrust, labor, and other laws. The Supreme Court has said repeatedly there is no First Amendment right to make a profit.

The framers would not have wanted the watchdogs to go unwatched. It was the kind of balancing they understood.

GIVING THE READING PUBLIC
WHAT IT WANTS

That remarkable Frenchman who visited the United States in the 1830s and whose observations still amaze us, Alexis de Tocqueville, recognized the dangers of giving the public what it says it wants:

I know of no country in which there is so little true independence of mind and freedom of discussion as in America. In America, the majority raises very formidable barriers to the liberty of opinion; within these barriers an author may write whatever he pleases, but he will repent it if he ever steps beyond them.

His remarks apply to any mass society. Obviously anyone engaged in a commercial enterprise must target his product to his audience; so must a bureaucrat in a collective society.

Mass media managers often carry the argument to extremes, picturing themselves as helpless courtiers to the crowd, unable to provide quality fare because no one will pay for it. There is nothing new about the argument. For example, in eighteenth century England, Lowenthal and Fiske (1957) documented these same arguments about lowering literary and theatrical standards in order to attract the newly literate lower classes. It marked the first time that the artist could make a profit from his works from the masses, without having to rely on patrons. Plots were simplified and became repetitious; there was an increase in sex and violence; settings became more exotic; and the heroes and villains showed both good and bad sides. During the same period magazines prospered, and as the century wore on, the newspapers contained more news and less of the wit that *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* had served up in the early part.

New media forms never replace old ones, but they force the older ones to adjust in order to attract both an audience and advertisers. Newspapers did not replace newsletters, nor did the more popular appeal press of the 1830s, 1890s, or 1920s replace the political, mercantile, or "serious" papers of their day. The mass magazine which arose at the beginning of the century did not spell the end of the elitist monthlies. But they changed them all drastically. McCombs (1972) showed that during the twentieth century at least, advertising accounted for a constant share of the gross national product. Dollars attracted to one medium came from another. The audience's time is also a constant. If it is attending one medium, at least a print medium, it cannot be attending another simultaneously. The main reason people give for not using another media product is not the added cost, but the lack of time (Becker, 1977).

There always has been and always will be a market for lowest common denominator content. Shoot-em-up violence, light comedies, and slightly naughty themes are surefire audience pleasers. Historically, the bitterest

competition has been waged over the privilege of dropping something inconsequential into an otherwise empty hour; however, researchers in most of the world take such content far more seriously than do Americans. While Americans have difficulty seeing why anyone attaches ideological interpretations to comic strips and/or advice columns, Marxists and other ideologues analyze their content, precisely because it strikes such widespread response. American researchers have been more interested in audiences, uses and gratifications, and attitude change.

Serious content does not sell very well. The journalist, in trying to explain a complex story for the ordinary reader (who probably will skip it anyway) may water it down too far to be any use to the specialist. More people quoted Horace Greeley than James Gordon Bennett, but they bought Bennett's paper. The sensational dailies in the major cities of the world far outstrip the newspapers of record in terms of circulation.

Unless it is sugarcoated, opinion matter does not sell well either. Joseph Pulitzer, asked why he resorted to so much sensationalism in his New York *World*, said he wanted to speak to the nation, not to a select committee. Across the street, in Hearst's *Journal*, sat the writer who really knew how to entertain readers while giving them the boss's views, Arthur Brisbane. Today's typical U.S. daily contains less than 5% opinion matter. In Europe, it takes steady subsidies from the government to keep the party papers afloat.

To show that the modern American media are not partisan is not to show that they are not ideological. They are imbued with certain values, not the least of which is to make a profit. Media owners sometimes equate their own financial success with greatness, in the same way Puritans looked on their material rewards as signs of God's providence. Overt political lust for power in the old Hearstian sense is rare today, but one wonders if it ever was common. Frank Munsey was as nonideological as any modern media baron, interested like a Lord Thomson only in the profit ledger. Economic rewards always have been greatest for those who played it safest, and that begins with the first two newspaper founders in this country. The feisty Benjamin Harris was in trouble with the authorities at once and managed to produce only one issue of his paper, while the toady Campbell enjoyed fifteen years of monopoly.

Publishers' claims about giving the public what it wants have some validity, but that does not make them convincing. As McPhee (1977: 103) pointed out:

> Picture a system in which one is allowed to vote, here to register his cultural choice by buying something, not just once per person but as many times as he pleases. Specifically, suppose the number of times one votes is in proportion to how well he *likes* the existing regime, the existing fare in a culture. And conversely, in proportion that

another person does *not* like the existing regime (the fare offered does not suit his cultural taste level), in that degree suppose he votes fewer times. He is progressively *disenfranchised*, then, in proportion that he would otherwise register protesting votes. That would be a political joke, a George Orwell nightmare. It is no joke, alas, but the real nightmare of the way we vote in commercial culture.

Tailoring the entire "product line" to the demands of the majority, and thereby alienating the entire minority, is marketing theory gone amuck. There are book publishers who run ads, usually for self-help books, in Sunday magazine sections and wait to see if enough coupons are returned· to justify commissioning a hack writer. If not enough come back, they return the checks and explain the book is sold out; in truth, it never was written.

That is a situation at least some of the Revolutionary generation could have understood. One of the door-to-door solicitors for subscriptions to John Marshall's multivolume "official" biography of George Washington saw there was a demand for a folksy, short version. "Parson" Weems's, filled as it was with outrageous lies, became one of the biggest sellers in early American publishing history. Lots of people still think George Washington chopped down the cherry tree.

GIVING THE VIEWING PUBLIC
WHAT IT WANTS

Broadcasters, even more than most media managers, not only insist they are giving the public what it wants, but they have ratings to back up their assertions. "What can we do?" they say, shrugging. Their argument is a product of the same state of mind which insists that by sticking to "objectivity" the reporter avoids all value judgments. More about that later.

The problem is not that the ratings are inaccurate (for they are remarkably accurate); the problem is that they are followed slavishly. Critics simply do not like what the ratings show: Viewers want to be entertained and it does not take much to entertain them.

Abrams (1973: 108) made an interesting observation about relying solely on ratings to determine programming:

Audience size is *not* the only possible yardstick for judging whether one is serving the public or even· being popular. It is a measure of tolerance, not a measure of taste. But given the way broadcasting media define service, taste and the public it [is] . . . in practice a determined pursuit of maximum inoffensiveness in broadcasting.

Although programmers around the world have grown more sophisticated about tailoring programs·for particular demographic audiences, the

predominant strategy remains to capture everyone all the time, at least during the prime time hours. An American network, in effect, will settle for anything over one-third of the viewers, and more than 90% of them are watching one of the three offerings.

When a rating point means 700,000 households, and advertising rates are based on how many households are delivered, the caution of the network planners is understandable. In the late 1970s, the going rate for evening prime time shows was about $3.50 per thousand and $1.50 per thousand in the daytime. Thus, an evening show that drew 10 million charged $35,000 for each 30-second commercial. A single rating point average gain for the network might mean $20 million a season.

Of the shows that survive the preliminary hurdles and are selected for a network slot, many do not last a season. A simple half-hour sitcom cost $100,000 to produce, so network executives show little patience in applying the ax, and produced fewer episodes. Where a season once meant 39 new shows and 13 repeats, by the 1970s it meant at least half reruns. The FCC gave its blessing to this arrangement. The reruns did about as well in the weekly ratings, perhaps because even regular viewers could not remember if they had seen that one before. Programmers have another interest in a series, namely how likely it is to be sold to syndicators for showing on local stations and in other parts of the world.

The limited range of possible themes understandably chafes writers. Frustrations run from the trivial (eliminating "fording a river" from the dialogue of a show sponsored by General Motors) to the serious. One TV writer told a Senate committee how his script on the nature of heroism was shifted from Vietnam to World War II and finally to a bullring in Spain.

Such content is far from benign, according to leftist critics such as Herbert Schiller (1969). By relaying content produced by and aimed primarily at the West, Third World media systems change the values in their own populations. These newer nations lack the kind of tradition of political participation that existed when broadcasting developed in the United States and in Western Europe, but they have the advantage of developing in an era when shortages, not abundance, are apparent in all natural resources, including the radio spectrum. They have a chance, according to Schiller, to make sure that considerations other than commercial enter into policy decisions.

Commercialism is not the total explanation, however. One would be hard-pressed to show that public broadcast systems have been bolder in trodding on political toes than have commercial ones. Hirsch (1977) found the U.S. evidence pointed the other way. As he put it, the issue was not whether social control existed, for it always did, but rather who exercised it and for what ends.

There is little evidence that public taste can be improved, even by force-feeding. The experience of British broadcasting offers an example. In 1922, the government established the British Broadcasting *Company*. This consortium of wireless set makers agreed to provide programs so that people would buy their sets; however, the company was thwarted at every turn by Marconi's tight-fisted control of patents. The Post Office looked on its supervision of radio as a nuisance, and the military wanted the spectrum for itself, so that, according to Burns (1977), the only real pressures for radio development came from the amateur enthusiasts. Eventually they had their way, and a royal patent was issued on the last day of 1926 to the British Broadcasting *Corporation*. The governmental corporation had a monopoly for the next 27 years, and from the outset it had social good as its central concern, programming without commercial considerations. Its dramas, music, and news standards earned the respect of the world, but in 1954 when the commercial Independent Broadcasting Authority was established, Britons flocked to it, often watching reruns of American entertainment series. Annual taxes on households with sets ($13 for color TV in 1978) and appropriations from Parliament helped underwrite the BBC, but even with those subsidies it could not produce radio or television fare that could hold the masses, even masses who had been subjected to a quarter of a century of quality.

The American public broadcasting system represents another approach to serving minority tastes. The masses ignore it, happy with their commercial programs and not much concerned about the $100 million a year the federal government invests in developing and distributing programs. While there is no direct tax on users of the public system, many of them voluntarily tax themselves by sending annual membership fees and bidding in TV auctions conducted by public stations.

The FCC has tried to insure that commercial stations listen to more than ratings and ad dollars. Each station must regularly survey community representatives about problems and describe how it intends to address those issues. In pressuring stations to hire more minorities and women, the FCC hopes to broaden the perspectives of decision makers. In much of the world, there is a stronger tradition of citizen participation. The Canadian licensing agency goes out to areas where licenses are to be renewed and listens, in person, to the gripes. Some European systems employ dozens of people to do nothing but read, process, and answer audience mail.

Whether it is delivered by a commercial or a public system, the mass television content does unify a nation culturally. The unrelenting flow of shared images and information gives television a socially integrating role. Think of the old Ed Sullivan variety show. Most viewers tuned in to see the big names, but in the process they were exposed to ethnic singers and folk dancers, and they sometimes found, to their surprise, that they

enjoyed them. Certainly they would not have tuned in a show devoted to them; so, indirectly, they received a message for cultural and entertainment diversity. If millions of viewers could share with *Maude* the pros and cons of having an abortion, then that topic became much more socially acceptable. An unwatched program cannot have that effect.

From a public policy standpoint, the ultimate question is whether the public interest is served better by subsidizing broadcasting with government money, by selling programs to advertisers who use them to try to sell to the audience, or by charging the audience directly, as in subscription television. Such programming is going to be expensive, justified only by large audiences.

But technology has provided a countertrend. The viewer who is willing to pay can get individualized programming on his set ranging from video games, to movies without commercials, to golf lessons. Videotape libraries are growing as recorders spread. Videodiscs may not be far behind. The set being used for any of those purposes is not delivering "regular" television, with its ads. The BBC was offering some subscribers a televised news report, tailored to each individual's interests. In Japan, there was renewed interest in facsimilie newspapers printed out in the home.

In several parts of the world, there were capable systems which included direct feedback mechanisms, whereby the viewer could register his opinion about an act, an issue, or a program in progress. Few developments provided such an Orwellian threat if such a system came into the hands of a demagogue. Imagine a ruler, addressing his nation about an international crisis, and giving them a specified number of minutes to push the buttons on their sets to register their opinions about whether he should launch a nuclear attack. While the martial music played in the background, the viewers across the nation could watch the totals spin. Almost certainly a majority would favor aggression as a matter of national honor. The ruler then would smile, say he was only giving the public what it wanted, and press his red button.

GIVING THE ADVERTISER
WHAT HE WANTS

Most advertisers are too smart to threaten a newspaper, magazine, station, or network with cancelling an ad because it will not knuckle under. If intelligently placed, advertising is more important to the advertiser than to the medium. Publications that have succumbed have been on the verge of bankruptcy anyway.

The frontier editor was not likely to criticize the town's only saloon, bank, or dry goods store. His successor might be more bold when there were six of each.

The black press offers another example. Except for the largest weeklies (especially the Chicago *Defender*, Pittsburgh *Courier*, and Baltimore *Afro-American*, with their national editions), most of the papers were marginal financial enterprises until department stores and grocery chains reacted to civil rights pressures in the 1960s and began to place ads regularly. Before that, the advertisers had been mostly ma-and-pa black enterprises or a few national black advertisers such as insurance companies and cosmetic firms. In an earlier period, Booker T. Washington had used the patronage of his Tuskeegee Enterprises advertising to keep some of the papers in line. Politicians often bought off the really marginal papers, gaining their editorial support for ads. Today, the black papers are financially stable and much less subject to such manipulation.

Outright bribery of the press has been rare, although Boss Tweed admitted he paid Republican upstate editors sums ranging from $500 to $5000 to drop their attacks on his manipulations of the legislature in Albany. He was less successful in his attempted bribe of Thomas Nast to "quit printin' them pictures." Bribes from foreign agents to the American press have been rare.

There have been accusations that big business bought off the muck-raking journals. It is a confusing picture because when conglomerates took over some of the magazines about 1910, the public appetite for exposure journalism seems to have been sated. In any case, the editors read the audience demands that way and began running more fiction and self-help features. Reigier (1932) recounted a specific charge against *Cosmopolitan*, a leading muckraking journal. In 1906, shortly after Hearst purchased the monthly, *Cosmopolitan* allegedly bowed to pressure from U.S. Senator John F. Dryden, former president of Prudential Insurance Company, and recalled an issue already on the stands to delete an article critical of insurance practices. In its place went an innocuous poem and short story. Prudential was a regular advertiser in the magazine.

A few publications have existed primarily as vehicles to extract black-mail for what they did *not* run, although these have been less common in American than in French history. None of them lasted long, fortunately. There also have been individual journalists working on respectable publications who have used their positions to keep stories out of print in return for financial favors, but these, too, have been rare in the United States. There really has been only one proven case of this on a daily in the last quarter of a century, and that was of Harry Karafin. The Philadelphia reporter went to prison in 1968, after being convicted on forty counts of squeezing bribes from dozens of individuals and corporations. Certainly more lawyers and doctors have been convicted for their misdeeds than have journalists.

Some sponsors want to be associated with quality programs, even if it does not make strict economic sense. Firestone did not want to end its musical hours on television, but the network refused to renew, insisting the quality show hurt the ratings of all its other offerings on that night. Texaco probably has not pumped enough extra gallons to pay for its long sponsorship of the Saturday afternoon radio broadcasts from the Metropolitan Opera. When they turn to promotional ads for themselves, media managers can be equally illogical about economics. Magazines which purchase the back page of New York *Times* sections to trumpet their circulation gains are probably satisfying the ego of their own executives more than they are trying to attract new accounts.

Time magazine's radio version of *The March of Time* was an artistic and ratings success but a money loser. Henry Luce announced its cancellation and was deluged with protest mail. Fielding (1978) described the dilemma. Luce ran a two-page ad in *Time* on February 29, 1932, thanking the public for its support, and then asking the quintessential support-for-quality question: "Whose the responsibility to continue it? *Time*'s subscribers? The radio chains? a philanthropist's? the government's? ... Obviously, *Time* cannot be expected to buy advertising when it does not want it, in order to perform public service." The chagrined network carried it for a while as a sustaining show, and then advertisers lined up. In the meantime, *Time* received all the benefits of being identified with the show.

If only commercial considerations shaped a publication, then a healthy magazine that refused for its first 33 years to carry advertising should have been a bold critic indeed. The editorial mix and conservative tone of the *Readers Digest* did not change at all when ads were introduced in 1955. The addition of ads was accomplished, it should be noted, only because the sample of subscribers surveyed said they wanted them—at least more than a large increase in the cover price. Here is another example of the use of a survey or rating to justify what the media manager already wanted to do.

Advertising is valuable information, and both the audience and the Supreme Court see it that way. When the adless *PM* asked its readers in the early 1940s what they wanted, it was ads. In one of the great ironies of American newspaper history, *PM* started summarizing the ads from competitive newspapers in its own consumer advice column. Many a trade and professional journal is read more avidly for its new product ads than for its editorial copy, and magazines like *Harper's Bazaar, Seventeen*, and *New Yorker* are purchased as much for their handsome ads as for their articles. Newspaper readers use the grocery and other ads for comparison shopping. People say they object more to broadcast ads because they are so intrusive; still, there seems to be no real dislike for the radio and TV ads. In fact, the characteristic which correlates best with sales is "irritability" of the ad.

People remember the brand name, even in commercials they dislike, and over time, they forget the negative context.

The government's main concern in regulating advertising is in preventing unfair competition in the form of false and misleading ad claims. In the 1970s, the Federal Trade Commission, after a half-century of pussyfooting around, got tough on this, requiring a few advertisers to run *mea culpa* corrective ads. Courts, at the same time, refused to force the media to carry any particular ads, with the limited exception of broadcasters who must carry ads for all candidates for the same office on the same basis. Print media could refuse any ad they did not like.

A series of Supreme Court decisions in the late 1970s extended First Amendment protection to so-called commercial speech. Traditionally, ads had not been entitled to such protection. The courts affirmed that advertising was no less socially useful information for having been purchased. Those who did not own their own media had little other avenue open to a mass audience, the courts said.

The framers, used to a system in which patronage was used to purchase the allegiance of an entire newspaper, could have found little fault with a trend which protected ad messages clearly labeled as such.

THE JOURNALIST'S OWN PRESSURES

Psychotherapist Rollo May (1969), in his *Love and Will*, detailed protective covers which modern man assumes to cushion himself from the pain of caring too much. Assaulted from all sides by conflicting and confusing stimuli, he must have some place to hide. While May does not mention the journalist, he is perhaps the perfect example. Far more than most people, he is present at all sorts of scenes of intense personal involvement, suffering, and conflict. He is around people who really care, and they want him to care too.

The journalist is supposed to observe these scenes and, without becoming involved in them, gather information and describe them for those who are not present. In short, he is asked to understand but not to get involved. May calls this the dilemma of modern man.

After the Civil War, newspapers began using and emulating the accounts provided by the wire services, written so as not to offend papers of any persuasion. Objectivity became the paramount value in the business, and the journalist found it a comforting one. Not only did it protect him from psychological shocks, but to a degree, from reader wrath. After all, he was just reporting the facts, just "holding a mirror up to the world."

Some journalists carried the noninvolvement to extremes, refusing to vote or to join any organization for fear it might lead to a conflict of interest. Even on papers with highly partisan editorial pages, reporters did

this, in part as an assertion of their own independence; however, it also served corporate interests in emphasizing the distinction between news and opinions.

Traditional objectivity leads to a heavy reliance on official sources. The journalist wants to get ideas, conclusions, and estimates into the mouth of a source. Once he gets it, he may feel obligated to print it, even if he knows it is not true. Many papers published Senator Joseph McCarthy's wild accusations about Communists in the government in their news columns, and then relied on their editorial pages to do the correcting. Demagogues know, of course, that far more people hear a charge than hear its correction and that far more read the front page than read the editorials.

Convenient as it was, the myth of absolute objectivity was seen for what it was by the perceptive journalist. He, more than anyone else, knew the selectivity involved in deciding what stories to cover. Many stories are optional, but even for the musts there are infinite choices to be made about what details to include, what to use for the lead, how long to make the article, and finally how to play the story in the paper or on the air. Every study of newsroom sociology since Breed (1955) has shown that reporters seldom get policy directives about how to cover or slant stories. They pick up their clues from seeing what stories are played prominently, something every reporter, past or present, wants. Just as modern psychology makes us dubious about the rationality of the electorate, so it calls into question the model of the unbiased, objective journalist. Even if he is not aware of them, his preconceptions are bound to affect the way he does his job.

Eventually, the debate of the 1960s and 1970s turned not so much on whether objectivity was possible (even hard-liners conceded absolute objectivity was not) but on whether it was a worthy goal. The so-called "new journalists" were more interested in conveying the essence of truth than in recording the facts.

The participant journalist was no longer a neutral observer. Like a journalist in the Communist system, he put his biases up front and did not apologize for them. Some invented dialogue, events, and even sources, without warning their readers of the liberties they were taking. If it did not happen just that way, it *should* have. One who assumes that kind of responsibility must be confident of himself, confident that by announcing his known biases he has listed them all. It is a heady role, one which requires maturity and reflection, attributes as rare among journalists as among any others. Traditionalists often expressed admiration for the writing skill of these new journalists but were appalled by their methods. They worried that the readers would lose confidence in what all journalists

said, but of course, surveys showed they were doing so anyway, just as they were losing faith in all societal institutions.

By no means all "regular" journalists rejected the participant values represented by the new journalists. Johnstone et al. (1976) found a wide schism among those on staffs on the same papers and stations. Journalists in the sample were presented a list of eight functions performed by the media and asked to evaluate each along a scale ranging from "extremely important" to "not important at all." Four represented press functions associated with a participant press (investigative, watchdog, interpretive, educative) and four were more neutral (speed, accuracy, verfication, enter-tainment). The journalists rated the participant values higher, with the watchdog on government role the highest of all. At the same time, most also supported such traditional and essentially neutral values as speedy transmission and care in verification. The older the newsmen, the more they leaned toward the neutral values. While the types of career paths influenced ratings, the greatest influence was the educational background. The more highly educated the journalists, the more they supported the participant press values.

Unlike journalists in many parts of the world, the American practi-tioner is not licensed, and the First Amendment forecloses the possibility that he could be. Federal law defines a professional as one who is licensed, who must complete a prescribed course of specialized instruction, and who is bound by self-enforced professional standards. Journalists do, however, share certain values, including protecting news sources and trying to be fair.

At least since the ancient Greeks, the subject of ethics has absorbed the attention of thoughtful people in all cultures. Ethics deals with right and wrong, what one ought to do. Philosophers who have studied folk notions of ethics as well as formal codes have found a remarkable agreement in them: Be honest, loyal, kind, industrious, and cooperative, and do not be treacherous, unreliable, cruel, lazy, and selfish.

Journalists, like all groups, have tried to frame codes of ethics. Both state and national associations of print and broadcast groups, plus each of the industries (including comic books and motion pictures) have tried to reduce values to a simple list. They, too, have shown themselves remark-ably consistent, according to Hulteng (1973). The journalist must try to employ his talents for the general good, not for private advantage. He must be impartial, functioning as the public's representative and not as a mouthpiece for special interests. His news report should be as sincere, true, and accurate as he can make it, and it should be thorough, balanced, and complete. The journalist should respect the canons of decency.

By almost any standard, today's journalist comes closer to meeting those values than yesterday's. Anyone who has spent hours reading the old

papers and magazines knows there has been a marked improvement. If anything, the media have become too responsible, too serious. Some would long for the kind of moon hoax that James Gordon Bennett perpetrated, but today's audiences would not only *not* be taken in by such shenanigans, they would resent them greatly.

Throughout the world, the media have invented devices to hold themselves accountable. Many nations have press councils, the first one having started in Sweden in 1913. In most cases, they are nongovernmental agencies, with members from both the media and the public sectors. Usually they have no means of enforcing their findings, other than the media attention and peer pressure. Their financing almost always is totally or partially from voluntary payments made by the media. Since the 1960s, there have been local press councils in a few locations in the United States, and there is a statewide council in Minnesota. A foundation grant in 1973 established a national news council, which initially evaluted charges only against the national media but more recently has also adjudicated complaints against local papers and stations. Journalism reviews also encourage self-criticism. At the local level, executives of some papers meet regularly with citizen advisory boards to discuss policies and practices. A few employ an ombudsman to follow up on reader queries.

The founding fathers knew self-restraint was "unnatural"—but they certainly applauded it when they saw it.

SUMMARY

Historians seek to provide a usable past by focusing on examples which illuminate problems of the day. The ones discussed here—toleration for diversity, the values of competition, the problem of balancing what people say they want with what they need—are old ones and will not go away.

In closing, we call once more on that insightful historian, Daniel Boorstin. Boorstin (1976) suggested a Law of Inverted Distance: Advancing technology affects large quantities much more than small. Airplanes are incredibly fast, once you get to the airport, get cleared for takeoff and then for landing, and then fight your way through jammed roads to your destination. They save you time only on the long distance flights. The same is true with cars, because for short trips, the time is eaten up in traffic tieups and looking for a parking place. Technology has had the same effect in the realm of communications. Messages and images bring us national and world events, but make us less aware, interested in, and able to deal with those close at hand. The media found out long ago that people care more about what goes on in the White House than in the county commission, although the latter may have much more direct effects on them.

Because technology is complex and expensive and requires expertise to operate, it becomes more centralized and more focused on celebrities, whether in politics, sports, or government. We live in the Age of the Celebrity, and the trend has run full circle. Today, media people themselves are celebrities.

What would the founding fathers have thought if they knew that Walter Cronkite consistently heads polls to see who the public trusts most? Pragmatic men that they were, they would have said, "Let's run him for President on *our* ticket!"

6

DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS
AND THE PRINT MEDIA

Books, magazines, and newspapers are shaped, to a large degree, by the way they are distributed. This applies both to their physical characteristics and to their content. Changes in postal laws have changed the Amercian media, and so has the ownership pattern of wholesale and retail distribution outlets.

Producers of mass products—soap flakes or soap operas, pet rocks or rock records, tampons or tabloids—live or die by the efficiency of their distribution systems. The key is getting the products quickly and efficiently to the customers. While executives in all the mass media devote enormous amounts of money, time, and energy on these networks, historians tend to ignore them, concentrating instead on individuals and institutions that originate messages and on their alleged impact on social and political issues. This chapter will focus on the print media and the way they are distributed, while the next will look at the other media.

Technology accounts for most, but not all, changes in distribution. The leaders in any industry are in the best position to conduct the research that leads to innovations. They also are most able to take advantage of developments by others. On the other hand, they have the greatest stake (psychological as well as financial) in the existing system, so they sometimes resist changes which might fundamentally alter the status quo. Often it is the lean and hungry company that is most willing to gamble. And there is no accounting for individual genius, wherever it may show up. Sometimes such a person can reorganize a business and its distribution pattern in the absence of major technological changes.

While these chapters examine distribution systems in the mass media, it is important to remember that vast amounts of information are distributed on an interpersonal basis. At a macroscopic level, one hardly needs to repeat how the paths of empire have followed the paths of trade and communication. The Greeks, living in small city-states, had no need for complex communication systems, but the Romans sent their legions to the

reaches of the civilized world and were absolutely dependent on such intercourse.

We will begin our survey with the most venerable of print media, books.

BOOKS

Books always have been costly and bulky, and much of their costliness has been because of their bulkiness. McLuhan (1964) made much of the relationship between the increasing portability of writing materials and the spread of empire. Certainly there is no need to reiterate the impact of the development of movable type in the fifteenth century on the spread of knowledge. The shift from hand production to craftsman's art to mass production defines not only the dimensions of the book but also the kind and size of the audience with access to it.

Even today, however, the book remains expensive. Popular writers predict the end of books as we know them, asking who will invest the time and money in them when the same content becomes available served up in attractive sight and sound forms at the touch of a switch in our own homes. Before we dismiss the book, however, we should remember it has been around for a long time (more than forty centuries if you count the clay tablets Babylonians used to record legal and financial matters) and has shown itself remarkably adaptable. Guinzburg (1953) pinpointed the principal reason for the book's durability:

It is by all odds the most important single medium of intellectual immortality, the never-ending chain of continuity binding the past with present and future generations. It has survived ruined civilizations; it has escaped burnings and suppressions; it has contributed immeasurably to the building of nations and the suppression of tyranny; it continues to be the medium best suited to the creative use of words, to the expression of serious ideas, and to the recording of newly acquired knowledge.

The development of a material upon which to write from papyrus (about 4000 B.C.) to parchment (about 200 A.D.) to linen paper (about 1000 A.D.) is central to the rise of the book, but perhaps the pivotal change was one of format. In about the fourth century A.D., the Romans cut scrolls into sheets, bound them on the left, and put them between wooden boards. That permitted detailed indexing, nearly impossible with rolled scrolls. It also led to one of Rome's other great legacies, the codification of law.

So long as each copy had to be written by hand (even if several slaves produced identical copies simultaneously) their distribution was bound to be limited. Those who wanted to use books had to go to where they were,

usually chained down in church or government buildings. Only the richest could afford their own copies. This all changed of course, with the advent of movable type in the fifteenth century and its rapid spread throughout Europe. Press runs were still quite small, not only because so much handwork was involved, but because the expanded audience influenced both the form and content of the books. The metal type first was designed to look as much as possible like the ornate hand lettering, but the new audience preferred legibility, and type styles were simplified. Likewise, religious works began appearing in vernacular languages. These stages in limited democratization were repeated even faster as the production of books spread from the Continent to England to America.

According to Lowenthal and Fiske (1957), one reason book prices were rising sharply in England at the end of the eighteenth century was that elegant members of the new feminine audience demanded more elaborate and costly formats and bindings. Cheap publishers turned out reprints of classics as well as trashy novels for the less particular.

The first printing presses in North America were restricted to religious printing, although they soon expanded to serve the needs of officials and businessmen. A few colonial printers brought out books, but it was impractical to import the necessary materials for book production. Most contented themselves with selling in their shops books printed on the other side of the Atlantic.

The publishing firms founded in the wake of the Revolution were tiny. Lacking as they did any risk capital, they insisted that American authors pay in advance. They could pirate all the works they wanted from British authors, who were vastly more popular with American readers. For that reason, Americans refused to sign the international copyright agreement which emerged in 1837.

During the 1840s, the reputable American publishers found themselves challenged by a new group of cheap publishers. Cheap paper and steam-driven presses dramatically cut the costs of production. Newspapers were among those spewing forth editions on broadsides at a price which book publishers could not match.

It was this economic challenge, according to McVey (1975), that forced the American publishing industry to regulate itself and to lobby for changed postal laws. No single publisher was big enough to dominate the business, so the industry leaders formed pools to reduce the competition from the new firms. They agreed to respect one another's prior claims to publish a British work. An American publisher who wanted exclusive rights to a British book could purchase advance sheets directly from the British firm. That way the English publisher got at least something for his "American rights." High tariffs blocked him from shipping in printed

7000. The vast majority of the new ones were chain-owned, "fast-book" outlets in shopping centers. For example, Waldenbooks had more than 400 and B. Dalton more than 300 outlets. They carry only the hottest books, although by comparison with the 100,000 or so outlets using racks only, they offer a wide choice. Even big bookstores (found almost nowhere except in the largest cities and near campuses) can stock only a small share of the titles. The buyer seeking a "gourmet" item will have to find a specialized shop, order by mail, or obtain a copy on microfilm or microfiche. The photographic systems keep enormous numbers of books "in print" forever; even more important, they make it possible to order a copy of a book or thesis, even if it was only "published" in one copy. When combined with information retrieval systems, such processes call into question the very definition of distribution.

Publishers are understandably wary of any new distribution form. They looked askance at private libraries, then public libraries, then rental libraries, then condensations, fearing they would make one copy do the work of many, only to find these institutions whetted literary appetites. Soon they learned how a movie or TV special could send buyers scurrying to their nearest bookstore for the original.

Bantam Books set a record of some sort in 1978 when it had a paperback, written as an enlarged novelization of an original TV mir. series, on the "Top Ten" chart *before* the series even aired. Two weeks before NBC-TV started the *Holocaust* series, Bantam was in its sixth edition and had printed more than a million copies of the 408-page book. (*Roots* was not yet in paperback when its record-breaking ABC-TV series ran in early 1977.) Sales of perennials like the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew series soared after they became TV series.

Even interactive cable may change the book retailing business, since early experiments with Warner Cable Corporation's two-way system in Columbus, Ohio, found bookstores could move goods that way—much better, for example, than could clothing stores.

Libraries are major buyers of books (accounting for more than 10% of American sales), and for certain types of books, they are virtually the only buyers. For example, university presses sell half their books to libraries. Turow (1977) found that publishers of juvenile books counted on library buyers to be more daring and innovative than those for retail stores. Increasingly the latter are chains, interested only in the kind of work which will sell itself with bright covers, attractive illustrations, and low cover prices.

While both sales and borrowing of books have been climbing, it is sobering to remember that Machlup (1962) calculated that it was 1953 before the total number of books published in the United States reached the level it had been in 1914; even in 1959, the number was only 24%

higher than it had been before World War I. In the meantime, the population had increased 78% and the gross national product had multiplied ten times.

MAGAZINES

From their appearance in 1741, American magazines have been published on two basic patterns. Benjamin Franklin announced his plan to bring out a magazine, but a competitor published another three days before Franklin's came off the press. Both failed in less than a year. (Pattern #1: Suicidal Competition.) Franklin sold his magazine primarily by the single copy, while his rival relied on subscriptions. (Pattern #2: Dual Distribution.)

All eighteenth century magazines were expensive, an annual subscription costing about as much as a laborer earned in a week. Little wonder the magazines served up literary material to the educated and wealthy elite. There was no thought that the magazines should be relevant; relevancy was for newspapers and personal communications.

Thanks partly to low postal rates, magazines enjoyed their first blossoming in the early nineteenth century, when real editors—not printers or publishers—emerged and attracted the nation's best writers. Many of these writers were eager for a showcase, since, as we saw earlier in the chapter, book publishers seldom would take a chance on American writers.

Soon magazines demonstrated their ability to plead special causes (such as abolition of slavery) and to report and illustrate news events (notably the Civil War). They also began to serve special audiences of farmers, women, and businessmen. At the end of the Civil War, there were about 500 magazines in this country; two decades later, when the momentous decision to slash cover prices came, there were more than 3000.

From the 1860s on, magazine distribution was a virtual monopoly in the hands of the American News Company (ANC). In 1872, ANC purchased control of Union News Company, the largest owner of newsstands, thus merging wholesaling and retailing. Not that newsstands were much of a factor at that time, being confined almost entirely to hotel lobbies and railroad stations. But as the railroads expanded, so did the number of outlets, until by the turn of the century ANC controlled some 4000 key sites. Street and Smith, publishers of a wide range of pulp and slick magazines, broke with ANC in the 1920s and organized its own subsidiary. This firm, the Chelsea News Company, came up with a new wrinkle on reducing the cost of returns, one quickly adopted by ANC and others. Instead of shipping back the whole issue, the retailer returned only the top half of the front cover. To consolidate its control, ANC gradually gained control of imported books and periodicals, vending machines, lunch coun-

ters, and other retail outlets in and near hotels and depots. One of its subsidiaries gained control of the rental library business.

The retailer was glad to add magazines, especially since he took no risk. ANC would pay him a percentage for all he sold and would not charge him for those he did not. The same high-profit, no-risk attraction later gained magazines access to drug and grocery stores, locations which until the 1930s were quite resistent.

In 1952, the Department of Justice charged ANC with monopolizing newsstands, and five years later ANC abandoned national distribution, agreeing to service everyone's magazines through arrangements with fifty or more regional offices. Peterson (1964) said some magazine publishers longed for the old days when they could deal with one giant. Now they had to bargain with dozens of independent distributors, who in turn served eight hundred independent wholesalers, each presiding over his own fiefdom.

In the 1970s, American magazines sold about as many copies on a single-copy basis as by subscription, but the pattern is quite different in other parts of the world. For example, in Western Europe and in Japan, almost all magazines are sold on newsstands, while in many developing nations the postal system is so unreliable as to make subscriptions impractical.

Subscription agents have been a part of the magazine business, almost from the beginning. In the early nineteenth century, catalog agencies bought a large number of subscriptions to a magazine at a bargain price and then resold them at a markup through part-time salesmen. After World War I, the agencies became more aggressive with crews of hard-selling young agents hauled from town to town by crew captains. "I'm working my way through college . . ." became part of American folklore. Peterson estimated that 20,000 such field salesmen worked the towns and hamlets of the nation between the wars.

They reappeared in the 1950s and were the subject of exposures, both in the media and in congressional hearings. The high-pressure tactics, virtual enslavement of some of the young salesmen, and gross cheating of customers left such a bad public image that most publishers abandoned them, several setting up their own subscription sales organizations. Soon the Federal Trade Commission was after them, too. In 1973, Hearst's Periodical Publishers' Service Bureau, one of the largest, signed a consent decree, promising to halt deceptive telephone and door-to-door sales tactics and high-pressure methods of collecting unpaid accounts.

Direct mail solicitation of subscriptions began in the 1920s and became epidemic as computers streamlined the process. Time, Inc., became the undisputed champion of using direct mail to offer cut-rate subscriptions to nearly every group from students to physicians. No one, it seemed, paid

the full price. Recently, even Time, Inc., has had second thoughts about bargain rates. Those who pay full price are better prospects in the eyes of advertisers, because they are more committed to the contents. They also renew at a higher rate.

Many predicted that network television would cut sharply into circulations of general magazines, but it did not. Instead, it took away the advertisers. Magazines simply cannot deliver a mass *undifferentiated* audience as cheaply per thousand as network TV can. Magazines costing three or four times as much to publish as their cover price died when the advertisers withdrew. Others tried belatedly to lop off less affluent subscribers. Zip Codes made it possible to locate the subscribers in wealthy and not-so-wealthy sections. Publishers scurried to find ways to sell advertisers on the quality, not the quantity, of their readers.

While no scandal ever has besmirched the Audit Bureau of Circulation since it was established in 1914 to bring honesty out of the chaos of conflicting circulation claims, there has been recent dissatisfaction with the way it breaks out circulation figures. Advertisers cannot tell how many copies were sold on newsstands, how many came in at full subscription price, and how many were lured in by cut rates. They also felt ABC did not adequately monitor the way some of the magazines offered their special regional and interest editions.

Compared with most of the mass media, the magazine business is decentralized, with the twenty largest publishers accounting for only half the total circulation. Owen (1975) wrote that the industry "provides perhaps the closest approximation possible to ideal competition and freedom."

Although there is nothing to prevent a magazine publisher from moving toward vertical integration, few except Curtis Publishing Company ever tried it, and in recent years, even Curtis has backed off. At one time, Curtis grew trees, ran paper-making plants, controlled transportation routes, owned printing plants, and distributed through its own wholesalers. (It never joined ANC.) A large share of its copies were delivered by its own army of "little merchants" or by boys who were delivering the weekly paper at the same time. Curtis struck many agreements with such newspapers, in return for advertising.

One highly profitable segment of the business which relies entirely on mail distribution is the controlled circulation magazine. A publisher obtains a mailing list of all persons in some trade or technical classification, designs a magazine for them, sells advertising, and then sends it, free of charge, to everyone on the mailing list. No one else can even buy a copy. The advertiser is thus given saturation coverage of a category of reader. While some argue that no one takes seriously a publication he receives free and unsolicited, it is nonetheless true that some controlled circulation

magazines are among the most respected and quoted in their respective fields.

Postal rates have continued to climb and services to be curtailed, for reasons examined later in this chapter. In spite of experiments with alternate methods of distribution, such as vending machines and contracting with so-called private postal systems in major cities, it seems evident that magazines will continue to rely heavily on the U.S. postal system.

U.S. POSTAL SYSTEM

Before moving on to newspapers, it is perhaps time to take a look at the U.S. postal system, since it has played and continues to play such an important role in the distribution of all the print media.

The United States always has subsidized mail deliveries for periodicals. Every country, especially developing ones with a population spread over a wide territory, wants to encourage dissemination of some types of information.

Congress often has demanded, even in the same bill, that the postal system add some costly extension or feature (Rural Free Delivery, city delivery, special delivery, to name a few) while also insisting that it be run on "a businesslike basis," in other words, that it at least break even. Low rates for periodicals often have been central to these policy debates.

While the newspaper industry is less reliant than it once was on mail delivery (only two million of sixty million copies of dailies are delivered by mail, but for weeklies the percentage is higher), magazines are much more dependent on the postal service. Half the copies of general magazines are delivered by mail. The more specialized the magazine, the more it must count on postal delivery.

Since lines of communication always follow lines of commerce, it is not surprising the colonies were more eager to set up postal arrangements with England than with one another. Commerce among the colonies was minimal and good land routes almost nonexistent.

War ships carried government correspondence, but ordinary citizens deposited and picked up letters at coffee houses and taverns, paying a fee to masters of merchant vessels. Scheele (1970) found that when the colonies formalized arrangements in the 1630s and 1640s, they did not even mention domestic mail. As commerce grew, colonies began to take this into account, and in 1693 a royal patent attempted to link all the systems. In 1707 a formal royal postal service began; however, transatlantic mail still went by private merchant vessels.

The British had little success operating the colonial post, partly because of irregular packet ships and poor roads, but mostly because of the ways the colonials found to evade the service. Many thought the high rates

were yet another odious British tax. Although postriders were not required to deliver newspapers, they usually did. In fact, it was the attempt by the British to bar certain "seditious" patriot papers from the post that caused the final downfall of the royal mail service. Printers simply organized their own network of private riders.

When the Continental Congress assumed control in mid-1775, it told Benjamin Franklin to set up a reliable mail system, especially between Congress and the armies in the field. If he could show a profit on the rest of the service, the financially strapped federal government would be most grateful; but even Franklin could not manage that. After the war, dreams of profit were abandoned before the pressures to serve the scattering populace. Henry Adams calculated that in 1800, the postal service was carrying only one letter per adult inhabitant per year, but that was changing rapidly. The number of post offices climbed from 75 in 1789 to more than 14,000 in 1845, and the number of post roads and related services increased even faster. Stage coaches, steamboats, and railroads were subsidized to carry the mails, just as airplanes would be in the next century.

Publishers always sent their newspapers at far below cost, free in exchanges with one another. During the early nineteenth century, regulations permitted postmasters to serve as collection agents for newspapers, collecting subscription funds and transmitting them through official franked mail. Not only that, but the printer often was the postmaster and thus was paid for collecting his own debts. During that time, newspapers glutted the mail system. Pred (1973) estimated that in 1837, some 10,000 exchange copies a day were put in the post. That meant that each of the 1300 dailies received an average of 7 exchange copies a day, and there were 10 times as many weeklies exchanging copies, all of which were carried free by the post office.   ʹ

Eastern businessmen realized they were paying high postage rates to subsidize extension of the service to the frontier, so they introduced private express companies in several large cities. According to Scheele (1970), these firms provided two services which postal officials had steadfastly refused: They picked up and delivered mail at homes and offered a fast express service between a few key cities. The Post Office gradually met both challenges and cut rates in the process. During the Civil War, it began home delivery in a few large cities, gradually expanding the service to smaller cities, towns, villages, and in 1896 to Rural Free Delivery. Each extension—uneconomical though it was—was hailed by the newspapers and magazines.

The postal service experimented in the 1960s with facsimile transmission of mail between selected U.S. cities, but called off the experiment because it was too costly. In the late 1970s, USPS entered into agreements

with a private satellite company to try international deliveries that way on a limited basis. The letter carrier still delivered the actual product in each experiment. And in both, the main users were businesses, not individuals.

Most people still think of "mail" as letters between friends and relatives, but only 20% of first-class mail (a tiny proportion of all classes) is personal correspondence. The rest is bills and payments, a relatively profitable sector of the business which electronic banking and billing is threatening to take away from the postal service. While electronic systems do not provide for confidentiality, little mail needs that anyway.

Large-volume mailers are seeking alternatives to postal delivery, none more eagerly than publishers. Time, Inc., Meredith Corp., and *Readers Digest* experimented with private systems in selected cities. By the end of 1977, Dow-Jones was delivering 160,000 of the 1.3 million copies of the *Wall Street Journal* that way and hoped to have the figure up to 500,000 eventually. Private systems work only because they can define what and where they will deliver, skimming the profitable segments. They are not about to pick up a letter or a periodical in Maine, process it, and hand carry it to a rural mail box in South Dakota for 15 cents. To keep our societal commitment to providing mail service, the public system must do so, and increasingly it will have to be subsidized.

Second-class rates for periodicals have been based strictly on weight since 1875. Late in the nineteenth century, they were only 1 cent a pound, a rate so inviting that cheap novels, house organs, and ad circulars all posed as periodicals. In 1894, the Postmaster General claimed such matter accounted for 85% of the total weight of mail. Definitions were tightened, so that a decade later, his successor could report a dramatic decrease. Note that the argument was not with legitimate newspapers and magazines; everyone agreed they should be carried below cost.

There seemed to be a fundamental change in philosophy in the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970, when the new USPS was told to charge users appropriate rates; however, there was a proviso that second-class mailers were to be subsidized at least 50%. (In 1976, second-class matter accounted for 10% of the volume but only 3% of USPS revenue.) As their rate quadrupled between 1971 and 1979, magazines trimmed page sizes and shifted to lighter paper.

Soaring rates and declining service plague every industrialized nation. The fundamental problem was outlined in *The Necessity for Change* (1976), a staff study prepared for Congress:

> Given the present charter and goals, the Postal Service is destined to be a continuing source of dissatisfaction and frustration. Too many constituencies expect the Postal Service to produce economically rational results, given economically irrational constraints and expectations. . . . If the Postal Service were operating as a business it could

keep rates down to a reasonable level for those mailers who generate most mail, while providing services responsive to their needs. It would do so, however, by curtailing traditional services now provided to non-paying constituencies or by instituting new or higher rates for a variety of services. Whether the Postal Service operates as a public service or as a business, there must be recognition of the changing demand for postal services.

Congress stubbornly refused to close unprofitable rural post offices or to eliminate Saturday deliveries. USPS claimed it cost $400 million a year to operate the sixth day. One major argument for keeping it was that daily newspapers relied on the mails, but since less than 4% of copies are delivered that way, it is an expensive luxury. But magazines and newspapers always have had special treatment.

NEWSPAPERS

The newspaper was a venerable institution by the time it was imported to America, and it brought its traditions with it. The early printers tried, within their limitations, to produce papers like the ones their readers had known in England, filling their four-page weeklies with articles copied from British periodicals and adding a smidgen of government notices, shipping news, and local literary contributions.

The printer, like other colonial entrepreneurs, had to hustle to eke out a living, and especially at first, the newspaper brought in far less profits than business, church, and governmental printing. Often he held the job of postmaster as a kind of sinecure. In his shop, he sold everything from patent medicines to lampblack to books printed in England.

Distribution was simple. You either went to the shop to buy a copy or you subscribed a year in advance. From the beginning, mail rates for newspapers were kept quite low, and many copies—including exchange copies between papers—were carried at no charge at all. This exchange and reprinting among the postmaster-printers, according to Merritt (1963), was instrumental in instilling the idea of a separate nation with interests different from the mother country. This is not the place to recount the familiar story of the press's role in the events surrounding the Revolution.

By 1800, most seaport cities had a daily, and there were weeklies even in the interior. While the dailies devoted much of their content to mercantile and shipping matters, the frontier weeklies reprinted mostly news from the papers "back East," as these papers earlier had relied on news from "back home in England."

The first newspapers for the masses appeared in large American cities in the 1830s. Steam power applied to rotary presses made possible

undreamed of circulations, and the surge of Jacksonian democracy created a social and political need for wide dissemination of views, news, and entertainment.

The success of the penny press rested partially on a new distribution system, namely street hawkers. (The youth-oriented underground papers of the 1960s would rediscover this system.) While an annual subscription was beyond the pocketbook of a workingman, he could scrape up a penny or two for a copy of a paper that interested him. The content became spicier, featuring police court and related news. The same kind of popular daily press arrived a little later in Great Britain, delayed by the taxes on newspaper copies which were continued to 1855. It did not really blossom until Lord Northcliffe's *Daily Mail* in 1896, by which time the American popularization had gone much further into the era of Hearst and Pulitzer. Tunstall (1977) pointed out there were fewer women readers, less disposable income, and less advertising available to spur the trends in Great Britain.

Encouraged by low postal rates, American publishers always have exchanged widely and borrowed liberally from one another. In the early years, smaller papers copied their political content from others of the same political stripe, which is why the Federalists prosecuted only the editors of the six largest Jeffersonian weeklies under the Sedition Act of 1798. If they could have silenced them (which they were not able to do), they would have stilled their echoers.

From about 1830 on, newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic began hiring real reporters and going after some news; still they usually picked up most of their news accounts from the papers nearest to the event. They relied on them for features, too. For example, much of Mark Twain's early fame rested on articles which other Western papers reprinted from the *Territorial Enterprise.* It is not much of a conceptual leap from this scissors-and-pastepot brand of journalism to more formal cooperative schemes.

Fiction by name writers was a staple of big city newspapers by the mid-nineteenth century, and noncompetitive newspapers in different cities figured out how to pool their payment to an author to share the story. Right after the Civil War, Ansel N. Kellogg took the idea a step further and began printing one side of newspaper pages with fiction, witticisms, household hints, pictures, poems, and—most importantly—ads, usually for patent medicines. He then would give (or sell cheaply) the preprinted sheets to smalltown editors. They were delighted since half their work was done, and probably few local readers even knew that the inside pages were produced in Chicago. Kellogg and his imitators made their profit from the sale of the advertisements. Although the popularity of this publishing

method peaked in the 1890s, the last ready-print house did not go out of business until 1952.

One unexpected effect of the readyprint service was that some publishers found themselves able to produce several editions for different nearby cities. Although all they changed in some cases was the nameplate, the device enabled them to collect the profitable legal advertising in each site.

Today's publisher can fill his nonadvertising space from three sources: his own staff, the wire and supplemental news services, and the feature syndicates. Certainly, he will want to include some of each type of content, but their costs are quite different. Bagdikian (1965) estimated that while a typical daily devoted one-third of its space to syndicated matter, it cost only one-tenth of its editorial budget. The same paper could purchase the columns of fifteen experts for half what it cost to pay an additional experienced reporter. The syndicates, like the wire services, charge according to the size of the client. The smallest daily might pay $5 a week for a comic strip and $100 a week for basic UPI service, while the same items would cost a major metropolitan daily $200 and $5000 respectively. But even for the big paper, such material is a real bargain.

The Supreme Court in 1941 ordered the Associated Press to discontinue its blackball practice, which permitted any member to veto the application of a potential rival. The AP had avoided an earlier court showdown over its policy of not selling to broadcasters. Today, the AP and United Press International have about the same number of newspaper clients (1200) and broadcast customers (3500) here, and more in one hundred or so other nations. Each spends $50 million a year to gather and disseminate its news, the only practical source of nonlocal news for a paper or station.

If the wire services now sell to everyone, the syndicates certainly do not. A syndicate will offer a newspaper a feature at a number of different prices, depending on how large the territory in which the customer wishes to enjoy exclusivity. Suburban papers have complained for years that metropolitan giants buy up all promising new features and then throw them in the wastebasket to keep them from their competitors. Although there has been no definitive ruling by a court on whether this constitutes restraint of trade, some papers have agreed to soften their control over syndicated materials in consent decrees. For example, they have agreed not to exercise it in counties where they have only a few papers circulating or to cancel it on any feature they do not run at all in a given period of time. Another frequent complaint of publishers is that syndicates insist they subscribe for features they do not really want in order to get the ones they think will enhance their circulation. As we shall see in the next

chapter, this is similar to block booking in the movies. Owen (1975) abhors both practices and would endorse antitrust actions to prohibit them—this in spite of his general belief that antitrust is an ineffective means of forcing newspaper-to-newspaper competition. While no one is sure that given comic strips or columns translate into more readers, being denied access to them certainly handicaps any publisher.

The late nineteenth century often is referred to as the watershed of American history, and certainly it is that in American media history. Among other developments, it saw the rise of the corporation and modern newspaper.

Wires, cables, telephones, and typwriters altered the methods of gathering news, and Linotypes, web-fed presses, and color printing revolutionized printing. One of the most significant developments was cheap paper, made from wood pulp. As Pulitzer and others geared their content to attract the new reader, they had to compete for his pennies and attention with the new mass magazines, the nickelodeons, cheap stage productions, and spectator sports.

They sold many of the copies on newsstands, which is why they used big headlines and illustrations on the front page. The new Sunday editions were even more sensational. As they began distributing more to homes, via carriers, the papers either toned down their looks and content or published different editions for the newsstand and for the home. This was the period when big city dailies took advantage of rail lines to extend their home delivery to nearby communities. E. W. Scripps, while still a young man, recruited agents for *The Evening News* around Detroit, and the agents supervised boys who put the papers on the doorsteps the afternoon they were published, rather than with the next day's mail.

Gradually a pattern emerged in which readers in outlying areas got their nonlocal news from a morning metro and their local news from their own afternoon daily. Downtown department stores lost interest in those too far away to shop, but with the post-World War II spread of shopping centers, this changed again. The stores went to the suburbs and prized those readers.

The United States never really has had national dailies, aside from such specialized papers as *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Christian Science Monitor.* That is not only because of the geographical spread (Moscow papers are distributed across the Soviet Union) but also because no single city is the economic, cultural, and political capital, unlike Moscow, Tokyo, London, or Paris.

It has had national weeklies. The history of the black papers certainly shows the influence of changing distribution realities. Early in this century, when the Chicago *Defender* found itself unable to sell enough papers in its own city, it began shipping bundles to agents in Southern towns who

peddled copies in poolrooms, grocery stores, and anyplace else blacks visited. The paper is credited with a primary role in stimulating the migration of thousands of blacks from the South to the plant jobs in the North during World War I. Letters from the new arrivals reinforced the paper's siren song. Within a few years, the Pittsburgh *Courier* and the Baltimore *Afro-American* also circulated widely in those cities. The *Afro* published special editions for most of the Eastern cities with sizable black populations. The local black weeklies had a hard time competing, especially when the "Big Three" invested sizable amounts in newsgathering expeditions throughout the country and the world. They had correspondents and bureaus in Washington and in foreign countries. Their circulations grew during World War II to nearly a quarter of a million copies each.

After the war, the "white" papers paid more attention to the racial news which had been the black weeklies' staple. Department stores and grocery chains began advertising in black weeklies. These advertisers favored the local papers, even if they were less polished journalistic products. The "Big Three" deemphasized their national editions, concentrating on circulation in their own cities. The *Afro* cut its regional editions sharply. This pulling back was encouraged by the deterioration of dependable train deliveries. Finally came the inevitable building of chains. Sengstacke Newspapers, publishers of the *Defender*, turned it into a daily and then acquired the *Courier* and several other weeklies.

How sensational a newspaper will be depends almost entirely on how it is sold. Black papers remain relatively sensational because they still sell primarily on the newsstand. Another type of national weekly, the sensational tabloid, shifted its content when it moved from the newsstand to supermarkets. It still sold primarily by the copy rather than by subscription, but *The National Inquirer* concluded the shopper would not go for its old sex and violence headlines (e.g., "He Ripped Out Her Heart and Stomped On It!"). The publisher shifted to celebrities, psychics, and self-help and saw the circulation rise from 1 million to more than 6 million by the end of 1978.

Most daily newspapers print and distribute their own papers, functions which Owen would use antitrust laws to outlaw. He would have them concentrate on the editorial product and to contract for the other functions. Many American weeklies already let their printing to central plants, and new offset technology makes this feasible for some dailies. Private distributors can handle more than one paper and already do in a few markets. That saves a new paper from the burden of setting up its own network.

Centralized print shops have reduced the price of entry into the weekly market. They also have made possible the boom in give-away newspapers,

or shoppers. The publisher sells low-cost display and classified ads in a neighborhood or a small town, adds some editorial content (seldom more than one-fourth of the space), and delivers copies to every door. Many a shopper has been born because some printer had unused press capacity. Some "regular" publishers respond with their own shoppers for nonsubscribers; a few have run into antitrust difficulties when accused of trying to freeze out competitors.

One large publisher, Harte-Hanks Newspapers, set up a division to publish shoppers in four Southern California counties, and by 1977, their combined circulation reached 1 million. They carried *no* news or editorials on the assumption that what the reader really wanted was the ads, and they did not want to "distract" him.

While exact figures are elusive, earnings of American newspapers certainly are well above the average for U.S. industry in general. An indication of their profitability is the way "smart money" bids to buy them (especially the small and the middle-sized dailies) even before they come on the market. No matter how much one may bemoan the decrease in the number of dailies since their peak in 1910 (from 2200 to about 1750) or even more the number of cities with competing dailies (from nearly 700 to fewer than 40), the indisputable fact is that there were once more papers than the economy could support.

When Bishop and Sharma (1977) developed a model to test the effects of such factors as literacy rates, urbanization, and market isolation on newspaper circulation, they found that in the industrialized states, the drop in circulation per capita began as early as 1910. For example, in New York, 3.21 newspapers per household circulated in that year—far more than the market could bear. The resulting decline was really a return to normal marketing. Owen concurs in that observation. Another explanation offered by Bishop and Sharma was the increased press capacities. In 1850, 14 daily papers could coexist in New York City because none could print more than 20,000 copies, but when the big ones could print 1 million or more, the number of newspapers dropped dramatically.

In spite of decreasing numbers of papers, total circulation continued to climb at roughly the pace of the U.S. population until after World War II. Since then it has not kept up with the population increase. Owen found that newspapers increased their market penetration from 22% in 1880 to 79% in 1920; by that time they had virtually saturated the urban markets.

Some of that urban circulation was gained by sheer muscle. More than two dozen people died in circulation wars in Chicago alone in the years before World War I. Several of the nine competing dailies hired thugs to burn newsstands, turn over delivery trucks, and beat up delivery boys.

Today, the great bulk of American newspapers are delivered to homes by carriers. Newspapers are not likely to give up this system until the

courts order them to treat the "little merchants" as employees instead of contractors. (The implications in terms of fringe benefit costs are enormous.) When publishers cry that such a ruling would destroy newspapering as we know it, it is as hollow as the pleas from club owners that baseball could not survive without the reserve clause. The carrier system is plagued by problems of the mobility of the society (one-third of adults changing addresses between 1970 and 1974), the difficulty of delivering and collecting in inner cities and in apartment complexes with security systems, and by the shrinking number of youths in the twelve-to-sixteen age bracket.

Of course, in many parts of the world, home delivery is virtually unknown. Servan-Schreiber (1974) said Parisian dealer associations blocked all attempts to establish direct distribution, and Tunstall (1977) reported that in the late nineteenth century, a few firms used charges of "trash" to keep emerging national papers off the rail platforms in Great Britain. The British papers, especially the emerging populist Sunday papers, developed their own systems, something the French failed to do.

The ultimate solution to newspaper distribution lies with electronics. A small "newspaper" was printed by the facsimile process as long ago as 1938. Although the system is still too expensive for general use, it continues to draw attention. Costs go down as more homes are tied to cables; meanwhile, traditional delivery systems get more expensive. Direct transmission systems offer even greater possibilities for facsimile.

BBC demonstrated a system in 1977 which permitted the person at home to customize his home-printed paper by choosing from a displayed budget those stories he wanted to call up, either to read from the tube or to have copied by facsimile in "hard copy." He can suggest various lengths for stories, depending on how much detail he wants, and is charged accordingly.

Such electronic transmission systems raise both economic and public policy questions. Will the reader call up and pay for ads? Considering the high readership for ads in newspapers and magazines, the answer is probably yes. Will such a system spell the end of the regular newspaper? Probably not, since print is still the most efficient way to deliver many types of content. And, finally, would such a system be subject to government control and licensing? The answer there depends on whether it is seen as more closely analogous to a newspaper or to a broadcast.

7

DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS AND THE NONPRINT MEDIA

The significance of control of distribution is most clear in the case of the motion picture industry; however, it is also evident in the history of the telephone, the telegraph, sound recordings, and broadcasting. These media grew up in an atmosphere dominated by huge, moneyed corporations.

The role of distribution in shaping the product is even more obvious in the nonprint than in the print media. Motion pictures, the telephone, the telegraph, sound recording, and commercial broadcasting are inseparable from electronic technology.

We will begin our survey with theatrical motion pictures, an industry where the struggle for control of the distribution channels is drawn in especially bold relief.

THE MOVIES

"The movies" mean many things, including the industry which produces films, the allegedly glamorous production process, and the place where the end products are viewed; however, we will focus on the industrial product, the can of celluloid-wrapped reels, ready to be shipped to exhibitors. That definition encompasses the three key elements in the business: the producers, the distributors, and the exhibitors. The industry has seen a seesawing struggle for control of the middle by the two ends. The middle, or distribution, as Owen (1975) pointed out, is precisely where the significant economies of scale occur. From a profit standpoint, movies are a highly perishable product. Producers, knowing that most of the revenues are generated in the first few weeks of a film's release, want it shown widely and fast. Exhibitors want the best films while they are hot. Both groups have an interest in guaranteeing a steady flow of more modest fare, the bread-and-butter films, and that is where the distributor becomes the key.

In the beginning, there was no middleman. Anybody with a camera and a few feet of film stock could shoot a movie, make some prints, and peddle them to the entrepreneurs who operated nickelodeons in the large cities. The exhibitor showed several on a bill and changed it frequently, so he soon grew weary of swapping and selling to other exhibitors down the street. Thus emerged the distributor, who would buy or lease the films from the producers and then rent them to the exhibitors.

The Edison Company owned the basic patents on both the motion picture camera and on the projector, but there were so many infringers on both that even a barrage of legal actions could not guarantee the company's monopoly. So in 1908, the Edison Company joined with six major domestic and two French producers and the largest manufacturer of film stock to form the Motion Picture Patents Company (MPPC). This trust then forced film distributors and exhibitors to sign exclusive agreements with it or face the prospect of receiving no films from MPPC members. Exhibitors had to pay $2 a week tribute to the trust for the privilege. By 1910, 60% of the nation's 10,000 theaters had signed, and the holdouts were mostly the smallest operators. Soon the MPPC decided it would rather own than rely on the exchanges and bought most of them outright. Because the control over producers, distributors, or exhibitors was never total, the independents were more innovative. They had to be; also, they had less to lose. They began making longer features which could tell complex stories. They also concentrated on technical improvements. Jowett (1976) credited their examples with forcing the major producers to go in the same directions. These improvements, along with the handsome new movie palaces which were appearing not only in the largest but also in the middle-sized cities, did much to lure the middle-class audience to the movies.

Sklar (1975) considered the trust already wobbly, when in 1915 the federal courts ordered it to get out of the exchange business. Power, especially economic power, abhors a vacuum; within two years Adolph Zukor, through his Paramount studio, linked production with distribution. He controlled so much of the flow of film product that he could force exhibitors to take his less promising films in order to get the ones featuring his stars.

The exhibitors countered this block booking by joining together in circuits of first-run theaters, thus giving them a stronger position with Zukor. By 1920, First National Exhibitors Circuit represented more than 600 key theaters and began to contract with stars such as Charlie Chaplin to supply their own films. If the exhibitors wanted to intrude into what Zukor considered his territory, he could invade theirs, and by 1921 he had purchased more than 300 theaters. That started a stampede to acquire theaters, which in the end made no economic sense for the producers.

The studio system merely applied efficient production methods developed in other industries to the making of films. To support these film factories and their attendant wholesale and retail operations, the studio owners increasingly had to raise capital outside the industry. The moneymen in New York and the movie producers in California were separated by a philosophical gap far wider than the 3000 statute miles. Critic Pauline Kael (1974: 47) described this rivalry:

> The hatred of the moneyman for the ungovernable artist is based on the degradation that isn't far from the stripper's hatred of the audience—furious resentment of the privileged people who, as he sees it, have never had to stoop to do the things he has done. . . . The artist's crime is caring less for profits than for what he wants to do; that caring is an insult and a threat.

The bankers' influence increased steadily throughout the 1920s, multiplied manyfold by the sudden coming of sound during the last three years of the decade. Talkies really were a by-product of radio research. While General Electric was perfecting an all-electric sound-on-film system, Western faced financial collapse. Then in 1934, long before other economic indicators turned upward, attendance started to climb; however, by then, the industry faced a new menace, an activist federal government.

The New Deal's National Recovery Administration (NRA) permitted the movie industry to do what it refused to other industries, namely to link production and distribution. More significantly, it approved of block booking, which Jowett called "the cornerstone in the production-distribution-exhibition triad."

If the neighborhood and small town exhibitors were disappointed with the NRA's decision, they would have the last laugh, because in 1948 the Justice Department ruled block booking a restraint of trade and ordered the studios to sell all their theaters. Owen praised the disintegration order as a useful model for breaking up vertical integration in the broadcasting and newspaper businesses, but for the movie industry it came at a most inopportune moment. Already, it was in the second year of an audience decline from the peak year of 1946. The decline soon would be precipitous, spurred not only by the order but by the sweep of television, loyalty investigations, and stiff import taxes imposed by European nations to promote their own film industries.

As audiences deserted, theaters boarded up, small studios closed down, and the majors slowed to a standstill, the Hollywood moguls talked bravely. For example, Samuel Goldwyn in 1949 praised television for ridding the movie business of marginal theaters and added, "TV will cause Hollywood to achieve new heights, and as time goes on, above those heights new peaks will rise." For the next decade, such men praised every ripple in the sand at the bottom of their Death Valley as a "new peak."

The studios began to emphasize in their ads aimed at theater owners how much publicity and promotion effort they would put behind a production. Where once the ads in *Variety* stressed stars and stories, now it was merchandising.

They also paid renewed interest to overseas markets. Guback (1969) found that American filmmakers traditionally had looked on foreign rentals as gravy, and even in 1950 these accounted for only 15% of revenues; two decades later, they accounted for half. The motion picture is one of the few products of international trade whose mechanical specifications are the same the world over. Dubbing or subtitling is inexpensive. Today, no other major American industry relies so heavily on exports for its survival.

Aside from Canada (considered by Hollywood accountants as part of the U.S. market), the biggest customers were Great Britain, France, and Italy. These three countries, like most others, sought to curb the import of films, not only to protect their own emerging film industries after World War II, but also to minimize the outflow of cash. They set up governmental subsidies to encourage domestic filmmakers, but Guback demonstrated that their net effect was to further U.S. domination. American firms set up corporations in each nation to produce films which qualified for subsidies and at the same time avoided import quotas. Then they would import them into the United States for showing, where American audiences preferred the exotic foreign settings to studio backlot sets anyway. The success of this strategy can be gauged by Guback's estimate that by the late 1960s, American firms were collecting four-fifths of the British film subsidies.

The Justice Department's 1948 divestiture order did not reach abroad, of course, and American film companies continued to own chains of movie houses throughout the world. The largest chain in Canada, Famous Players Ltd., which in 1978 had nearly half of the box office, is controlled by Gulf & Western Industries, Inc., the conglomerate which also owns Paramount Pictures. The second largest chain, Odeon, with about a quarter of the national market, was sold that same year by British interests to a Canadian firm.

American major studios are banded in the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association, which dominates distribution in the country. Canadian feature filmmakers complained so loudly that they could not get screenings in their own country that under pressure from Ottawa, the chains agreed in 1976 to set aside a few weeks each year to show Canadian features and even to help bankroll Canadian-made movies. J. Arthur Rank insisted such regulations prompted it to sell its theaters, while Odeon said after two years that it no longer could afford to invest in Canadian productions.

The major studios almost stopped making movies during the 1960s, contenting themselves with financing, distributing, and promoting the films which independent producers could make more cheaply. Some of these operations found a specialized audience and prospered. Most notable was American International, which ground out motorcycle flicks for the drive-in trade. Only after the amazing box office success of *The Godfather* did most of the majors decide to produce occasionally their own blockbusters while continuing to facilitate productions by independents. In 1978, independents made about two-thirds of the 300 American features.

Studios curse themselves for having sold their backlog of feature films to the networks and to syndicators too cheaply, but they seldom rereleased any but the very biggest hits anyway, a fact which is hard to remember in this age when films return again and again.

The television and movie industries became virtually inseparable. Studios rent facilities and technical experts to those shooting TV programs; according to Owen, they count on TV rights for about one-third of their total domestic revenues. The networks, from time to time, produce their own low-cost features, which after having shown on U.S. networks are screened in foreign (but never U.S.) movie houses. One network, ABC, actually owns a chain of U.S. motion picture theaters. There are even more complex relationships at the conglomerate level.

Today's distributor is an independent contractor who deals with all the producers and all the exhibitors. Knowing as he does that the typical film takes in two-thirds of its income within the first six months of its release, the distributor wants the fastest screenings he can get. The chains, which increase their share of the U.S. market as they spread their multiscreen operations to shopping centers, are in the best position to bid for blockbusters. The fact that they have fewer seats is an advantage, since they simply run the film longer.

Those who operate larger houses are plagued by a lack of films which sometimes forces them to close down for a while or to extend runs longer than they would like. The frantic efforts to keep alive Radio City Music Hall in the late 1970s illustrated the problems. By then it cost $172,000 a week to run the 6000-seat dinosaur, not including taxes, advertising, or film rental. That was 10 times higher than any other New York City theater.

Most of the 11,000 indoor and 4000 drive-in theaters in the United States operate on a profit margin so narrow that it comes from the refreshment stand. Downtown theaters which could not save themselves with black exploitation adventures often turned to pornographic films, usually serviced by their own distributors. The hard-core distributor had a special problem with pirates who stole and copied prints.

Regular distributors had problems enough, and neither they nor the exhibitors like what they see on the horizon, namely ways to copy and distribute uncut and uninterrupted feature films directly into homes at modest cost. More and more homes are wired to subscription television systems that do this. Meanwhile, more homeowners add videotape and videodisc players which virtually demand feature films. One major studio announced that beginning in 1981 it would release films simultaneously to theaters and on videotape. Quality films could be shown first, or perhaps exclusively, on cable, cassette, or disc, thus eliminating the need for theaters, although it is likely there always will be some people who want to go out to see a movie and are willing to pay the price.

It is time to consider the role of the telephone and telegraph industries in affecting the other media, since they have been the focus of much of the research (and financing) for the other nonprint delivery systems.

THE TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH

In the period right after the Civil War, there was much opposition even to the idea of carrying the human voice to remote spots. Dots and dashes might be all right, but God-given speech was not for men to fool with. Reputable physicists and electrical engineers largely shunned the field.

As Brooks (1975) noted, it took a man interested in the *voice*, and not in electricity, to make the key discoveries. That man, of course, was Alexander Graham Bell. His 1876 patent has been called the most valuable ever granted. It was only after more than 20 years of challenges—more than 600 separate legal actions—that the Supreme Court ruled, in effect, that Bell was the legitimate discoverer of the telephone. As we shall see, that decision was the making of American Telephone & Telegraph, to whom Bell sold his rights.

Telephones caught on far more quickly in the United States than elsewhere. While it is arguable that this was because the American "free enterprise" system was better than the government-owned systems elsewhere, most of those publicly owned systems charged rates too low to produce capital for expansion and maintenance. That Bell never made such a mistake is indicated by the fact the company could cut its rates by one-half between 1885 and 1907, when faced with competition from independent firms, and still show handsome profits.

Bell at first looked on the independent exchanges as a contented cow looks on buzzing flies, an annoyance not a challenge. Most of the independents were in rural areas which were expensive to wire and serve anyway. By 1903, however, there were too many of them to ignore, and Bell cut its rates ruthlessly; more importantly, it absolutely refused to allow the independents to interconnect with any Bell systems.

J. P. Morgan tried to seize control of the telephone industry in 1906, but he failed as Western Union had failed in 1878-1879 to strangle the telephone industry in its infancy. In an earlier try, another noted financier was the unwitting and unlikely hero. It was Jay Gould's attempts to take over Western Union that kept the directors of that well-established firm from putting their full efforts into controlling the new telephone challenge. Gould eventually did control Western Union, but by the time the telegraph firm recovered from that battle, it had a real competitor on its hands.

Western Union was founded in 1856 specifically to exploit the commercial possibilities of the telegraph and had succeeded remarkably by the time Bell obtained his patent and Western Union began its court actions against him. Western Union's lines stretched across the land, and the firm had an exclusive contract to transmit all news for the largest commercial wire service, the original Associated Press.

Rather than lick its wounds after Bell's victory in the Supreme Court, Western Union made its peace with AT&T, to whom Bell sold his rights. It formed a subsidiary, Western Electric, and the marriage to AT&T was consummated with a stock transfer in 1909. Four years later, under heavy antitrust pressure, AT&T "voluntarily" withdrew from the telegraph end of the business; however, as Goulden (1968: 71) wrote:

> Western Electric is an operation unique to American industry. It has one master, AT&T, and one principal customer, AT&T. Western Electric manufactures every telephone used by Bell's subscribers. Western Electric wire is strung over poles provided by Western Electric and connects through switchboards made by Western Electric. The relationship is cradle to grave: When outdated phone equipment is scrapped, it goes to ... AT&T's private junk yard, where the metal is reclaimed and sold at a profit.

AT&T is, far and away, the biggest corporation in the world. The New York *Times* (January 9, 1978) summarized how big it was. Its assets of $90 billion exceeded those of General Motors, Ford, Chrysler, General Electric, and IBM *combined*. It makes $4 billion a year for its 3 million stockholders, more than twice as many as own stock in any other corporation. It has nearly 1 million employees in 23 telephone companies, Bell Laboratories, and Western Electric, and it operates about half the telephones in the nation, the rest split among 1600 independent firms, only 62 of which had revenues of $1 million or more.

In at least two mass media—radio and movies—AT&T made bids to dominate and then backed off under antitrust pressures, as it had earlier from the telegraph business. It started a radio station in New York City in 1922 and soon had a chain of stations which had exclusive rights to use

the telephone wires; the competitive stations had to link themselves through the more expensive telegraph lines. Reluctantly, in 1926, AT&T withdrew from broadcasting. An AT&T subsidiary developed in 1925 the key patent for synchronizing sound to movies (as we saw earlier in this chapter); by 1929 this equipment was used for 90% of all films made in the United States. In the mid-1930s, AT&T decided to abandon the movie business rather than face antitrust fights, fights which might strip it of even more profitable operations.

Earlier in the chapter, we saw AT&T's involvement in the early stages of the movie business, and in a later section we will see a parallel involvement in broadcasting. The company retreated from both fields rather than face bruising antitrust battles. It is worth noting here, however, that it also sought to control communications satellites when it became clear in the 1950s they would be a major factor in the future of message transmission.

In 1961, when NASA approved developing Telstar, a retransmitting satellite, AT&T argued it was an extension of microwave telephone relays and therefore its property. Brooks described the congressional compromise, COMSAT, as one which turned out well for AT&T. COMSAT was financed by both public and private funds, with AT&T allowed only 27.5% of the shares and three of fifteen directorships. AT&T became the best customer and arranged with foreign telephone companies for international phone relays through space. In 1972, the Federal Communications Commission pressured AT&T to sell its COMSAT stock and give up its seats on the board, and AT&T complied, again rather than face a possibly far-reaching antitrust decision.

Before leaving the direct and indirect links of wires and those who control them to media, it is worth reviewing the ties to newspapers. The modern Associated Press was founded by Midwestern editors, tired of the stranglehold New York publishers had on the flow of nonlocal news, a stranglehold based on an exclusive contract in the late nineteenth century with Western Union.

During that same period, Western Union had a symbiotic relationship with the railways, relying on them for stations and part-time assistance from station masters as well as right of way, in return for the use of the telegraph system to make the rail complex work. (A century later, local cable television franchisers would be negotiating similar rights contracts with telephone companies to use their poles.) Tunstall (1977) said one price the original Associated Press had to pay for its exclusive lease arrangement with Western Union was an agreement not to carry news detrimental either to the telegraph or railway companies.

As we have seen, newspapers rely heavily on wire service news. They also use the wires to carry messages to and from staff members and

correspondents around the state, nation, and world—all at special reduced press rates. In almost any city, one of the biggest customers of the telephone company is the local newspaper. The telephone company, in turn, is a regular buyer of advertising.

SOUND RECORDINGS

Thomas Edison did not know what he had invented when he took out his patent on a sound recording device in 1877. He thought he had solved the office dictation problem, but his efforts to market that idea to businessmen failed; in disgust, Edison turned his attention to perfecting another idea, the electric light. Meanwhile, other inventors found in the 1890s that there were people willing to lay down a nickel to hear a short song or recitation. They equipped the cylinder players with coin slots and grouped them in public arcades, not unlike the nickelodeons where motion pictures spent their infancy.

During the predictable patent fight which followed, Edison's firm lost its dominant position in the industry by sticking with cylinders after a Bell Telephone affiliate marketed less expensive and more easily stored discs. Buyers quickly showed their preference for the discs.

Columbia Phonograph Company and Victor Talking Machine Company commanded the industry during the boom period of the first two decades of this century. Both had cozy patent agreements with major European companies. First network radio and then talking pictures crippled record sales during the 1920s. Retail sales plummeted from more than $100 million in 1921 to less than $6 million in 1933, in the depth of the Depression.

The juke box, with its voracious appetite for the latest popular and jazz hits, probably saved the record industry during the Depression. Television proved to be the best friend the record industry ever had because it robbed network radio of its traditional content and left the radio stations with no choice but to play records. (Today, 75% of air time on U.S. stations is recorded music.) Plays boosted sales in the stores, especially when rock music came to dominate the business, as it has for the last quarter-century. Until TV came along, the record business was dominated almost entirely by four giant firms. Hirsch (1970) says these firms, gearing their output to the mass tastes of network radio, had little incentive to serve subaudiences, so new specialty labels sprang up in rock 'n' roll, progressive jazz, and so on. The big companies reacted in a predictable manner: They bought up the upstarts as fast as they could but still lost their stranglehold on the business. There simply was too much growth to control, with gross sales soaring from $100 million in 1945 to ten times that in 1968. Much of the

growth was prompted by development of 33 rpm and 45 rpm records and tape recordings.

In 1948, Columbia Records unveiled the 33 rpm LP (Long-Playing) record. For 40 years, engineers had been trying to increase the amount which could be recorded on a disc. There are only two ways: either to slow down the revolutions or to reduce the width of the grooves. Columbia accomplished both and marketed a record which would play for 24 minutes on a side, 6 times as long as a 78 rpm record. At the same time, it introduced a low-cost adapter which would allow the new records to be played on existing phonographs.

Before the public demonstration, according to Gelatt (1977), Columbia showed the LP to its principal competitor, RCA Victor, in hopes of convincing its rival to adopt the new record speed. RCA remained noncommital, and a few months later introduced the 45 rpm record and an inexpensive player. The new records played no longer than the 78s, but they were lighter, smaller, and cheaper.

Other firms were wary of committing themselves in the "Battle of the Speeds," and so were record buyers, but by 1949 the LP clearly had won over both groups. The next year RCA Victor began issuing 33 rpm records, but at the same time it launched the heaviest advertising campaign in record business history on behalf of 45 rpms, promoting them as the way to listen to popular singles. It worked, a classic example of market segmentation.

In the early 1950s, the record business faced the same kind of distribution crisis that book publishers and movie makers did: the disappearance of retail outlets. Record shops, for half a century the heart of the business, were disappearing. Cut-rate merchandisers sliced up the market, even resorting to mail orders. In 1955, RCA reduced all its LPs to $3.98 to discourage discounters, but the discounters just dropped their prices accordingly. Record-by-mail schemes, patterned after book clubs, also became a major factor. First Columbia, and then other record firms, started their own clubs. They also exploited foreign markets until today one-third of the records produced in the United States are sold overseas.

With the arrival of the rack jobbers, who distributed in the same way and in the same high-traffic areas that paperback book jobbers did, the retailing end of the business changed even more. Big record firms came out with their own budget labels to compete. Today, most of the 60,000 record outlets in the United States stock only a handful of the hottest records. In a field where superstars become has-beens in a trice, those in the industry could not survey the tastes of the audience. By the time they found out, the tastes had changed, so they started recording almost anything, knowing a single record in 50 might be a hit that would pay for all the duds.

There were rumors for years that the record companies were working on a stereo disc, and in 1957 an RCA engineer let it slip that the Westrex Company (an AT&T subsidiary) had worked out a way to put two stereo channels into a single groove. Westrex demonstrated the system before the Audio Engineering Society, and Decca displayed another stereo disc at the same meeting. Within weeks, Columbia unveiled yet a third system. Industry leaders shuddered. No one wanted a repetition of the War of the Speeds.

The record makers did just what the movie makers had done in 1927 when they faced the talkie revolution. They got together and agreed to take their time and develop the Westrex system. Again, there was a "Warner Brothers" which had little to lose and which took the plunge ahead of the industry giants. Audio Fidelity Inc. produced a few stereo discs, and within a few weeks a small manufacturer was turning out players that would handle them. The public reacted enthusiastically, and the other firms had no choice. All were selling stereo discs by the end of 1958. Real sound afficionados turned to tape, and the major firms found themselves in that business too.

Americans spent more than $2 billion on records and tapes in 1976, three-fifths of those dollars for rock music. Will former rock record buyers take their record buying habits with them as they grow older? That was a problem that worried the industry, especially in view of the projections for an aging U.S. population. Many former rock radio stations were shifting to middle-of-the road formats.

Radio listening is usually done alone, while record listening is done with friends. Sharing the experience is a basic appeal in record buying, and industry officials hoped that it would continue to be.

BROADCASTING

Broadcasting, unlike print media, developed within a big business atmosphere, dominated from its infancy by the largest industries in the world. There was no period of small entrepreneurs, as there was with books, magazines, or newspapers—or even motion pictures.

Williams (1975: 25) spelled out the distinction:

In the history of motion pictures, capitalist development was primarily in production; large-scale capitalist distribution came much later, as a way of controlling and organizing a market for a given product. In broadcasting, both in sound radio and later in television, the major investment was in the means of distribution, and was devoted to production only so far as to make the distribution technically possible and then attractive. Unlike all previous com-

munications technologies, radio and television were systems primarily devised for transmission and reception as abstract processes, with little or no definition of preceding content. . . . It is not only that the supply of broadcasting facilities preceded the demand; it is that the means of communication preceded the demand.

Broadcasting, in short, was a system looking for content—not content looking for a system. As it has developed in the United States, broadcasting is a two-way system, delivering program fare to audiences and audiences to advertisers who want to rent access to them. In no other country has broadcasting been organized so strictly as an arm of commerce. In most nations, broadcasting is strictly a government-owned monopoly; in others, such as Great Britain and Canada, there is a mix of public and private support systems. While this is not the place to describe these systems in any detail, it is well for Americans to keep reminding themselves there are alternatives.

In the United States, during the titanic battles over patents in the years preceding World War I, radio looked to be less profitable than either telephony or telegraphy; still the same corporations scrapped over control. After the armistice, when the federal government returned radio to private control, the new Radio Corporation of America (RCA) forged one of the greatest trusts in history. In 1921, RCA used stock and seats on its board of directors to bring off alliances with both General Electric and AT&T, and later, with Westinghouse. Barnouw (1966) described the resulting agreement as follows: GE and Westinghouse would make the radio receiver sets; RCA would market receivers and parts and retain the chief role in international communication; and AT&T would sell the transmitters and the service. Sales to amateurs were exempted, and as the eager nonprofessionals multiplied they formed a huge market, much larger than had been anticipated. In the end, that proved to be the defect in the arrangement.

The partners tried to define all their new customers, be they buyers of transmitters, sets, or tubes, as "amateurs," and they could not keep up with the demand anyway. Americans spent $60 million on sets in 1922, and more than twice that the next year. During the first 11 months of 1921, the Department of Commerce licensed 5 stations; in December of that year, it issued 23 licenses, and during the next 6 months, it licensed 354 stations. By the end of 1922, there were 690 stations licensed, 10% of them to newspaper owners.

David Sarnoff at RCA wanted a bigger slice of the pie and tried to deny sales to competitive set makers, most of whom still had to buy RCA tubes. AT&T started squeezing stations to use only its transmitting equipment. Congress asked the Federal Trade Commission to investigate monopoly in the radio business, and hearings began in late 1924. By then, far more serious private talks were going on among the radio and telephone giants.

Each was trying to reinterpret the 1920 agreements to its own advantage. When the arbitrator sided with the others against AT&T, especially AT&T's plans to start marketing radio sets, AT&T threatened to force the whole unsavory business into open court. The parties went back to serious negotiating, and the result was the formation of the National Broadcasting Company, incorporated in 1926 and formally launched in January, 1927.

It was years before the details of this new division of empire came to light, but according to Archer (1939), NBC was formed by RCA (50%), GE (30%), and Westinghouse (20%) to establish a network of stations. NBC agreed to purchase AT&T's New York station for $1 million (four-fifths of this for "goodwill") as its flagship and to use AT&T lines exclusively to link the stations in the network. These rentals were huge, even at the beginning. In turn, AT&T agreed to get out of active broadcasting, and while it won the right to market radio receivers, in had lost interest by then.

Clearly the new company had a stake in creating quality programming which would encourage the 80% of American households still without a radio to purchase one. Advertising, which in various masked forms had been creeping onto the airwaves for years, was clearly the shortest cut to financing expensive programming. The new Radio Act of 1927 gingerly avoided the word "advertising."

CBS soon arose as a rival network, and like most competitors who find themselves "number two," CBS pushed the limits in advertising as in other areas. For example, CBS started mentioning prices in ads, and NBC felt it had no choice but to follow. Radio ads became more blatant and more intrusive; meanwhile, the ad agencies developed and produced most network programs, thus controlling both creative and selling aspects.

In 1930, the Justice Department ordered a break up of the old radio monopoly. The policy had few implications for AT&T, but RCA, GE, and Westinghouse faced the possible loss of their stations and their two networks (Red and Blue). By the end of 1932, they hammered out an agreement which left RCA the sole owner of NBC, while GE and Westinghouse kept their stations and received recompense through real estate and stock arrangements. In addition, RCA agreed that they all could manufacture and sell radio receivers. In spite of the deepening Depression, NBC, like CBS, was turning neat profits.

By then, hardly anyone questioned that profits were the "natural" goal of broadcasting and that broadcasting was just another business. As Schiller (1969) put it: "No sudden coup, therefore, captured broadcasting for commerce and turned American radio-television programming into the soul-destroying wasteland it is. The discovery of radio (and later television) came out of inventive minds but the development of these media was determined at all points by the market system which surrounded them."

These big business ties grew tighter when the same corporations became the principal creditors to the movie industry during the switch to sound.

Another interesting intermedia connection is the one between ABC and movie studios. CBS and NBC tied up most of the best stations in major markets before the freeze on television station construction from 1948-1951. In May, 1951, ABC announced plans to merge with United Paramount Theaters to gain capital to found a third network, and the FCC approved the merger in 1953. ABC-TV started with its 7 owned stations and only 8 affiliates at a time when CBS had 74 and NBC had 71. At first, ABC could not afford full-time programming, and so its service was taken as a second or alternate programming source by certain stations, while most of its clients were the weakest stations in major markets and the new ones opening in secondary markets.

The turning point came when CBS and NBC both balked at helping to finance Disneyland as part of the price for a contract with Disney for TV films. ABC invested $500,000 in Disneyland (which of course proved to be good business in itself) and obtained exclusive rights to Disney's program, his films, and later to the Mickey Mouse Club. Its second breakthrough was a contract with Warner Brothers to produce films and series for ABC. The Disney deal and to a lesser extent the Warner deal gave ABC a solid base; although it continued as the number three network in audiences and revenues until 1975, it survived.

Similarly, there have been strong links with the record business. Nickeson (1946) traced the first commercial plugs in 1919 to a Pittsburgh station which consistently mentioned the name of the record store which provided the free discs. This was three years before the first indirect radio commercial for real estate.

Radio developed essentially at the local level and without the direct influence of paid commercials; however, programming got more expensive, and the stations sought ways to reduce these costs by the two obvious means of subsidies and dividing the costs among several stations. The first led to commercials and the second to networking.

By 1933, variety shows dominated network radio with their expensive musical and comedy talent; they were clearly superior to anything that an individual station could offer. The profit discrepancies between network stations and nonnetwork ones increased along with the program discrepancies. It was not long before other networks formed, the most successful of which was Mutual. Eventually, the government forced NBC to separate its Blue and Red networks and thus gave birth to ABC.

In a perhaps overdrawn analogy, Brown (1971) suggested that the roots of the three TV networks explain much about their program patterns and goals. NBC was organized to create entertainment programs which would spur people to buy radios (and later television sets), which RCA, of course,

manufactured. William Paley built CBS on the strength of stars lured away from NBC. Showmanship always was the center of interest at CBS, although William Stanton became the public statesman and built the news and public affairs area. Unlike NBC, broadcasting remained the central business interest at CBS. ABC (until the late 1970s the consistent "weak sister" of the three in ratings and income) was a johnny-come-lately and had to pick up the leftover stations in smaller, less profitable markets. Its programming was always more innovative, having less to lose.

Between 1948 and 1951, television simply devoured its older brother. The frantic shift of talent and advertisers from radio was expedited, of course, by the fact the same firms owned both systems. Radio networks dried up to little more than providers of news at the top of the hour, and local stations learned to beam music at special audiences. As a local medium, radio became more profitable than ever; certainly it was far more diverse.

It is easy to quote statistics to underscore the magnitude of TV. Suffice it to say the industry estimated in 1977 that there were 123 million working sets in 71 million U.S. homes and another 6 million outside the homes. The average set is on nearly 7 hours a day, and the average adult watches more than 2 hours a day.

The vast majority of what the 700 commercial TV stations carry originates with the three networks, and most of the remainder with syndicators. During the evening hours, 92% of U.S. sets are tuned to one of the three commercial networks. About the same number of persons watch at a given hour, regardless of what is on, the differences being in the proportion tuned to what network. Even that is less different than one might imagine, since ratings make it clear that viewers seldom change the channel once they have tuned in for a given night. Although network programmers have become more sensitive to the demographics of audiences for different shows, the name of the game remains essentially what it always is for the most mass medium of the moment: appeal to the widest possible audience all the time.

The Federal Communications Act of 1934, the basic broadcasting legislation, insists that the individual station is responsible for everything it airs. The owner cannot escape responsibility by saying the material came from a network or a syndicate. He is required to assess periodically the needs of his community and to design programs to meet those needs. He, not the programmer, is the licensee. Theoretically, each affiliate station looks at each program the network is going to offer to decide whether to air it. In practice, a station seldom turns down a program, knowing it cannot produce one of like quality. Besides, by plugging into a feed from the network, the station automatically shares in the advertising revenue which the network collects for that program.

Sometimes a station does preempt on grounds of public interest convenience and necessity (PICAN), though. A station owner may consider a program too inflammatory or too lewd to be shown in his community. For example, about a dozen ABC affiliates refused to carry *Soap* in 1977-1978 on the ground that it was salacious. They then had to fill the void in their schedules with local shows, or, as usually happened, with programs purchased from syndicates. Some of these cheap substitutes drew so well that stations were considering using more of them in order to have more minutes of advertising time to sell locally—and not to have to share with the networks. But for most, it remains easier to plug in and wait for a piece of the network ad pie, supplementing that with ads sold on the local news and in the slots between prime time network shows.

The networks are not licensed as networks, but they are licensed as owners of five highly profitable television stations. This involvement in both distribution and exhibition has long been under antitrust scrutiny. So has the network's role as a financer of talent agencies which develop pilots of the action-adventure and situation comedy shows. Certainly, there seem to be parallels with the old movie industry arrangements.

Broadcasters understand, even if some of their critics do not, that they are in the audience-delivery business.

Distribution systems are shaped by geography as much as by economics and politics. For example, the sheer massiveness of Canada (3500 miles across) has forced the government to invest most of its communication resources in transmission systems—wires, cables, and satellites. By contrast, a compact nation like Great Britain can put its money into programming, programming which in turn can be sold to other nations, especially English-speaking ones.

By early 1979, the top 50 cable systems had about 10 million homes wired; that was nearly four times as many as they had in 1972. Teleprompter had about 1 million, followed by Time, Inc.'s American Television and Communications Corporation (800,000) and Warner Cable Corporation (700,000). Warner was the leader in two-way cable. Teleprompter and Viacom were the largest pay-television systems. The 3.5 million homes on pay systems approximated the number of basic cable households 10 years earlier.

One of the first big-time operators to take advantage of satellite technology was Ted Turner of Atlanta, who beamed programs from his stations there to other stations throughout the nation, including some of the big ones in Chicago, New York, and Oakland. He also happened to own the Atlanta Braves, and because of the satellite transmission, Atlanta games were being shown in such unlikely places as Montana.

In the spring of 1980, Turner began a worldwide news service for cable

systems, serviced by satellites. He set up bureaus around the nation and was seeking national advertisers.

The networks were working furiously to shift to complete or partial satellite transmission. For example, NBC hired an RCA executive with expertise in satellite transmission to shape that network's planning. Most affiliates expected it to be a reality within two years. Other networks were moving equally quickly.

Satellites destroy our traditional concepts about distance. It costs the same to bounce a message off one, whether the ground distance between sender and receiver is five or five thousand miles. Satellites are quickly replacing the long telephone lines which were AT&T's entree into the broadcasting business, but the more things change, the more they stay the same. After all, AT&T is one of the principal investors in satellite communication.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

JOHN D. STEVENS is Professor of Communication at the University of Michigan, where he has taught since 1967. A former newspaperman, he has headed the Association for Education in Journalism's History Division. In addition to history, his research and teaching areas include mass media and society and communication law. He is the coauthor of *Mass Media and the National Experience* (1971) and *The Rest of the Elephant* (1973). He has written more than forty scholarly articles, reviews, and chapters, including a chapter in Volume IV of the *Sage Annual Reviews of Communication Research* (1975). He received his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin.

HAZEL DICKEN GARCIA is Assistant Professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Minnesota, where she teaches communications history and publications editing. A former teacher of English in India, she received her Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin and has taught journalism at the University of Iowa, University of Maryland, University of Massachusetts, University of Michigan, and American University. In 1976-1977, she was a research fellow in American history and culture at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. She has written several articles on journalism and communications history.