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BY

CHARLES SOMERVILL

Norman, Oklahoma

1976

ASCERTAINMENT IN PUBLIC BROADCASTING:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SOCIAL SCIENCE INSTRUMENT

FOR ANALYZING COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

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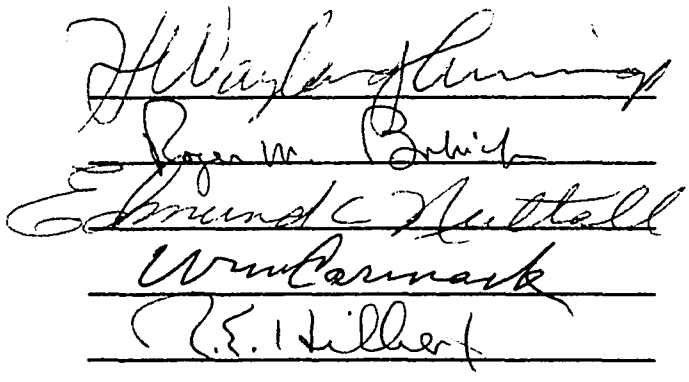

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER I 3

PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS IN PUBLIC BROADCASTING: POLITICAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK 3

Social Responsibility and the Public Interest 4

Ascertainment As a Procedure to Ensure the Public Interest 8

The Relationship of Social Responsibility to the Legal Framework of Ascertainment 11

Ascertainment in Commercial Broadcasting 14

The ethical dimension of ascertainment 15

Ascertainment and Public Broadcasting 17

The need of a modification 21

Summary of Chapter I 23

CHAPTER II 24

THE SOCIAL-THEORETIC FRAMEWORK FOR ASCERTAINMENT IN PUBLIC BROADCASTING 24

Identifying Community Problems 26

Defining Social Problems 28

Assigning Priority to Social Problems 28

Ameliorating Social Problems 29

Ascertaining Degrees of Social Responsibility in Social Problem Areas 31

Social-Sensitivity as a Measure of Social Responsibility 33

Expressed awareness 34
Expressed concern 34

Social-Sensitivity as Found in People's Perceptions of Major Social Problem Areas 35

The Selection of Categories 36

Family-Community Relationships 37
Education 38
Poverty 38
Aging 38
Crime 39
Religion 40
Ethnic minorities 40

Summary 41

CHAPTER III 43

AN OVERVIEW OF A MODEL OF ASCERTAINMENT FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING 43

The Units of the Model 43

The Political-Legal Functions of Ascertainment 43

Ascertainment Functions of Both Commercial and Public Broadcasting 44

Ascertainment Functions Unique to Public Broadcasting 45

Empirical Research Questions and Expectations 46

CHAPTER IV 50

METHOD OF ANALYSIS 50

Procedures and Data Analysis 50

Variables 50

Criterion Variables 51

Attitudes in television viewing 51
Attitudes toward public television 51

Predictor Variables 51

Social-sensitivity 51
Post hoc analysis 52

Research Questions 52

CHAPTER V 55

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION 55

Reliability 61

Interviewers 63

Demographic Data 63

Nominal Variables 63

Sex 63
Race 66

Continuous Variables 66

Age 66
Income 71
Sets 71
Hours Watching Commercial Television 71
Hours Watching Public Television 71
Education 77

Discussion 77

CHAPTER VI 84

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY 84

Suggestions for Further Study 85

BIBLIOGRAPHY: REFERENCE LIST 87

APPENDICES 91

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE

1 Factor Selected for Social-Sensitivity 56

2 Item-Whole Selections for Viewing Social Issues 57

3 Item-Whole Selections for Attitudes toward Public Television 58

4 Predictive Validity of Scales 59

5 Reliability Coefficients of Scales 62

6 Social-Sensitivity by Interviews; Viewing of Social Issues by Interviewers 65

7 Attitudes toward Public Television by Interviewers 65

8 Social-Sensitivity by Race 67

9 Social-Sensitivity by Age 68

10 Viewing of Social Issues by Age 69

11 Attitudes toward Public Television by Age 70

12 Viewing of Social Issues by Income 72

13 Attitudes toward Public Television by Income 73

14 Social-Sensitivity by Sets 74

15 Social-Sensitivity by Hours Watching Public Television 75

16 Viewing of Social Issues by Hours Watching Public Television 76

17 Attitudes toward Public Television by Hours Watching Public Television 78

18 Social-Sensitivity by Education 79

19 Viewing of Social Issues by Education 80

20 Attitudes toward Public Television by Education 81

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE

Figure 1 - "Ascertainment as an Accountability Procedure" 13

Figure 2 - "Social-Theoretic Concerns of Ascertainment" 25

Figure 3 - "A Modification in Ascertainment for Public Broadcasting 32

Figure 4 - "An Ascertainment Model for Public Broadcasting" 47

Figure 5 - "Variance Contributed in the Prediction of Attitudes toward Public Television 73

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX

Appendix A - "Social-Sensitivity: Conceptual Categories" 91

Appendix B - "Scales" 96

Appendix C - "Sampling Procedures" 101

INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to develop an instrument which operationalizes the concept of social-sensitivity as a means of examining social issues. Social-sensitivity is a concept derived from philosophical and social-theoretic concerns described in this study. These concerns are generated from the broader context of ascertainment as a requirement for public broadcasting.

The social theorist would note that what the public broadcaster does in his programming of social issues is essentially an act of communication. Since broadcasting is guided by federal regulations, broadcasting communication takes place in an organized social environment with certain rules and values relevant to human interaction. Among those values relevant to broadcasting regulation is the traditional democratic ideal of a fully informed public. In the United States, the ideal of a fully informed public requires that accessible information on controversial issues be provided for the masses (FCC Primer, 1971). In the twentieth century, this democratic ideal would seem to reflect certain contemporary notions of social responsibility (Schramm, 1957). Specifically, social responsibility requires that information be presented to the masses so as to encourage a sense of social responsibility in making decisions about social issues. Therefore, it follows that broadcasters must make judgments on program choices dealing with social issues in order to encourage a sense of social responsibility. The broadcaster is unable to make intelligent judgments without ascertaining the nature of current social issues. For this reason, commercial broadcasters are required to do an ascertainment of community problems in order to acquire a knowledge of social issues (FCC Primer, 1971). Ascertainment has only recently been adopted by the Federal

Communications Commission (FCC) as a requirement for public broadcasting (FCC Report and Order, March 22, 1976).

As a procedural requirement of broadcasting regulations, ascertainment can perhaps best be understood as contributing to the information gathering process needed to ensure the goals of social responsibility. The social theorist would be interested in the type of information a philosophy of social responsibility seeks to gather in order to shape man's behavior through mass communication. In particular, how does this philosophy seek to shape man's behavior through mass communication in broadcasting? How has ascertainment contributed to this shaping process in commercial broadcasting? How can ascertainment contribute to this process in public broadcasting?

The answers to the foregoing questions provide the philosophical background for a discussion of two interrelated social-theoretic problems: (1) what can the broadcaster learn about social issues in his ascertainment of community problems? And (2) what is an instrument for assessment of social problems that would be useful for the public broadcaster in making programming decisions on social issues?

Chapter I, "Philosophical Assumptions in Public Broadcasting: Political and Legal Framework," presents the philosophical assumptions underlying ascertainment. Chapter II, "The Social-Theoretic Framework for Ascertainment in Public Broadcasting" describes the social-theoretic concerns of the study. Chapter III, "An Overview of a Model of Ascertainment for Public Broadcasting," shows how the philosophical and social-theoretic concerns form a set of interrelated requirements for a particular ascertainment study. Chapter V includes "Results and Discussion." And Chapter VI includes "Summary and Suggestions for Further Study."

CHAPTER I

PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS IN PUBLIC BROADCASTING: POLITICAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter discusses certain ideological elements in the philosophy of United States democracy in the twentieth century and broadcasting's role within this philosophy. According to Schramm (1957), the particular ideology which shapes man's behavior through mass communication in the twentieth century is called social responsibility. In examining the FCC Primer (1971), it would seem that broadcasters are expected to operate within this ideology by programming so as to encourage an ethical awareness and concern of important social issues. When broadcasters comply with this expectation, they apparently are commended as operating within the public interest (Flathman, 1966). According to Held (1970), to operate within the public interest is to operate within the contemporary political philosophy. If this position is accepted, it might be shown that social responsibility characterizes the public interest. Social responsibility in broadcasting, as stipulated in this study, is referred to as broadcasting responsibility. The FCC requires broadcasters to present evidence of broadcasting responsibility through an ascertainment study of community problems. Ascertainment, therefore, might be best understood as a procedure to ensure the public interest within a philosophy of social responsibility.

The foregoing concerns are divided into three areas describing (1) how social responsibility characterizes the public interest, (2) how social responsibility is legally formalized in broadcasting responsibility and (3) how the ascertainment procedure deals with broadcasting responsibility in the area of community

problems.

Social Responsibility and the Public Interest

In 1957, Schramm noted that a new concept of mass communication was emerging:

> We have called it the "social responsibility" theory for want of a better name, but it is distinguished from its parent libertarianism chiefly by a greater responsibility on the part of the media (p. 90).

The philosophy of libertarianism can be seen in the free press (Siebert, 1956, p. 60). According to Schramm (1957), libertarianism is a by-product of seventeenth and eighteenth-century rationalism. Some aspects of libertarianism, such as the right to dissent and the free expression of divergent ideas and opinions, are inherent in the United States Constitution, particularly in the First Amendment. Some aspects of social responsibility, such as due process and representative government, are also present in the Constitution. It can be argued, for example, that the United States was never established with the intent of a pure libertarian democracy, but rather as a representative republic. Arguments about what the United States was intended to be, however, are essentially unresolvable. What is perhaps more obvious is that the elements of both libertarianism and social responsibility are present in the United States Constitution. The emergence of one over the other depends on the ideological climate of a given period of history (Schramm, 1957).

According to Schramm (1957), a society's conception of the nature of man has an important influence on its political ideology. In the libertarian philosophy, man is thought of as a rational being "whose reason, left on its own, can discriminate truth from error in a free marketplace of ideas" (Schramm, 1957). Therefore, freedom as defined in the libertarian philosophy is

> . . . freedom from the encroachments and requirements of government, and other external agencies. . . . Under the libertarian theory, it was

> sufficient to remove the restraints and restrictions on man, and let his reason and natural endowments work (Schramm, 1957, p. 95).

The free press, with freedom from federal regulations, was an early participant in the libertarian philosophy.

Broadcasting, on the other hand, was a product of the early twentieth century when the Progressive Movement was strongest, and new reforms and regulations were popular (Gusfield, 1963; Timberlake, 1963; Taylor, 1966). It was in this political context that the principles of social responsibility began to form. Freedom, as interpreted within the philosophy of social responsibility, is "freedom for the kind of communication which fulfills society's needs" (Schramm, 1957). Therefore, federal regulations in broadcasting are presumably enacted "to make sure that freedom can operate effectively" (Schramm, 1957).

Social responsibility shares some of the same concerns as libertarianism, particularly in the value of individual decision-making and rational behavior. But social responsibility places a lower evaluation on man's moral and rational capacity:

> Man has not always behaved like a rational and discriminating being. Rather he has behaved like a lethargic being, seldom showing those innate natural qualities with which Enlightenment credited him. Capable of using his reason, he is loath to do so . . . Because of his mental sloth, man has fallen into a state of unthinking conformity, to which his inertia binds him. . . . If man is to remain free, he must live by reason instead of passively accepting what he sees, hears, and feels. Therefore, the more alert elements of the community must goad him into the exercise of reason. Without much goading, man is not likely to be moved to seek the truth. The languor which keeps him from using his gift of reason extends to all public discussion. Man's aim is not to find truth but to satisfy his immediate needs and desires (Schramm, 1957, p. 94).

It follows from the foregoing discussion that broadcasters must stimulate the people, and the federal government must stimulate the broadcasters to cultivate an active interest in social and political issues. Without such an interest, the democratic principle of a fully informed public would be frustrated. Furthermore, broadcasting is charged with the responsibility to "help man distinguish the truth:"

> . . . objectivity is not enough. "It is no longer enough to report the fact truthfully," said the commission; "it is now necessary to report the truth about the fact." This is a new and severe responsibility to be placed on mass communication, incomparably more difficult than the task of "objectivity." (Schramm, 1957, p. 92).

A statement expressing the goals of social responsibility in broadcasting is given in a 1974 statement by members of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS):

> To assume the responsibility for enlarging the people's awareness of the world and their range of choices is to affect the moral standards of society, either by changing them or by reinforcing them. Educational broadcasting cannot responsibly present either just the best or just the worst of our society, nor can it present both with complete indifference. It must make an active choice; to show both the best and the worst so that they can be recognized for what they are ("The People's Business", 1974, p. 8).

Both social responsibility and libertarianism espouse the democratic principle of a fully informed public. However, in the concept of social responsibility, there is the added requirement that the public be informed in such a way as to increase their sense of social responsibility.

By 1927, broadcasting was regulated for two reasons: (1) to prevent the jamming of signals on broadcasting's limited frequency spectrum and (2) to require broadcasters to operate in the public interest, convenience, and necessity (Holt, 1967).* The term "public interest" is used by societies other than the United States. According to Held (1970), the public interest phrase is inevitably tied to its political system:

---

*To emphasize the role of public trustee, broadcasters are also required to sign a statement conceding that the airwaves belong to the people. The airwaves are broadcast on a limited frequency spectrum. Therefore, as stated in broadcasting regulations, the broadcaster holds in trust a scarce commodity for which the government holds him responsible (Kahn, 1973). Thus the scarcity principle becomes a legal justification for broadcasting responsibility. According to Schramm (1957), most broadcasters argue that the public interest in broadcasting is actually tied to the regulation requirements of a limited frequency spectrum. And furthermore, if it were not for this legal restriction, broadcasting would share the same unrestricted First Amendment rights as the free press. Therefore, one could

> . . . only the political system provides an effective decision method which could be associated with the term public for claims of what is or is not in the public interest. Any such decision method, or network of methods, for a given society is constitutive of a political system. . . . A valid public interest claim, then, can only be asserted by or in behalf of a political system . . . (pp. 177-788).

Held (1970) also notes that the public interest cannot logically be characterized by a set of regulations or the framework itself;

> . . . the demonstration of final criteria of "legal validity" must depend on non-legal questions. . . . its support must be something non-legal in nature; it cannot be some other legal norm, nor within the legal system at all (pp. 182-183).

Held (1970) suggests that the legal framework derives its philosophical intent from a non-legal Grundnorm. The Grundnorm, as Held (1970) describes it, is the society's dominant ethical or philosophical belief which stands at the apex of the political and legal system. It is the Grundnorm which characterizes the public interest (Held, 1970). According to Schramm (1957), social responsibility characterizes the United States political system in the twentieth century:

> . . . It is clear that man is no longer considered as the . . . respository of natural rights and the exerciser of reason, which the Enlightenment made him out to be. As to government . . . the newer concept is rather more favorable than the older ones. The libertarian view of government was derived from

---

make the extension that a legal restriction conceals a dormant libertarian philosophy in broadcasting. Bunge (1972) notes that with the advent of widespread cable adoption, the scarcity principle no longer holds. Broadcasting becomes cablecasting; the restricted airwaves of the public domain would logically give way to the unrestricted microwaves of the cable owner, and the libertarian philosophy would be set free in television and radio. According to Schramm (1957), the democratic principle of a fully informed public within the libertarian philosophy can be served by simply making available an abundance of channels. Bunge (1972) accepts the libertarian position that man is a rational being in a free marketplace of ideas. Logically, there is no need to stimulate an ethical awareness in a rational being who is better off left to his own decision-making processes. Also, the need for ascertainment would be minimized; all that enlightened man needs is enough channels of information to make his own decisions. Schramm (1957), on the other hand, observes that the libertarian philosophy is no longer adequate to meet twentieth century realities.

> centuries of experiences with authoritarian rule; the social responsibility view grows out of experience with democratic rule (p. 94).

If the philosophy of social responsibility functions as a Grundnorm in our society and characterizes the public interest, then it now becomes necessary to ask how ascertainment functions as a procedure to ensure the public interest.*

Ascertainment as a Procedure to Ensure the Public Interest

Although broadcasting responsibility is apparently influenced by a social responsibility philosophy, precise standards have yet to emerge. As Schramm (1957) notes, the social responsibility philosophy is

> . . . still tentative, still rather rootless, retaining many of the doctrines and goals of libertarianism, but turning away from individualism toward social responsibility, from rationalism toward a social and religious ethic. The new concept is still emerging, still not quite clear, but clearly a creature of our own time, and likely to be with us for the rest of the century (p. 97).

One important difficulty of defining the public interest in the context of social responsibility is in the apportionment of responsibility. If man is sometimes untrustworthy and irrational, what type of procedure can be developed to ensure

---

*According to Schramm (1957), social responsibility is a slowly emerging concept. If this position is accepted, it follows that later broadcasting regulations might more clearly reflect this political ideal than earlier regulations. Ascertainment was required in a brief statement for commercial broadcasters in 1960 (Kahn, 1973). But the procedures of ascertainment, as well as a clarification of its intent, were not formulated until 1971 (FCC Primer). Therefore, ascertainment is a contemporary formulation that might reasonably be expected to reflect the concept of social responsibility. This study is primarily concerned with the adequacy of ascertainment as a philosophical statement of social responsibility. Some evaluation, however, is probably needed to determine the relationship of ascertainment to other broadcasting regulations. This study is indebted to Bennett's dissertation (1971) which evaluates ascertainment as a potential procedure for public broadcasting in the total context of broadcasting regulations. Although this present study does not seek to duplicate Bennett's study, certain aspects of Bennett's study are considered helpful in developing an ascertainment instrument for public broadcasting.

the public interest? Specifically, what criteria in a democratic society can be used to judge whether the public interest is being served? Rousseau's notion of the general-will suggests that if a governmental system as a whole is created in the interest of all citizens, then everything the governmental system does is in the public interest (Held, 1970). Therefore, the public interest is an ideal which considers what is best and wisest for the public, and is actually above popular, fallible consensus. As Minow noted in 1964, the public interest is not "what interests the public" (p. 50). But Rousseau's philosophy does not specify how to judge whether the governmental system is acting in its own behalf or is actually attempting to serve the public interest.

Alternatively, it can be asked if the public interest might be best conceived as majority interest or what citizens prefer in a given situation? It is clear that in the United States, particularly in the twentieth century, the public interest is not served by citizen preferences alone. United States constitutional law does not leave major decisions affecting the general welfare to the common sense or simple preferences of its citizens. Bishin (1968) notes the reasons for this restriction in United States judicial decisions:

> In the context of a given case the job of putting these factors together is always extremely difficult. It requires sensitivity, judgment, perception, analytical power. It requires a good deal of knowledge—of law, of history, of government, of how human beings think and act. It is a field that requires expertise. And like such fields, it may come up with answers that do not comport with common sense. But common sense is so often as Einstein said, the uneducated, unreflective, prejudiced sense. It can be the sense of those who do not have the inclination to study the matter or the courage to face unpleasant facts (p. 19).

Therefore, various political agencies are created to develop the expertise to guard the public interest. For this reason, the Federal Communications Commission was created in 1934 and given, among other duties, the custodial responsibility of ensuring the public interest, convenience, and necessity in the field of broadcasting (Kahn, 1973).

In a democracy, however, the public interest cannot be totally relegated to the political system. An agency of the political system can too easily become self-serving and the public interest will become redefined within this context. As Minow (1964) noted:

> I deeply recognize the dangers in having government agencies developing vested, bureaucratic interests of their own. I tried to extend the debate beyond words exchanged at broadcaster conventions. Broadcasting is too important to be left to the broadcaster—or to the FCC (p. 42).

Also, minority interests are not represented in a closed political system. As Held (1970) notes:

> A dispute between a valid claim of public interest and a valid claim of individual interest can only be resolved outside the political system (p. 197).

Therefore, a procedure is needed to ascertain the public interest on an objective level to determine the validity of judgments in a given situation.

On the indispensability of the public interest concept and its relation to law, Herring (1936) has said that the concept of public interest "is to the bureaucracy what the due process clause is to the judiciary" (p. 23). Taking this analogy a step further, the ascertainment procedure is to public interest as trial-by-jury is to due process; there are procedural rules in both cases involved in a decision-making process to ensure an objective outcome. In a United States court, the judge, the jury, and the attorneys are all obligated to a decision-making procedure outside themselves to keep vested interest from taking a predominant role. The same principle is carried over into ascertainment—with the FCC, the licensee, and the general public. Ascertainment is a procedure which, hopefully, will provide objective information for ameliorating community problems through programming.

Ideally, ascertainment is a procedure which includes input from the FCC, the licensee, and the general public while minimizing the vested interests of all three. Just as trial-by-jury serves the ideal of justice, so does ascertainment serve

the public interest within a philosophy of social responsibility. In practice, ascertainment procedures are required by broadcasting regulations. The adequacy of ascertainment as a statement of social responsibility within the legal practice of broadcasting may now be examined.

The Relationship of Social Responsibility to the Legal Framework of Ascertainment

Philosophically, ascertainment is a procedure to ensure the public interest. In a philosophy of social responsibility, ascertainment must ensure the public interest in such a way that (1) minimizes the vested interests of all parties concerned and (2) reinforces programming that promotes a sense of social responsibility. Historically, the FCC has concentrated on the later of these two requirements by suggesting program areas that would encourage a sense of social responsibility. The programming policy of 1945, in particular, was an FCC prescriptive treatment of what the broadcaster should do to promote a sense of social responsibility.* Bennett (1972) notes that the ethical tenor of this 1945 policy recurs in the ascertainment requirements of the 1970's. Kahn (1973) also notes that the 1945 policy continues to be a strong influence in broadcasting regulations. There is no doubt that the 1945 policy was the first clear articulation of an ethical way of thinking in broadcasting regulations (Bennett, 1971). But the

---

*To implement the public interest requirement, the FCC has attempted various methods of evaluating a station's programming policy. At first, the station applicant for licensing simply made specific pledges that time would be made available for civic, educational, agricultural, and other public service programs. Renewal of the license was more or less automatic (Kahn, 1973). But by 1945, it was apparent that in many cases there was a great disparity between promises and performance (Kahn, 1973). The Programming Policy of 1945, which came to be known as the Blue Book, was instituted for a more detailed review. The Blue Book required a time analysis of four public-service areas which the FCC thought to be

prescriptive treatment of the programming policy of 1945 did not minimize the vested interest of all parties concerned, particularly the interest of the FCC. In effect, the 1945 policy prescribed the programming areas that the broadcaster must produce in order to encourage a sense of social responsibility (Kahn, 1973). Ascertainment, a product of commercial broadcasting regulations in the 1960's, is an attempt to distribute the process of evaluation equitably, beginning with the broadcaster:

> The process of evaluation of community problems is the basis for the applicant's choice of broadcast matter to meet those problems. As such, the process is left to the licensee's discretion . . . (FCC Primer, 1971, p. 4100).

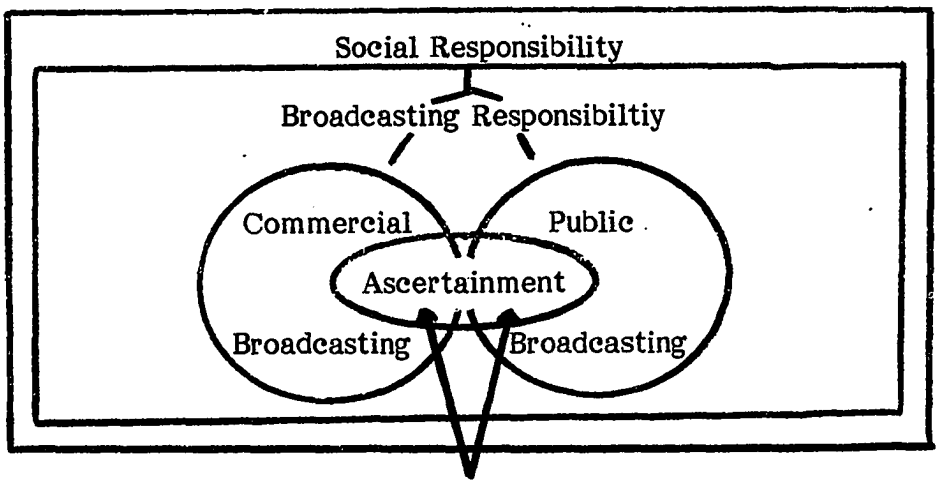
In practice, ascertainment attempts to minimize the vested interests of all parties concerned by apportioning the responsibility of the process as follows: (1) the people are surveyed by the broadcaster in order to ascertain community problems, (2) the broadcaster evaluates the results of the survey and bases his programming decisions on those results, and (3) the FCC reviews the adequacy of the broadcaster's process of evaluation (FCC Primer, 1971). In this way, ascertainment functions as an accountability procedure to determine whether the broadcaster is serving the public interest in the area of community problems.

Ascertainment is only one procedure to ensure the public interest. Other areas, such as fairness in political campaigns, are protected by other legal procedures in broadcasting. How ascertainment functions as an accountability

---

relevant to the public interest (Kahn, 1973). Widespread opposition by the broadcasters prevented administrative implementation of the Blue Book. However, one important concept in the 1945 policy did survive and recurs in ascertainment requirements: needs as opposed to preferences. This distinction forms the main thesis of ascertainment procedures in the 1970's: the requirement that the general public shall be consulted on the subject of community problems, not programming preferences (FCC Primer, 1971).

procedure within the legal framework of broadcasting regulations is illustrated in Figure 1:



The areas of broadcasting requiring legal reinforcement in which ascertainment functions as an accountability procedure.

Figure 1 - Ascertainment as an Accountability Procedure

As shown in Figure 1, ascertainment functions as only one procedure within the legal framework of broadcasting regulations. As a subordinate part of the philosophy of social responsibility, ascertainment is an accountability procedure with two broad objectives: (1) to minimize the vested interests of all parties concerned and (2) to reinforce the type of programming decisions which encourages a sense of social responsibility among broadcasting audiences. These two broad objectives form a basis for defining ascertainment and examining the appropriateness of ascertainment for public broadcasting.

Ascertainment procedures seem well related to the concept of social responsibility. Bennett (1971) observes that one of the outcomes of public broadcasters seriously studying ascertainment requirements is an ethical awareness of

what broadcasters should do in programming to ameliorate community problems. Before ascertainment was established as a procedure in commercial broadcasting, broadcasting responsibility was more often thought of in such general terms as the responsibility of presenting a balanced programming schedule. The responsibility of meeting community problems through programming was less seriously considered (Bennett, 1971). In order to evaluate ascertainment's appropriateness for public broadcasting, however, it is necessary to examine in more detail why ascertainment is considered necessary for commercial broadcasting.

Ascertainment in Commercial Broadcasting

The ascertainment process was introduced into commercial broadcasting in 1960 so that the responsibility for programming would be placed with the licensee. That is, the licensee would make his own ascertainment of community problems which he would be prepared to defend at the time of license renewal or initial application (Kahn, 1973).

In 1960, the FCC also instituted a broad policy statement (Kahn, 1973):

> The major elements usually necessary to meet the public interest, needs and desires of the community in which the station is located as developed by the industry, and recognized by the Commission, have included: (1) Opportunity for Local Self-Expression, (2) The Development and Use of Local Talent, (3) Programs for Children, (4) Religious Programs, (5) Educational Programs, (6) Public Affairs Programs, (7) Editorialization by Licensees, (8) Political Broadcasts, (9) Agricultural Programs, (10) News Programs, (11) Weather and Market Reports, (12) Sports Programs, (13) Service to Minority Groups, (14) Entertainment Programming (p. 246).

By the 1970's, it was apparent that some elements of the 1960 programming policy-statement were considered more crucial for regulation than others ("FCC Seeks to Define," Feb. 22, 1971):

> The commission suggested that the question be approached in terms of "two critically important areas"—local programming and programming aimed at informing the electorate, that is, news and public affairs. . . . one that does not do a substantial job in news and public affairs is "undermining" the commission's basic allocation scheme (p. 30).

In the Hearings Before the Senate Subcommittee on Communications in 1974, the foregoing emphasis was linked to ascertainment:

> Now, specifically, ascertainment has historically dealt with programming, and specifically with nonentertainment programming such as news, public affairs, etc. We believe it would be a mistake to solicit "views" as to all aspects of the licensee's "broadcast operations" (p. 90).

The areas described in the 1960 programming policy-statement were all considered important to the public interest for a balanced-programming schedule (Kahn, 1973). But some areas, such as entertainment and sports, were obviously not going to be eliminated from lack of FCC encouragement. Many of the public service areas, on the other hand, do not have profit-making characteristics for the broadcaster and are much more likely to be neglected without FCC encouragement (FCC Primer, 1971). Therefore, ascertainment procedures concentrated on nonentertainment areas and particularly public-affairs type programming (Hearings, I, 1974). In this sense, the legal requirements of ascertainment are certainly prescriptive but, as previously mentioned, the process of evaluation is shared by all parties concerned.

The influence of social responsibility in broadcasting regulations is perhaps most apparent in certain requirements of the ascertainment study itself. As suggested by Bennett (1971), the ascertainment study has an ethical dimension with important consequences for programming decisions. This ethical dimension is also important in developing a conceptual framework for an ascertainment instrument.

The ethical dimension of ascertainment. As noted by the FCC, broadcasters have been slow to understand the intent of ascertainment ("Decisions and Reports," 1973):

> . . . our experience has shown that a large segment of the broadcast industry has steadfastly interpreted community "needs" to mean program

> preferences. We are shown, for example, communities with "needs" for more country and western music, or for more sports programs, but which apparently are not believed to have needs for improved schools, roads or welfare programs. . . . we sought in preparing the Primer to use a new word to emphasize our intent; hence "problems" (p. 656).

Perhaps even more surprising to the broadcaster was the further requirement that programming be developed to ameliorate the problems identified through ascertainment (FCC Primer, 1971):

> The phrase "to meet community problems" will be used to include the obligation to meet, aid in meeting, be responsive to, or stimulate the solution for community problems (p. 4094).

The Primer implements the foregoing requirements by stating that the broadcaster must "present broadcast matter programming to meet community problems" and be prepared to defend his process of evaluation (FCC Primer, 1971). These ascertainment requirements present three major areas of difficulty for the broadcaster: (1) he must be able to identify community problems, (2) he must make judgments as to which problems take priority, and (3) he must be able to justify his process of evaluating these problems in making [programming] decisions which presumably will contribute to the amelioration of these problems. These areas will be discussed again in Chapter II under social-theoretic concerns.

The notion of stimulating the solution for community problems is peculiar to a philosophy of social responsibility in broadcasting; it involves a rhetorical attempt to shape the audience's sense of social responsibility. Ascertainment, therefore, would seem closely linked to the requirements of social responsibility in commerical broadcasting. The question can now be raised as to whether social responsibility in public broadcasting requires the same type of ascertainment procedures as commercial broadcasting.

Ascertainment and Public Broadcasting

The FCC mandated ascertainment procedures for non-commercial broadcasters on March 11, 1976 (FCC Report and Order, March 22, 1976). Ascertainment has been seriously considered as a requirement for public broadcasting only in the past few years. In 1973, the FCC issued a "Notice of Inquiry" and a "Notice of Proposed Rulemaking" to develop an FCC rule on the ascertainment of community problems for noncommercial broadcasters. The filing of comments by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), the Corporation of Public Broadcasting (CPB), the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (NAEB), individual stations and a number of community groups was completed in April, 1974.* Nearly all of the comments filed favored the concept of ascertainment in public broadcasting. On May 5, 1975, the Senate Subcommittee on Communications strongly supported ascertainment in public broadcasting and requested the FCC to expedite its rulemaking procedures (CPB Report, May, 1973).

As the CPB suggested in its comments, public broadcasting carries the obligation of a public fiduciary because it is partially supported by federal and state taxes (PBS Memorandum, 1974). And apparently, public broadcasting is also expected to provide an alternative to commercial programming (Burke, Part II, 1972). Therefore, the need for an accountability procedure would seem stronger for public broadcasting than commercial. Thus far, however, the FCC has not based its decisions on the philosophical distinctiveness of public broadcasting. Rather, the FCC has mandated similar ascertainment procedures for public

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*These comments were summarized in a PBS Memorandum, March 22, 1974.

broadcasting as it has with commercial. The difference seems to be in favoring public broadcasting by allowing more flexibility in ascertainment techniques (FCC Report and Order, March 22, 1976).

To determine what modifications of ascertainment might be utilized for public broadcasting, it is necessary to analyze its particular characteristics in contrast to commercial broadcasting. The term public broadcasting, coined by the Carnegie Commission in 1966, refers to broader cultural, informative, and entertainment program content which would furnish alternative programming to commerical broadcasting (Burke, Part II, 1972). Commercial broadcasting's dependence on mass appeal and mass advertising creates this need for an alternative, according to educational broadcasters.

Unlike Menzer's 1944 definition of educational broadcasting, public broadcasting is not necessarily unique to large educational institutions.* The only basic requirement of public broadcasting is a difference (expressed as alternative programming) from commercial (Singer, 1971).

Public broadcasting is the product of a federal act. Several factors led to federal involvement in educational broadcasting and the creation of public broadcasting. By 1965, the effects of mass advertising on commercial broadcasting had become apparent to many (Singer, 1971):

> . . . the television industry was under remorseless pressure to maximize audience, minute by minute, over the entire broadcasting day. That meant an almost completely networked system. And it meant, finally, that the appeal

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*Carl Menzer represented the NAEB before the FCC in 1944 and described educational broadcasters as offering programs unique to large educational institutions. This conception of educational broadcasting served until the Carnegie Commission divided the terminology into (1) instructional and (2) public broadcasting in 1966 (Hill, 1965; Burke, II, 1972).

> had to be the lowest common denominator of interests and tastes. . . . in 1965, there was an inclination to wonder whether television—not commercial television, but television—couldn't do better than that (p. 4).

Since the democratic principle of a fully informed public seemed partially thwarted by commercial broadcasting, the United States government was receptive to new alternatives. Presumably, the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 permitted such an alternative in a federally funded but self-sufficient television system (Burke, II, 1972). This Act grew out of the Carnegie Commission Report which envisioned a public broadcast system which would be free from government intervention and whose programming would primarily be reflective of local needs and interests (Burke, II, 1972). Branscomb (1975) notes that the Act itself did not provide the legal and financial means to carry out the intent of the Carnegie Commission.* What the 1967 Act did was to create the Corporation of Public Broadcasting (CPB) as an administrative board, with little or no power, to direct public television activities. The CPB created a volunteer committee to do the actual organizing of public television stations. This volunteer committee came to be known as the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). Later on when it was apparent that there was no organized leadership to direct public broadcasting, PBS reorganized itself as a membership organization composed of prestigious lay-representatives from the boards of public broadcasting stations. PBS elected a national board from its

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*Several members of the Carnegie Commission, notably Singer and White, have publicly objected to the direction taken by public television in actual practice. Their major objection is that public television has "cast itself into the mold of commercial television," with networked and non-networked programming (Singer, 1971). They also claim that the Ford Foundation has overshadowed the position of the programming. The Carnegie Commission felt that the primary goal of public broadcasting should be to develop local talent, needs, and interests; a sort of off-Broadway function for local communities. Thompson's dissertation on "Public Television: Goals and Goal Achievement Assessment" found that very few public television stations have clearly developed, stated goals (1972).

membership ranks, developed some political lobbying power, and persuaded the CPB to form a partnership with PBS in making major decisions (Branscomb, 1975). The PBS members actively solicited additional funds from private corporations, state legislatures, and from private citizens in fund-raising campaigns. The success of PBS fund-raising, according to some critics, is a mixed blessing to public television (Branscomb, 1975):

> Although PBS alledgedly maintains ultimate control over the programming content, the availability of funding from corporate interests helps determine the direction of programming choices. This means more entertainment programming and fewer informational programs of a controversial nature (p. 14).

According to Branscomb (1975), another factor which is likely to encourage an entertainment trend in public broadcasting is a PBS-CPB agreement to channel 50% of unearmarked CPB funds directly to local stations. Branscomb (1975) notes that the questionable feature about the foregoing agreement is not local funding, but undesignated funding which is apt to go into an imbalance of entertainment programming.

Rowland (1975) apparently takes a different position from Branscomb's postulations of an incipient entertainment trend in public broadcasting. Rowland (1975) observes that the Carnegie Commission's expectations, calling for local self-determination in public broadcasting, have not proven financially feasible. But the general tenor of the Carnegie Commission's Report, calling for a predominance of public-affairs programming in public broadcasting, has been heeded:

> Moreover, having read the Carnegie recommendations very carefully the vast majority of station managers understood that a major part of their mandate as public broadcasters was the provision of a large volume of strong public affairs programming. In making this category of programming a predominant part of the total interconnection schedule, PBS was merely carrying out the clearly expressed goals of the Carnegie Commission . . . (Rowland, 1975, p. 12).

Whether an entertainment trend exists or not, there is no doubt that a predominance of public-affairs type programming is considered desirable in public

broadcasting. Therefore, in both commercial and public broadcasting, it is the public-affairs type programming designed to ameliorate community problems which logically needs FCC reinforcement. Indeed, the development of a sense of social responsibility about community problems would seem an even stronger philosophical requirement in public broadcasting than commercial (Rowland, 1975; Branscomb, 1975). It follows from this discussion that the basic concept of ascertainment, requiring research into community problems, should apply to both commercial and public broadcasting.

Apparently, very little has been done to empirically demonstrate a significant difference in public broadcasting (Rowland, 1975).* Nevertheless, there is widespread agreement that public broadcasting should make a philosophical difference in broadcasting practices:

> Yet one of the unique and major challenges for public broadcasting is precisely the need to develop, and act upon, a substantially new conceptualization of radio and television audiences. . . . In seeking a soul and character for itself, in searching for a viable programming philosophy, public broadcasting is thinking unimaginatively—indeed, it is failing—when it merely ratifies the conceptual framework of traditional mass politics and commercialism (Rowland, 1974, pp. 7-8).

Whether the nature of this difference calls for a change in ascertainment procedures in public broadcasting may now be considered.

The need for a modification. Critics disagree as to the precise expectations of public broadcasting (Branscomb, 1975; Rowland, 1975). However, there is one generally agreed-upon requirement, unique to public broadcasting, which

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*Rowland (1975) notes that research methodologies in this area have been mostly confined to ratings procedures.

suggests a needed modification in public broadcasting ascertainment: the requirement of alternative programming.* Perhaps the strongest defense for the existence of a tax-supported public broadcasting system is in its contribution to the democratic principle of a fully informed public through alternative programming. Ideally in a philosophy of social responsibility, public broadcasting unfettered by the profit-motives of commercial braodcasting would not cater to an audience which practices selective exposure. According to Weiss (1968), selective exposure is a practice in which people seek "to avoid contrary information and obtain reinforcement for their views." Among commercial broadcasting audiences in the United States, the research evidence suggests that selective exposure is a fairly common practice (Weiss, 1968). There is also evidence which suggests that some people do not practice selective exposure (Weiss, 1968). One could make the extension, therefore, that public broadcasting could seek to maximize exposure to the issues involved in social problems. Ideally, public broadcasting would try to develop an audience with a stronger awareness and concern for the issues involved in community problems. As Rowland (1975) suggests, such an audience would have an eagerness for complex information:

> Those intending to provide noncommercial programming services must come to see their audiences, not as passive responders to media stimuli, nor even as less passive seekers of some mysterious "uses and gratifications," but as broadly active, intelligent individuals whose symbol-hungry minds can, and ought to be encouraged . . . (pp. 7-8).

With this purpose in mind, it follows that ascertainment should be modified in public broadcasting to determine whether those having a stronger sensitivity to

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*Alternative programming is a broad expectation of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 and is not necessarily identified with the Carnegie Commission's more elaborate definition of alternative programming.

social issues also favor public broadcasting. This modification will be explored in Chapter II.

Summary

Philosophically, ascertainment as developed in broadcasting seems well related to the concept of social responsibility. Ascertainment, within a philosophy of social responsibility, is a procedure to (1) minimize the vested interests of all parties concerned in broadcasting and (2) reinforce programming on social issues that the broadcaster will develop in such a way as to encourage a sense of social responsibility. Legal reinforcement is not needed with entertainment programming which is already reinforced by profit and popularity incentives. Programming on social issues, however, is in need of legal reinforcement because of its potential neglect by both commercial and public broadcasters.

The public broadcaster is partially supported by tax revenues, and the need for an accountability procedure is perhaps stronger in public broadcasting than in commercial broadcasting. Within the political and legal framework, public broadcasting has the obligation of providing alternative programming to promote the democratic principle of a fully informed public. Ascertainment in public broadcasting, therefore, should not only give information on community problems but also give evidence of whether public broadcasting attracts an audience with a stronger sense of social responsibility than those who do not favor public broadcasting.

CHAPTER II

THE SOCIAL-THEORETIC FRAMEWORK FOR ASCERTAINMENT IN PUBLIC BROADCASTING

This study is guided by a social-theoretic question which is of particular interest to communication: How does the ideology of social responsibility seek to shape man's behavior through mass communication in broadcasting?* This shaping process is particularly visible within the legal framework of ascertainment. For example, the requirement that broadcasters develop programming to stimulate the solution of community problems is obviously linked to shaping society's sense of social responsibility (see pp. 13-14). The relationship of key issues raised in the legal framework of ascertainment to this chapter's social-theoretic discussion is illustrated in Figure 2:

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*Other types of questions, of course, would elicit different information. For example, Bennett's dissertation (1971) involves a case study of public broadcasting stations. The purpose of her study was to evaluate how ascertainment of community problems is actually practiced in public broadcasting and determine whether these practices are consistent with United States broadcasting regulations. Bennett is not concerned with broadcasting as a shaping or social-control process. Therefore, her study gives a comprehensive review of broadcasting regulations to establish a basis of comparison for her case study of ascertainment in public broadcasting stations. Bennett mentions that a social science instrument is needed in ascertainment and that the development of such an instrument raises social-theoretic concerns outside her particular study. Broadcasting regulations, in this present study, are treated in less detail than in Bennett's dissertation. The pertinence of regulations in this study is examined only as it relates to the conceptualization of an ascertainment instrument within the ideology of social responsibility.

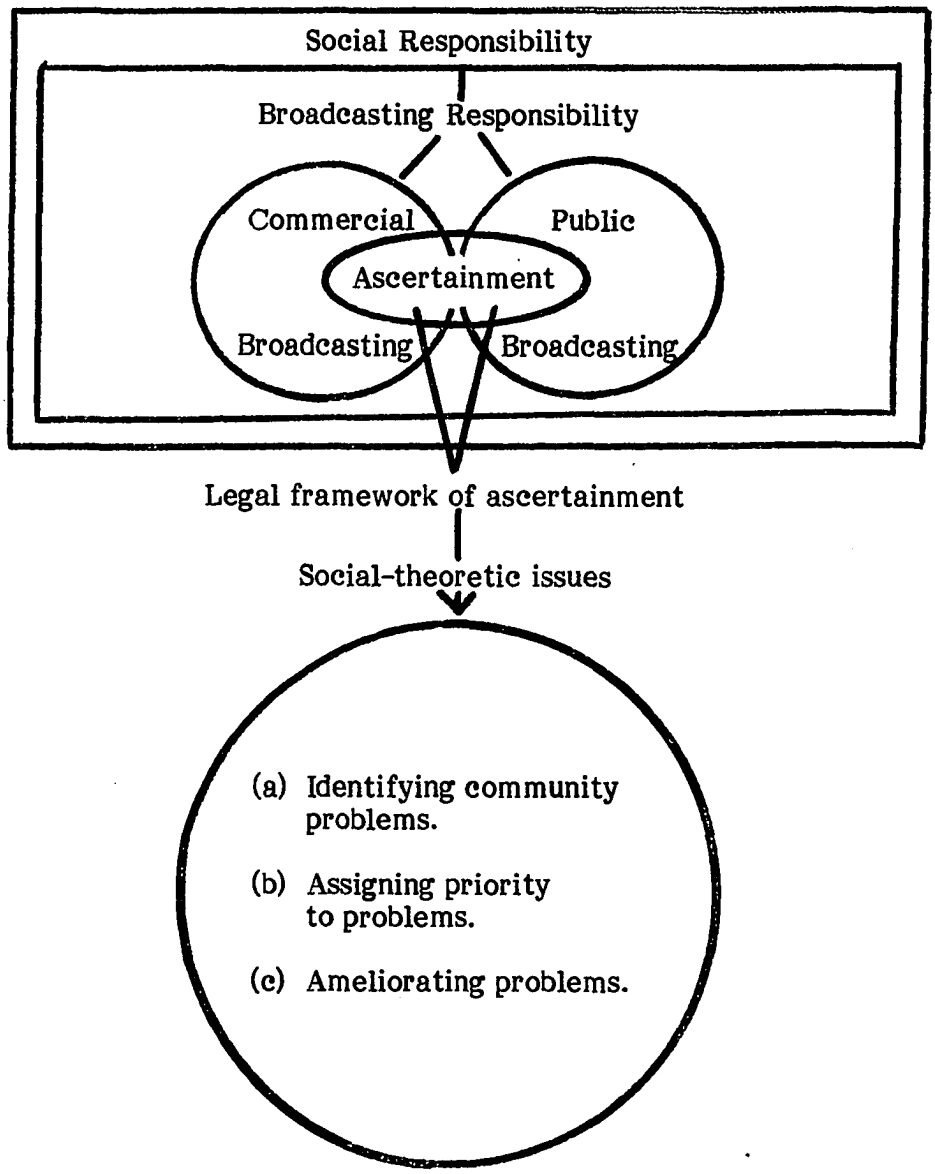

Figure 2 - "Social-theoretic Issues of Ascertainment"

As illustrated in Figure 2, the requirements of the political-legal structure of ascertainment generate three major social issues: (a) identifying community problems, (b) assigning priority to problems, and (c) ameliorating problems (see pp. 15-16). These issues address one of the two general research questions raised in this chapter, namely "How can the broadcaster ascertain community problems?"

Apparently, an ascertainment of community problems is a needed procedure for both commercial and public broadcasting (see p. 21). Therefore, the general research question, "How can the broadcaster ascertain community problems," presents issues that apply to both. A second general research question, which raises issues about a possible modification of ascertainment for public broadcasting, is offered later in this chapter. The first section of this chapter discusses the three social-theoretic issues of Figure 2.

Identifying Community Problems

The first thing a broadcaster must be able to do in ascertainment is to identify community problems. As previously mentioned, the FCC leaves the responsibility of this process with the broadcaster. But the FCC also realized that some standard was needed for an FCC review of this process (FCC Primer, 1971):

> Thus, we will revise answer 22 to require that all community problems be listed with the exception of those that are clearly frivolous (p. 4100).

As a result of the foregoing requirement, broadcasters have tried to defend their process of evaluation by presenting a rank-ordering of ascertained community problems. The broadcaster typically uses one of two possible criteria in defending his results: (1) the rank-ordering of the general public* or (2) the rank-ordering of the community leaders. A rank-ordering of community problems by citizens, whether from followers or leaders, is an inadequate criterion in a philosophy of social responsibility for interpreting community problems (see p. 9). This criterion also presents a questionable procedure within a social-theoretic perspective:

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*In a 1973 ascertainment study of Oklahoma City, this criterion identified "chuck-holes" and "wild dogs" as leading problems (Media Statistics, 1973).

> To define a social problem on the basis of social recognition is to err on the side of subjectivity. It also raises the question of whose recognition is determinative. . . . Public definitions are unsound guides to the existence or magnitude of social problems, necessary as they may be to locating the problems in the first place (Dentler, 1972, pp. 15-16).

This study raises a third alternative that the broadcaster might use in making programming decisions: the development of an a priori perspective of community problems with the help of a social-theoretic framework. The first requirement of such a perspective is a careful definition of community problems. The term community problems, according to Raab (1973), refers to a broader category of problems in which social problems form a subcategory:

> First of all, social problems are primarily problems in relationships among people. Consider community problems as an example. All community problems are not necessarily social problems. An agricultural area may be severely stricken by drought; the farmers have a serious problem. When the question is raised of how the more fortunate members of the community should assist those stricken, the problem acquires a social dimension. It becomes a matter of the kind of relationships that members of the community have established or should establish among themselves (p. 2).

Nisbet (Merton and Nisbet, 1971) makes a similar distinction:

> Social problems are distinguished from other problems by their close relation to institutional and normative contexts. They are social in that they pertain to human relationships and to the value contexts in which human relationships exist (p. 12).

It should be obvious, therefore, that most community problems are indeed social problems involving both subjective and objective dimensions (Merton and Nisbet, 1971). Some problems, such as "drought" and "chuck-holes" may not involve a value-conflict in human relationships; such problems may simply be listed as unfortunate objective occurrences. Ascertainment, however, would seem to require more than just an identification of unfortunate, objective occurrences (see p. 16).

Defining Social Problems

Social problems involve controversial decisions in human relationships, and these problems are probably best examined in people's perceptions, particularly in their attitudes toward these relationships. As Nisbet (Merton and Nisbet, 1971) notes, social problems are inevitably tied to the process of human labeling:

> No social problem exists for any people unless it has been defined as a social problem. The subjective element is inescapable (p. 12).

The conditions under which a social problem is so labeled involve some type of value-conflict, a struggle over divergent interests and values (Weinberg and Rubington, 1973). When this struggle persists over a long period of time and the existence of the value-conflict is well known among a large segment of the population, it is called a major social problem (Dentler, 1972). A listing of such major social problems as crime, poverty, and racial discrimination is common practice in ascertainment (Greenberg, Baldwin, Reeves, Thornton, and Wakshlag, 1974). The listing of major social problems, however, adds very little to the broadcaster's knowledge of these problems. It is the subjective character of the value-conflict that needs assessment if these problems are to be effectively linked to programming.

Assigning Priority to Social Problems

Ascertainment requires that the broadcaster must make judgments as to which problems take priority (see pp. 15-16). In considering the difficulty of assigning priority to problems, Perrucci and Pilisuk (Horton and Leslie, 1971) note that:

> The definition of a social problem reflects the norms and values of the definer. Science helps us little, for in it there are, in a sense, no troubles, pathologies, or evils; there are only conditions and structures which are consequences of other conditions and structures (p. 10).

What they are saying, in effect, is that the method of science cannot answer questions of good and evil. By implication, this means that such questions can be answered only by reference to other values. In the present study, the judgment as to which problems take priority is made in terms of the value-orientation identified earlier as social responsibility (see pp. 22-23).

Merton (Merton and Nisbet, 1971) in his discussion of "latent social problems," observes that the greatest problem of all may be the absence of social problems. Apparently, what this statement means is that a society may not see that certain of its actions are problematic relative to its own goals, and thus feel that it has no problems (Merton and Nisbet, 1971). Taking Merton's logic a bit further, one might conclude that an awareness of the conditions and consequences of certain actions may be necessary for a citizen to act in a socially responsible way. Few sociologists would deny the importance of sociological findings in weighing the consequences of various alternatives of actions, whether or not they are recognized as problematic.

In the last analysis, ethical decision-making in a democracy is inevitable. In a philosophy of social responsibility, assigning priorities to problems is a part of the process of weighing alternatives by using the best available evidence from studies of social problems. Given the broadness of social problem areas, a variety of sociological generalizations is required within a given value orientation to make policy decisions.

Ameliorating Social Problems

Assuming that the broadcaster can devise a defensible rationale for making policy decisions on the priority of problems, what evidence is there that broadcasting has the capacity for ameliorating social problems? The FCC

apparently assumes that the broadcaster can effectively carry out the obligation of change-agent (see pp. 15-16). Communication research has found that mass communication through broadcasting has three effects: (1) cognitive awareness, (2) reinforcement of existing attitudes, and (3) a desensitization function in introducing new ideas (Weiss, 1968).

The fact that there has been no research evidence of immediate attitude-change effects produced by broadcasting has led some writers to conclude that mass communication is not an effective agent of conversion (Burgoon, 1974). Since the research evidence that led to the foregoing conclusion is based on immediate attitude-change effects, the question might be raised as to whether attitude-change is a sufficient condition for social-change? According to Katz (1970), the attitude construct is defensible as an indicator of policy orientation, but a more precise relationship of attitudes to social action has been difficult to establish. If the relationship of attitude-change to social action has not been established, then one could seriously question a social-change paradigm based on attitude-change studies.

Awareness and reinforcement, however, can be utilized as a social-change paradigm within the context of response-shaping in operant-conditioning. A given class of responses (the operant) under a specified schedule of reinforcement can be shaped in a predetermined manner (Skinner, 1974). The impersonal character of broadcasting is particularly effective as an unobtrusive channel in creating awareness and salience through continual coverage (Weiss, 1968).

A plausible explanation of social change, therefore, would recognize the interdependence of a number of factors, including the role of broadcasting in (1) creating an awareness of the conditions and consequences of social problems, and (2) developing a salience around social issues through reinforcement by continual

coverage (Weiss, 1968). The broadcaster, therefore, does have an important role as change-agent in the amelioration of social problems.*

Ascertaining Degrees of Social Repsonsibility in Social Problem Areas

In public broadcasting, there is the added political expectation of cultivating a sense of social responsibility, particularly among the more alert elements of the community, beyond that of mass-appeal programming (see pp. 21-22). Ascertainment in public broadcasting, therefore, would include evidence of a public broadcasting audience with a higher sense of social responsibility. This modification in ascertainment would suggest the need of a second general reaearch question: "How can the public broadcaster ascertain social problems so as to determine degrees of social responsibility?"

If people's perceptions about social problem areas can be characterized within the ideology of social responsibility as desirable and undesirable, a measurement of degrees would be desirable. When a social problem is discussed in terms of what should or should not be done, it is called a social issue.* Social issues provide a basis for making statements expressing degrees of awareness and concern about social problems. In this study, attitude statements are devised to examine the perceived salience of certain social issues. These attitude statements are an attempt

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*The solution to social problems is often complex and rarely apparent; for this reason the term amelioration is preferred to the term solution (Merton and Nisbet, 1971).

*This definition of social issues is taken from the ordinary meaning of the word issue: "a point under dispute" (Webster's, 1973). Although this study does not utilize the concept of ego-involvement, the basic conception of social issues as statements along a continuum about a point under dispute is similar to Sherif's (1965).

to operationalize the concept of sensitivity to social issues. Therefore, sensitivity to social issues provides a measurement of degrees of the citizen's sense of social responsibility. The term social-sensitivity is used in this study as a shorter form of the phrase sensitivity to social issues. The structural relationship of these terms is illustrated in Figure 3:

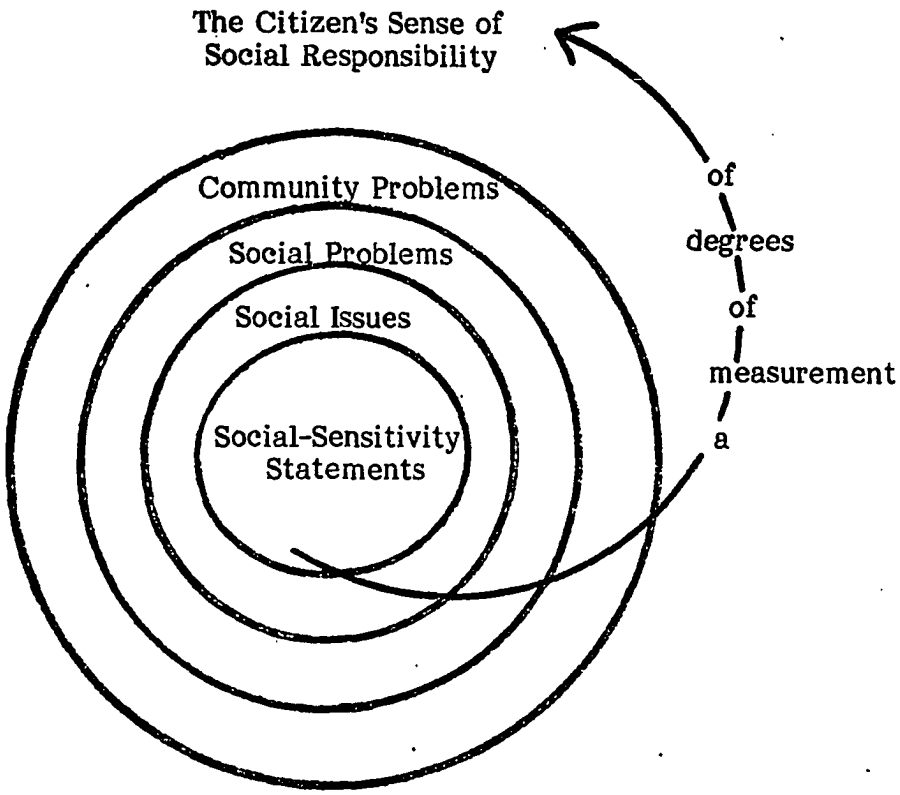

Figure 3 - "A Modification in Ascertainment for Public Broadcasting"

As shown in Figure 3, the broadest category in the ascertainment study is community problems (see p. 27). Social problems, involving value-conflicts in human relationships, are depicted as a large subcategory of community problems (see pp. 26-27). Social issues are a set of statements about the value-conflicts of social problems. When a social issue is phrased as an attitude statement testing

degrees of awareness and concern about the issues of social problems, it is called a social-sensitivity statement. Social-sensitivity, therefore, provides a means of measuring degrees of the citizen's sense of social responsibility. The concept of social-sensitivity is necessary in dealing with the general research question: "How can the public broadcaster ascertain social problems so as to determine degrees of social responsibility?"

Social-Sensitivity as a Measure of Social Responsibility

Since social responsibility has been adopted as the value-orientation of this study, it is necessary to develop a sociological perspective from this orientation (see pp. 28-29). A standard procedure for deriving a sociological perspective is as follows (Weinberg and Rubington, 1973):

> Defined simply, a perspective on social problems is an orienting idea about social problems which implies definition, conception, and action. The sociologist defines a problem a certain way, develops a working conception of the problem a certain way, develops a working conception of the problem which includes causes, conditions, consequences, and possible remedies. Then he seeks data fitting to his conception (p. ix).

A definition of social problems has already been supplied in the first section of this chapter. In seeking data fitting to the concept of social responsibility, the citizen must be kept in mind as the key to the amelioration of social problems (Raab, 1973):

> Even at his or her most passive, it is still the citizen who shapes public policy by abdicating social responsibility. The professional, whether politician, welfare worker, or educator cannot launch remedial programs in the complex areas of social problems without the social action which falls within the province of the citizenry at large (p. 27).

If the citizen lacks sensitivity to social problems, little remedial action will be taken until that sensitivity is increased. The term social-sensitivity, as stipulated in this study, refers to two interrelated components: (1) expressed awareness of

the conditions and consequences of social problems and (2) expressed concern, or a need of personal involvement, towards the amelioration of social problems.

Expressed awareness. Awareness, as a component of social-sensitivity, is not simply an awareness of the existence of social problems, but an awareness of the underlying structures which perpetuate value-conflicts. Such an awareness is particularly important to being aware of what to expect in particular efforts to ameliorate social problems (Raab, 1973):

> They will suspect, if they do not know, that so deep a disturbance in social behavior as delinquency is caused by more than the existence of idle hands; they may even suspect, if they do not know, that . . . recreational facilities will be of more benefit to non-delinquents than to habitual delinquents, who will indeed tend to avoid facilities of this sort. Similarly, they will doubt the proposition that laws to punish or fine parents of delinquent children will make a major contribution to the solution of delinquency, knowing that there are causative forces at work more fundamental than the willful negligence of parents (p. 27).

There are limits to the usefulness of an awareness concept. If there is no prior experience or knowledge of a social problem area, then an attitude statement based on the facts will not discriminate (Scott, 1968).

Expressed concern. Awareness is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for a sense of social responsibility. It is possible to be analytically aware of the structures underlying a value-conflict without feeling a sense of concern or a need of personal involvement in the amelioration of the conflict. As Dentler (1972) notes, there are a number of reasons why a citizen might become insensitive to social problems:

> For even if a solution is within reach, the citizen may not know it. He may give up too quickly or he may be persuaded that solution of the problem is readily achievable, only to find that he is the direct recipient of side effects. . . . It is often impossible to fix the boundaries, apportion the responsibility, or predict the effects of a problem or its solution (p. 28).

If the citizen has a sense of hopelessness towards ameliorating problems, for whatever reason, then a sense of social responsibility is not likely to follow (Dentler, 1972; Raab, 1973). Social-sensitivity suggests the type of concern which places an importance on becoming involved in the amelioration of social problems, even if a final solution is not apparent. Whatever else may be said about social problems, it is obvious that the attitudes of citizens toward the issues involved will determine remedial action (Raab, 1973).

Social-Sensitivity as Found in People's Perceptions of Major Social Problem Areas

A thorough review of sociological literature on social problems reveals that on the higher conceptual levels involving recently recognized areas of value-conflict, sociologists disagree on the factors involved in social problems. On this higher level, sociological thinking can be characterized as pre-scientific (Freeman and Jones, 1973). But there is a lower level consisting of long-existent social problems which are well defined with widespread agreement on most of the accompanying conditions and consequences (Dentler, 1972):

> We can be as scientific as this circumstance allows, however. One way to achieve this is to focus on the most thoroughly documented of social problems, those that have a long history of definition and about which considerable knowledge has been achieved (p. 18).

This well-defined area provides some minimal generalizations on which a scale might be constructed. The foregoing rationale is often given for the term major social problems (Dentler, 1972; Raab, 1973).

Apparently, the sociologist has developed a set of fairly well agreed-upon generalizations from the issues of major social problems. Since the concept of social-sensitivity is partially dependent on an awareness component, an ascertainment survey might reveal more information using items that examine well-known

problem areas. It is also possible that information from the tested attitude items of major social problem areas might generalize to lesser known social-problem areas. Generalizability would seem possible because of the interrelatedness of social problems (Raab, 1973):

> . . . identifiable social problems . . . are entangled in a symbiotic network, one problem affecting the other, and all intensifying together (p. 2).

The question remains, however, as to whether specific problems are interrelated in the perceptions of the general public. Familiarity with even major social problems may vary. Fortunately, social problems as described in sociological literature are not only conceptualized as interrelated but are also given separate identities and characteristics for which categories can be constructed. The construction of categories is particularly important to the development of a scale.

The Selection of Categories

In most research articles and basic sociological texts dealing with social problems, a rationale is given for the selection and treatment of the categories included (Horton and Leslie, 1971; Merton and Nisbet, 1971; Dentler, 1972; Raab, 1973; Freeman and Jones, 1973). The rationale for the selection of categories in this study reflects ascertainment concerns in the context of social responsibility. In particular, the categories must allow for a clear statement of social issues. If the issues are not generally agreed-upon, then it would be difficult to interpret the results of derived attitude items. Social responsibility requires clear statements of what it means to act responsibly. It follows that the categories selected in this study should permit defensible generalizations for the development of particular items. From the sociological literature reviewed in this chapter, the following criteria seem appropriate for the selection of categories: (1) The categories should be developed from consensus generalizations in major social problem areas. The

primary purpose for developing an instrument in this study is to examine the perceived salience of major social issues. Although the inclusion of a number of issues is considered necessary for this process, it is not the purpose of this study to include all possible social issues. In order to ensure a proper selection of issues, it is further stipulated that the categories selected should be included in most current social problem texts (Horton and Leslie, 1971; Merton and Nisbet, 1971; Dentler, 1972; Raab, 1973; Freeman and Jones, 1973). (2) The categories must be broad enough to include most of the social problems listed in other ascertainment studies (Greenberg, et al., 1974). Ascertainment is still in an early experimental stage in broadcasting. But where possible, some consistency between ascertainment studies is probably desirable.

In keeping with the foregoing criteria, the following categories were utilized to examine how people regard major social problem areas: (1) family-community relationships, (2) education, (3) poverty, (4) aging, (5) crime, (6) religion, and (7) ethnic minorities. The minimal generalizations that these categories might provide for the construction of attitude items can now be examined.

(1) Family-community relationships. The family is the nuclear unit of the community; it is the value-transmission base of society (Raab, 1973):

> It is the place where the child initially learns or can learn his most basic values, aspirations, and attitudes. . . . Because of its major role as transmission belt, there is concern not only with what the family does but what it fails to do (p. 23).

The minimal requirement for a family to function effectively as the nuclear unit of a community is a simple recognition of the fact that the type of relationships developed at home will extend into the community. If the members of a family feel a responsibility towards each others' welfare, then the likelihood increases for a sense of responsibility towards others. However, the family may isolate itself

from the community and teach children not to become involved in the problems of others. The question, in the context of social responsibility, is whether the primary relationships developed in the family extend into the community.

(2) Education. Perhaps the greatest problem in education is the failure of the community to maximize the learning experience during adolescence. Sociologists have noted that inadequate high school training may constitute an important gap with respect to the communities' requirements for professional and technical personnel (Freeman and Jones, 1973). When high schools fail to provide an adequate education, colleges and universities are penalized with time wasted in remedial courses.

In general, educational problems include a lack of community awareness of educational goals. For example, the community may fail to appreciate education's role for future decision-making in the affairs of the community (Freeman and Jones, 1973). There is also a lack of parental encouragement, especially in low-income families.

(3) Poverty. There is nothing ennobling about poverty. Poverty brings with it a demeaning set of conditions and consequences that tends to keep people from breaking out of its cycle. As Matza (1971) observes:

> The only sense in which the poor themselves perpetuate their condition is by sometimes being so engulfed . . . by their situation as to be unable to effectively act against . . . existing arrangements . . . (p. 601).

The conditions of poverty, physical and psychological, make conformity to community standards difficult. A sympathetic awareness of these conditions suggests high social-sensitivity.

(4) Aging. Interestingly, concern for the aged has been relatively recent. The reason for this new interest, of course, is the increased population of the

elderly due to medical improvements (Freeman and Jones, 1973):

> At the start of the century only 4 out of every 100 persons living in the United States had reached or passed the age of sixty five. Sixty years later, the proportion of old people in the population had more than doubled, and now is almost 10 percent of the population (Neugarten, 1966). In round numbers . . . it is an increase from 3 million to 18 million with the projection for the year 2000 set at 28 million (p. 543)!

Inadequate income, coping with health-care expenses, and a radical change in style of living are among the major problems of the elderly (Freeman and Jones, 1973). The United States society is youth oriented and assistance for the elderly is often resented by the taxpayer. The old person is sometimes regarded as an inconvenient, unproductive entity; something to be relegated to a nursing home. Viable alternatives, such as a model village for the elderly, suggest a more humane approach than the tranditional nursing home.

(5) Crime. Dentler (1972) observes that it may be "that the best theory of crime will come not from studies of crime and its causation but from studies in penology, in how society responds to crime" (p. 519). Sociologists typically point to the contemporary penal system as contributing to the cause of crime (Dentler, 1972):

> Imprisonment does not protect the society from the criminal. It is a temporary incapacitation which as frequently increases the future dangerousness of the offender through isolation, incubation with hardened offenders and post-prison stigmatization (p. 520).

Viable alternatives to the penal system include foster homes, group homes, halfway houses, group therapy and guided group interaction programs, and intensive community-based treatment. The evidence suggests that "these programs generally are capable of cutting recidivism—subsequent criminal conviction and imprisonment—at most in half and at least by one-third" (Dentler, 1972, p. 523). Rehabilitation procedures, of course, may include both positive and negative reinforcement techniques; that is, the purpose of rehabilitation is not to make the

offender comfortable but to change his behavior patterns. It is difficult, however, to include a complex definition of rehabilitation in ascertainment. The most plausible assumption, based on the foregoing generalizations, is that social-sensitivity increases with an expressed emphasis on rehabilitation, rather than punishment.

(6) Religion. The importance that a person attaches to remedial social action may well be reflected in how that person views the role of his or her religious organization. In recent years, there has been an increase in the preachment of ethical social action by the leaders of religious organizations. As a result, there is a growing gap between many Protestant clergymen and the conservative middle-class laity (Fiske, 1971):

> One ironic effect of lay opposition to social involvement has been to drive frustrated liberal clergymen out of local parishes into teaching or denominational positions. In these posts they then become influential in training young clergymen and drafting the official church pronouncements that irritate conservatives (p. 253).

The foregoing illustrates how value-conflicts are perpetuated in major denominations. Attendance and orthodoxy are highly correlated in both Protestant and Catholic Churches (Stark and Glock, 1971). The orthodox, in general, strongly oppose social change and social action. The Jews, on the other hand, have traditionally made less distinction between secular and religious activities (Fiske, 1971). Religious institutions obviously present an area of intense value-conflict. It is assumed that attitudes toward the social involvement of religious organizations and leaders reflect at least in part one's personal sense of social responsibility.

(7) Ethnic minorities. Discrimination against ethnic minorities, from a psychological standpoint, can be a very complex issue. But at its simplest level, attitudes toward minorities may reflect an understanding or misunderstanding of

the actual conditions that a particular group faces. The American Indian, for example, is:

> . . . the very poorest of the poor—with the lowest standard of living, the highest rates of unemployment, and the worst health and housing suffered by any Americans (Freeman and Jones, 1973, p. 173).

In Oklahoma, poverty conditions for the Indian are at their worst ("Poverty in Oklahoma," March, 1974). Awareness of these conditions is one factor in social-sensitivity. Another factor is the concern manifested in statements about how relationships with minorities should or should not be sympathetically regarded.

Summary

The shaping of man's behavior through mass communication in broadcasting seems influenced by an ideology of social responsibility. This shaping process is particularly visible in the legal framework of ascertainment which requires that the broadcaster identify, assign priority to, and ameliorate community problems. The term community problems refers to a broad category of problems in which social problems is a very large subcategory. Some community problems such as drought and needed street repairs may not involve a value-conflict in human relationships; such problems can simply be listed as unfortunate objective occurrences. But social problems can only be ascertained in the subjective character of value-conflicts; these problems, in a general public survey, are probably best ascertained in people's perceptions of major social problem areas.

Ascertainment in public broadcasting, which carries the requirement of alternative programming, includes the need of ascertaining degrees of social responsibility to indicate whether those who favor public broadcasting also have a stronger sense of social responsibility. Degrees of social responsibility can be ascertained through degrees of salience in attitudes toward social issues. Social

issues, which involve a point under dispute, provide a basis for making statements expressing degrees of awareness and concern about social problems; such expressions are characterized by the term social-sensitivity. Attitude statements reflecting sensitivity to social issues can be formed out of categories which describe the conditions and consequences of major social problems in the areas of human interaction in which these problems occur.

The next chapter will discuss how a model of ascertainment for public broadcasting might be constructed out of the philosophical, legal and social-theoretic concerns articulated in this study.

CHAPTER III

AN OVERVIEW OF A MODEL OF ASCERTAINMENT FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly summarize the political, legal, and social-theoretic framework for ascertainment in public broadcasting and to discuss the associated research questions. To do this, a conceptual model is derived from Chapters I and II to discuss the functional aspects of an ascertainment instrument for public broadcasting.

The Units of the Model

The ascertainment model, described in this chapter, identifies three interrelated units: (1) the political-legal functions of ascertainment, (2) the social-theoretic functions of ascertainment held in common by both public and commercial broadcasting, and (3) the social-theoretic functions of ascertainment unique to public broadcasting. The nature of these three functions can now be summarized from the review of literature presented in Chapters I and II.

(1) The Political-Legal Functions of Ascertainment

The ascertainment procedure would seem to emanate from a philosophy of social responsibility (see p. 16). In order to avoid the extremes of authoritarianism and to minimize the vested interests of all parties concerned, the evaluation process is first placed with the broadcaster and later reviewed by the FCC (see p. 12). The democratic principle of a fully informed public requires that ascertainment be directed at nonentertainment areas which broadcasters might otherwise

neglect (see p. 15). In practice, ascertainment is a procedure that seeks feedback from the community via a community problems' survey. The results of this survey can then be utilized in preparing programs that shape the citizen's sense of social responsibility (see p. 13).

(2) Ascertainment Functions of Both Public and Commercial Broadcasting

To produce data that can be utilized in shaping man's sense of social responsibility, ascertainment procedures are specifically applied to the identification of community problems. In a philosophy of social responsibility, not all problems should be seriously considered.* Furthermore, the broadcaster must defend his process of selecting problems for programming (see p. 16). Therefore, the broadcaster must determine a criterion for assigning priority to problems (see p. 16). A few problems, such as natural disasters which have an obvious referent, can simply be videotaped and brought to the public's attention. But most problems are social problems, and can only be ascertained in the subjective character of value-conflicts (see pp. 27-28). Social problems, as found in people's perceptions of what should or should not be done in human relationships, are interrelated. It may not be necessary, therefore, to assign priority to specific problems but to consider instead what attitudes are predominant within recognized areas of value-conflict (see p. 36). An assignment of priority is still necessary, but in a broader context: the broadcaster would assign priority to recognized areas of value-conflict (see pp. 35-36).

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*For example, the FCC requires that problems which are clearly frivolous should not be listed (FCC Primer, 1971).

The shaping of the public's sense of social responsibility is carried out in the process of ameliorating social problems through broadcasting. The effectiveness of this shaping process is dependent on the broadcaster's knowledge of his audience's perceptions of social issues. The public's social attitudes, if known through ascertainment, can be positively or negatively reinforced as the situation may require. A gradual shaping process can be generated through programming from awareness to social change (see pp. 30-31).

(3) Ascertainment Functions
Unique to Public Broadcasting

The requirement of alternative programming suggests a needed modification in ascertainment procedures for public broadcasting (see p. 22). Specifically, an ascertainment of degrees of social responsibility is apparently needed to indicate whether those who favor public broadcasting will also demonstrate a higher sense of social responsibility (see pp. 31-32). Such a finding would at least indicate whether public broadcasting attracts an audience with a greater sense of social responsibility. Degrees of social responsibility can be ascertained through degrees of salience in attitudes toward social issues, utilizing the concept of social-sensitivity (see p. 32). It should be noted that the social issues chosen for the construction of attitude statements are derived from recognized areas of value-conflict described in the categories of Chapter II (see pp. 37-41). The character of these attitude statements, suggested by the phrase sensitivity to social issues, deals with degrees of awareness and concern elicited by the respondent about the issues of major social problems. Therefore, social-sensitivity is represented in the ascertainment model as measuring degrees of the citizen's sense of social responsibility.

The interrelationship of all three units of this conceptual model is illustrated in Figure 4.

As shown in Figure 4, the social-theoretic concerns of ascertainment are developed from certain political-legal functions (Unit 1). Specifically, social responsibility is conceived as influencing the characteristics of ascertainment functions. Unit 2, illustrating how social-theoretic concerns are treated in ascertainment, determines the type of social issues selected. These social issues are then utilized, as illustrated in Unit 3, to derive specific social-sensitivity statements. Social-sensitivity statements form the basis of attitude items which provide a means of measuring degrees of social responsibility. Figure 4, therefore, shows how a philosophy of social responsibility can be developed as a theoretic model for ascertainment in public broadcasting. This theoretic model generates certain empirical research questions that can now be discussed.

Empirical Research Questions and Expectations

From the foregoing conceptual model of ascertainment, these empirical research questions are derived:

(1) What are the social-sensitivity attitudes that will predict attitudes showing an interest in the viewing of social issues on television?

This empirical research question seeks to establish social-sensitivity on a scale determining interest in viewing social issues on television. According to attribution theory, a person attributes salience to information that aids in making relevant comparisons for decision-outcomes (Kelly and Thibaut, 1969, p. 10). Therefore, the logical relationship of social-sensitivity is expected to be stronger with viewing of social issues than with attitudes toward public television.

The second empirical research question is:

(1) The political-legal functions of ascertainment

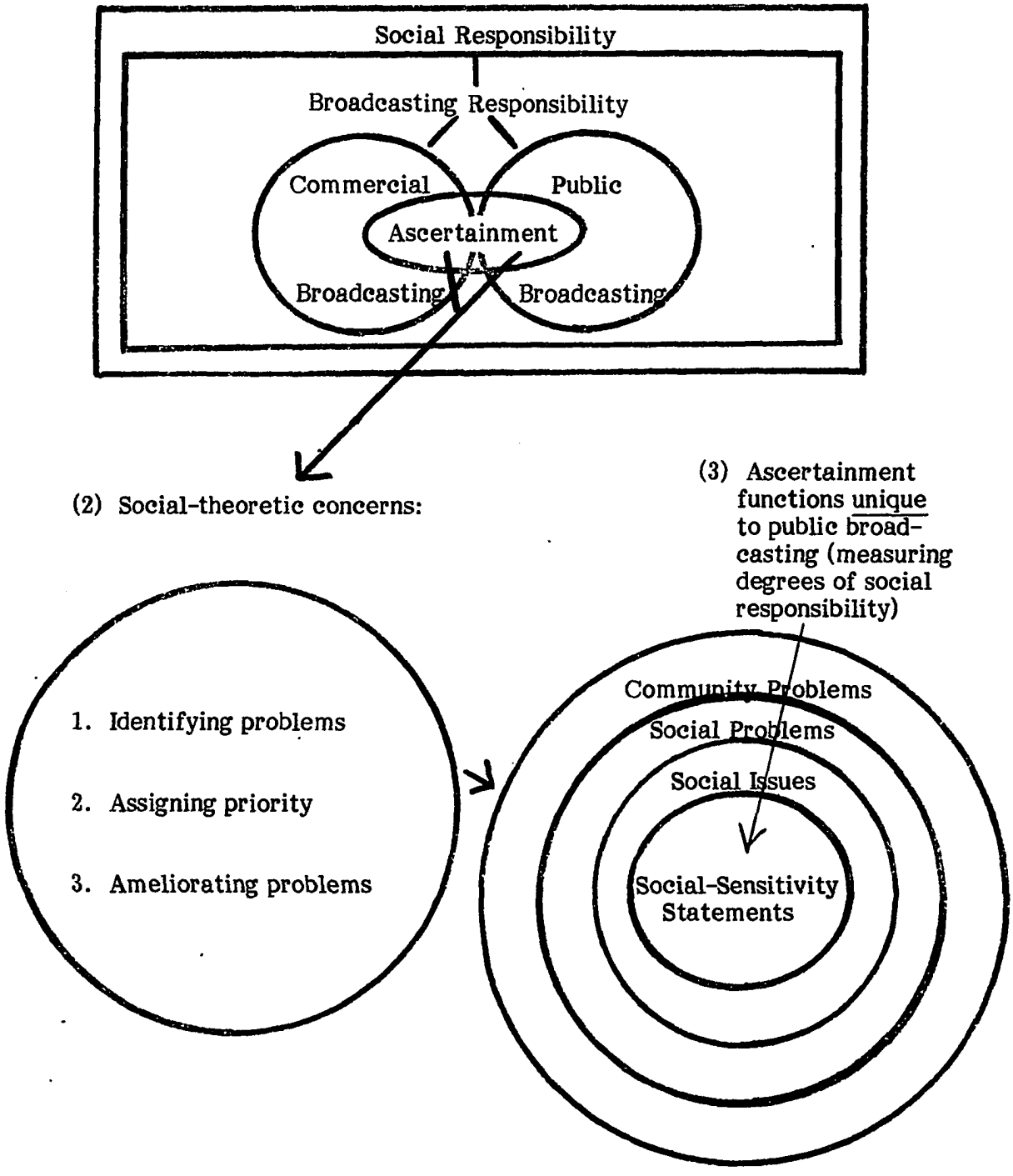

Figure 4 - "An Ascertainment Model for Public Broadcasting"

(2) Will social-sensitivity predict attitudes toward public television?

If the results show that those favoring public television demonstrate a higher social-sensitivity than those who do not favor public television, then the claim of alternative programming can be supported.

The third empirical research question examines whether those favoring the viewing of social issues on television will also favor public television:

(3) Will viewing of social issues predict attitudes toward public television?

Therefore, community attitudes are examined at three points: (a) social-sensitivity, (b) interest in the viewing of social issues, and (c) the worthwhileness of public television.* The confirmation of alternative programming in public television would have its strongest support if (a) social-sensitivity and (b) viewing of social issues are both highly correlated with (c) favorable attitudes toward public television.

It should be noted that previous research of public broadcasting audiences has dealt mostly with ratings' procedures and percentages of viewers among demographic groups (Rowland, 1975). Beyond these findings, very little is known about public broadcasting audiences. Conceivably, those who have favorable attitudes toward public television may also favor commercial television. There is no evidence to indicate that the intent of alternative programming in public broadcasting is to eliminate the need of commercial broadcasting. It may be that the alternative programming of public broadcasting provides a legitimate supplementary function to the mass-appeal programming of commercial broadcasting.

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*In addition to these three empirical research questions, correlates with hours watching commercial and public television, and correlates with demographic characteristics will be offered to further describe the public television audience.

Within the context of social responsibility, the functions of commercial and public broadcasting need not be antagonistic. Rather, the two functions may act in a complementary fashion with different expectations. If this position is accepted, it follows that the ascertainment instrument should treat alternative programming as that which is favored or not favored in public broadcasting, rather than that which disfavors commercial broadcasting. Therefore, the key issue identified in the empirical research questions is whether those who favor public broadcasting will also demonstrate a higher social-sensitivity than those who do not favor it. In this sense, public broadcasting is expected to attract an audience with a stronger sense of social responsibility.

The ascertainment instrument developed in this study is primarily concerned with the predictive capability of social-sensitivity categories. Beyond this primary concern, there is a secondary concern examining the general public's interest in the programming of social issues. Since public broadcasting is apparently expected to provide a predominance of public-affairs programming (see p. 20), it follows that those who favor the programming of social issues should also favor public television.* Therefore, attitudes toward the programming of social issues are compared to attitudes toward public television. Also, if social-sensitivity predicts viewing of social issues, then additional confidence may be given to the predictive capability of social-sensitivity.

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*Public broadcasting encompasses the same philosophical basis for both public television and radio. This study, however, utilizes an ascertainment instrument which tests the public television audience of the Oklahoma Educational Television Authority.

CHAPTER IV

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

This study developed three general research questions for testing:

(1) What are the social-sensitivity attitudes that will predict attitudes showing an interest in the viewing of social issues on television?

(2) Will social-sensitivity predict attitudes toward public television?

(3) Will viewing of social issues predict attitudes toward public television?

In answer to the foregoing research questions, the following procedures seek to determine the relationships of the variables.

Procedures and Data Analysis

A proportionate sample of six hundred subjects was taken in Oklahoma with each county represented (see Appendix C). This sampling process allows generalizability to ages 12 and over in the state of Oklahoma. The instrument was administered over a time period of 45 days. Twelve interviewers were trained for four hours; a simple one-way analysis of variance was used to detect error due to differential characteristics of interviewers. If a significant F test statistic were obtained, certain limitations of the study would be made.

Variables

In order to facilitate generalizations regarding the research questions, nine predictor variables were prepared for this study.

Criterion Variables

Viewing of Social Issues. The operational definition of this criterion variable was a six-item Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree (Scale II, Appendix B). Scores were summed across items with a range of 6-30. Both split-half and total-score reliabilities were utilized to detect any attributable response bias. A Kuder-Richardson's Formula 21 was used for predicting the correlation if the scale were larger. An item-whole correlation was used to determine the unidimensional characteristics of the scale (Guilford and Fruchter, 1973, p. 454).

Attitudes toward public television. The operational definition of this criterion variable was a ten-item Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree (Scale III, Appendix B). Scores were summed across items with a range of 10-50. Split-half and total-score reliabilities were utilized to detect any attributable response bias. A Kuder-Richardson's Formula 21 was used for predicting the correlation if the scale were larger. An item-whole correlation was utilized to determine the unidimensional characteristics of the scale.

Predictor Variables

Social-sensitivity. The operational definition of this predictor variable was a thirty-seven item Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree (Scale I, Appendix B). Scores were summed across items with a range of 37-185. Since social-sensitivity is a primary concern in this study, the issue of dimensionality was examined carefully. A principle-component solution was used to determine the factor which explains the most variance. Any item which has a

factor loading of less than .50 was deleted (Cronbach, 1960, p. 253).* The highest seven items, provided these items equalled or exceeded a factor loading of .50, constituted social-sensitivity. Split-half and total-score reliabilities were used as a further check on any attributable response bias. Kuder-Richardson's Formula 21 was used for predicting the correlation if the scale were larger.

While the author conceived all the items on Scale I as potentially measuring social-sensitivity, the abstracted factor solution was assumed to be the appropriate measure of social-sensitivity on a prima facie basis only, unless evidence to the contrary was warranted.

Post Hoc Analysis. The operational definitions of the eight demographic variables are provided in Scale IV (Appendix B). Two of these variables, sex and race, are nominal. All others are considered continuous (rank order). A one-way analysis of variance was used to determine significant differences to social-sensitivity, viewing of social issues, and attitudes toward public broadcasting. If any of the continuous variables showed a significant difference, a trends analysis was taken between that demographic variable and the cell mean scores.

Research Questions

The first research question is concerned with the predictive validity of social sensitivity (Scale I) on viewing of social issues (Scale II). Based upon a scattergram and polynomial trends analysis, a determination was made as to the

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*According to Cronbach (1960), many factor analysts use a factor loading of .50 as an arbitrary criterion for the selection of items. The logic of this selection is based on the amount of variance explained. A .50 factor loading explains 25 percent of the variance.

appropriate predictor equation, whether linear or curvilinear. Because variance in social-sensitivity may be explainable in terms of attitudes toward public television (Scale III), a partial correlation analysis was made, removing variation in both social-sensitivity and viewing of social issues due to Scale III. If social-sensitivity holds predictive validity on viewing of social issues as suggested in Research Question 1, then a significant amount of the variance in Scale III should be attributable uniquely to Scale I. For future studies, point and interval estimates of the intercept and the slope were made. This procedure allowed for future studies on the cross validity of social-sensitivity.

The second research question asks the predictive nature of social-sensitivity (Scale I) on attitudes toward public television (Scale III). Again, since variance in either social-sensitivity or attitudes toward public television may be attributable to viewing of issues (Scale II), a partial correlation analysis was made, removing variations in both social-sensitivity (Scale I) and attitudes toward public television (Scale III) due to Scale II. As before, a significant amount of the variance in Scale II should be attributable to Scale I. Appropriate point and interval estimates were made for future research.

The third research question is concerned with the predictive validity of viewing of social issues (Scale II) on attitudes toward public television (Scale III). Once again, since variance in both viewing of social issues and attitudes toward public television may be attributable to social-sensitivity (Scale I), a partial correlation analysis was made, removing variations in both viewing of social issues (Scale II) and attitudes toward public television (Scale III) due to Scale I. If viewing of social issues (Scale II) holds predictive validity on attitudes toward public television (Scale III), as suggested by research question 3, then a significant amount of variance in Scale I should be attributable uniquely to Scale II. Appropriate point and interval estimates were made for future studies.

The implications of these reserach questions for public broadcasting obviously go far beyond previous studies in ascertainment that have concentrated only on the identification of perceived community problems. It is the hope of this study that the identification of social attitudes within public broadcasting audiences will give a better understanding of how social issues might be approached by public broadcaster. A discussion of the results of this study will be provided in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter includes the statistical findings of the three general research questions of the study. The "social-sensitivity" scale is established in answer to the first general research question:

> (1) What are the social-sensitivity attitudes that will predict attitudes showing an interest in the viewing of social issues on television?

A principle-component analysis was used to determine the factor explaining the most variance for social-sensitivity. The items appearing on this factor are shown on Table 1 and met the criterion of a .50 factor loading.

The criterion variable, viewing of social issues, was determined by an item-whole procedure. The items shown on Table 2 met the criterion of a .50 correlation coefficient. As shown on Table 4, the predictive validity of social-sensitivity with viewing of social issues was determined by Pearson r.

The second general research question is:

(2) Will social-sensitivity predict attitudes towards public television?

The criterion variable, attitudes toward public television, was determined by an item-whole analysis. The items shown on Table 3 met the criterion of a .50 correlation coefficient. As shown on Table 4, the predictive validity of social-sensitivity with attitudes toward public television was determined by Pearson r.

The third general research question was:

(3) Will viewing of social issues predict attitudes toward public television?

As shown on Table 4, the predictive validity of viewing of social issues with attitudes toward public television was determined by Pearson r.

Table 1

Factor Selected for Social-Sensitivity

Item	Loading
1. Sex education can properly be taught in public schools.	.55
2. In most American communities, the low-income people are poor because of their own laziness.	.55
3. Racially integrated schools are usually good for the community.	.52
4. Religious leaders, even if well educated, should stick to the scriptures and leave social problems alone.	.53
5. Religious leaders should speak out against racial prejudice.	.59
6. Blacks should feel free to move into any white neighborhood they choose in Oklahoma.	.59
7. Prisons should be provided with additional tax funds for rehabilitation programs.	.53

Note. Items were derived from Scale I, Appendix B.

Table 2

Item-Whole Selections for Viewing of Social Issues

Item	Correlation
1. Local television stations should develop more programs on community problems and issues.	.67
2. Television stations would be better off if they stayed with entertainment programs and left social problems alone.	.77
3. Television programs on state and local problems are usually dull and boring.	.55
4. Television programs on community problems can be made just as interesting as entertainment programs.	.62
5. Television should try harder to keep people informed on social issues.	.65

Note. Items were derived from Scale II, Appendix B.

Table 3

Item-Whole Selections for

Attitudes toward Public Television

Item	Correlation
1. Among the people I know, public television (Channel 13 or 11) is watched an increasing amount.	.71
2. There is a growing interest at my residence in watching public television.	.75
3. Public television is rarely watched at my residence.	.71
4. Public television provides a valuable balance in television programming.	.68
5. Public television is dull and boring.	.72

Note. Items were derived from Scale III, Appendix B.

Table 4

Predictive Validity of Scales

Viewing of Social Issues with Social-Sensitivity			
Correlation (r)	.43	Intercept (A)	6.92
r Squared	.18	Slope (B)	.28
Std. Err. of Est.	2.89	CI = .23 ≤ Byx ≤ .33	
Attitudes toward Public Television with Social-Sensitivity			
Correlation (r)	.38	Intercept (A)	7.52
r Squared	.15	Slope (B)	.27
Std. Err. of Est.	3.22	CI = .21 ≤ Byx ≤ .33	
Attitudes toward Public Television with Viewing of Social Issues			
Correlation (r)	.56	Intercept (A)	5.21
r Squared	.31	Slope (B)	.61
Std. Err. of Est.	2.89	CI = .52 ≤ Byx ≤ .70	

Note. As determined by a scattergram and polynomial trends analysis, the appropriate predictor equation for all three scales is linear. No significant effects were found on curvilinear trends (Kerlinger and Pedhazur, 1973, p. 208).

Partials were obtained to describe the variance contributed by the effects of each scale. With social-sensitivity held constant, the partial r of viewing of social issues with attitudes toward public television was .47. With viewing of social issues held constant, the partial r of social-sensitivity with attitudes toward public television was .20. With attitudes toward public television held constant, the partial r of social-sensitivity with viewing of social issues was .28. The variance explained in the prediction of attitudes toward public television by social-sensitivity and viewing of social issues is illustrated in Figure 5.

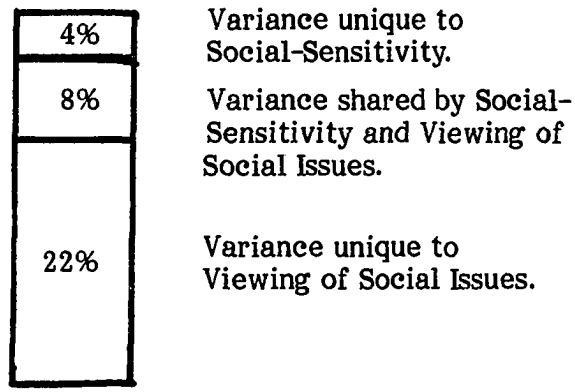

Figure 5 - "Variance Contributed in the Prediction of Attitudes toward Public Television"

As shown by the partitioned variance in Figure 5, social-sensitivity explained 12% of the variance (8% shared, 4% unique) in predicting attitudes

toward public broadcasting. Viewing of social issues explains 30% of the variance (8% shared, 22% unique). A common factor variance of 8% is shared by social-sensitivity with viewing of social issues. Therefore, the total variance explained by social-sensitivity and viewing of social issues in predicting attitudes toward public broadcasting was 34% (R = .58).

Reliability

In order to detect any attibutable response bias, reliability coefficients were taken on all three scales (see Table 5). From the reliability coefficients, several observations can be made about the scales. The social-sensitivity scale is probably unidimensional; that is, the items appear to cluster around a common factor. Since Kuder-Richardson's coefficient, .70, is somewhat higher than the split-half, .58, the social-sensitivity items are probably of equal difficulty and the scale can be justifiably lengthened (Guilford and Fruchter, 1973, p. 417). Since the total-score coefficient is .99, the social-sensitivity scale was probably not influenced by a response bias (Guilford, 1954, pp. 379-380).

The viewing of social issues scale, as suggested by the Kuder-Richardson coefficient of .40, probably does not consist of items of equal difficulty (see Table 5). Since establishing difficulty indices would not be conceptually meaningful, this scale could not be lengthened in future studies. As suggested by the total-score coefficient of .92, the two halves of the scale would appear to be parallel (see Table 5). Therefore, the items probably do cluster around a common factor:

> If the reliability of the total score is very high (.90 or better), there is little chance of improving the test in this respect [homogeneity] . . . difficulty indices would still be useful for achieving other goals, and possibly also for increasing reliability a bit (Guilford, 1954, p. 418).

The attitudes toward public television scale, as suggested by a total-score coefficient of .58, may have experienced some response bias. Since the items of

Table 5

Reliability Coefficients of Scales

Social-Sensitivity	
Split-Half Reliability	.58
Kuder-Richardson Formula 21	.70
Flanagan (Total-Score)	.99
Viewing of Social Issues	
Split-Half Reliability	.58
Kuder-Richardson Formula 21	.41
Flanagan (Total-Score)	.92
Attitudes toward Public Television	
Split-Half Reliability	.69
Kuder-Richardson Formula 21	.61
Flanagan (Total-Score)	.59

this scale were presented at the last of a 60-75 minute interview, there may have been a fatigue bias. The Kuder-Richardson coefficient, .61, was slightly lower than the split-half, .69. Kuder-Richardson's Formula 21 will usually give a somewhat lower estimate of reliability than other reliability coefficients (Guilford, 1954, p. 382). But the fact that both the Kuder-Richardson and Flanagan formulas gave lower reliability coefficients than the split-half method would suggest the need of further testing before assuming unidimensionality of attitudes toward public television.

Interviewers

A simple one-way analysis of variance was taken between interviewers on all three scales to see if there might be any attributable difference due to Type G Error (see Table 6 and 7). Type G Error may have occurred, perhaps as a function of disparate cell sizes across interviewers (see Table 7). Also, the assumptions of homogeneity were not met on all three scales. This fact would suggest that the mean difference may not be between groups but within, possibly as a function of the variation of N-size (Kirk, 1968, p. 61).

Demographic Data

A one-way analysis of variance was used to determine whether social-sensitivity, viewing of social issues, and attitudes toward public broadcasting might be a function of certain demographic characteristics. Two nominal variables, sex and race, are considered first; the remaining variables are continuous.

Nominal Variables

Sex. There were no significant differences as a function of sex on any of the three scales.

Table 6

Social-Sensitivity by Interviewers

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between	1500.25	10	150.02	6.86*
Within	12877.06	589	21.86	
Total	14377.31	599		

*Significant at .05 level

Test for Homogeneity of Variances

Cochrans C = Max. Variance/Sum (Variances) = 0.17, $P < .05$

Bartlett-Box F = 4.63, $P < .05$

Viewing of Social Issues by Interviewers

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between	281.69	10	28.17	2.84*
Within	5841.81	589	9.92	
Total	6123.50	599		

*Significant at .05 level

Test for Homogeneity of Variances

Cochrans C = Max. Variance/Sum (Variances) = 0.16, $P < .05$

Bartlett-Box F = 3.99, $P < .05$

Table 7

Attutides toward Public Television by Interviewers

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between	784.56	10	78.46	7.13*
Within	6478.56	589	11.00	
Total	7263.12	599		

*Significant at .05 level

Tests for Homogeneity of Variances

Cochrans C = Max. Variance/Sum (Variances) = .15, $P < .05$

Bartlett-Box F = 3.22, $P < .05$

Districts Covered by Interviewers

Districts	N-Size	Districts	N-Size
1	41	7	38
2	41	8*	153
3	34	9	56
4	40	10	26
5	42	11	16
6	113		

*Two interviewers covered District 8 together.

Race. On two scales, viewing of social issues and attitudes toward public television, there were no significant differences as a function of race. The social-sensitivity scale did show a significant F (see Table 8). However, the N-sizes were quite disparate and the assumptions of homogeneity were not met (see Table 8).

Continuous Variables

When any of the continuous demographic variables showed a significant difference, a trends analysis was taken between that demographic variable and the cell mean scores. Since the study was done with a completely randomized design (Fixed-Effects Model), the treatment levels were often calculated on disparate N-sizes. Some of the variance, therefore, may be due to variance within groups rather than between. In some cases, this difference in N-size probably accounts for the assumptions of homogeneity not being met (Kirk, 1968, p. 61).

Age. Significant differences were found on all three scales as a function of age. A trends analysis showed significant linear and quadratic components on the social-sensitivity scale. As indicated by an index showing strength of association (Kirk, 1968, p. 126), the strength of the linear trend was not significant and the effects of the curvilinear trend were small (see Table 9). The assumptions of homogeneity were not met on social-sensitivity (Table 9).

The best description of viewing of social issues as a function of age is curvilinear (see Table 10). The strength of this trend, however, is small (see Table 10).

The best description of attitudes toward public television as a function of age is curvilinear (see Table 11). The strength of this trend is small and the assumptions of homogeneity were not met (see Table 11).

Table 8

Social-Sensitivity by Race

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between	261.37	4	65.34	2.75*
Within	14107.37	593	23.79	
Total	14368.75	597		

*Significant at .05 level

Tests for Homogeneity of Variances

Cochrans C = Max. Variance/Sum (Variances) = .34, $P < .05$

Bartlett-Box F = 5.11, $P < .05$

Ethnic Groups Interviewed

Race	N-Size	Mean
Amer. Indian	28	19.19
Black	35	15.97
Caucasian	526	18.04
Mex. American	5	14.00
Oriental	4	18.00

Note. The lower mean-scores indicate higher social-sensitivity. This mean-score relationship holds true for all three scales for each Table.

Table 9

Social-Sensitivity by Age

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	846.87	3	282.29	12.54*
Linear Trend	88.13	1	88.13	3.71*
Departure	758.74	2	379.37	16.85*
Quadratic Trend	110.81	1	110.81	4.70*
Departure	647.93	1	647.93	28.78*
Within Groups	13169.06	585	22.51	
Total	14015.94	588		

*Significant at .05 level

Tests for Homogeneity of Variance

Cochrans C = Max. Variance/Sum (Variances) = .31, $P < .05$

Strength of Association*

Linear F = 3.60, $P \not< .05$; Curvil. F = 16.85, $P < .05$

$(w^2-p^2xy) = .05$

Age Categories

Age	N-Size	Mean
12-18	29	18.45
18-39	327	16.87
40-59	127	18.88
Over 60	106	19.77

*When F is significant, p^2 and (w^2-p^2xy) report variance explained, i.e., $(w^2-p^2xy) = .05$ or 5% variance explained.

Table 10

Viewing of Social Issues by Age

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	88.12	3	29.37	2.91*
Linear Trend	13.47	1	13.47	1.32
Departure	74.66	2	37.33	3.95*
Quadratic Trend	82.59	1	82.59	8.19*
Departure	-7.93	1	-7.93	.78
Within Groups	5910.56	585	10.10	
Total	5998.69	588		

*Significant at .05 level

Strength of Association

Curvilinear $F = 8.7$, $P < .05$

$(w^2-p^2xy) = .01$

Age Categories

Age	N-Size	Mean
12-18	29	13.17
18-39	327	11.71
40-59	127	11.72
Over 60	106	12.39

Table 11

Attitudes toward Public Television by Age

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	197.69	3	65.90	5.55*
Linear Trend	27.20	1	27.20	2.24
Departure	170.48	2	85.24	7.18*
Quadratic Trend	49.13	1	49.13	4.07*
Departure	121.35	1	121.35	10.22*
Within Groups	6947.75	585	11.88	
Total	7145.44	588		

*Significant at .05 level

Tests for Homogeneity of Variances

Cochrans C = Max. Variance/Sum (Variances) = .32, $P < .05$

Strength of Association

Curvilinear F = 7.18, $P < .05$

$(w^2-p^2xy) = .02$

Age Categories

Age	N-Size	Mean
12-18	29	12.62
18-39	327	11.99
40-59	127	12.53
Over 60	106	13.55

Income. On the social-sensitivity scale, no significant differences were found as a function of income. On viewing of social issues and attitudes toward public television as a function of income, significant curvilinear trends were found (see Tables 12 and 13). Both quadratic and cubic components obtained significance on viewing of social issues (see Table 12). Only the cubic component obtained significance on attitudes toward public television (see Table 13). The strength of these trends is small. Since 107 subjects out of the 600 sampled did not respond on income, less confidence can be attributed to the results.

Sets. Only the social-sensitivity scale showed a significant difference as a function of number of television-sets-owned. A linear trend was indicated but the strength of association is nearly .00. The mean differences were possibly due more to variance within groups than between. The assumptions of homogeneity were not met (see Table 14).

Hours Watching Commercial Television. None of the three scales showed a significant difference as a function of hours spent watching commercial television.

Hours Watching Public Television. Significant differences were found on all three scales as a function of hours spent watching public television. The best description of the effects of hours watching public television on the social-sensitivity scale is quadratic (see Table 15). The strength of association is fairly small. Except for those watching over 5 hours of public television (N = 11), social-sensitivity apparently increases as a function of increased viewing of public television (see Table 15). On viewing of social issues, a linear trend was found (see Table 16). The strength of association is very small and the assumptions of homogeneity were not met (see Table 16).

Table 12

Viewing of Social Issues by Income

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	244.75	4	61.19	6.95*
Linear Trend	10.33	1	10.33	1.12
Departure	234.42	3	78.14	8.87*
Quadratic Trend	57.75	1	57.75	6.32*
Departure	176.67	2	88.33	10.03*
Cubic Trend	36.73	1	36.73	4.05*
Departure	139.93	1	139.93	15.89*
Within Groups	4298.31	488	8.81	
Total	4543.06	492		

*Significant at .05 level

Strength of Association

Curvilinear $F = 8.87$, $P < .05$

$(w^2-p^2xy) = .05$

Income Categories

Income	N-Size	Mean
Less than $6,000	133	12.13
6-11,000	207	12.48
11-20,000	120	10.82
20-35,000	26	11.61
Over 35,000	7	13.86

Table 13

Attitudes toward Public Television by Income

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	205.50	4	51.37	4.57*
Linear Trend	8.23	1	8.23	.71
Departure	197.26	3	65.75	5.85*
Quadratic Trend	27.78	1	27.78	2.41
Departure	169.49	2	84.74	7.54*
Cubic Trend	62.47	1	62.47	5.47*
Departure	107.02	1	107.02	9.53*
Within Groups	5481.75	488	11.23	
Total	5687.25	492		

*Significant at .05 level

Strength of Association

Curvilinear $F = 5.85$, $P < .05$

$(w^2-p^2xy) = .03$

Income Categories

Income	N-Size	Mean
Less than $6,000	133	12.88
6-11,000	207	12.91
11-20,000	120	11.78
20-35,000	26	10.65
Over 35,000	7	12.86

Table 14

Social-Sensitivity by Sets

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	262.62	4	65.66	2.77*
Linear Trend	102.40	1	102.40	4.29*
Departure	160.22	3	53.41	2.25
Quadratic Trend	.35	1	.35	.01
Departure	159.87	2	79.93	3.39*
Cubic Trend	8.26	1	8.28	.34
Departure	151.61	1	151.61	6.39*
Within Groups	14099.00	594	23.74	
Total	14361.62	598		

*Significant at .05 level

Tests for Homogeneity of Variances

Cochrans C = Max. Variance/Sum (Variances) = .33, $P < .05$

Bartlett-Box F = 2.56, $P < .05$

Strength of Association

Linear F = 4.31, $P < .05$

$(w^2-p^2xy) = .00$

Sets Categories

Sets Owned	N-Size	Mean
None	27	19.00
1	284	18.37
2	205	17.82
3	70	16.49
More than 3	13	16.46

Table 15

Social-Sensitivity by Hours

Watching Public Television

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	736.37	4	184.09	8.03*
Linear Trend	42.50	1	42.50	1.77
Departure	693.87	3	231.29	10.09*
Quadratic Trend	109.13	1	109.13	4.58*
Departure	584.75	2	292.37	12.75*
Cubic Trend	.26	1	.26	.01
Departure	584.49	1	584.49	25.49*
Within Groups	13640.94	595	22.93	
Total	14377.31	599		

*Significant at .05 level

Strength of Association

Curvilinear $F = 10.09$, $P < .05$

$(w^2-p^2xy) = .04$

Number of Hours

Hours	N-Size	Mean
None	173	19.63
Less than 1	182	17.55
1-3	186	17.10
3-5	48	17.62
More than 5	11	18.00

Table 16

Viewing of Social Issues by

Hours Watching Public Television

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	322.87	4	80.72	8.28*
Linear Trend	51.86	1	51.86	5.11*
Departure	271.02	3	90.34	9.27*
Quadratic Trend	14.82	1	14.82	1.46
Departure	256.20	2	128.10	13.14*
Cubic Trend	4.43	1	4.43	.44
Departure	251.77	1	251.77	25.83*
Within Groups	5800.62	595	9.75	
Total	6123.50	599		

*Significant at .05 level

Tests for Homogeneity of Variances

Cochrans C = Max. Variance/Sum (Variances) = .30, $P < .05$

Bartlett-Box F = 3.48, $P < .05$

Strength of Association

Linear F = 5.32, $P < .05$

$p^2xy = .01$

Number of Hours

Hours	N-Size	Means
None	173	19.63
Less than 1	182	17.55
1-3	186	17.10
3-5	48	16.62
More than 5	11	18.00

On attitudes toward public television as a function of hours watching public television, both significant linear and quadratic components were found. The strength of linear association is very small. The strength of the curvilinear trend, .19, is probably exaggerated by the greater mean score of Group 5 where N equals only 11 (see Table 17). An inspection of the means indicates an increase of favorable attitudes toward public television with an increase of hours watching public television (see Table 17). As noted by Scheffe's test for multiple range, the difference between those watching no public television and those watching 3-5 hours is significant (see Table 17). This difference suggests added confidence in the validity of the attitudes toward public television scale.

Education. The best description of the effects of education on all three scales is linear (see Tables 18, 19, and 20). The strength of association is fairly small but consistent for all three scales. Social-sensitivity, viewing of social issues, and attitudes toward public television all show increases as a function of increased level of education. Of particular interest is social-sensitivity as a function of education. Although the linear strength of association is fairly small, Scheffe's Multiple Range Test shows a significant difference between the lowest education level and the highest (see Table 18). It would seem that social-sensitivity, at least in part, is a definite linear function of education.

Discussion

In general, the research questions of this study ask about the predictive relationships of three variables: (1) social-sensitivity, (2) viewing of social issues, and (3) attitudes toward public broadcasting. It might be noted that Guilford and Fruchter consider any correlation above .30 to be potentially useful for predictive validity (Guilford and Fruchter, 1973, p. 347). The predictive validity of all three

Table 17

Attitudes toward Public Television by

Hours Watching Public Television

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between groups	1683.37	4	420.84	44.88*
Linear Trend	251.27	1	251.27	21.42*
Departure	1432.11	3	477.37	50.90*
Quadratic Trend	97.07	1	97.07	8.38*
Departure	1335.04	2	667.52	71.18*
Cubic Trend	6.92	1	6.92	.60
Departure	1328.12	1	1328.12	141.62*
Within Groups	5579.75	595	9.38	
Total	7263.12	599		

*Significant at .05 level

Strength of Association

Linear F = 26.79, $P < .05$; Curvilinear F = 50.90, $P < .05$

$p^2xy = .03$ $(w^2-p^2xy) = .19$

Scheffe's Multiple Range Test

Hours		Mean	$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}_3$	$\bar{X}_5$	$\bar{X}_4$
None	$\bar{X}_1$	14.95	—	2.91	3.88	4.31	4.47*
Less than 1	$\bar{X}_2$	12.04		—	.97	1.40	1.56
1-3	$\bar{X}_3$	11.07			—	.43	.59
More than 5	$\bar{X}_5$	10.64				—	.16
3-5	$\bar{X}_4$	10.48					—

*Significant at .05 level

Table 18

Social-Sensitivity by Education

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	1169.75	4	292.44	13.44*
Linear Trend	819.01	1	819.01	36.82*
Departure	350.74	3	116.91	5.37*
Quadratic Trend	8.62	1	8.62	.39
Departure	342.12	2	171.06	7.86*
Cubic Trend	.03	1	.03	.00
Departure	342.09	1	342.09	14.72*
Within Groups	12861.00	591	21.76	
Total	14030.75	595		

*Significant at .05 level

Strength of Association

Linear F = 37.64, $P < .05$

$p^2xy = .06$

Scheffe's Multiple Range Test

Education		Mean	$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}_3$	$\bar{X}_4$	$\bar{X}_5$
Less than high school	$\bar{X}_1$	19.98	—	1.15	2.93	3.43	4.60*
High school graduate	$\bar{X}_2$	18.83		—	1.78	2.28	3.45
Some college	$\bar{X}_3$	17.05			—	.50	1.67
College graduate	$\bar{X}_4$	16.55				—	1.17
Graduate work	$\bar{X}_5$	15.38					—

*Significant at .05 level

Table 19

Viewing of Social Issues by Education

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	248.56	4	62.14	6.46*
Linear Trend	227.45	1	227.45	23.69*
Departure	21.11	3	7.04	.73
Quadratic Trend	7.45	1	7.45	.78
Departure	13.66	2	6.83	.71
Cubic Trend	11.27	1	11.27	1.17
Departure	2.38	1	2.38	.25
Within Groups	5680.75	591	9.61	
Total	5929.31	595		

*Significant at .05 level

Strength of Association

Linear F = 23.70, P < .05

p^2xy = .03

Education Categories

Education	N-Size	Mean
Less than high school	118	12.78
High school graduate	172	12.21
Some college	193	11.67
College graduate	76	11.45
Graduate work	37	10.13

Table 20

Attitudes toward Public Television

by Education

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Between Groups	240.19	4	60.05	5.20*
Linear Trend	198.10	1	198.10	17.15*
Departure	42.09	3	14.03	1.22
Quadratic Trend	.06	1	.06	.01
Departure	42.03	2	21.01	1.82
Cubic Trend	1.33	1	1.33	.11
Departure	40.70	1	40.70	3.53
Within Groups	6818.69	591	11.54	
Total	7058.87	595		

*Significant at .05 level

Strength of Association

Linear $F = 17.7$, $P < .05$

$p^2xy = .03$

Education Categories

Education	N-Size	Mean
Less than high school	118	13.39
High school graduate	172	12.69
Some college	193	12.19
College graduate	76	11.71
Graduate work	37	11.05

scales in this study was above .30, with fair to moderate linear association (see Table 4, p. 59).

As to the predictive validity of social-sensitivity on viewing of social issues, where y equals the predicted score on viewing of social issues and x equals the obtained score on social-sensitivity, the correlation is .43. It is concluded, therefore, that people who favor the programming of social issues on television will tend to demonstrate higher social-sensitivity.

As to the predictive validity of social-sensitivity on attitudes toward public television, where y equals the predicted score on attitudes toward public television and x equals the obtained score on social-sensitivity, the correlation is .38 (see Table 4, p. 59). It is concluded, therefore, that people who favor public television will generally demonstrate a higher social-sensitivity. However, the variance explained is only 15 percent; other factors should be examined to obtain more complete information as to why people favor public television.

As to the predictive validity of viewing of social issues on attitudes toward public television, where y equals the predicted score on attitudes toward public television and x equals the obtained score on viewing of social issues, the correlation is .56 (see Table 4, p. 59). It would seem, therefore, that people who favor public television also demonstrate a higher interest in viewing social issues on television. Although these two scales do not share the high internal consistency of social-sensitivity, their reliabilities are sufficient to allow for predictive information (see pp. 61-63). It should also be noted that the predictive validity of social-sensitivity would probably improve with improvements in the reliabilities of attitudes toward public television and viewing of social issues (Guilford and Fruchter, 1973, p. 434).

The correlative information provided by the demographic variables adds confidence to the predictive validity of social-sensitivity and viewing of social issues. These two scales follow much the same trends as a function of the demographic variables described in this chapter. In general, those who favor public television and regularly watch it score significantly higher on both social-sensitivity and viewing of social issues. This finding provides confirmation for the existence of alternative programming in public television.

These demographic variables also give some idea as to how other scales might correlate with social-sensitivity, the scale of primary concern to this study. There were no significant differences with social-sensitivity as a function of sex, income, and hours spent watching commercial television. Probably, the scales which correlate highly with the foregoing demographic characteristics, would be unlikely to show a positive association with social-sensitivity.

On the other hand, social-sensitivity did show significant differences as a function of education (see Table 18, p. 79) and hours spent watching public television (see Table 15, p. 75). In general, increases with level of education and number of hours spent watching public television were accompanied with higher scores on social-sensitivity. Other scales which correlate with such characteristics might be expected to show some correlation with social-sensitivity.

The demographic characteristics of race (see Table 8, p. 67), age (see Table 9, p. 68), and number of T.V. sets owned (see Table 14, p. 74) also showed significant differences with social-sensitivity. But the assumptions of homogeneity were not met. On race (see Table 8, p, 67), Blacks (N = 35) and Mexican-Americans (N = 5) scored higher on the social-sensitivity scale than did Whites (N = 526). On age, the age group 18-39 (N = 327) scored higher on the social-sensitivity scale than did other age groups (see Table 9, p. 68). However, the N-sizes are too disparate to make a valid assessment of any of the foregoing results.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study has sought to operationalize the concept of social-sensitivity within the context of ascertainment. In the broadest sense, social-sensitivity is conceived as a particular means of examining social problems. Social problems are perhaps best examined within the perceptions of people. Social issues, a sub-category of social problems, are treated as statements about the value-conflicts inherent in social problems. When these issues are categorized under a sociological framework for social problems, a particular perspective is developed for social-sensitivity. A unidimensional scale, social-sensitivity, was derived in this study as a measure of the perceived salience of social issues. Specifically, this perceived salience is conceived as one means of examining the citizen's sense of social responsibility. The attitude statements of social-sensitivity are developed from several social problem areas. And yet, the items yield a measure of high internal consistency. This finding would suggest that social problems are interrelated in people's perceptions.

More importantly, this study would seem to indicate that audience receptivity to a source, at least in part, is a function of social-sensitivity. Public television is apparently perceived as an important source for those favoring the presentation of social issues. Within the perspective of this study, the public television audience would also seem more sensitive to the underlying issues of social problems. This shared concern and awareness of social issues is one way of evaluating audience receptivity to a source. Social-sensitivity provides a means of

examining this type of value-relationship between source and receiver.

Suggestions for Further Study

Three scales were developed in this study from untried items. The major concern, therefore, was for measures of internal reliability and validity. Social-sensitivity is the primary predictor scale of the study. Since social-sensitivity meets all the criteria for internal consistency, unidimensionality can be assumed. Future studies using the social-sensitivity scale can concentrate on indices of external reliability and validity. In particular, a test-retest reliability should be obtained. Also, a comparison of social-sensitivity with other scales should be made to further examine the predictive validity of social-sensitivity.

The two criterion scales, viewing of social issues and attitudes toward public broadcasting, can probably be used in future studies of external reliability and validity. However, verification of the unidimensionality of these two scales is incomplete. An examination of the reliability coefficients of these two scales (see Table 5) would suggest two considerations for further study: (1) the testing of additional items for equal difficulty in the viewing of social issues scale and (2) the retesting of attitudes toward public television to see if a response bias recurs. The item-whole correlations of the two scales, however, are encouraging; very little work would seem to be needed to improve their reliability. It is also probable that improvement of these two criterion scales would show a higher predictive validity coefficient for social-sensitivity. In particular, the shared-variance of viewing of social issues with social-sensitivity would probably increase if the former were improved. For the purpose of evaluating the role of public television, the viewing of social issues scale is conceptually simple and should be very useful.

The concept of social-sensitivity was developed out of broadcasting ascertainment requirements. But the concept of social-sensitivity is applicable to other situations as well and can be applied to a broad range of communication contexts. New criterion variables can and should be introduced to examine the predictive validity of social-sensitivity. A logical starting point for further use of the social-sensitivity scale might be with the education levels of the university. Social-sensitivity, in this study, is a function of increased education levels and follows a linear trend. Therefore, hypotheses might be formulated that social-sensitivity would positively correlate with other indices that function with increased education. In this way, social-sensitivity could be compared with other variables in a predictable context and variance unique to social-sensitivity could be further explicated.

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APPENDIX A

SOCIAL-SENSITIVITY: CONCEPTUAL CATEGORIES

(1) Family-Community Relationships

- 1. (2) In our uncertain times, parents should teach children to stick to their own business.

+ 2. (5) Children should bear the primary responsibility in caring for elderly parents.

+ 3. (15) Parents should make a habit of discussing social problems with their children.

+ 4. (24) Parents should try to influence the development of their childrens' sense of social responsibility.

- 5. (29) It is really a waste of time for children to become involved in community programs.

(2) Education

+ 1. (6) Sex education can properly be taught in public schools.

- 2. (12) The real purpose of education is to make a living.

- 3. (19) There is very little a parent can do to help a child in school.

+ 4. (21) Education should continue throughout life.

- 5. (26) Quite often, the greatest thing that can happen to a high school student is participation in sports.

- 6. (32) Education serves little purpose for developing good citizenship.

- 7. (37) People can get too much education.

(3) Poverty

+ 1. (8) Free school lunches should be provided for children of low-income families.

+ 2. (9) It is more difficult for the poor family to live up to the moral standards of the community.

- 3. (10) In the United States, low-income children have an equal opportunity within the public school system.

(3) Poverty (Cont.)

- 4. (14) There is nothing the state or community can do to make things much better for the poor.

- 5. (17) In most American communities, the low-income people are poor because of their own laziness.

- 6. (33) In the United States, poor people have an equal chance of being well-thought-of.

(4) Aging

+ 1. (1) The federal government should subsidize inadequate incomes of retired persons.

+ 2. (11) Those who design a flight of steps as the only entrance to a public building are discriminating against the elderly.

+ 3. (13) The elderly, in the low-income bracket, should be given financial assistance to pay for their medical care.

+ 4. (20) Local communities should be willing to spend additional funds in building special facilities for the elderly.

- 5. (36) Homes for the aged represent the only sensible solution in dealing with the elderly.

(5) Crime

+ 1. (3) Prison rehabilitation programs reduce crimes.

- 2. (4) The best way to eliminate crime is to keep criminals locked up.

+ 3. (18) Most criminals can be rehabilitated.

- 4. (27) Drug-users should be given maximum prison sentences.

+ 5. (34) Prisons should be provided with additional tax funds for rehabilitation programs.

+ 6. (35) Given time and enforcement, new laws can change the social attitudes of people.

(6) Religion

+ 1. (7) Religious leaders, if well qualified, should feel free to serve on public school boards.

+ 2. (23) Religious groups should employ social workers to help the community.

- 3. (28) Religious leaders, even if well educated, should stick to the scriptures and leave social problems alone.

+ 4. (30) Religious leaders should speak out against racial prejudice.

(7) Ethnic Minorities

- 1. (16) The Indian boarding school provides the best education for the Indian.

+ 2. (22) Western movies which give a bad image of the Indian should not be shown.

+ 3. (25) Racially integrated schools are usually good for the community.

+ 4. (31) Blacks should feel free to move into any white neighborhood they choose in Oklahoma.

APPENDIX B

SCALES

The untried items, from which the three scales of the study were derived, are here presented in the actual order of the interview. Subjects were asked to respond (1) strongly agree (2) agree (3) uncertain (4) disagree or (5) strongly disagree to each item. In the post hoc analysis, eight demographic variables were presented under "Scale IV."

Scale I: Social-Sensitivity

1. The federal government should subsidize inadequate incomes of retired persons.
2. In our uncertain times, parents should teach their children to stick to their own business.
3. Prison rehabilitation programs reduce crimes.
4. The best way to eliminate crime is to keep criminals locked up.
5. Children should bear the primary responsibility in caring for elderly parents.
6. Sex education can properly be taught in public schools.
7. Religious leaders, if well qualified, should feel free to serve on public school boards.
8. Free school lunches should be provided for children from low-income families.
9. It is more difficult for the poor family to live up to the moral standards of the community.
10. In the United States, children from low-income families have an equal opportunity within the public school system.
11. Those who design a flight of steps as the only entrance to a public building are discriminating against the elderly.
12. The real purpose of education is to make a living.
13. The elderly, in the low-income bracket, should be given financial assistance to pay for their medical care.
14. There is nothing the state or community can do to make things much better for the poor.
15. Parents should make a habit of discussing social problems with their children.

16. The Indian boarding school provides the best education for the Indian.

17. In most American communities, the low-income people are poor because of their own laziness.

18. Most criminals can be rehabilitated.

19. There is very little a parent can do to help a child in school.

20. Local communities should be willing to spend additional funds in building special facilities for the elderly.

21. Education should continue throughout life.

22. Western movies which give a bad image of the Indian should not be shown.

23. Religious groups should employ social workers to help the community.

24. Parents should try to influence the development of their children's sense of social responsibility.

25. Racially integrated schools are usually good for the community.

26. Quite often, the greatest thing that can happen to a high school student is participation in sports.

27. Drug-users should be given maximum prison sentences.

28. Religious leaders, even if well educated, should stick to the scriptures and leave social problems alone.

29. It is really a waste of time for children to become involved in community programs.

30. Religious leaders should speak out against racial prejudice.

31. Blacks should feel free to move into any white neighborhood they choose in Oklahoma.

32. Education serves little purpose for developing good citizenship.

33. In the United States, poor people have an equal chance of being well-thought-of.

34. Prisons should be provided with additional tax funds for rehabilitation programs.

35. Given time and enforcement, new laws can change the social attitudes of people.

36. Homes for the aged represent the only sensible solution in dealing with the elderly.

37. People can get too much education.

Scale II: Viewing of Social Issues

38. Local television stations should develop more programs on community problems and issues.

39. Television stations would be better off if they stayed with entertainment programs and left social problems alone.

40. Television programs on state and local problems are usually dull and boring.

41. Television programs on community problems can be made just as interesting as entertainment programs.

42. Television should try harder to keep people informed on social issues.

43. Television should be free to broadcast anything that makes a profit.

Scale III: Attitudes Toward Public Television

44. Among the people I know, public television (Channel 13 or 11) is watched an increasing amount.

45. There is a growing interest at my residence in watching public television.

46. Public television is rarely watched at my residence.

47. Public television provides some needed entertainment programs that commercial television does not have.

48. Public television is a waste of money.

49. Public television provides a valuable balance in television programming.

50. Public television is dull and boring.

51. Commercial television (such as NBC, ABC, and CBS) has all the good programming we need.

52. Public television is out of touch with the way people think.

53. Public television is just as interesting as commercial television.

54. Public television is more likely than commercial television to make people think.

Scale IV: Demographic Data

1. Sex of respondent.
   (a) Female
   (b) Male

2. Age of respondent.
   (a) 12-18 years
   (b) 18-39 years
   (c) 40-59 years
   (d) Over 60 years

3. Average annual income level of respondent.
   (a) Less than $6,000
   (b) $6-11,000
   (c) $11-20,000
   (d) $20-35,000
   (e) Over $35,000

4. Highest educational level completed by respondent.
   (a) less than high school
   (b) high school graduate
   (c) some college
   (d) undergraduate college degree
   (e) graduate work

5. How many television sets does respondent own?
   (a) none
   (b) 1
   (c) 2
   (d) 3
   (e) more than 3

6. How many hours per day does respondent watch public TV?
   (a) none
   (b) less than 1 hour
   (c) 1-3 hours
   (d) 3-5 hours
   (e) more than 5 hours

7. How many hours per day does respondent watch commercial TV?
   (a) none
   (b) less than 1 hour
   (c) 1-3 hours
   (d) 3-5 hours
   (e) more than 5 hours

8. Respondent's race or ethnic category.
   (a) American Indian
   (b) Black
   (c) Caucasian
   (d) Mexican American
   (e) Oriental

APPENDIX C

SAMPLING PROCEDURES

A state-wide proportionate, randomized sample was taken of six hundred subjects in Oklahoma. A multistage technique was used as follows:

I. The total population of the state was divided into each of the seventy-seven counties of Oklahoma, and then multiplied times six hundred (the number sampled) to determine the sampling proportion of each county.

II. The sampling proportion of each county was drawn from the total population of telephone exchanges within each county. This procedure was implemented by assigning a unique number to each exchange; a table of random numbers was used to determine selection.

III. The exchanges selected were matched to their geographic areas. Finally, the interviewers were given the following instructions to determine interviewees:

(1) Check number of white pages in phone book of town in which you are working.

(2) This will determine how many digits to use in the random number table — i.e., number of digits is equal to number of digits in total number of white pages.

(3) Make a draw from the random number table for each interview which will be necessary in a particular town. This will determine which page of the phone book each interviewee will be located on.

(4) The next applicable random number will determine the column to be used.

(5) The next applicable random number will determine how many names down the column.

(6) If an address determined in this manner is a business, go back to step 1.

(7) Call for an appointment. If you don't get an answer, call again later. Make an attempt to complete the original samples that day. If you can't contact them, pick a new sample.

(8) Upon arriving at an interviewee's house, if no one answers or if you are rejected, go back to step 1 and draw a new random number.

(9) Fill out a card for each interview completed.