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STUDY OF THE EDITORIAL PRACTICES OF A NUMBER OF  
MIDWEST COMMERCIAL AM RADIO STATIONS IN  
THE UNITED STATES

by

159

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## INTRODUCTION

An informed public requires free expression of opinion and thorough discussion of public issues.

The broadcast editorial serves this purpose, stimulates this free expression and discussion and advances the people's right to know.<sup>1</sup>

"The broadcast editorial is the fastest growing form of radio and television program," according to a 1962 report in Broadcasting magazine, the businessweekly of television and radio.<sup>2</sup> Although broadcasters were permitted to editorialize when the Federal Communications Commission revised its famed Mayflower or anti-editorial decision in 1949, the main influx of stations to the practice of editorializing did not occur until Newton N. Minow assumed the Chairmanship of the Commission in early 1961.<sup>3</sup> Minow frequently "stated with vigor his belief in editorializing."<sup>4</sup>

By 1963, 1,357 radio stations and 189 television stations in

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<sup>1</sup> Preamble, NAB Editorializing Code.

<sup>2</sup> "Editorials give station prestige," Broadcasting, July 16, 1962, 43.

<sup>3</sup> "Editorials give....," p. 43.

<sup>4</sup> "Editorials give....," p. 43.

the United States were editorializing.<sup>5</sup>

This rise in editorializing has provided a new role for the broadcaster. He is no longer just a voice-less bystander observing developments in his community. Instead he has been given the right to take the initiative to search for facts and take a position on controversial issues. Now, the broadcaster can become involved to a considerable extent in the affairs of his community.

John E. McMillin, former editor of Sponsor magazine and currently a broadcast advertising consultant, pointed out:

...editorializing, though still in its infancy, is providing an entirely new type of social and civic commentary, is stimulating new interest in a wide variety of community affairs, and is providing many new voices which American democracy has not known before.<sup>6</sup>

Editorials by the broadcast media are the new voices in Democracy giving verbal strength to the consciousness of responsible men. Former National Association of Broadcaster's President LeRoy Collins has urged broadcasters to editorialize and take sides, stating that:

...more of you broadcasters must take sides. You must help Americans and others to understand better this complex, rapidly-changing world and show them how they can become more significant parts of its movement.  
...your voice must be great as well as strong...beyond entertaining people it will challenge them; beyond praising right it will damn the wrong.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>See unpubl. pamphlet by NAB, Broadcast Editorializing (July, 1963).

<sup>6</sup>John E. McMillin, "New Voices in a Democracy," Television Quarterly, III, Summer (1964), 50.

<sup>7</sup>"Taking sides necessity, Collins thinks," Broadcasting, July 16, 1962, 72.

However, not all radio and television stations in the United States editorialize. Just as the broadcast media has the right to editorialize, it also has the right not to editorialize. The Communications Subcommittee of the House of Representatives, headed by Congressman Walter Rogers, has told the Federal Communications Commission that the Commission should not revoke licenses of stations that fail to editorialize, adding that "under no circumstances should the Commission consider as an adverse factor a station's refusal to editorialize."<sup>8</sup>

The United States Government, through the Federal Communications Commission, has given radio and television stations of the nation the right to editorialize. The choice either to editorialize or not to editorialize is left with the individual station. However, with this free choice broadcasters must realize the right of the government to exercise regulatory powers. Among the fundamental hypotheses of the Radio Act of 1927 and carried into the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended, is this governing philosophy:

The government has discretionary regulatory powers. The Act (Radio Act of 1927) grants certain specific powers of regulation, but since not all situations can be anticipated the regulatory agency is also granted considerable freedom to use its own discretion. The limit on its discretion is defined by the "public interest, convenience and necessity."<sup>9</sup>  
(Author's insert in parentheses)

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<sup>8</sup>McMillin, p. 48.

<sup>9</sup>Sydney W. Head, "Broadcasting in America; A Survey of Television and Radio (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1956), p. 131.



## Purpose

The purpose of this study was to: (1) survey the methods by which editorial subjects are selected and presented by a number of Midwestern commercial AM radio stations; (2) to study the editorials given by these stations for purpose, subject matter, organization of material, and language used; (3) to determine why a number of commercial AM radio stations in the Midwest do not editorialize, and (4) to determine some of the attitudes of Midwest broadcasters toward the fairness doctrine and Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended.

It was believed that the accumulation of such knowledge would be beneficial to persons interested in editorial practices by Midwest commercial AM radio stations. Not only has the writer attempted to provide an understanding of how editorial subjects are selected and presented by radio stations which do editorialize, but he also has reported the reasons given by many stations which do not editorialize.

Since the broadcasting industry is responsible to the government, through the Federal Communications Commission, governmental control upon editorializing practices are evident, particularly through the fairness doctrine and Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended. Comments were solicited from the broadcasters concerning the fairness doctrine and Section 315 and the effect these governmental regulations have on a station's editorializing practices. Recently, in an editorial of Broadcasting magazine, Section 315 was attacked as "unconstitutional" and the fairness doctrine was termed "fuzzy ridiculous and equally illegal."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>(Editorial), Broadcasting, Nov. 23, 1964, 96.

## Problem

The problem of the study was: (1) to collect data concerning the selection and presentation of editorials by commercial AM radio stations in the Midwest; (2) to select a method for analyzing sample editorials by the stations for purpose, subject matter, organization of material, and language used; (3) to determine what reasons are given for not editorializing by the numerous other Midwest commercial AM radio stations; (4) to determine the attitudes of Midwest broadcasters toward the fairness doctrine and Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended, and (5) to present these findings in a useful tabular form.

Specifically, the study sought to collect and analyze the following information:

1. Concerning the selection and presentation of editorials:

- a. Who participates in determining editorial policies of the stations?
- b. How long have the stations editorialized?
- c. What are the usual lengths of the editorials?
- d. Who usually selects the subjects for the editorials?
- e. Who writes the editorials?
- f. Who has final approval before the editorials are broadcast?
- g. Who usually broadcasts the editorials?
- h. Are editorials repeated?
- i. During what times of the day are editorials presented?

2. Stations' attitudes toward their editorializing practices:
  - a. Are the stations' images being improved?
  - b. Are the editorials costing the stations business?
  - c. Are the editorials costing the stations listeners?
  - d. Should stations endorse political candidates for public office?
3. Concerning the station's attitudes toward the fairness doctrine and Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended:
  - a. Is the fairness doctrine hampering editorial practices?
  - b. Should the fairness doctrine be written into the Communications Act?
  - c. Is the application of Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended, keeping stations from editorializing?
4. From the stations which do not editorialize:
  - a. Have the stations ever editorialized?
  - b. Reasons given for not currently editorializing.
  - c. Do the stations plan to editorialize in the future, and if they do, how soon?

#### Definition of Terms

For clarity throughout this study the following are definitions of terms used:

BROADCASTING--The dissemination of radio communications intended

to be received by the public, directly or by intermediary or relay stations.<sup>11</sup>

BROADCASTER--One who or that which broadcasts.<sup>12</sup>

BROADCAST EDITORIAL--An on-the-air expression of the opinion of the station licensee, clearly identified as such, on a subject of public interest.<sup>13</sup>

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION--A board of seven commissioners, appointed by the President of the United States under the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended, with power to regulate all electrical communications systems (radio, telegraph, cable, telephone) in the United States. Also known as the FCC.<sup>14</sup>

LICENSEE--The holder of a radio station license granted or continued in force under authority of Communications Act of 1934, as Amended.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Communications Act of 1934, as Amended, Sec. 3 (o).

<sup>12</sup> Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language, ed. William Allen Neilson, 2nd ed. (Springfield, Mass.: G. and C. Merriam Co., 1956), p. 339.

<sup>13</sup> NAB, Editorializing on the Air, 2nd ed. (Washington, D. C., 1963), p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 2nd ed. (Springfield, Mass.: G. and C. Merriam Co., 1956), p. 303.

<sup>15</sup> Communications Act of 1934, Sec. 3 (c).



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS--The trade association of the broadcasting industry. Also called the NAB.<sup>16</sup>

RADIO STATION--A station equipped to engage in radio communication or radio transmission of energy.<sup>17</sup>

FAIRNESS DOCTRINE--Policy of the Federal Communications Commission. When a licensee allows his facilities to be used for the expression of an opinion on a controversial issue, a reasonable opportunity must be afforded for the presentation of opposing viewpoints.<sup>18</sup>

SECTION 315--Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended. This is a precise law of Congress calling for equal disposition of time between opposing (political) candidates.<sup>19</sup>

#### THE PROCEDURE

The purpose of this study was to investigate editorial practices of commercial AM radio stations in the Midwest. The term "commercial AM radio stations" as used throughout this report denotes radio stations operating in the United States on the AM radio band in accordance with regulations by the Federal Communications Commission, with their income derived largely from the sale of time for commercial advertisement.

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<sup>16</sup>Head, p. 138.

<sup>17</sup>Communications Act, Sec. 3 (k).

<sup>18</sup>NAB, Editorializing on Air, p. 13.

<sup>19</sup>NAB, Editorializing on Air, p. 13.

All of the radio stations which were used in the study were located in the eight states which were in proximity to Kansas, the selected state in which the study originated. In addition to Kansas, the other states included in the study were: Colorado, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and Wyoming.

To have uniformity throughout the study in reporting data, the radio stations were classified by their daytime power, which was also, in most cases, their maximum power.<sup>20</sup> Excluded from the study were: FM radio stations as well as radio stations which operate on the AM radio band and derive their income from state support, private contributions or other non-profit funds. FM stations were eliminated because the majority of them were affiliated with an AM radio station used in the study.

It was determined that a mailed questionnaire would serve the needs of the study better than other methods of obtaining the required information. Geographical dispersion and the large number of respondents eliminated the personal interview method because of time and costs. A letter requesting open end information, as a method, was eliminated because the resulting information would be difficult to tabulate because of widely divergent data and would not necessarily produce the specific responses to certain questions in keeping with the study's purpose.

The response toward editorializing by Kansas radio stations was of the most interest to the author. After consulting the 1964 Radio

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<sup>20</sup>As listed in 1965 Yearbook issue of Broadcasting (Washington, D. C., 1965).

and Television Directory<sup>21</sup> compiled by Kansas State University, 56 Kansas radio stations were selected as a sample for the study. This constituted all of the commercial AM radio stations in the state which were listed in the Directory.

For a more meaningful comparative basis to study the Midwest broadcaster's practices and attitudes toward editorializing, additional radio stations were chosen from the Radio Annual and Television Year Book.<sup>22</sup> Commercial AM radio stations from the cities which had two or more radio stations in the states of Nebraska, Missouri, Iowa, and Oklahoma were added. This method of selection added 20 radio stations from Nebraska, 42 from Missouri, 33 from Iowa, and 23 from Oklahoma. Colorado, a neighboring state to Kansas, has the two metropolitan areas of Denver and Colorado Springs which added 16 radio stations to the sample. To complete the sample, Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Amarillo, Texas, were added, bringing 3 and 6 radio stations respectively into the sample. Cheyenne and Amarillo were selected because of their proximity to the previous stations selected for the sample of this study. The number of radio stations selected for the study was 199.

The second step of the study was that of preparing a short postal card questionnaire to determine which commercial AM radio stations in the sample editorialized and which stations did not editorialize. A

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<sup>21</sup>Office of Extension Radio and Television, Radio and Television Directory (Kansas State University, 1964), pp. 2-8.

<sup>22</sup>Radio Annual and Television Year Book, ed. Charles A. Alicoate, 22nd ed. (Radio Daily Corp., 1964).



dual postal card was selected for use in the inquiry. One postal card bore the name of the station manager, the station's call letter and address, and explained the purpose of the postal card inquiry. The manager was asked to fill out the questionnaire on the attached postal card and return. The attached postal card with the questionnaire contained these three questions: (1) does your station editorialize; (2) how often, and (3) will you please assist me in this study by completing a questionnaire which would be mailed to you at a later time, after January 1? (See Appendix A). Each postal card which was returned to the author was marked with the replying station's call letters.

October 10, 1964, the postal cards were mailed to the 199 commercial AM radio stations which had been selected for use in the sample. The distribution of the mailing of the postal cards by states is reported in Table I and the postal card return by states and population of the areas served by the radio stations is reported in Table II.

As explained earlier in this section of the study, the 199 postal cards were distributed among 8 states. All 56 commercial AM radio stations in Kansas were mailed a postal card. Radio stations which were located in communities served by two or more radio stations were situated in Iowa (33), Missouri (42), Nebraska (20), and Oklahoma (23). The 3 postal cards mailed to Wyoming and the 6 postal cards mailed to Texas were the total number of commercial AM radio stations in Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Amarillo, Texas, the only communities selected from their respective states for the study. Likewise, the 16 radio stations in Colorado were located in Denver and Colorado Springs.

TABLE 1  
 NUMBER OF 199 POSTAL CARDS DISTRIBUTED TO MIDWEST  
 COMMERCIAL AM RADIO STATIONS IN 8  
 MIDWEST STATES

States	No. of cards	States	No. of cards
Colorado	16	Nebraska	20
Iowa	33	Oklahoma	23
Kansas	56	Texas	6
Missouri	42	Wyoming	3

Table II, on the next page, reports the return of the postal cards by the states and areas of population served by the 150 radio stations which replied to the postal card inquiry. The largest group, 47 radio stations, were located in communities of between 100,000 to 1 million persons. Kansas led the states in the number of radio stations responding with 47, followed by Missouri with 28, and Iowa with 24. The most stations, classified by both state location and population of areas served, were in Kansas where 21 radio stations were in communities of under 15,000 persons.

Two questionnaires were then designed: (1) for the commercial AM radio stations which signified that they did editorialize, and (2) for the commercial AM radio stations which responded to the postal card inquiry that they did not editorialize. In selecting and preparing questions for

TABLE II

NUMBER OF MIDWEST COMMERCIAL AM RADIO STATIONS WHICH REPLIED TO THE

POSTAL CARD INQUIRY CLASSIFIED BY STATES AND POPULATION\*

OF THE AREAS SERVED BY THE 150 RADIO STATIONS

States	Under 15,000 population	15,000 to 50,000 population	50,000 to 100,000 population	100,000 to 1 million population	Over 1 million population	TOTAL
Colorado			3	6		9
Iowa	1	10	5	8		24
Kansas	21	14	1	10	1	47
Missouri	2	8	4	3	11	28
Nebraska	7	2		8		17
Oklahoma	1	6	1	9		17
Texas				6		6
Wyoming			2			2
TOTAL	32	40	13	47	18	150

\*1960 Census, U. S. Department of Census

the questionnaires, John E. McMillin's article, "New Voices in a Democracy,"<sup>23</sup> was used as a guide, as was a special report on editorializing by radio and television stations in Broadcasting magazine.<sup>24</sup> The two articles dealt almost completely with the radio and television stations which do editorialize. Very little reference was directed to AM radio stations which do not editorialize. Both articles reported the methods used in selecting and presenting editorials, but did not discuss broadcasters' attitudes toward the fairness doctrine or Section 315, of the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended, in relationship with editorial practices.

Since the questionnaire was the tool used in gathering the data, extra care was taken to follow Pauline Young's advice:

...questionnaires...are good because they are as brief as is consistent with complete understanding of the data desired; they are important enough to be sent to important and busy people; they use the language and the definitions of units and terms with which the average person is familiar; the possibility for multiple interpretations are few; a minimum of time and effort is required for filling out these questionnaires; a maximum of checking or underscoring of replies is possible; factual data rather than estimates or opinions are requested; the data are logically grouped.<sup>25</sup>

Dr. Forest L. Whan and Dr. Kenneth E. Thomas, two members of the Kansas State University administration who are familiar with broadcasting

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<sup>23</sup>McMillin, pp. 22-52.

<sup>24</sup>(special report), Broadcasting, July 16, 1962, 43-74.

<sup>25</sup>Pauline Young, Scientific Social Surveys and Research (New York, 1939), p. 160.



operations and regulations served as respondents in the pilot study of the questionnaires. Dr. Whan is a noted international researcher on audience analysis, owner of two commercial AM radio stations, and current Director of Summer School and Institutional Research. Dr. Kenneth E. Thomas is Director of Information. In a meeting with the two men the questionnaires were discussed as to organization, and phrasing of questions for clarity. Dr. Whan and Dr. Thomas suggested a further test of the questionnaires by selecting two station managers from the sample which had returned postal cards indicating they would help with the study. The questionnaires designed for use by the radio stations which did editorialize were mailed to Grover C. Cobb, general manager of KVGB, Great Bend, Kansas, and a member of the Presidential Freedom of Information Committee. The questionnaire for use by the stations which did not editorialize was personally given to Robert E. Schmidt, general manager of KAYS, Hays, Kansas, a member of the Associated Press Radio Board and the National Association of Broadcasters Television Code Board. After permitting an adequate period for the station managers to complete the questionnaires, a personal visit with the managers disclosed that they had experienced no problems in interpretation or in answering the questions. Both completed questionnaires from these station managers are included in this study's data.

Of the original 150 postal cards returned, 6 radio stations did not want to assist in the study. Two questionnaires to KVGB and KAYS were completed on a personal interview basis. Therefore, on January 18, 1965, questionnaires were mailed to the remaining 142 radio stations.



Out of the total number of questionnaires, 89 were mailed to the commercial AM radio stations which indicated they editorialized and 53 were mailed to the commercial AM radio stations which did not editorialize. The questionnaire designed for the stations which did editorialize is in Appendix B of this study and the questionnaire designed for the stations which did not editorialize is in Appendix C. The cover letter which accompanied the questionnaires is in Appendix D.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Growth of Editorializing in Broadcasting

Little is known about the exact origin of the broadcast editorial, however it is generally acknowledged to have been developed from the historical right of the print media of America to editorialize.<sup>26</sup> This right is a fundamental liberty guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution which states, "Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press."<sup>27</sup>

The print media's conception of editorializing dates back to the formative years of our nation, when such notable journalists as Benjamin Harris, John Peter Zenger and James and Benjamin Franklin exercised the right.<sup>28</sup> Harris printed the first and only issue of "Publick Occurrences"

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<sup>26</sup>Edwin Emery and Henry Ladd Smith, The Press and America, (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1954), p. 175.

<sup>27</sup>First Amendment, U. S. Constitution.

<sup>28</sup>Highlights in the History of the American Press, ed. Edwin H. Ford and Edwin Emery (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1954), p. 54.

on September 25, 1690, in which he editorially commented on the manner in which Indian Allies of the British had treated French captives.<sup>29</sup>

However, radio's history as a mass medium only goes as far back as the early 1920's,<sup>30</sup> and even though the editorial concept did exist at this time there appeared to be a coolness by broadcasters toward the idea of broadcast editorials during the early years of commercial broadcasting. John E. McMillin, broadcast advertising consultant to the NAB, attributed the indifference by broadcasters to three reasons:

For one thing, radio during the 1920's and the 1930's developed primarily as an entertainment medium, with news coverage added as an important programming element. A broadcaster...did not see himself fulfilling the same functions...as a local newspaper editor. Nor did he consider he was in the same kind of a profession. A second reason...during the 1921-1941 period, was the emergence, in radio, of a large number of well-known news commentators whose regular programs reflected strong points of view on numerous controversial subjects. Such men as Kaltenborn, Heatter, Gibbons, Winchell, Thomas, and others provided the radio audience with a spectrum of personal opinion, essentially editorial...A third reason...was a purely competitive one. Radio men were competing with newspaper publishers for advertising revenue, and they did not hesitate to attack what they thought was a flaw in the newspaper armor. This was the suspicion...that newspapers were biased, partial, and unreliable in their editorial approaches.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Highlights in..., p. 54.

<sup>30</sup> Llewellyn White, "The Growth of American Radio," Mass Communications, ed. Wilbur Schramm (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1960), pp. 39-69.

<sup>31</sup> McMillin, p. 30.

The earliest report of any formal editorial activity by a radio station came in 1941 in an outgrowth of the Federal Communications Commission's "Mayflower Case."<sup>32</sup> In its licensing renewal procedure for radio station WAAB, Boston, the FCC noted that the station had a policy of broadcasting editorials urging the election of candidates for political office or supporting one side or another of various controversial public issues. According to the FCC's findings, WAAB had started editorializing early in 1937 and had continued to editorialize through September, 1938.<sup>33</sup>

The Commission did renew the license of the station after determining that the editorializing practice had stopped, however in its decision the Commission stated:

A truly free radio cannot be used to advocate the causes of the licensee. It cannot be used to support the candidacies of his friends. It cannot be devoted to the support of principles he happens to regard most favorably. In brief, the broadcaster cannot be an advocate.<sup>34</sup>

Although no exact facts and figures are available concerning the number of radio stations which were editorializing at the time of the ruling, it could be assumed that there were only a few, otherwise the editorializing practices probably would have attracted the attention of the Commission earlier. It is interesting to note that the previous licensing renewal period for WAAB was in 1938, since the Communications

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<sup>32</sup>Frederick W. Ford, "The Fairness Doctrine," Journal of Broadcasting, VIII, Winter (1963-64), 4.

<sup>33</sup>Ford, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup>Ford, p. 4.



Act requires stations to renew licenses every three years,<sup>35</sup> which is during the period when the editorializing was said to have been taking place. The FCC, in 1938, evidently did not comment upon the practice at that time.

Broadcasting magazine in retracing the history of editorializing in broadcasting observed, "the huge majority of licensees had, at this time (1941), given no thought to plans of their own to 'advocate'."<sup>36</sup>

A 1947 study by Audience Surveys, Incorporated, which queried a cross-section of AM radio station managers on views regarding editorializing, reported that 88 per cent of the station managers believed they should have the right to editorialize and 55 per cent were sure they would editorialize if given the chance.<sup>37</sup> The study also disclosed that 79 per cent of the station managers thought editorials would boost radio station prestige.<sup>38</sup> This growing support by broadcasters in addition to objections to the ban on editorials by Congressmen, journalists, and members of the Commission itself,<sup>39</sup> led to an eventual reappraisal of the issue. Thus in 1948, with the belief that further clarification of

<sup>35</sup>Communications Act of 1934, as Amended, Sec. 307 (d).

<sup>36</sup>"Freedom to editorialize came in 1949," Broadcasting, July 16, 1962, 56.

<sup>37</sup>Roy E. Carter, Jr., "Radio Editorializing Aboard the 'New Mayflower'," Journalism Quarterly, XXVIII, Fall (1951), 470.

<sup>38</sup>Carter, p. 470.

<sup>39</sup>"Freedom came....," p. 58.

the obligations of broadcasters in the field of news, commentary and opinion was necessary, the Commission ordered hearings.<sup>40</sup>

Testimony was taken from 49 witnesses representing broadcasters, various interested organizations, and the general public at the hearing.<sup>41</sup> The Commission revised its "Mayflower" position in a report on June 1, 1949, and allowed that a broadcaster might editorialize "provided he followed certain editorial guidelines or principles of fairness."<sup>42</sup>

Even though editorializing by radio stations was prohibited during the years 1941 to 1949, a study by Professor Mitchel V. Charnley, University of Minnesota, revealed that some stations had engaged in the practice during the prohibited period.<sup>43</sup> According to the replies to a questionnaire circulated to 35 radio stations which were considered leaders in the field of news on radio, 7 radio stations (20 per cent of those answering the questionnaire) reported they had aired editorials since the middle part of 1949, when the ban on editorializing was lifted, and some admitted editorializing previous to that time.<sup>44</sup> One station commented:

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<sup>40</sup>Ford, p. 5.

<sup>41</sup>McMillin, p. 32.

<sup>42</sup>McMillin, p. 32.

<sup>43</sup>Carter, p. 471.

<sup>44</sup>Carter, p. 471.

WOR has continually... expressed ...its own editorial viewpoints...we will continue, only now with the blessings of the FCC.<sup>45</sup>

The remaining 28 radio stations (80 per cent of those answering the questionnaire) said they had not editorialized in the short period of time following the revocation of the "Mayflower" ruling.<sup>46</sup> Expressing the general opinion of the stations which did not editorialize, one station manager said:

We feel that the right to editorialize is a precious right to be defended but to be employed sparingly... we are convinced the public is confident in...radio news because of the resolute refusal of most American radio stations to dilute news broadcasts with editorial comment.<sup>47</sup>

In summarizing his study, Professor Charnley pointed out:

...many of the stations which did not editorialize shunned editorials because they regarded impartiality as one of the special strengths of the (radio) industry...other respondents took an apologetic tack and offered the opinion that in failing to take a stand on significant controversial issues--especially local ones--a broadcaster might be shirking a responsibility.<sup>48</sup>  
(Author's insert in parentheses)

In another 1951 study, Ben Clifford Markland, Northwestern University, solicited comments by a questionnaire from 307 broadcasters. Out of the 117 broadcasters who responded, 33.3 per cent reported they had started editorializing after the "Mayflower" decision and their

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<sup>45</sup>Carter, p. 471.

<sup>46</sup>Carter, p. 471.

<sup>47</sup>Carter, p. 471.

<sup>48</sup>Carter, p. 469.



editorial subjects were primarily on local and state issues.<sup>49</sup>

Through the 1950's the trend toward editorializing in broadcasting was slow. An extensive study the National Association of Broadcasters conducted in 1962 disclosed that only 6 per cent of the radio stations were editorializing previous to 1952 and just 12 per cent had editorialized from 1952 to 1957.<sup>50</sup> According to John E. McMillin, "by 1958, a handful of radio stations had clearly demonstrated to the industry that a station could operate as a forceful, meaningful editorial voice."<sup>51</sup> A rough estimate derived from the NAB study sets the percentage of radio and television stations editorializing in 1958 at 18 per cent.<sup>52</sup> According to the Television Information Office, only 4 television stations were editorializing in 1947, 20 editorializing in 1958, and 18 in 1959.<sup>53</sup>

Further proof that the broadcast editorial remained undeveloped by the majority of the radio stations during the late 1950's was contained in a 1958 article by Roy Wetzel in Journalism Quarterly.<sup>54</sup> Wetzel

<sup>49</sup>See unpubl. thesis (Northwestern University, 1951), by Ben Clifford Markland, "Editorializing Practices of American Radio Stations; a study of the Mayflower Decision and its revocation."

<sup>50</sup>"Editorials give...", p. 43.

<sup>51</sup>McMillin, p. 33.

<sup>52</sup>Editorials give..., p. 43.

<sup>53</sup>McMillin, p. 33.

<sup>54</sup>Roy Wetzel, "Editorializing on the Air by U. S. Television Stations," Journalism Quarterly, XXXV, Fall (1958), 472.

quoted figures used in a speech by FCC Chairman John C. Doerfer in a speech to the NAB on April 29, 1958, which said that out of more than 3,000 radio stations, only 5 per cent editorialized regularly and 35 per cent occasionally.<sup>55</sup>

At about this same time, the University of Michigan Journalism Department reported 34.3 per cent of television broadcasters editorialized while 65.7 per cent did not.<sup>56</sup> Of the stations which did not editorialize, 73.9 per cent said they did not because they believed "stations should maintain an impartial attitude to best serve public interest of all listeners."<sup>57</sup> Others said their staffs were too small, either to have the time or the proper background, to prepare the editorials. Of the stations which did editorialize, 14.7 per cent did so regularly and 20 per cent occasionally.<sup>58</sup> Wetzel concluded that his findings seem "to support the general statement that most stations do not...editorialize, and to suggest two major reasons why they do not-- concern over 'impartiality' and staff limitations."<sup>59</sup>

Shortly after 1958, the real movement into editorializing began.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Wetzel, p. 472.

<sup>56</sup>Wetzel, p. 472.

<sup>57</sup>Wetzel, p. 472.

<sup>58</sup>Wetzel, p. 473.

<sup>59</sup>Wetzel, p. 473.

<sup>60</sup>McMillin, p. 33.



Some FCC Commissioners' attitudes toward editorializing became so enthusiastic that in July, 1960, the Commission issued a report, outlining the programming obligations of a station licensee, which specifically listed editorializing as one of the "major elements usually necessary to meet the public interest, needs and desires of the community in which the station is located."<sup>61</sup>

After Newton N. Minow assumed the office of Commission chairman in early 1961, he frequently stated with vigor his belief in editorializing.<sup>62</sup> Minow told the NAB's First Editorializing Conference in March, 1962:

I want to talk today about broadcasting's inescapable duty to make its voice ring with intelligence and leadership. The plain and unhappy fact is that our traditional avenues of communication are contracting, not expanding. We are witnessing an odd and distressing phenomenon. The population is increasing at an explosive rate...but in the eye of this hurricane the number of metropolitan newspapers which traditionally have served our people is decreasing.

I believe it is a matter of urgent national importance that radio and television reach out for their greatest potential--for broadcasting opens up a dimension in communications which the more traditional processes of the printed word cannot achieve.<sup>63</sup>

Broadcasting conducted a nationwide survey of broadcast editorializing in the summer of 1962.<sup>64</sup> Summarizing the information received

<sup>61</sup>McMillin, p. 33.

<sup>62</sup>"Freedom came...", p. 60.

<sup>63</sup>McMillin, pp. 33-34.

<sup>64</sup>"Editorials give...", p. 43.

from 205 radio and television stations which were editorializing in all parts of the country and in all sizes of markets, the magazine reported:

One out of six editorializing stations have aired their editorial opinions less than a year.

One out of 16 editorializing stations have done so for more than 10 years.

Over half of the stations editorialize daily or five days a week.

The editorial board system is the usual method of selecting editorials.

Management keeps a tight reign over editorial policy.

Five out of six of the editorializing stations (83 per cent) report this practice of taking a stand on issues of the day has improved their position as a competitor to local newspapers.

Nearly half of the reporting stations run their editorials anywhere from three to eight times a day.

One out of five editorializing stations have taken a position on political candidates.<sup>65</sup>

In July, 1963, the National Association of Broadcasters conducted a postal card editorializing survey of the broadcast industry and reported 1,357 radio stations and 189 television stations were engaged in the editorializing practice.<sup>66</sup> The percentage of radio stations that editorialized and the percentage of television stations that editorialized was the same--32 per cent.<sup>67</sup> Of the radio stations which did editorialize, 64 per cent did so on an irregular basis, 24 per cent on a daily basis and 12 per cent weekly.<sup>68</sup> The editorializing pattern of the television

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<sup>65</sup>"Editorials give....," p. 43.

<sup>66</sup>NAB Pamphlet..., p. 1.

<sup>67</sup>NAB Pamphlet..., p. 1.

<sup>68</sup>NAB Pamphlet..., p. 1.

stations was practically the same as the editorializing pattern of radio with the heaviest concentration (57 per cent) also on an irregular basis.<sup>69</sup> When asked if they editorialized on political issues, 53 per cent of both the radio and television stations answered they had, however only 12 per cent of the radio stations and 6 per cent of the television stations said they had editorialized for or against political candidates.<sup>70</sup>

The last study to be reported on broadcast editorializing was conducted by the NAB in 1964.<sup>71</sup> An eight-page questionnaire was used to contact the 388 radio stations and 177 television stations which had indicated in the 1963 NAB study that they editorialized on a regular basis.<sup>72</sup> The depth study, designed to obtain extensive information about the editorial practice of broadcast stations, received replies from 42 per cent of the radio stations and 77 per cent of the television stations which received questionnaires.<sup>73</sup> General conclusions from the study were: (1) less than half of the radio stations and nearly

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<sup>69</sup> NAB Pamphlet..., p. 1.

<sup>70</sup> NAB Pamphlet..., p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> NAB, A Preliminary Tabular Report on the NAB Depth Study of Broadcasting Stations' Editorial Practices and Policies (Washington, D. C., 1964), p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> NAB, A Preliminary..., p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> NAB, A Preliminary..., p. 2.



three-fourths of the television stations which were editorializing regularly in 1963 were still editorializing regularly in 1964; (2) one half of the radio stations and practically all of the television stations which were broadcasting editorials daily, did so less than four times a day; (3) two-fifths of the editorial subjects were selected by an editorial policy board and nearly 70 per cent of the editorials were prepared by editorial writers or station managers; (4) just over half of the editorials were presented on the air by the station manager; (5) less than 20 per cent of the stations did not editorialize on political issues or editorialize for or against political candidates, and (6) local issues were emphasized practically nine-tenths of the time in the station's editorials.<sup>74</sup>

#### History of the Fairness Doctrine

Among the purposes of this study was one to determine Midwest broadcaster's attitudes toward the fairness doctrine and Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended. In order that the broadcaster's opinions in this study might be more meaningful, the histories of the fairness doctrine and Section 315 were reviewed.

The history of the fairness doctrine can be traced back to the early legislative acts in broadcasting by the United States Congress.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>NAB, A Preliminary...., pp. 3-18.

<sup>75</sup>"Applicability of the Fairness Doctrine in the Handling of Controversial Issues of Public Importance," Federal Register, XXIX, 145 (July 25, 1964), 10423.

Congress expressed its concern that the air waves be used as a vital means of communication, capable of making a major contribution to the development of an informed public opinion. It was to encourage these capabilities within the American institutional framework that Congress legislated in this field.<sup>76</sup>

Congress' intentions through the Federal Radio Act of 1927 and later the Communications Act of 1934 was:

...radio should be maintained as a medium of free speech for the general public, rather than an outlet for the views of a few, and that the responsibility held by the broadcast licensee must be exercised in a manner which would serve the community and the various civic groups.<sup>77</sup>

Early seeds of the fairness doctrine were planted in 1926 when Congressman (later Senator) White, in debating enactment of the Radio Act of 1927, said:

We have reached the definite conclusion that the right of all our people to enjoy this means of communication can be preserved only by repudiation of the idea underlying the 1912 law that anyone who will, may transmit and by the assertion in its stead of the doctrine that the right of the public to service is superior to the right of any individual to use the ether... licenses should be issued only to those stations whose operation would render a benefit to the public...If enacted into law, the broadcasting privilege will not be the right of selfishness. It will rest upon an assurance of public interest to be served.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> "Applicability of...", p. 10425.

<sup>77</sup> "Applicability of...", p. 10425.

<sup>78</sup> "Applicability of...", p. 10425.

A general reallocation program began on November 1, 1928, outlining the frequencies and hours of operation of every radio station in the country.<sup>79</sup> During this period, the Radio Commission received numerous applications from organizations which had been using their facilities primarily for promotion of their own viewpoint. While previously the Commission would grant the superior right for a license to the station with the longest record of continuous service when two broadcasting stations had equal claims for privileges, an exception was made in the case of stations which served as outlets for the presentation of only one point of view. At that time, in denying the Great Lakes Broadcasting Company an application for modification of license, the Commission said:

Broadcasting stations are licensed to serve the public and not the purpose of furthering the private or selfish interests of individuals or groups of individuals. The standard of public interest, convenience, or necessity means nothing if it does not mean this.

It would not be fair, indeed it would not be good service, to the public to allow a one-sided presentation of the political issues or a campaign. Insofar as a program consists of discussion of public questions, public interest requires ample play for the free and fair competition of opposing views...and the commission believes that the principle applies not only to addresses by political candidates but to all discussions of issues of importance to the public.<sup>80</sup>

Also in 1928, when the Chicago Federation of Labor was denied a modification of license the Commission said:

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<sup>79</sup> FERC, Second Annual Report (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1928), pp. 200-214.

<sup>80</sup> FERC, Third Annual Report (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1929), pp. 32-33.



...there is no place for a station catering to any group, but that all stations should cater to the general public and serve public interest as against group or class interest.<sup>81</sup>

With the enactment of the Communications Act of 1934 on June 19, 1934, the newly created Federal Communications Commission continued to support the fairness principles.<sup>82</sup> In 1936, an application for a construction permit by Young People's Association for the propagation of the Gospel was turned down because the applicant's policy of refusing to permit the use of its broadcast facilities by persons or organizations wishing to present any viewpoint different from that of the applicant.<sup>83</sup> Five years later the Commission issued its Sixth Annual Report which mentioned:

In carrying out the obligation to render a public service, stations are required to furnish well-rounded rather than one-sided discussion of public questions.<sup>84</sup>

Probably the most famous of the decisions establishing the guiding principles of the fairness doctrine came in 1941 when the Commission denied an application by the Mayflower Broadcasting Corporation.<sup>85</sup> The case, which became known as the "Mayflower Case," brought this statement from the Commission:

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<sup>81</sup>FRC, 3rd Ann. Rept., p. 36.

<sup>82</sup>Walter B. Emery, Broadcasting and Government (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1961), p. 24.

<sup>83</sup>"Applicability of....," p. 10425.

<sup>84</sup>"Applicability of....," p. 10426.

<sup>85</sup>Ford, p. 4.

...a truly free radio cannot be used to advocate the causes of the licensee. It cannot be used to support the candidacies of his friends. It cannot be devoted to the support of principles he happens to regard most favorably.<sup>86</sup> In brief, the broadcaster cannot be an advocate.

Charles A. Siepmann, New York University, discussed the "Mayflower Case" in a 1950 text:

The broadcasters' case was based on two main contentions. It was argued, first, that regulation by the FCC had originally been imposed because of the shortage of frequencies available and the consequently privileged position of the licensee in securing access to the air...secondly (and far more strongly), that limitation of the licensee's right to editorialize was an infringement of the First Amendment--as also of section 326 of the Communications Act, which denies to the Commission the power of censorship. ...Supporting the decision were private citizens and civic groups which expressed a concern over present irresponsibility of radio...radio's consolidated strength and corporate point of view on many matters were such as to constitute a public danger unless kept within reasonable bounds by regulation...The main preoccupation here was with the listeners' freedom (to hear the widest possible diversity of views) rather than with the licensee's right to untrammelled self-expression.<sup>87</sup>

Meanwhile, Charles Lidsley explained in his text Radio and Television Communication:

The majority opinion of the Commission at that time was that overt editorialization, or advocacy by broadcast licensee chose to espouse as to make impossible any reasonable balanced presentation of all sides of such issues.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>McMillin, p. 32.

<sup>87</sup>Charles A. Siepmann, Radio Television and Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), pp. 220-221.

<sup>88</sup>Charles F. Lindsley, Radio and Television Communication (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1952), p. 91.



Heated debate resulted from the Commission's decision and a reappraisal of the role of broadcast editorializing and the fairness doctrine began on September 5, 1947.<sup>89</sup> During their examination the Commission continued to apply the fairness doctrine, as in the WBNX (New York City) case:

The fairness with which a licensee deals with particular racial or religious groups in its community, in the exercise of its power to determine who can broadcast what over its facilities, is clearly a substantial aspect of his operation in the public interest.<sup>90</sup>

Eventually, the Commission issued a Report on Editorializing on June 1, 1949, which concluded that "the expression of editorial opinion by broadcast licensees within reasonable limits and subject to the general requirements of fairness was not contrary to public interest."<sup>91</sup> The Report then reviewed the principles of fairness and the treatment of controversial issues. In a dissenting opinion Commissioner Frieda Barkin Hennock pointed out that the "standard of fairness as delineated in the Report is virtually impossible of enforcement by the Commission, with our present lack of policing methods, and with the sanctions given us by law."<sup>92</sup> Commissioner Robert Franklin Jones wrote:

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<sup>89</sup>"Applicability of...", p. 10426.

<sup>90</sup>"Applicability of...", p. 10426.

<sup>91</sup>Ford, p. 5.

<sup>92</sup>McMillin, p. 32.

I cannot subscribe to the action of the Commission in expressly imposing prospective conditions on the exercise of the licensee to use the facilities of a station for the purposes of editorialization. I would not say to the licensee, as does the Commission's decision, "You may speak, but only on the prospective conditions that are laid down in our report." For my part, I would merely say to the licensee, "You may speak."<sup>93</sup>

A two-fold obligation was outlined by the Report on every licensee seeking to operate in the public interest: (1) that every licensee devote a reasonable portion of broadcast time to the discussion and consideration of controversial issues of public importance, and (2) that in doing so, he be fair--that is, that he affirmatively endeavor to make his facilities available for the expression of contrasting viewpoints held by responsible persons.<sup>94</sup> Paragraph 9 in the Report said:

...the licensee's obligations to serve the public interest cannot be met merely through the adoption of a general policy of not refusing to broadcast opposing views when demand is made of the station for broadcast time...it is evident that broadcast licensees have an affirmative duty generally to encourage and implement the broadcast of all sides of controversial public issues...over their facilities...<sup>95</sup>

Additional thoughts from the Commission have been added through the correspondence to individual broadcast stations. On April 12, 1950, the Commission wrote to WLIB, New York:

In our report in the manner of editorializing by Broadcast Licensees, it was made clear that the licensee

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<sup>93</sup>McMillin, pp. 32-33.

<sup>94</sup>Ford, p. 7.

<sup>95</sup>"Applicability...", p. 10426.

has an affirmative duty to seek out, aid and encourage the broadcast of opposing views on controversial questions of public importance.<sup>96</sup>

The words "an affirmative duty to seek out," which did not appear in the original Report were contained in this and subsequent letters on the fairness subject until 1959.<sup>97</sup> It was not until July 29, 1959, that this interpretation of the editorializing report was changed.

The Commission, writing to KNOE-TV, Monroe, Louisiana, said:

...the licensee must follow a reasonable standard of fairness in the presentation of the issues of the controversy and that he has an affirmative duty to aid and encourage the broadcast of opposing views by responsible persons.<sup>98</sup>

Recently, on July 26, 1963, the FCC issued this notice:

...where the licensee has chosen to broadcast a sponsored program which for the first time presents one side of a controversial issue...he cannot reject a presentation otherwise suitable to the licensee...on the ground that he cannot obtain sponsorship for that presentation.<sup>99</sup>

This last addition to the fairness doctrine was an attempt by the Commission to avoid controversial issues becoming a battle of giant pocketbooks and thus eliminating persons who did not have the money to purchase equal time to challenge ideas which were presented.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>Ford, p. 8.

<sup>97</sup>Ford, p. 8.

<sup>98</sup>Ford, p. 8.

<sup>99</sup>Ford, p. 11.

<sup>100</sup>Ford, p. 11.



In enforcing the fairness doctrine the Federal Communications Commission's stand is that the nature of the issue should dictate to a large extent the manner of presenting the other views:

Different issues will inevitably require different techniques of presentation and production. The licensee will in each instance be called upon to exercise his best judgment and good sense in determining what subjects should be considered, the particular format of the programs to be devoted to each subject, the different shades of opinion to be presented, and the spokesman for each point of view. In determining whether to honor specific requests for time, the station will inevitably be confronted with such questions as whether the subject is worth considering, whether the viewpoint of the requesting party has already received a sufficient amount of broadcast time, or whether there may not be other available groups or individuals who might be more appropriate spokesman for the particular point of view than the person making the request.<sup>101</sup>

In a recent article in Journal of Broadcasting, Dr. Joseph M. Ripley, associate professor of Speech in the University of Wisconsin, reviewed two surveys of American broadcasting.<sup>102</sup> The first survey covered four months of early 1957 and the second survey covered the last seven months of 1959.<sup>103</sup> Among his conclusions was that "almost three quarters of the stations...had programmed some opinion about controversial issues—but that the amount of programming on the average individual station was very small."<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup>NAB, Editorializing on the Air, pp. 14-15.

<sup>102</sup>Joseph M. Ripley, "Policies and Practices Concerning Broadcasts of Controversial Issues," Journal of Broadcasting, IX, Winter (1964-65), 25-32.

<sup>103</sup>Ripley, p. 25.

<sup>104</sup>Ripley, p. 25.



Other conclusions reached by Dr. Ripley were:

- (1) The majority of broadcasters who returned questionnaires...made the facilities of their station available for opinions on public issues. However, a significant proportion of the respondents did not make their stations available for opinions about controversial issues.
- (2) Broadcasters did not appear to devote a sufficient amount of time to controversial issue discussions.
- (3) Generally, at least one side of issues named as "hot" local issues were presented over the facilities of the station.
- (4) ...many of the formats which were used for two-sided discussion programs did not adequately provide for confrontation of opposing viewpoints...
- (5) At least four of every five broadcasters accepted the idea that both sides of an issue should be presented fairly.<sup>105</sup>

The fairness doctrine has been and continues to be one of the most controversial regulations of the Federal Communications Commission. Among the broadcasters who have spoken out favoring such a statement on fairness is Ben Strouse, president and general manager of WWDC-AM-FM, Washington, D. C. Although opposed to the government telling him or any broadcaster what he should or should not do, Strouse believes the public will reap the benefits of all sides of an issue by the expressions broadcast and published in all media.<sup>106</sup> According to Strouse, most broadcasters do not have much trouble living up to the fairness doctrine, and he adds, "If a broadcaster doesn't want to be fair, maybe he shouldn't be a broadcaster."<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup>Ripley, pp. 27-31.

<sup>106</sup>"Another trip into the fairness land," Broadcasting, Sept. 14, 1964, 68.

<sup>107</sup>"Another trip...", p. 68.

Not all of the opposition to the doctrine is based on whether or not a broadcaster would be fair if such a doctrine did not exist, rather the opposition can be summarized by Rex G. Howell, NAB radio code board chairman, who attacked the doctrine as "censorship."<sup>108</sup> Howell charged that the Commission's policy is being used to discourage broadcasters from carrying programs of controversial subjects, saying:

The Commission's own doctrine on fairness is being used to discourage broadcasters from expressing anything but innocuous palliatives in lieu of forthright expressions of opinion...instead of nationwide efforts to remove controversial programs, we should be more concerned with making sure we are keeping the airplanes open to the widest possible latitude of discussion. The worst conspiracy is the one of silence.<sup>109</sup>

Even the legality of such a fairness guide has been questioned by the NAB General Council Douglas A. Anello, who has repeatedly told broadcasters:

While we do not in any way concede the legality of the FCC's "fairness doctrine," as a practical matter it is being applied, and broadcasters will have to live with it until such time as the court or the Congress decides differently.<sup>110</sup>

Congressional or court action possibly will be taken in the future to clarify or nullify the doctrine. Representative Walter Rogers, Democrat of Texas, chairman of the House Communications

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<sup>108</sup>"Fall meet's subject: government," Broadcasting, Oct. 19, 1964, 54.

<sup>109</sup>Rex G. Howell, "Fairness...Fact or Fable?" Journal of Broadcasting, VIII, Fall (1964), 321-330.

<sup>110</sup>Letter to NAB Membership from Douglas A. Anello, "Personal Attacks and the 'Fairness Doctrine'," July 16, 1964.

Subcommittee, has said the fairness doctrine raises "thousands of questions" for candidates, broadcasters and the Commission.<sup>111</sup>

Questions he would like to have answered include:

- ...what are a station's obligations or a citizen's rights when attacks are made over a station's facilities?
- ...who may answer editorials, particularly those directed against or for political candidates?
- ...what happens when a third party is attacked in a reply to an editorial?
- ...when is equal time really equal?
- ...is it fair to consistently include one candidate's views in a newscast...to the exclusion of, or far more frequently than, his opponent?<sup>112</sup>

And Representative Oren Harris, Democrat of Arkansas, chairman of the House Commerce Committee, noted that the FCC had confused broadcasters and the public alike with its effort to interpret the fairness doctrine and added:

My feeling is that the judgment as to what 'contrasting' viewpoints a broadcaster should permit to be aired over his facilities should be left with the licensee, where the Communications Act put it in the first place.<sup>113</sup>

It is doubtful that any action will be taken immediately to either clarify or nullify the fairness doctrine since a study of the history of the doctrine disclosed that no broadcast license has ever been revoked or denied renewal because of the questions under the doctrine.<sup>114</sup> FCC Commissioner Frederick W. Ford, in defending the doctrine,

<sup>111</sup>"A new trip down campaign lane," Broadcasting, Aug. 31, 1964, 56.

<sup>112</sup>"A new trip...", p. 56.

<sup>113</sup>"Harris criticizes ratings 'stranglehold'," Broadcasting, Nov. 18, 1963, 76.

<sup>114</sup>Ford, p. 14.



said:

...anticipated calamities stem from a furious chain of reasoning based on a series of false premises drawn from a misunderstanding of the meaning of the advisory Notice (fairness doctrine). These exercises in logic should demonstrate for all time the wisdom of Justice Holmes when he said, "Reason is not the life of the law, it is experience." The broadcasters' experience with the doctrine during the past fourteen years has been good and should improve. The doctrine is sound in concept and thus far in development and execution. No sanctions or penalties are required. Most broadcasters have the desire to be fair (and) that has become our ideal and I expect this situation to continue.<sup>115</sup>  
(Author's inserts in parentheses)

#### History of Section 315

Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended, is an outgrowth of Section 18 of the Radio Act of 1927.<sup>116</sup> As established in the previous section of this paper tracing the history of the fairness doctrine, the early concepts of broadcasting placed heavy emphasis upon the right of all people to enjoy the radio media. As Congressman Wallace H. White stated during the debates leading to the enactment of the Radio Act of 1927:

...the right of the public to service is superior to the right of any individual to use the ether...the broadcast privilege will not be the right of selfishness. It will rest upon an assurance of public interest to be served.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup>Ford, pp. 14-15.

<sup>116</sup>Emery, p. 219.

<sup>117</sup>McMillin, p. 31.



Following the adoption of the Radio Act of 1927 and in preparation of the election campaign of 1928, the Federal Radio Commission, which had been created under the Radio Act, issued this general order on May 11, 1928, to broadcast licensees:

The Federal Radio Commission calls to the attention of all broadcasting stations section 18 of the Radio Act of 1927, which reads as follows:

"If any licensee shall permit any person who is a legally qualified candidate for any public office to use a broadcasting station, he shall afford equal opportunities to all other such candidates for that office in the use of such broadcasting station, and the licensing authority shall make rules and regulations to carry this provision into effect: Provided, That such licensee shall have no power of censorship over the material broadcast under the provisions of this paragraph. No obligation is hereby imposed upon any licensee to allow the use of its station by an such candidate."

Any violation of this section of the act will be considered as sufficient ground for the revocation or denial of a radio-broadcasting license.<sup>118</sup>

Although the licensee had "no obligation" to allow the use of the station by an candidates, the Federal Communications Commission, created by the Communications Act of 1934, has held that a station may not arbitrarily limit the amount of time made available, once some time is made available.<sup>119</sup> New Orleans radio station WDSU had a policy of not cancelling any regularly scheduled commercial program for paid political programs, the FCC announced in a 1945 decision:

This statement of policy (policy of WDSU) reflects such a complete failure on the part of the licensees to appreciate their obligations as station licensees...as to

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<sup>118</sup>FRC, 2nd Ann. Rept., pp. 44-45.

<sup>119</sup>Head, p. 383.

require severe censure of such a policy...a station licensee has both the right and the duty to cancel such previously scheduled programs as may be necessary in order to clear time for broadcasts of programs in the public interest.<sup>120</sup>

(Author's insert in parentheses)

This declaration by the Commission has not been written into the Section, however it remains an important part of the Section's interpretation.

In 1952, Congress amended Section 315 of the Communications Act by adding the provision that the charges made for broadcasts by political candidates could not exceed those made for "comparable use" of a station for other purposes.<sup>121</sup> In its identification of "legally qualified candidates" the Commission established this definition:

...any person who has publicly announced that he is a candidate for nomination by a convention of a political party or for nomination or election in a primary, special, or general election, municipal, county, state or national, and who meets the qualifications prescribed by the applicable laws to hold the office for which he is a candidate so that he may be voted for by its electorate directly or by means of delegates or electors, and who: (1) has qualified for a place on the ballot or (2) is eligible under the applicable law to be voted for by sticker, by writing in his name on the ballot, or other method, and (3) has been duly nominated by a political party which is commonly known and regarded as such or (4) makes a substantial showing that he is a bonafide candidate for nomination or office, as the case may be.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>Head, p. 383.

<sup>121</sup>Emery, p. 219.

<sup>122</sup>Emery, p. 220.

Licensees were barred from using discrimination or preference practices between candidates through "charges, practices, regulations, facilities, or services," and a complete record of all broadcast time requests by political candidates was to be kept and retained for a period of two years.<sup>123</sup>

The only major change to occur to Section 315 resulted from serious criticism of the Commission's interpretation of the Section in the "Lar Daly Case" on February 19, 1959, and a reaffirmation on June 15, 1959.<sup>124</sup> Lar Daly, a candidate for mayor of Chicago, filed a complaint with the Commission alleging that certain Chicago television stations had, in the course of their newscasts, shown film clips of his opponents in connection with certain events and occasions. Daly reported he had requested equal broadcasting time over these stations but his requests had been refused. After careful consideration, the Commission advised the stations involved that under Section 315 Lar Daly was entitled to equal broadcasting opportunities.<sup>125</sup> The Commission's decision brought a howl of protests from prominent people in government, the press and the broadcasting industry. President Eisenhower called the Commission's interpretation "ridiculous," and directed Attorney General Rogers to see what could be done about it.<sup>126</sup> The Washington Daily News termed it

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<sup>123</sup>Emery, p. 220.

<sup>124</sup>Emery, p. 221.

<sup>125</sup>Emery, p. 221.

<sup>126</sup>(Editorial), "'Equal Time' Hit," New York Herald Tribune, Sunday, June 21, 1959.



"a foolish ruling," and joined other newspapers in calling on Congress to amend the law "promptly."<sup>127</sup>

In an appeal filed with the Commission, Frank Stanton, president of the Columbia Broadcasting System, said:

...film clips were shown as part of regularly scheduled news broadcasts and were handled by the station in routine fashion; that they were not designed to advance the cause of any candidate nor were they initiated directly or indirectly by a candidate; that they were under the exclusive control of the station and each film clip was included in the particular news program in the bona fide exercise by the station of its news judgment.<sup>128</sup>

The National Broadcasting Company and Westinghouse also filed documents with the Commission which outlined similar points as those made by Stanton.<sup>129</sup> United States Attorney General Rogers told the Commissioners:

...Section 315 does not state that any showing of a candidate on a radio or TV program entitles his opponents to "equal opportunities" to use the station's facilities; that instead it provides that "if any licensee shall permit any person...to use a broadcasting station it shall afford 'equal opportunities' to other candidates 'in the use of such broadcasting station'; and that this language is directed to 'use' by candidates of particular station facilities as part of their political campaign activities--not the stations reporting, as part of its news coverage, significant news events or campaign developments.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> (Editorial), The Washington Daily News, Saturday, June 20, 1959.

<sup>128</sup> Emery, p. 221.

<sup>129</sup> Emery, p. 222.

<sup>130</sup> Emery, p. 222.



The points which were brought to the attention of the Commissioners contributed to a review of the legislative history of Section 315 by the FCC and resulted in a 41-page decision on June 15, 1959 which reaffirmed the Commission's earlier position that "any appearance by a political candidate on a newscast not initiated by him constitutes a 'use' of the station's facilities by the candidate within the meaning of Section 315."<sup>131</sup>

Protests from broadcasters, Congressmen and the press continued. The United States Justice Department served notice to the FCC that if the ruling ever went to court, the Justice Department would argue against the decision.<sup>132</sup> Eventually, under pressure from the broadcast industry and with support of a substantial portion of the press, Congress took action on September 14, 1959, to amend Section 315.<sup>133</sup> Specifically, Congress added:

Appearance by a legally qualified candidate on any--  
 (1) bona fide newscast,  
 (2) bona fide news interview,  
 (3) bona fide news documentary (if the appearance of the candidate is incidental to the presentation of the subject or subjects covered by the news documentary),  
 or  
 (4) on-the-spot coverage of bona fide news events (including but not limited to political conventions and activities incidental thereto), shall not be deemed to be use of a broadcasting station within the meaning of this subsection. Nothing in the foregoing sentence

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<sup>131</sup>Emery, pp. 222-223.

<sup>132</sup>(Editorial), "The FCC Holds Firm," Minneapolis Morning Tribune, Friday, June 19, 1959, 4.

<sup>133</sup>Emery, p. 334.

shall be construed as relieving broadcasters, in connection with the presentation of newscasts, news interviews, news documentaries, and on-the-spot coverage of news events, from the obligation imposed upon them under this Act to operate in the public interest and to afford reasonable opportunity for the discussion of conflicting views on issues of public importance.<sup>134</sup>

Congress also added a Section 2 which provided further that Congress will reexamine from time to time the new provisions to "ascertain whether they are effective and practicable."<sup>135</sup>

It is appropriate to note that Congress suspended Section 315 for the 1960 presidential and vice-presidential campaign and allowed the face-to-face debates between Vice-President Richard Nixon and Senator John F. Kennedy. Recently, similar attempts to suspend the Section were made for the 1964 presidential and vice-presidential campaign failed.<sup>136</sup>

## FINDINGS OF STUDY

### Initial Postal Card Inquiry

As reported in the procedure of this study, 150 postal cards were returned from the 199 Midwest commercial AM radio stations which were originally selected as the sample for the postal card inquiry. The postal card asked two questions: (1) does your station editorialize,

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<sup>134</sup>Communications Act, Sec. 315 (a).

<sup>135</sup>Communications Act, Sec. 315, Sec. 2 (a) and (b).

<sup>136</sup>"No relief from equal time in this campaign," Broadcasting, Aug. 24, 1964, 72.

and (2) how often. Table III, on the next page, is a summary of the postal card replies received from the 150 radio stations.

The majority, 61.8 per cent, of the radio stations reported they editorialized. The stations which served communities of over a million persons reported the largest percentage of stations presenting editorials, 75 per cent. While the least percentage, 50 per cent, was reported from the stations serving communities of under 15,000 persons.

Of all the stations, 31.6 per cent presented editorials on an irregular basis. Just under half, 43.3 per cent, of the radio stations which served areas of between 100,000 to 1 million population followed this editorial pattern. Such descriptions of the frequency of broadcasting editorials which were reported include "occasionally," "frequently," "every so often," "varies," "rarely," and "as the need arises."

Sixteen per cent of the stations indicated that they presented weekly editorials. Such practices as "twice a week," "three times a week," "Monday-Wednesday-Friday," and "tri-weekly," were reported as an established pattern for the presentation of editorials regularly each week.

Even though daily editorials were the least used editorial practice, since only 14.2 per cent of the radio stations reported they followed this pattern, one-fourth of the stations located in communities which served over a million persons reported using this practice.

Over one-third, 38.2 per cent, of the 150 radio stations did not editorialize. The largest percentage group of these stations, 50 per cent, were located in communities of under 15,000 population. As the classification of population of areas served by the stations increased,



TABLE III

PERCENTAGE OF RADIO STATIONS WHICH EDITORIALIZED DAILY, WEEKLY AND IRREGULARLY,

AND THE RADIO STATIONS WHICH DID NOT EDITORIALIZE, AS COMPARED

BY THE POPULATION\* OF THE AREAS SERVED BY 150 MIDWEST

# COMMERCIAL AM RADIO STATIONS

	Under 15,000 population (No. = 32)**	15,000 to 50,000 population (No. = 42)**	50,000 to 100,000 population (No. = 11)**	100,000 to 1 million population (No. = 53)**	Over 1 million population (No. = 12)**	Average (No. = 150)***
Editorializing daily	9.4 %	7.1 %	18.2 %	11.3 %	25.0 %	14.2 %
Editorializing weekly	15.6	16.7	27.2	3.8	16.7	16.0
Editorializing irregularly	25.0	38.1	18.2	43.4	33.3	31.6
TOTAL EDITORIALIZING	50.0	61.9	63.6	58.5	75.0	61.8
TOTAL NOT EDITORIALIZING	50.0	38.1	36.4	41.5	25.0	38.2

\*1960 Census, U. S. Department of Commerce

\*\*Number of stations

\*\*\*Total number of stations



the percentage of radio stations not editorializing decreased, with one exception. The exception was in the communities of 100,000 to 1 million persons where 41.5 per cent of the stations did not editorialize.

#### Findings in the Editorial Practices of the 67 Radio Stations Which Editorialized

Out of the 90 questionnaires mailed to the Midwest commercial AM radio stations which reported in the initial postal card inquiry that they editorialized, 67 (74.4 per cent) were returned. The data gathered from the answers which were given by the stations concerning their editorial practices are reported in this section.

A summary of the answers provided to five questions asked by the questionnaires are reported in Table IV. These 5 questions were asked: (1) who participates in determining editorial policies of your station; (2) who usually selects the subjects for your station's editorials; (3) who usually writes your station's editorials; (4) who has final approval before the editorials are aired (broadcast), and (5) who usually airs the editorials.

In the majority of the stations, 73.1 per cent, an editorial board, or an editorial committee (as it is called by some stations), was used to determine the station's editorial policies. The radio station personnel who are members of the editorial board are reported in the latter part of this section. The station manager determined the editorial policy for 14.9 per cent of the stations.

The editorial board was also credited in most stations, 46.4 per cent,

TABLE IV  
PERCENTAGE OF 67 MIDWEST COMMERCIAL AM RADIO STATIONS  
PERSONNEL, IN VARIED STAFF POSITIONS, WHO  
PARTICIPATED IN EDITORIAL PRACTICES

Personnel staff position	Determine editorial policy	Select editorial subjects	Write editorials	Approve editorials before broadcast	Broadcast editorials
Editorial board	73.1 %	46.4 %	20.9 %	14.9 %	
Owner*	10.5	16.4	16.4	23.9	14.9 %
Manager	14.9	29.9	35.9	58.2	55.2
News Director	1.5	2.9	13.4	1.5	19.4
Program Director		2.9	2.9	1.5	4.5
Others**		1.5	10.5		6.0

\*includes Owner-Manager as same person

\*\*includes editorial assistant, special news writer, farm director, public affairs director, and editorial subscription service.

as selecting the editorial subjects. The manager selected the editorial subjects for 29.9 per cent of the stations and the owner selected the subjects for 16.4 per cent of the stations. For most stations, 35.9 per cent, the station manager usually wrote the editorials. It should be noted that some stations had editorials written by a public affairs director, an editorial assistant or special news writer. One radio station reported their editorials were written by an editorial subscription service.

The station manager approved the editorials before they were broadcast on 58.2 per cent of the 67 Midwest commercial AM radio stations, while 23.9 per cent of the stations placed this duty with the owner, and 14.9 per cent left the editorial board in charge of the final approval.

The actual broadcast of the editorial was performed by the station manager in over half, 55.2 per cent, of the radio stations. The station owner broadcast editorials on 23.9 per cent of the stations. One station reported "a voice" presented their editorials on the air.

Not reported in Table IV, but of interest, is that 10 station managers and 6 station owners determined editorial policies, selected editorial subjects, wrote editorials, approved editorials before broadcast, and broadcast the editorials for 16 (23.9 per cent) of the radio stations which editorialized. Three-fourths of these 16 station managers and owners were members of the staff of stations located in communities with under 50,000 persons.

As the following Table V illustrates, of the 49 Midwest commercial AM radio stations which reported they used an editorial board for determining editorial policy of the station, the station manager was a member of an average of 29.5 per cent of the editorial boards. The news director was on 26.7 per cent of the boards and the station owner was on 21.6 per cent. The three station personnel constituted practically four-fifths (77.8 per cent) of the total membership of the editorial boards for the radio stations.

As the population of the areas served by the radio stations increased, the addition of a program director and other station personnel to the



TABLE V

PERCENTAGE OF STATION PERSONNEL OF VARIED STAFF POSITIONS WHO WERE MEMBERS OF  
EDITORIAL BOARD WHICH DETERMINED EDITORIAL POLICY FOR  
49 MIDWEST COMMERCIAL AM RADIO STATIONS COMPARED  
BY POPULATION\* OF AREAS SERVED

Personnel staff position	Under 15,000 population (No.= 11)**	15,000 to 50,000 population (No.= 32)**	50,000 to 100,000 population (No.= 15)**	100,000 to 1 million population (No.= 67)**	Over 1 million population (No.= 20)**	Average (No.= 145)***
Owner****	36.4 %	25.0 %	20.0 %	22.4 %	5.0 %	21.6 %
Manager	36.4	34.4	20.0	26.9	30.0	29.5
News Director	18.2	28.1	33.3	23.9	30.0	26.7
Program Director		9.4	6.7	14.9	20.0	10.2
Others*****	9.0	3.1	20.0	11.9	15.0	12.0

\*1960 Census, U. S. Department of Commerce

\*\* Number of radio stations

\*\*\*Total number of radio stations

\*\*\*\*Includes Owner-Manager as same person

\*\*\*\*\*Includes editorial assistant, special news writer, farm director, public affairs director, and editorial subscription service



editorial board generally increased. For instance, the program director was not listed as a member of the editorial board for stations serving areas of under 15,000 persons. Whereas, a per cent of other staff personnel were listed as serving as members of the editorial board for stations serving areas of under 15,000 population. As the areas served became larger, the use of the program director as a member of the editorial board generally increased. Other members to the editorial board, such as an editorial assistant, special news writer, farm director, and public affairs director, generally were used in stations which served communities of over 50,000 population.

With the increased participation by the program director and other staff members, the station manager's participation remained relatively the same, but the station owner's role decreased. For instance, the station owner participated in over a third, 36.4 per cent, of the editorial boards of radio stations which served communities of under 15,000 persons, but his participation declined to 22.2 per cent for the stations with 100,000 to 1 million population and then dropped to only 5 per cent for the radio stations which served over a million persons. The decrease in the use of the station owner in determining the editorial policies of radio stations in larger metropolitan areas was further proven in a breakdown of the percentage of the station personnel which participated in determining editorial policy in radio stations which did not have an editorial board. Such a breakdown disclosed that 30 per cent of the station owners determined editorial policy for stations in cities of under 15,000 population. However, the owner's influence in establishing editorial policy, dropped to 15 per cent for cities of 15,000 to 50,000

population, 12.5 per cent for cities of 50,000 to 100,000 population, and 5.5 per cent for the radio stations in cities of 100,000 to 1 million population. The station manager's participation in determining editorial policies also diminished quickly with the increase in population above 100,000 persons.

Among the other station personnel who were listed as members of the editorial board were the farm director, public affairs director, editorial assistant, and a special news writer. One station, serving a community of almost 500,000 population described its editorial board's composition and functions in this way:

Editorial policy is determined by the Editorial Board...The Editorial Board consists of the vice president and general manager...radio station manager and program director, and the...news director.

Editorials may be contributed by all editorial board members or other staff members; in practice, the great majority are written by the public affairs director, who selects most of the topics on the basis of his own assessments of community needs, but (he) often...receives topic suggestions from the general manager or other editorial board members. The news director, associate news director and staff newsmen also write editorials, but less frequently. Editorial members vote on each proposed script and have the opportunity to edit scripts submitted before approving them for broadcast.

Editorials are normally aired on a rotating basis by the... Station Manager...Program Director and Public Affairs Director, and occasionally by the General Manager; in practice, the choice is determined largely by the availability of a particular executive among those named, at taping time. (Author's insert in parentheses)

Table VI, on the following page, reports the number of years the 67 Midwest commercial AM radio stations have editorialized and whether or not the same editorials were repeated during the broadcast day. Most of the radio stations which participated in the study, 35.6 per cent, had on the average editorialized for between 1 to 3 years.

TABLE VI

PERCENTAGE OF RADIO STATIONS WHICH HAVE EDITORIALIZED FOR VARIOUS NUMBERS OF YEARS

AND WHICH REPEATED OR DID NOT REPEAT THE SAME EDITORIAL DURING

THE BROADCAST DAY COMPARED BY THE POPULATION\* OF THE AREAS

SERVED BY 67 MIDWEST COMMERCIAL AM RADIO STATIONS

Editorial practice	Under 15,000 population (No.= 10)**	15,000 to 50,000 population (No.= 20)**	50,000 to 100,000 population (No.= 8)**	100,000 to 1 million population (No.= 18)**	Over 1 million population (No.= 11)**	Average (No.= 67)***
Editorialized less than year		10.0 %		22.2 %	18.2 %	10.1 %
Editorialized 1 to 3 years	30.0 %	25.0	75.0 %	11.1	36.4	35.6
Editorialized 3 to 5 years	50.0	25.0	25.0	33.3		26.6
Editorialized over 5 years	20.0	40.0		33.3	45.4	27.7
Always repeated editorials	60.0	60.0	100.0	72.2	81.8	74.8
Sometimes repeated editorials	30.0	35.0		22.2	9.1	19.3
Never repeated editorials	10.0	5.0		5.6	9.1	5.9

\*1960 Census, U. S. Department of Commerce

\*\*Number of radio stations

\*\*\*Total number of radio stations



The second largest group, 27.7 per cent, had editorialized for over 5 years. The population of the areas served did not seem to effect the number of years the stations have editorialized. Seventy-five per cent of the radio stations located in communities from 50,000 to 100,000 persons have editorialized for a period from 1 to 3 years, and 45.4 per cent of the stations in communities of over 1 million persons have editorialized for over 5 years. Generally, over half of the stations have editorialized for longer than 3 years. This is true in every population division in the Table, with the exception of the communities of between 50,000 to 100,000 population, which have only 25 per cent that editorialized for over 3 years.

Also in Table VI, almost three-fourths of the radio stations, 74.8 per cent, said they "always repeated editorials" at different times during the broadcast day. This practice was particularly prevalent among the more populous communities. For instance, all of the stations in the communities of 50,000 to 100,000 population always repeated their editorials during the broadcast day, as did 72.2 per cent of the stations in communities from 100,000 to 1 million population, and 81.8 per cent of the stations in communities of over 1 million persons.

In a further study, it was found that the largest percentage of the 42 radio stations which editorialized on an irregular basis, 35.7 per cent, have editorialized for over 5 years. Over a third, 36.4 per cent of the 11 radio stations which editorialized on a weekly basis, have editorialized for at least four years. The percentage of the 14 radio stations which editorialized daily was fairly evenly distributed with the largest group, 28.6 per cent, having editorialized for over 5 years.



Nearly three-fourths, 70.3 per cent, of the 67 Midwest commercial AM radio stations reported on the average that their editorials were usually from 1 to 3 minutes in length. The length of the editorials and the time the editorials were broadcast in relation to a regularly scheduled newscast by population of areas served is given in Table VII, on the following page. Practically all, 94.2 per cent, of the radio stations in the communities of between 50,000 to 100,000 population broadcast editorials of the 1 to 3 minute length. Additional stations which followed this length were the 81.8 per cent located in communities of over a million persons, and the 80 per cent in communities of under 15,000 persons. One Kansas radio station, serving a community of 43,000 persons, reported a weekly 20-minute editorial program in addition to regular editorials of 1 to 2 minutes in length. This station is reported in Table VII as broadcasting editorials 1 to 3 minutes in length, since it reported the "regular" length of its editorials were 1 to 2 minutes. The 20-minute editorial is not included in the Table. Editorials of over 5 minutes in length were rare, with only an average 3 per cent of the 67 radio stations broadcasting editorials of that length.

A further study revealed that over half of the 67 radio stations, 52.2 per cent, broadcasted editorials of 1 to 2 minutes length.

Also reported in Table VII, over half of the 67 radio stations, 55.9 per cent, broadcasted editorials independent of regularly scheduled newscasts. Almost 30 per cent, 29.3 per cent average, broadcasted editorials adjacent to newscasts, and an average 14.8 per cent broadcasted their editorials as part of a newscast. In the various population divisions, with the exception of the communities below 15,000 population,

TABLE VII

USUAL EDITORIAL PRACTICES BY PERCENTAGE OF RADIO STATIONS BROADCASTING EDITORIALS OF VARIOUS LENGTHS OF MINUTES AND BROADCASTING EDITORIALS AS PART OF, ADJACENT TO, OR INDEPENDENT OF

REGULARLY SCHEDULED NEWSCASTS, COMPARED BY THE POPULATION\* OF THE

AREAS SERVED BY 67 MIDWEST COMMERCIAL AM RADIO STATIONS

Usual editorial practice	Under 15,000 population				50,000 to 100,000 population		100,000 to 1 million population		Over 1 million population		Average (No.= 67)***
	(No.= 10)**	15,000 to 50,000 population (No.= 20)**	50,000 to 100,000 population (No.= 8)**	100,000 to 1 million population (No.= 18)**	1 million to 2 million population (No.= 11)**	2 million to 3 million population (No.= 6)**	3 million to 4 million population (No.= 3)**	4 million to 5 million population (No.= 1)**	5 million to 6 million population (No.= 1)**	6 million to 7 million population (No.= 1)**	
Editorial length under 1 minute	10.0 %	5.0 %	25.0 %								8.0 %
Editorial length 1 to 3 minutes	80.0	45.0	50.0	94.2 %	81.8 %						70.3
Editorial length 3 to 5 minutes	10.0	35.0	25.0	5.6	18.2						18.7
Editorial length over 5 minutes		15.0									3.0
Editorial broadcast as part of newscast	30.0	15.0	12.5	16.7							14.8
Editorial broadcast adjacent to newscast	30.0	35.0	25.0	11.1	45.5						29.3
Editorial broadcast independent of newscasts	40.0	50.0	62.5	72.2	54.5						55.9

\*1960 Census, U. S. Department of Commerce

\*\*Number of radio stations

\*\*\*Total number of radio stations

the majority of the editorials were broadcasted independent of newscasts. In the communities of under 15,000 persons, 40 per cent of the radio stations broadcasted editorials independent of newscasts. None of the radio stations in communities of over a million persons broadcasted editorials as part of a newscast.

Table VIII, top of next page, reports various opinions expressed concerning the editorial practices of the 67 Midwest commercial AM radio stations which editorialized. The majority, 89.5 per cent, said that editorializing "helps improve" their station's image. None of the stations believed that editorials did not help improve their image, and 10.5 per cent did not know. In a further explanation, most of the stations reported receiving oral comments and letters from listeners to support their opinion. However, over one-fourth reported their judgement was based upon, as one station described, "pure conjecture."

In reply to a question on whether or not listeners were lost because of the station's editorials, over three-fourths, 79.1 per cent, said that they believed listeners were not lost. Just over half of the 67 radio stations based their judgement as to whether or not listeners were lost to, as described in the previous paragraph, "pure conjecture." Nearly a third reported that they had received oral comments and letters from listeners to support their opinion.

Nearly three-fourths, 74.6 per cent, of the stations said that the editorials did not appear to have cost the station any commercial business. However, 20.9 per cent reported that business had been lost due to their editorial practices. One Wichita, Kansas radio station reported receiving "threats and intimidation," and a Topeka, Kansas radio station said it had



TABLE VIII  
 PERCENTAGE OF VARIOUS OPINIONS CONCERNING EDITORIAL PRACTICES  
 EXPRESSED BY 67 MIDWEST COMMERCIAL AM RADIO  
 STATIONS WHICH EDITORIALIZED

Opinions expressed	Yes	No	Do not know	No opinion
Editorializing helps improve station's image	89.5 %		10.5 %	
Editorials have cost station listeners	4.5	79.1 %	16.4	
Editorials have cost station commercial business	20.9	74.6	4.5	
Radio stations should endorse political candidates	40.3	31.3		28.4 %
Fairness doctrine hampers presentation of editorials	35.8	53.7		10.5

"received a few threats" but never a cancellation.

The 67 radio stations were closely divided on an opinion of whether or not radio stations should endorse political candidates. Most of the stations, 40.3 per cent, said that radio stations should endorse political candidates, while 31.3 per cent, said that radio stations should not, and 28.4 per cent had no opinion. Among the radio stations supporting the contention that radio stations should endorse political candidates was a Kansas station serving a community of 43,000 population, which said, "It is our obligation in the public interest." A Denver, Colorado radio station stated that "as a news medium we are in a position



to evaluate the effectiveness of candidates better than the general public." Some stations expressed qualifications in endorsing political candidates, such as a 500-watt Kansas station in a community of 43,000 population said, "Station operators should be free to support candidates, but support should be based on individuals qualifications in preference to straight party affiliation." Another station, this time an Oklahoma station in a community of 511,000 persons, said, "If a station feels strongly about it, they should endorse candidates--but they should not be obligated to." A 500-watt Kansas radio station asked, "Why back off from this element in life?", and a 5,000-watt Missouri radio station stated that stations "should take a stand on any and all issues and candidates they believe to be important."

Meanwhile, opposing arguments to the endorsement of political candidates revealed that some stations believed problems might arise in endorsing political candidates as a result of the Federal Communications Commission regulations. For instance, an Omaha, Nebraska station said that Section 315 of the Communications Act "would make such a practice cumbersome...in that equal time for response would have to be provided each opponent of every endorsed candidate, thereby neutralizing the effect of the endorsement." A Missouri station which served over 2 million persons stated that "...FCC regulations are so stringent that endorsement requires a great deal of additional work to comply with FCC regulations." A 5,000-watt Nebraska station said the endorsement of political candidates could cause "too much trouble from FCC." Another station, serving over 80,000 persons in Iowa simply wrote, "Fairness Doctrine" to support its contention that radio stations should not endorse political candidates

for public office. An Iowa radio station in a community of nearly 34,000 persons said, "it is...unsafe to ride the bandwagon of any candidate, under the equal time provisions of the FCC, you leave the door open when you do." "The final decision is up to the voters," said one Nebraska station in a community of 17,000 population, adding, "the facts given them (the voters) should not be slanted." An Iowa station said it did not believe it was in a position, when serving the entire public, to dictate to any one faction or part. And a Kansas radio station manager said, "I believe in presenting both candidates but without editorial comment, as a general rule there is too much personality conflict possibilities."

The question on whether or not radio stations should endorse political candidates for public office also was asked the 40 radio stations which did not editorialize. The replies expressed are discussed in a later section of this chapter reporting on the editorial practices of the radio stations which did not editorialize.

Most of the radio stations, 53.7 per cent, did not believe that the fairness doctrine hampered its presentation of editorials. However, 35.8 per cent believed that the doctrine did hamper the presentation of editorials. Generally, the reasons given by the radio stations which believed that the doctrine did not hamper their presentation of editorials were directed around one thought, as expressed by a 500-watt Kansas radio station, "(the) fairness doctrine merely requires fair treatment for all parties...a policy which broadcasters should normally follow." A radio station serving 343,000 persons in Kansas echoed the thought, adding:

The "function" of the editorial, in an environment colored by commercial broadcasting, should be essentially to stimulate thought and discussion--as opposed to winning converts for a particular partisan position. This can only be accomplished by hearing all sides of an issue.

A 1,000-watt radio station in a community of 418,000 population also endorsed the previously stated opinion, adding, "If anything, the presentation of contrary views helps both image and listener interest."

Some of the radio stations believed that the fairness doctrine, even though it did not hamper them in the presentation of their editorials, posed problems. For instance, one Kansas radio station in a community of 23,000 population, said that the fairness doctrine had not hampered editorial presentation, "but it might, depending on certain conditions. Some individual or organization might apply continual pressure by constant sniping." An Iowa radio station manager in a community of 33,000 persons explained one of his problems involving the fairness doctrine:

If I, for example, climb on some issue, local or otherwise, involving individuals, equal time is always offered...Advantage is not always taken by those discussed in my editorials however, the extreme right segment of the nation has attempted often to give me some static, but thus far I have been able to sidestep most of it...there is a need however for some clarification of the so-called FCC Fairness Doctrine.

A request for clarification of the fairness doctrine also was voiced by a few of the radio stations which did believe that the doctrine hampered them in their presentation of editorials. "Failure to spell out exactly what the electronic media can do and cannot do leaves most stations undecided as to what course to take and destroys their effectiveness in this area," a Springfield, Missouri radio station



reported. A 250-watt Oklahoma station said, "...the FCC has put this doctrine into a 'Grey' area--the average manager finds it difficult to understand each case." And a St. Louis, Missouri radio station asked for a "clearer definition of the application of the Fairness Doctrine which frequently presents a problem in making the decision as to whether the editorial content can or cannot be used."

Other radio stations reported problems which have arisen or could arise as a result of the fairness doctrine. A Topeka, Kansas radio station said the doctrine "sometimes brings unreasonable demands for 'equal time' where not really needed." A Nebraska radio station in a community of 8,000 population reported "there may be 3,000 different opinions and not enough time to put them on the air." Daytime only station "has no sufficient time to present all candidates," said a Denver, Colorado station, and a Des Moines, Iowa station reported, "There is often more than one organization representing an opposing point of view and equal time becomes a problem." An Omaha, Nebraska radio station stated the doctrine hampered its station's editorials because it tended to make the station "stay away from topics that are apt to get us in trouble or large controversy."

And touching upon governmental control exercised through the fairness doctrine, a Southwestern Kansas radio station reported that the "Government guidelines...are burdensome. Sometimes when we are busy, we will avoid controversy rather than seek out somebody who may or may not exist with an opposing viewpoint." A Topeka, Kansas radio station said:



It (fairness doctrine) hampers our operation the same way it would hamper a newspaper if they were federally controlled. More and more we are being told what we can and cannot say...now a subtle infringement on the basic freedom of speech. We fear this paves the way for more government censorship and dictation.  
(Author's insert in parentheses)

The most frequently selected time of day for the 67 Midwest commercial AM radio stations to broadcast editorials was the morning hours between 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. As Table IX, the following page, points out, 14 of the 67 radio stations broadcast editorials around 7 a.m. By 8 a.m. the number of stations editorializing peaked at 37. By 9 a.m. the number of stations had dropped to 24, and finally dropped to 5 stations by 10 a.m. The second influx of editorials during the day occurred during the noon hour, jumping from just 10 stations presenting editorials at noon to 25 stations editorializing by 1 p.m. Then in the late afternoon, 17 stations editorialized around 5 p.m., the number increased to 23 stations by 6 p.m., and 25 stations by 7 p.m. The only concentration of editorials after 8 p.m. in the evening were the 10 radio stations which reported they editorialized around 10 p.m.

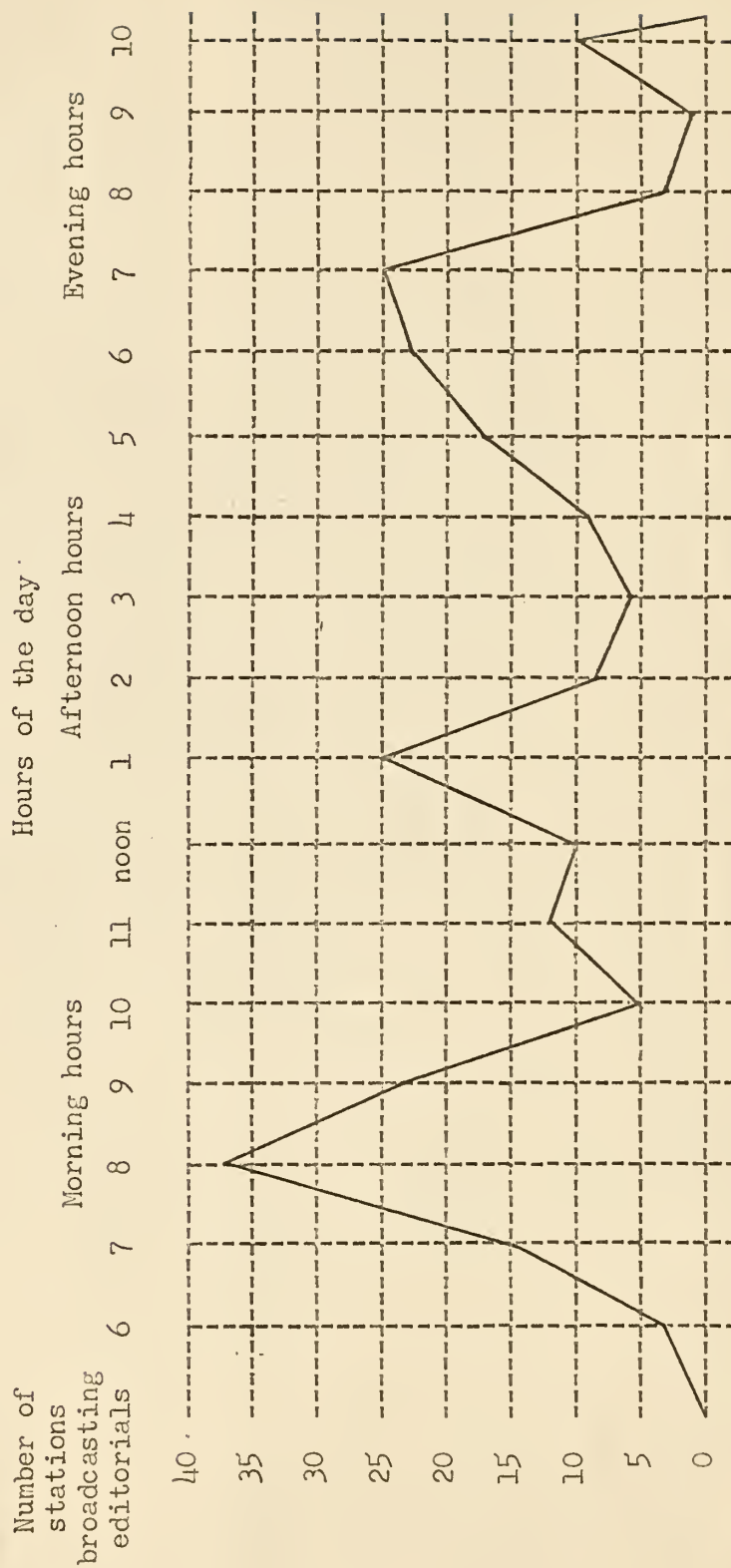
#### Study of Editorials Presented

Thirty-four of the 67 radio stations which editorialized and returned questionnaires concerned with their editorial practices, attached at least one editorial which had been broadcast by the station. All of the editorials received were reported to have received a "favorable" public response.

The largest number of editorials, 11 of the 34 broadcast editorials, were critical of elected city or county officials, the local newspaper,

TABLE IX

NUMBER OF 67 MIDWEST COMMERCIAL AM RADIO STATIONS WHICH BROADCAST EDITORIALS  
AT VARIOUS TIMES DURING THE BROADCAST DAY



other radio stations, or community problems and issues. Generally, the editorials offered advice and-or solutions in addition to the criticisms. Seven of the editorials attempted to solicit support to community projects, 3 editorials endorsed political candidates or political issues, while others defended action of elected officials, and advocated changes in local or county governmental structures. Only 2 of the 34 editorials commented on a state issue and just 2 of the editorials discussed national issues. However, it was possible for the subject matter of many of the editorials to be applied to what also could be similar problems in other cities of the nation. Thus, the subject matter could be applicable to state-wide or even national interest.

Among the more strongly worded editorials criticizing a local problem was one from a Central Kansas radio station in a community of 6,000 population. In discussing the practice by a "bereaved family" to set up a fund or memorial for a deceased friend or relative "on the assumption that friends or relatives 'must' give something to express their concern," the station commented:

...should the deceased be used as the tool to raise these funds...I think not...people should be allowed to express their concern...quietly and inconspicuously...we should be allowed to express ourselves in the manner in which we choose...it's high time we stopped using this highly emotional moment in the lives of people as a vehicle for hustling money for a project.

Attached to the editorial was a copy of an editorial reply by a minister in the community who disagreed with the editorial expressed, saying that:

...no one...to my knowledge...has used this highly emotional moment to hustle funds...but suddenly, because memorial funds flourish, we are called money hustlers



because someone else's cash register doesn't ring...as often! More power to the families who choose to make funerals Christian and make requests according to their deepest needs and desires.

City Commissioners and Councilmen were the targets of four of the editorials. A Kansas City, Missouri radio station made the following comment on April 4, 1961:

Peanuts, popcorn, crackerjacks...We expect to hear the butcher's garbled call almost any day now in the chambers of city council...a three-ring circus...And you can't tell the performers from the animals....Kansas City's municipal government has sunk so low in dignity and prestige, it's not even funny anymore. It's a comic opera, tragic in its over-tones, pathetic in its action, disastrous in some of its deeds, as it pushes through appointments to high places of men not suited for the job, men not qualified for the job, men not wanted by the people. Last Thursday, the city council put on a show that was funnier than a three-ring circus ...if it had not been such a tragic session for a decent city administration. There weren't any hot-dogs being sold...but there was plenty of "raw ham"...People go to the zoo to look at the animals. Maybe we ought to put our city council in cages, and let the monkeys come look at them.

An Oklahoma station, located in a community of almost 39,000 population, indirectly blamed the city council for a local law officer shooting an 18-year-old youth, by stating:

...let's point the finger of blame, in a large part, at the...City Council for naming a man with no experience or training as City Marshal...You can't strap a gun on a man and pin a badge on his shirt and make him an officer.

A 1,000-watt Kansas radio station editorialized against the local city commission's sudden 90 per cent increase in water service rates. The editorial, acknowledging that "some rate adjustments" were needed, criticized the procedure the Commission used in implementation of the rate increase. In a December 7, 1964 editorial, the station called



"upon the members of the City Commission to take positive action at the earliest possible time," adding, "and that means this week's meeting." As a note of explanation, the station manager attached this comment to the editorial:

...nobody did anything except us...we put on the editorial ...this helped to crystallize sentiment. Then we called for a change in Commission procedure...they (Commissioners) then bowed to public pressure and claimed that it was a lack of communication...Like hell it was...  
(Author's insert in parentheses)

A Cedar Rapids, Iowa radio station reviewed a recent trip by the municipal judge, noting that \$750 worth of bills resulted from a recent trip which the Judge took to a conference in Chicago. In retracing the Judge's route, the editorial reported he picked up his wife and daughter along the way and evidently charged his family's expenses to the taxpayers. The editorial challenged the "judgement of a municipal judge who charges the taxpayers for going somewhere, where a relative is added to his trip," adding:

In a previous controversy, Judge McLaughlin issued a statement for the record which says, in part, that he would not resign as juvenile court judge until someone had shown his judgement to be faulty.

We contend the judge has offered his own best proof.

Local newspapers were criticized in two of the editorials. A Clinton, Iowa station, defended the local Plan Commission for "selecting the Traver site for the proposed recreation area and golf course" as it lashed out at the local newspaper for criticizing the commission. The editorial said "the local paper has taken a hasty, critical viewpoint on the action of the Plan Commission. It was a hasty ill-advised editorial... all the facts are not either known...or at least presented to the reader."

Another Iowa radio station, this time in Des Moines, criticized newspapers for their coverage of the "sex scandal in England," terming it as "not leaving much to anyone's imagination."

In Topeka, Kansas, two radio stations editorialized on the same issue, but proposed different solutions. In the initial editorial, on November 22, 1964, one of the stations called for the formation of a City-County Police force as a means of preventing "the inept handling of some phases" of a recent kidnap-murder case. The editorial stated:

We're...operating with many ideas first introduced 100 years ago when Kansas became a state. The time is at hand for Kansas to take a good look at laws which still require election of one sheriff for a county with only 2,000 people, and one sheriff for another county with over 150,000 people.

The station called for an immediate study of consolidation for the Shawnee County Sheriff's Office and the Topeka Police Department, concluding that:

The public should demand no less than the best protection. The County Commission and the City Commission should get to work on a City-County Police force at once.

Ten days later, another radio station in the same community referred to the kidnap-murder case in an editorial and stated that "Each and every citizen in Topeka, to some degree, shares guilt if our law enforcement agencies are not operating at peak efficiency." The editorial continued:

We pay the officers a minimum rate for their services. Doesn't this mean we want to have a champagne life on a beer budget? Perhaps it was the conscience rather than the charity and generosity of Topekans that was displayed in the Mayor's Memorial Fund which went to the parents of the slain child. That money might have been used to prevent the crime instead of appeasing our conscience after the girl was killed.

Rather than consolidate the Topeka police and Shawnee sheriff or any other similar effort, let's get down to brass tacks and give good salaries to police officers. ...It is true...we pay for what we get!

Other radio station editorials attempted to rally local public support behind a particular program or cause. For instance, a Salina, Kansas radio station on December 16, 1964, noting that the nearby Schilling Air Force Base was to be closed, said, "the best leadership must come from within Salina" to cope with the approaching problem. The editorial urged all of the Salina community organizations and citizens to "...build Salina! Let's pull together...Everyone..."

A St. Louis, Missouri radio station complimented its city with a review of the Negro problem in its city and concluded:

Our city has led the way among all major cities... north and south...in making our government representative of all the citizens. This is an achievement in which we should take pride. This is a guidepost that other cities would well follow.

Five of the 34 station editorials urged the listeners to vote for or against a particular bond issue, an ordinance change, or a political candidate. One Springfield, Missouri, station urged the adoption of a \$1,750,000 school bond issue, concluding the editorial with "mark your calendar now to vote for the school bond issue Tuesday, November 17th." Another of the editorials submitted asked listeners to vote for Barry Goldwater for President. The Kansas radio station, which served a community of 23,000 population, touched on the "liberal" and "conservative" philosophies of government, and concluded by asking its listeners to:

...express your faith in moderation and conservatism by voting Republican and putting your "X" in the square next to Barry Goldwater's name. The transfer of money and



possessions acquired or to be acquired from one person to another should be on a voluntary basis. Big Brother in Washington should not be on a voluntary basis. Big Brother in Washington should not take it from you and give it to someone else.

Also in the political vein was an editorial presented by a Dubuque, Iowa, radio station, complimenting the winners of recent elections and offering words of praise to the losers:

We...wish to pledge our support to the victorious Democratic candidates of Dubuque County. Tom Mulgrew, your candidates won fair and square. Now is the time for us to join ranks in a common community cause. We are firm believers in the value of competitive causes. In this respect, Bill Burke and his fellow Dubuque County Republicans have provided our community with a great quality, a quality not enjoyed in many years. Their interest, and their fight to assert the right of choice...have been in the truest traditions of American Democracy. The effect on our community has been and will continue to be of inestimable benefit.

An editorial which was designed to stir thought was also the shortest editorial submitted by the 34 radio stations. It simply said:

This is probably the shortest comment we will ever produce:  
And what ever happened to the FBI report on Bobby Baker?

An accompanying note from the Kansas radio station which broadcasted the editorial stated that usually its editorials ran two and a half minutes. A Central Kansas radio station concluded a January 6, 1965 editorial on governmental spending with these two paragraphs, which were intended to produce thought:

And so my question is this--when all of us vote to have all of us supported by the public treasury what is to become of our present form of government? What is to become of the individual?  
Whether you agree with my thinking is not important.  
What is important is that you think.



A Kansas City, Missouri, radio station submitted an editorial which eulogized a local Rabbi who had died. The November 27, 1964, editorial is particularly noteworthy because of the choice of words:

Rabbi Samuel S. Mayerberg has left our midst in the land of the living...has been gathered up in the loving arms of the God he loved so well and knew so well...like one of the prophets of the Old Testament...his craggy features spouting fire of wrath against injustice and corruption... His voice was like a violin that echoed the beauty of the soul...yet his voice could blast forth like the trumpet of a warrior as he fought his battle for truth and justice and liberty...We shall miss him.

It would appear, from the editorials cited, that the radio stations were forthright in saying what they wanted to say. The vocabulary was generally one that would be understood by every listener. This is proven further by an editorial broadcast in the midpart of December, 1964, by a radio station in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The editorial commented on City Council action which could have led to the dismissal of the City Manager. The radio station defended the City Manager and forcefully labeled the charges the council members were leveling against the manager as "phony."

Radio station listeners were rather bluntly attacked by an Iowa radio station. Quite a stir was created when the general manager of the station, which served a community of 33,000 population, announced during his regular morning editorial:

...I am taking the program (editorials) off the air today, because of pressures exerted, if you will, by a small minority of people whose prime purpose in life is to tell you that if your ideas differ with theirs that they will exert pressure and influence against you to destroy you... once again the American public in its apathy to appease and bend to the will of a few toss in the towel...so slide back into your apathetic attitudes...let a few tell you what you

can do and cannot do...give up what freedom you have because of fear of personal pressure and fear of economic reprisal.  
(Author's insert in parentheses)

The editorial continued with comments directed at "Wheel-Type" citizens who are "not interested in what you as a citizen and spender think...I am personally sick and tired of keeping mum when my constitution screams to be heard..." The editorial went on to say:

Ladies and Gentlemen, face a few facts...unfortunately, such trite expressions as "Brotherhood," "Freedom of Speech," "Assembly," "Equality in Justice," and "All Men are Created Equal," and many more that you and I use every day are becoming just...Trite expressions... You listening out there, who operate your lives on the theory that the end always justifies the means, had better open your Bibles, whether you are Catholic, Jew, or Protestant and begin to read...Do you know what you're doing...You like so many of us are giving lip service to "Brotherhood," "Honesty in Business," "Tolerance," "Fair Play," "Equality," "Cooperation," etc.

In a note of explanation attached to the editorial, the station manager said:

Here is a copy of an editorial I used more than a year ago. When you read it, you will see that it was a formal editorial announcement to my listeners that due to certain pressures I was taking the show...off the air. I did take the show off the air the following day. In the next nine days...I received 3,547 pieces of mail and my office logged over 750 phone calls...all, I repeat, all of which indicated they wanted me to tell the so-called big wheels I had mentioned to take a flying jump and to please put the show back on the air. I did exactly that and it is still on the air.

A Denver, Colorado radio station challenged some of its listener's attitudes toward police brutality in an editorial in May, 1964. The editorial remarks opened with a note of congratulations to a Denver resident who assisted two police officers who were being attacked by

three young men. The policemen were injured and required hospital treatment. The editorial made reference to an incident in New York "where citizens just stood by instead of assisting people in trouble," then went on to ask:

Really isn't it about time we stopped shedding crocodile tears over all the talk about police brutality? Here we have two police officers injured as a result of a brutal attack by three young fellows with unsavory records that include at least three arrests each on charges ranging from drunkenness to larceny. Just what do we expect our police officers to do? Handle everyone with kid gloves ...should we let any individual our police officers deal with spit in their faces, curse them out, assault them with fists, knives or guns? NO! We don't feel our police officers should have to take such abuse...Just remember, when you hear a hue and cry about police brutality, it is not always a one-sided story.

However, there was one station in Wichita, Kansas, which editorialized against the law enforcement officers, particularly in its county. In what appeared to be a tongue-in-cheek approach, the editorial criticized the sheriff's office:

In recent months the sheriff's office had made headlines with a series of murder investigations, some hirings and firings among department officials and several items about county prisoners. All of this news indicates a very active operation.

Of course, the murders remain unsolved, the hirings have been protested because of questionable records among the people hired, the firings had political overtones and the prisoners in question escaped but, still in all, it leaves no doubt that this county has a very busy sheriff's office.

But we wonder if "busy" and "effective" might be two different things...

And, another Wichita radio station seemed to enjoy commenting in a conversational vein on the then-approaching presidential campaign. In an April 15, 1964 editorial the station chided Kansas for its



political leanings:

Everytime a presidential election year rolls 'round, we get to thinking that ours is not the "sunflower state" ...so much as it is the "wallflower state." Nobody courts a wallflower...

And we have it straight from Barry Goldwater, Jr. "Father doesn't plan to campaign in Kansas."

But, who can blame Barry? Barry Senior, that is?

...Rockefeller, Nixon and such other dark horses as may yet enter the listings will want to be seen and heard where they have some chance of picking up delegate strength. (Lodge, the current front runner, would seem to have discovered that the BEST place to campaign is at a point as far from Kansas as it is possible to get: namely, South Viet Nam).

And, if there were a Lyndon B. Johnson, Jr., we imagine he would say--like the younger Goldwater--"Father doesn't plan to campaign in Kansas this year." Even a Democrat demands odds of at least one-in-a-hundred;

It is interesting to note that the editorial was proven erroneous in its assumptions. Both Goldwater and Johnson did campaign in Kansas during the 1964 presidential campaign, and Johnson, the Democrat, carried the state in the November election.

#### Findings of 40 Midwest Commercial AM Radio

##### Stations Which did not Editorialize

There were 53 questionnaires mailed to the radio stations which indicated in the initial postal card inquiry that they did not editorialize. Forty radio stations, 75.5 per cent, replied to the study. The data gathered from the answers which were given by the radio stations concerning their editorial practices is reported in this section.

Among the purposes of the study was one to determine the reasons why a number of commercial AM radio stations in the Midwest did not editorialize. Tables X and XI, on the following two pages, are summaries



TABLE X  
REASONS GIVEN BY THE 13 MIDWEST COMMERCIAL AM RADIO  
STATIONS FOR DISCONTINUING EDITORIALS

Reasons given	First	Second	Third	TOTAL number of time given
Change of radio station policy	5	1		6
Loss of qualified person to write editorials	3		1	4
Uncertainty of FCC action	2	1		3
Lack of community issues to warrant editorials	1	1		2
Took too much time of personnel	1	1		2
Loss of qualified person to present editorials		1	1	2
Pressure from advertisers disapproving editorials		1		1
Loss of commercial business		1		1
Don't believe radio stations should editorialize	1			1

of the reasons which were given by the 13 radio stations which had previously editorialized, but discontinued the practice, and the 27 radio stations which had never editorialized.

Table X points out that 6 of the 13 radio stations discontinued editorials because of a "change in station policy." Of these 6 stations,

TABLE XI  
 REASONS            GIVEN BY THE 27 MIDWEST COMMERCIAL AM RADIO  
 STATIONS WHICH DID NOT EDITORIALIZE    FOR  
 NOT EDITORIALIZING

Reasons given	First	Second	Third	TOTAL number of times given
Lack of qualified person to write editorials	12	2		14
Too much time and effort necessary	7	3		10
Confused with "equal time" provisions of Sec. 315	1	2	2	5
Uncertainty of FCC action	4			4
Lack of community issues to warrant editorials	1	3		4
Lack of qualified person to present editorials	4			4
Don't believe radio stations should editorialize	2		1	3
Don't want to stir controversy		1	1	2
Adverse public opinion to other station's editorials		1		1

2 reported a "change in ownership" as one of the reasons for discontinuing editorials. The "loss of a qualified person to write the editorials" was among the reasons 4 stations gave, and an "uncertainty of Federal Communications Commission action" was among the reasons given by

3 of the radio stations. Other reasons included "lack of community issues to warrant editorials," it took "too much time of personnel," "loss of qualified person to present the editorials," "loss of commercial business," "pressure from advertisers who disapproved of editorials," and "don't believe radio stations should editorialize."

Out of the 27 Midwest commercial AM radio stations which had never editorialized, Table XI indicates that just over half, 14 radio stations, attributed the reason for not editorializing to the "lack of a qualified person to write editorials." Ten stations said that it "took too much time and effort." One of these ten stations reported it did not "have a staff sufficiently large enough to do the necessary research to make editorials meaningful." A Nebraska radio station in a community of 13,000 persons said:

Our station policy is confined to serving our advertisers by giving the public entertainment, straight news, sports and timely features. An editorial must have teeth and we find stations who do editorialize, water them down, so as not to offend anyone, to the point they become ineffective.

And an Iowa radio station in a community of 33,000 population said that it would try to "provide a much better service by giving more in-depth news--special programs to the public and let public make up its own mind." This same station went on to say, "I question the value of my station editorializing when most (stations) don't even present a good sound program of local news coverage. This is 100 per cent more important!" (Author's insert in parentheses)

Five of the radio stations reported they were confused with the "equal time" provisions of Section 315 of the Communications Act, and 4



radio stations were "uncertain of Federal Communications Commission action." Among other reasons listed were "lack of community issues to warrant editorials," "lack of qualified persons to write and broadcast editorials," and, as three stations indicated, they did not "believe radio stations should editorialize."

Table XII reports the percentage of the 40 Midwest commercial AM radio stations which indicated various opinions to four questions pertaining to their editorial practices. The questions inquired whether or not the station would editorialize if Section 315 of the Communications Act were repealed, whether or not the station would editorialize if the fairness doctrine were rescinded, whether or not the fairness doctrine should be written into the Communications Act, and whether or not radio stations should endorse political candidates.

One-eighth of the radio stations indicated they would editorialize if Section 315 were repealed. Just under half, 45 per cent, said that they would not editorialize if the Section were repealed and 40 per cent indicated that the repeal of Section 315 "does not apply" to whether or not they would editorialize. For the purposes of this study it was assumed that the stations which indicated "no" or "does not apply," meant the same thing: that Section 315 of the Communications Act was not the main reason or among the reasons that the stations did not editorialize. Likewise, the answers to whether or not the station would editorialize if the fairness doctrine were rescinded indicated that the majority, the 80 per cent total of those who either said "no" or "does not apply," still would not editorialize. However, 17.5 per cent of the 40 stations indicated they would editorialize if the fairness doctrine

TABLE XII  
PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES CONCERNING VARIOUS EDITORIAL  
PRACTICES EXPRESSED BY 40 MIDWEST COMMERCIAL AM  
RADIO STATIONS WHICH DID NOT EDITORIALIZE

Answers given	Yes	No	Does not apply	No opinion
Would you editorialize if Section 315 were repealed	12.5 %	45.0 %	40.0 %	2.5 %
Would you editorialize if the fairness doctrine were rescinded	17.5	40.0	40.0	2.5
Should the fairness doctrine be written into the Com- munications Act	10.0	52.5		37.5
Should radio stations endorse political candi- dates for public office	30.0	52.5		17.5

were rescinded.

Additional opinions offered included the just over half, 52.5 per cent, which said that the fairness doctrine should be written into the Communications Act, and an identical majority, 52.5 per cent, indicated that radio stations should not endorse political candidates for public office. It should be noted that according to Table VIII, the Table reporting on opinions by 67 Midwest commercial AM radio stations which did editorialize, most of the radio stations which did editorialize, 40.3 per cent, said that radio stations should endorse political candidates for public office.

As to future plans, Table XIII on the following page, shows that

TABLE XIII  
 PERCENTAGE OF 13 RADIO STATIONS WHICH DISCONTINUED EDITORIALS  
 AND 27 RADIO STATIONS WHICH HAVE NEVER EDITORIALIZED  
 AND FUTURE PLANS TOWARD EDITORIALIZING

Future editorial plans	Stations that have editorialized (No.= 13)*	Stations that have never editorialized (No.= 27)*	TOTAL (No.= 40)**
Do not plan to editorialize	46.2 %	55.6 %	52.5 %
Plan to editorialize:			
Within a year	30.8	7.4	15.0
Within 1 to 2 years	15.4	14.8	15.0
Within 2 to 3 years		3.7	2.5
No answer	7.6	18.5	15.0

\*Number of radio stations

\*\*Total number of radio stations

over half, 52.5 per cent, did not have any plans to editorialize in the future. This view was more strongly expressed by the radio stations which had never editorialized, while 30.8 per cent of the stations which had editorialized indicated they planned to resume the practice within a year.



## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The purposes of this study were to: (1) survey the methods by which editorial subjects are selected and presented by a number of Midwestern commercial AM radio stations; (2) to study the editorials given by the stations for purpose, subject matter, organization of material, and language used; (3) to determine why a number of commercial AM radio stations in the Midwest do not editorialize, and (4) to determine some of the attitudes of Midwest broadcasters toward the fairness doctrine and Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended.

An initial postal card questionnaire was designed and mailed to 199 Midwest commercial AM radio stations. From the answers provided by 150 radio stations which responded to the initial postal card inquiry, just under two-thirds of the radio stations in the Midwest editorialized, largely on an irregular basis. The percentage of the radio stations which editorialized increased as the population of the areas which they served increased. One half of the stations in cities of under 15,000 population did not editorialize.

Two separate sets of questionnaires were designed for the 150 radio stations which responded to the postal card inquiry. One was sent to the 90 radio stations which indicated that they editorialized, and the other set was sent to the 54 radio stations which indicated that they did not editorialize. The additional findings of this study were based upon the returns of the completed questionnaires by 67 commercial AM radio stations which editorialized, and 40 commercial AM radio stations which did not editorialize.

In three-fourths of the radio stations which editorialized an editorial board was used to determine editorial policy. The station owner and station manager's role in determining that editorial policy, regardless of whether or not they were members of an editorial board, decreased as the population of the communities served increased.

Most radio stations have editorialized for over a year, but less than three years. It should be pointed out that the real surge into editorializing did not occur until 1961 when Newton N. Minow became chairman of the Federal Communications Commission and frequently stated his belief in editorializing.<sup>137</sup>

Generally, the editorials which were presented were broadcast more than once during the same broadcast day. The most popular time periods to broadcast editorials were around 8 a.m. in the morning, during the noon hour, and early evening from 6 to 7 p.m. This practice of repeating the same editorials particularly at different times during the same day appears to be an attempt by the radio stations to reach the largest possible radio audience.

The length of the editorials were mostly 1 to 3 minutes. This would probably distinguish them from commercial or political announcements which usually are one-half minute to one minute in length. This length would probably also allow a subject to be briefly explored and developed to a conclusion without losing the interest of the listener.

Most editorials were broadcast independently of regularly scheduled

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<sup>137</sup>"Editorials give....," p. 43.

newscasts. It would seem that this was an attempt to separate news from opinion. Just as a newspaper has an editorial page or editorial column, the radio stations seem to have specific editorial programs.

Nine out of ten radio stations which editorialized believed editorials helped improve their station's image. This judgement was based largely upon oral comments and letters from their listeners. One-fifth of the radio stations which editorialized reported that they lost commercial business because of their editorials. Some stations reported they received threats and intimidations from clients in addition to actually losing commercial income. Other radio stations reported receiving a few threats, but they did not know of any lost business due to the editorials.

The general editorial topics were local issues and problems. It is assumed that this was due to the actual involvement many of the stations have in the issues and problems through proximity and personnel participation in community activities.

The majority of the radio stations which did not editorialize reported that they lacked the time and/or the personnel to write and present the editorials effectively. A few of the radio stations expressed their desire to improve other programming services in lieu of editorializing.

Even though there were some hostilities presented by broadcasters toward Section 315 of the Communications Act and the fairness doctrine, most radio stations which editorialized did not let the regulations keep them from editorializing. Also, the regulations were not among



the major reasons listed as reasons why some radio stations did not editorialize. A general attitude among the broadcasters appears to be that it is the duty of the stations to be fair in the presentation of controversial issues. However, there were a few calls for a clarification of the fairness doctrine.

Finally, just over half of the radio stations which did not editorialize did not plan to editorialize in the future. However, one-third of the radio stations indicated that they would begin to editorialize within 2 years, although no reasons for this change were offered.

#### CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of the findings presented in this study, it would seem reasonable to conclude that:

1. The majority of the Midwest commercial AM radio stations did editorialize, but largely on an irregular basis.

2. Three-fourths of the radio stations which editorialized used an editorial board to determine the station's editorial policy.

3. As the population of the areas served by the radio stations increased, the percentage of radio stations serving the areas which editorialized, also increased.

4. As the population of the areas served by the radio stations increased, the role the station owner or the station manager played in determining editorial policy decreased.

5. Most radio stations have editorialized for over a year, but less than three years.

6. Generally, the editorials which were presented were broadcast more than once during the same broadcast day. Three-fourths of the radio stations which editorialized reported they repeated the same editorial during the same broadcast day. One out of five stations reported they sometimes repeated their editorials.

7. The general length of the editorials was 1 to 3 minutes.

8. Most editorials were broadcast independent of regularly scheduled newscasts.

9. Nine out of ten radio stations which editorialized believed that the editorials helped improve their station's image.

10. One-fifth of the radio stations which editorialized reported they lost commercial business because of the editorial practice.

11. The more popular times of day to broadcast editorials were in the morning approximately 8 a.m., in the noon hour, and the late evening hours between 5 to 6 p.m.

12. Most of the radio stations which did not editorialize indicated they lacked the time and/or the personnel to write and present the editorials effectively.

13. Even though there were some hostilities voiced from the broadcasters toward Section 315 of the Communications and the fairness doctrine, most radio stations which editorialized did not let the regulations keep them from editorializing, and the regulations were not among the major reasons why some radio stations did not editorialize.

14. Most of the radio stations which did not editorialize did not plan to editorialize in the future.

15. Editorial topics were generally on local issues or persons.

LIST OF WORKS CONSULTED



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APPENDIX A

POSTAL CARD QUESTIONNAIRE

## POSTAL CARD QUESTIONNAIRE

Side A

Mr. Bill Ohlmeier  
 Radio & Television Section  
 Nichols 206A  
 Kansas State University  
 Manhattan, Kansas 66502



THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

Dear Station Manager:

As a graduate student in Radio and Television at Kansas State University, I am conducting a study of Editorializing by radio and television stations in the Midwest. I would appreciate it if you would fill out the self-stamped card and return it to me at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,  
 Bill Ohlmeier



## POSTAL CARD QUESTIONNAIRE

Side B



THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE SQUARE:

Does your station editorialize? YES ( ) NO ( )

How often? DAILY ( ) WEEKLY ( ) MONTHLY ( )

OTHER \_\_\_\_\_.

Will you please assist me in this study by completing  
a questionnaire which would be mailed to you at a  
later time? (After Jan. 1, 1965) YES ( ) NO ( )

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_

Station's call letters:

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RADIO STATIONS

WHICH DID EDITORIALIZE

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY CHECKING THE APPROPRIATE SQUARE(S):

1. Who participates in determining the editorial policies of your station?

STATION OWNER(S) ( )      MANAGER ( )      NEWS DIRECTOR ( )  
 EDITORIAL BOARD OR COMMITTEE ( )      PROGRAM DIRECTOR ( )  
 OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

If you checked EDITORIAL BOARD OR COMMITTEE, please identify the members of that board or committee by their titles. (Check as many as apply.)

STATION OWNER(S) ( )      MANAGER ( )      NEWS DIRECTOR ( )  
 NEWS WRITER ( )      STAFF ANNOUNCER ( )      PROGRAM DIRECTOR ( )  
 SALES MANAGER ( )      OTHERS: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )  
 \_\_\_\_\_ ( )      \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

2. How long has your station editorialized?

LESS THAN YEAR ( )      1 TO 2 YEARS ( )      2 TO 3 YEARS ( )  
 3 TO 4 YEARS ( )      4 TO 5 YEARS ( )      OVER 5 YEARS ( )

3. What is the usual length of your station's editorials?

UNDER 1 MINUTE ( )      1 TO 2 MINUTES ( )      2 TO 3 MINUTES ( )  
 3 TO 4 MINUTES ( )      4 TO 5 MINUTES ( )      OVER 5 MINUTES ( )

4. Who usually selects the subjects for your station's editorials?

STATION OWNER(S) ( )      MANAGER ( )      NEWS DIRECTOR ( )  
 PROGRAM DIRECTOR ( )      EDITORIAL BOARD OR COMMITTEE ( )  
 OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

5. Who usually writes your station's editorials?

STATION OWNER(S) ( )      MANAGER ( )      PROGRAM DIRECTOR ( )  
 EDITORIAL BOARD OR COMMITTEE ( )      STAFF NEWS WRITER ( )  
 OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

6. Who has final approval before editorials are aired?

STATION OWNER(S) ( )      NEWS DIRECTOR ( )      PROGRAM DIRECTOR ( )  
 EDITORIAL BOARD OR COMMITTEE ( )      STAFF NEWS WRITER ( )  
 MANAGER ( )      OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

7. Who usually airs editorials?

STATION OWNER(S) ( )      MANAGER ( )      NEWS DIRECTOR ( )  
 PROGRAM DIRECTOR ( )      OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

8. How often does your station editorialize?

DAILY ( )      WEEKLY ( )      MONTHLY ( )      OCCASIONALLY ( )  
 AS NEED ARISES ( )      OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

If DAILY, how many times per day does your station editorialize?

ONCE ( )      TWICE ( )      THREE TIMES ( )      FOUR TIMES ( )  
 FIVE TIMES ( )      OVER FIVE TIMES ( )

9. Do you repeat same editorial at different times during the day?

ALWAYS DO ( )      SOMETIMES DO ( )      NEVER DO ( )

10. At what time(s) during the day does your station usually editorialize?

AM: \_\_\_\_\_ PM: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

11. What relationship does the time during the day the editorials are aired have to do with your station's regularly scheduled newscasts?

PART OF NEWSCAST ( )      ADJACENT TO NEWSCAST ( )      INDEPENDENT ( )  
 OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

12. Do you believe that editorializing helps improve your station's image?

YES ( )      NO ( )      DON'T KNOW ( )

If YES, or NO, how do you determine whether or not editorials improve image?

ORAL COMMENTS FROM LISTENERS ( )      LETTERS FROM LISTENERS ( )  
 SURVEYS ( )      OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )



13. Do you believe that your editorials have cost your station listeners?

YES ( ) NO ( ) DON'T KNOW ( )

If YES, or NO, how do you know whether or not listeners were lost?

ORAL COMMENTS FROM LISTENERS ( ) LETTERS FROM LISTENERS ( )  
SURVEYS ( ) OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

14. To your knowledge, have your editorials cost your station commercial business?

YES ( ) NO ( ) DON'T KNOW ( )

If YES, how did you know business was lost because of editorials?

CANCELLATION OF ACCOUNTS ( )  
REFUSAL TO PURCHASE ADVERTISING TIME ( )  
OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_ ( )

15. Should radio stations endorse political candidates for public office?

YES ( ) NO ( ) UNDECIDED ( )

If YES, or NO, why should or shouldn't radio stations endorse political candidates?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you feel the fairness doctrine hampers your station in its presentation of editorials?

YES ( ) NO ( ) NO OPINION ( )

If YES, or NO, please state why. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF ONE OF YOUR MOST EFFECTIVE EDITORIALS, FROM THE STANDPOINT OF A RATHER CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE PUBLIC RESPONSE.

What was the public response to it? FAVORABLE ( ) UNFAVORABLE ( )

May the author reproduce your editorial or portions of it for use in his study of the purpose, subject matter, organization of material, and language used? (station's identity will not be used) YES ( ) NO ( )

18. If you would like a copy of the author's summary concluded from this study, please mark your station's call letters here:

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RADIO STATIONS

WHICH DID NOT EDITORIALIZE

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS BY CHECKING THE APPROPRIATE SQUARE:

1. On your postal card which you returned to me, you stated that your station did not editorialize, would your station editorialize if Section 315 (law on political broadcasts) was repealed?

YES (    )                      NO (    )                      DOES NOT APPLY (    )

2. Would your station editorialize if the fairness doctrine was rescinded?

YES (    )                      NO (    )                      DOES NOT APPLY (    )

3. Should the fairness doctrine be written into the Communications Act?

YES (    )                      NO (    )                      NO OPINION (    )

4. Has your station ever editorialized?

YES (    )                      NO (    )

If NO, go to question 5 on next page.

If YES, why did your station discontinue editorializing?

(Check the box to the left of any answer that applies)

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| (    ) LOSS OF QUALIFIED PERSON TO <u>WRITE</u> EDITORIALS    | _____ |
| (    ) LOSS OF QUALIFIED PERSON TO <u>PRESENT</u> EDITORIALS  | _____ |
| (    ) CHANGE OF STATION POLICY                               | _____ |
| (    ) ADVERSE PUBLIC OPINION TO EDITORIALS                   | _____ |
| (    ) PRESSURE FROM ADVERTISERS THAT DISSAPPROVED EDITORIALS | _____ |
| (    ) LOSS OF COMMERCIAL BUSINESS                            | _____ |
| (    ) UNCERTAINTY OF FCC ACTION                              | _____ |
| (    ) TOOK TOO MUCH TIME OF PERSONNEL                        | _____ |
| (    ) LACK OF COMMUNITY ISSUES TO WARRENT EDITORIALS         | _____ |
| (    ) _____  | _____ |
| (    ) _____  | _____ |
| (    ) _____  | _____ |

On the blank to the right of the above statements, please signify the three most important reasons for discontinuing editorializing-- use 1 for most important, 2 for second most important, and 3 for the third most important reason.

5. Why doesn't your station currently editorialize? (Check the box to the left of any answer that applies.)

- ( ) LACK OF QUALIFIED PERSON TO WRITE EDITORIALS \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) LACK OF QUALIFIED PERSON TO PRESENT EDITORIALS \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) ADVERSE PUBLIC OPINION TO OTHER STATIONS EDITORIALS \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) UNCERTAINTY OF FCC ACTIONS \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) TOO MUCH TIME AND EFFORT NECESSARY \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) DON'T WANT TO STIR CONTROVERSY \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) DON'T BELIEVE RADIO STATIONS SHOULD EDITORIALIZE \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) CONFUSED WITH "EQUAL TIME" PROVISIONS OF SEC. 315 \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) LACK OF COMMUNITY ISSUES TO WARRANT EDITORIALS \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) \_\_\_\_\_
- ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

On the blank to the right of the above statements, please signify the three most important reasons for discontinuing editorializing-- use 1 for most important, 2 for second most important, and 3 for the third most important reason.

6. Should radio stations endorse political candidates for public office?

YES ( ) NO ( ) UNDECIDED ( )

7. Do you anticipate editorializing in the future?

NO ( ) WITHIN A YEAR ( ) WITHIN 1 TO 2 YEARS ( )  
 WITHIN 2 TO 3 YEARS ( ) WITHIN 3 TO 4 YEARS ( )  
 WITHIN 4 TO 5 YEARS ( ) OVER FIVE YEARS ( )

8. REMARKS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

9. If you would like a copy of the author's summary concluded from this study, please mark your station's call letters here:



APPENDIX D

COVER LETTER

Radio and Television Section  
Department of Speech  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, Kansas

Thank you for returning the postal card indicating your willingness to assist me in the study of editorial practices by commercial AM radio stations in the Midwest. Enclosed is the promised questionnaire. I hope you will find the questions self-explanatory and easy to answer. If additional space is necessary for comments, please use the back side of the pages of the questionnaire.

The purpose of my study is to: (1) survey the methods by which editorial subjects are selected and presented by Midwestern commercial AM radio stations; (2) to study the editorials given by the stations for purpose, subject matter, organization of material, and language used; (3) to determine why a number of commercial AM radio stations in the Midwest do not editorialize, and (4) to determine Midwest broadcaster's attitude toward fairness doctrine and Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended.

After you have completed the questionnaire, please return it to me via the self-addressed stamped envelope. Thank you for your assistance. I assure you that individual station's comments and answers on the questionnaire will be held in the strictest confidence.

Sincerely,

Bill Ohlemeier

Enclosures

APPENDIX E

LIST OF 150 RADIO STATIONS  
USED IN STUDY

## LIST OF 150 RADIO STATIONS USED IN STUDY

Call letters	Location	Maximum power*
KABI	Abilene, Kansas	250
KAKC	Tulsa, Oklahoma	1,000
KAKE	Wichita, Kansas	1,000
KANS	Larned, Kansas	500
KARE	Atchison, Kansas	1,000
KATZ	St. Louis, Missouri	5,000
KAYS	Hays, Kansas	1,000
KBEA	Kansas City, Missouri	1,000
KBIX	Muskogee, Oklahoma	250
KBIZ	Ottumwa, Iowa	1,000
KBON	Omaha, Nebraska	1,000
KBRL	McCook, Nebraska	5,000
KBTR	Denver, Colorado	5,000
KBUY	Amarillo, Texas	5,000
KCBC	Des Moines, Iowa	1,000
KCCO	Lawton, Oklahoma	250
KCFI	Cedar Falls, Iowa	500
KCGM	Columbia, Missouri	250
KCKN	Kansas City, Kansas	1,000
KCLN	Clinton, Iowa	1,000
KCMO	Kansas City, Missouri	50,000

\*Listed in watts



KCRB	Chanute, Kansas	1,000
KCRC	Enid, Oklahoma	1,000
KCRG	Cedar Rapids, Iowa	5,000
KDRO	Sedalia, Missouri	250
KDTH	Dubuque, Iowa	5,000
KEDD	Dodge City, Kansas	1,000
KELI	Tulsa, Oklahoma	5,000
KEWI	Topeka, Kansas	5,000
KEYR	Scottsbluff, Nebraska	1,000
KFAB	Omaha, Nebraska	50,000
KFBC	Cheyenne, Wyoming	1,000
KFDA	Amarillo, Texas	5,000
KFEQ	St. Joseph, Missouri	5,000
KFH	Wichita, Kansas	5,000
KFLA	Scott City, Kansas	500
KFMJ	Tulsa, Oklahoma	1,000
KFML	Denver, Colorado	1,000
KFOR	Lincoln, Nebraska	1,000
KFRM	Salina, Kansas	5,000
KFSB	Joplin, Missouri	5,000
KFSC	Denver, Colorado	1,000
KGBX	Springfield, Missouri	5,000
KGFW	Kearney, Nebraska	1,000
KGGF	Coffeyville, Kansas	10,000
KGLO	Mason City, Iowa	5,000

KGNC	Amarillo, Texas	10,000
KGNO	Dodge City, Kansas	5,000
KGWA	Enid, Oklahoma	1,000
KHMO	Hannibal, Missouri	5,000
KICK	Springfield, Missouri	1,000
KIND	Independence, Kansas	250
KIOA	Des Moines, Iowa	10,000
KIUL	Garden City, Kansas	1,000
KIXZ	Amarillo, Texas	5,000
KJCF	Festus, Missouri	250
KJCK	Junction City, Kansas	1,000
KJEM	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	250
KJRG	Newton, Kansas	500
KKAN	Phillipsburg, Kansas	1,000
KKJO	St. Joseph, Missouri	5,000
KLEE	Ottumwa, Iowa	500
KLEO	Wichita, Kansas	5,000
KLIB	Liberal, Kansas	500
KLID	Poplar Bluff, Missouri	1,000
KLIN	Lincoln, Nebraska	250
KLIR	Denver, Colorado	1,000
KLKC	Parsons, Kansas	250
KLMS	Lincoln, Nebraska	1,000
KLPR	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	1,000
KLSI	Salina, Kansas	500
KLWN	Lawrence, Kansas	500

KLWW	Cedar Rapids, Iowa	1,000
KLZ	Denver, Colorado	5,000
KMA	Shenandoah, Iowa	5,000
KMAN	Manhattan, Kansas	500
KMDO	Fort Scott, Kansas	500
KMNS	Sioux City, Iowa	1,000
KMOX	St. Louis, Missouri	50,000
KNBI	Norton, Kansas	1,000
KNCK	Concordia, Kansas	500
KNDY	Marysville, Kansas	250
KNEB	Scottsbluff, Nebraska	1,000
KNED	McAlester, Oklahoma	1,000
KNIC	Winfield, Kansas	250
KOA	Denver, Colorado	50,000
KOAM	Pittsburg, Kansas	10,000
KODY	North Platte, Nebraska	1,000
KOFO	Ottawa, Kansas	250
KOIL	Omaha, Nebraska	5,000
KOKO	Warrensburg, Missouri	1,000
KOLT	Scottsbluff, Nebraska	5,000
KOMA	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	50,000
KOWH	Omaha, Nebraska	500
KPIK	Colorado Springs, Colorado	5,000
KPRS	Kansas City, Missouri	1,000
KQYX	Joplin, Missouri	250
KRAY	Amarillo, Texas	500

KRGI	Grand Island, Nebraska	5,000
KRIB	Mason City, Iowa	250
KRMG	Tulsa, Oklahoma	50,000
KROS	Clinton, Iowa	1,000
KRSL	Russell, Kansas	250
KSAL	Salina, Kansas	5,000
KSCB	Liberal, Kansas	1,000
KSD	St. Louis, Missouri	5,000
KSEK	Pittsburg, Kansas	1,000
KSID	Sidney, Nebraska	1,000
KSIR	Wichita, Kansas	250
KSIS	Sedalia, Missouri	1,000
KSIW	Woodward, Oklahoma	1,000
KSMN	Mason City, Iowa	1,000
KSO	Des Moines, Iowa	5,000
KSOK	Arkansas City, Kansas	1,000
KSTL	St. Louis, Missouri	1,000
KSTT	Davenport, Iowa	1,000
KTLN	Denver, Colorado	5,000
KTMC	McAlester, Oklahoma	250
KTOK	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	5,000
KTOP	Topeka, Kansas	250
KTRI	Sioux City, Iowa	5,000
KTTS	Springfield, Missouri	1,000
KUDL	Kansas City, Missouri	5,000
KUSN	St. Joseph, Missouri	1,000



KVFD	Ft. Dodge, Iowa	1,000
KVGB	Great Bend, Kansas	5,000
KVOE	Emporia, Kansas	250
KVOO	Tulsa, Oklahoma	50,000
KVOR	Colorado Springs, Colorado	1,000
KVWO	Cheyenne, Wyoming	1,000
KWBB	Wichita, Kansas	5,000
KWBW	Hutchinson, Kansas	1,000
KWHK	Hutchinson, Kansas	1,000
KWK	St. Louis, Missouri	5,000
KWOS	Jefferson City, Missouri	1,000
KWRV	McCook, Nebraska	1,000
KWTO	Springfield, Missouri	5,000
KWWL	Waterloo, Iowa	5,000
KXIC	Iowa City, Iowa	1,000
KXOK	St. Louis, Missouri	5,000
KZIP	Amarillo, Texas	1,000
WDAF	Kansas City, Missouri	5,000
WDBQ	Dubuque, Iowa	1,000
WHO	Des Moines, Iowa	50,000
WIBW	Topeka, Kansas	5,000
WIL	St. Louis, Missouri	5,000
WKY	Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	5,000
WMT	Cedar Rapids, Iowa	5,000
WOW	Omaha, Nebraska	5,000
WREN	Topeka, Kansas	5,000

STUDY OF THE EDITORIAL PRACTICES OF A NUMBER OF  
MIDWEST COMMERCIAL AM RADIO STATIONS IN  
THE UNITED STATES

by

BILLY JOE OHLEMEIER

B. A., Fort Hays Kansas State College, 1962

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Speech

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1965

The purposes of this study were to: (1) survey the methods by which editorial subjects are selected and presented by a number of Midwestern commercial AM radio stations; (2) to study the editorials given by the stations for purpose, subject matter, organization of material, and language used; (3) to determine why a number of commercial AM radio stations in the Midwest do not editorialize, and (4) to determine some of the attitudes of Midwest broadcasters toward the fairness doctrine and Section 315 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Amended.

Following a review of pertinent literature, 199 Midwest commercial AM radio stations were selected for the sample to be used in the study. An initial postal card inquiry brought response from 150 of these stations. Two questionnaires, one for radio stations which editorialized and the other for the radio stations which did not editorialize, were designed and mailed to 90 radio stations which editorialized and 54 radio stations which did not editorialize.

Based on the completed questionnaires received from 67 commercial AM radio stations which editorialized and 40 commercial AM radio stations which did not editorialize, it would seem reasonable to conclude:

1. The majority of the radio stations did editorialize, but largely on an irregular basis.

2. An editorial board determined editorial policy in three-fourths of the radio stations which editorialized.

3. The population of the communities served affected the role the station owner and station manager played in determining editorial policy.

4. Editorials were generally 1 to 3 minutes in length, pertained principally to local issues and problems, and broadcast more than once

during the same broadcast day, largely independent of regularly scheduled newscasts.

5. Nine out of ten radio stations which editorialized believed that the editorials helped improve their station's image. However, one-fifth of the stations reported losing commercial business due to their editorials.

6. Most radio stations which editorialized have done so for less than three years.

7. The most popular time of day to broadcast editorials was approximately 8 a.m. in the morning.

8. The majority of the radio stations which did not editorialize said that they lacked the time and/or the personnel to write and present editorials effectively, and that they did not plan to editorialize in the future.

9. Section 315 of the Communications Act and the fairness doctrine did not hinder most of the stations which editorialized, nor were the two regulations listed as major reasons why some radio stations did not editorialize.









