

THESIS

A USES AND GRATIFICATION STUDY  
OF PUBLIC RADIO AUDIENCES

Submitted by  
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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION  
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ENTITLED A USES AND GRATIFICATIONS STUDY OF PUBLIC RADIO AUDIENCES  
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS  
A USES AND GRATIFICATION STUDY  
OF PUBLIC RADIO AUDIENCES

This thesis sought to find out why people listen to public radio. The uses and gratifications data gathering approach was implemented for public radio audiences.

Questionnaires were sent out to 389 listener/contributors of public radio in northern Colorado. KCSU-FM in Fort Collins and KUNC-FM in Greeley agreed to provide such lists of listener/contributors. One hundred ninety-two completed questionnaires were returned and provided the sample base for the study.

The respondents indicated they used public radio primarily for its news, its special programming, and/or because it is entertaining. Her/his least likely reasons for using public radio are for diversion and/or to transmit culture from one generation to the next. The remaining uses and gratifications categories included in the study indicate moderate reasons for using public radio.

Various limitations of the study possibly tempered the results. These included the sample used and the method used to analyze the data. Conducting the research necessary for completion of this study made evident the fact that more

research needs to be done to improve the uses and gratifications approach to audience analysis. The identification of the uses and non-uses of public radio have helped lay a foundation for future research in this area.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

In the past sixty years in America, "educational" or public radio has grown and matured tremendously. In the 1920s, it struggled as the broadcast industry itself started to develop the concept of "educational" radio. Soon after, in the mid-1940s, "educational" radio was granted its own frequency band. The number of "educational" stations continued to increase over the next two decades. Then, as "educational" radio changed its name to "public" radio, its power and capacities were solidified as the government decided to fund radio on a bi-yearly basis and organize public radio stations into a network. Today, public radio is increasing its ability to carry programs via satellite, and the number of public radio stations continues to grow.

For public radio, however, it appears as if this growth has been and continues to be unnoticed by researchers. Rating services, such as Nielsen and Arbitron, continue to develop precise scientific methods of analyzing broadcast audiences, but they focus their studies on commercial broadcasting audiences. Although this practice presents particular problems for public broadcasters who desire

audience information, even commercial broadcasters have limited knowledge about their audiences. There are people in broadcasting who believe there is more to audience analysis than what the ratings and ratings services currently provide. Monica Dignam, an independent research consultant, is one person who feels this way:

Radio producers--like their television counterparts a few years ago--are beginning to understand that ratings don't tell them very much. Regardless of how they are held to the light, the numbers never answer the questions "Why?"<sup>1</sup>

Research, other than that involving ratings, also has concentrated on commercial radio--or more often television. Very little research has been done on public radio, especially public radio audiences. It was the purpose of this thesis to find out information about the audience use of public radio. More specifically, this thesis studies audience use of public radio, the demographic makeup of this audience, and finally, when this audience listens to public radio.

### History

In November of 1920, when KDKA in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, first broadcast on the air, there was no distinction between "educational" and "commercial" stations. Nevertheless, "Between 1921 and the end of 1936, a total of 202 broadcast licenses were granted to educational institutions." Many of the educational licenses were permitted to expire, be revoked, or transferred to other interests.

By 1937, only thirty-eight of the 202 licenses were still viable.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, commercial broadcasting became a reality.

Between 1936 and 1945, two events occurred which were relevant to "educational" radio: (1) In 1938, the FCC made an explicit distinction between commercial and noncommercial stations; no programs with sponsored or commercial content are to be transmitted on "educational" stations. As part of that distinction in 1940, the FCC made a long-term commitment to FM broadcasting, as five channels between 42 and 43 MHz were reserved for noncommercial use on the FM band. (2) In June of 1945, "the FCC adopted an extensive revision of existing frequency allocations and established the 88 to 108 MHz band as the permanent home for FM broadcasting." Twenty FM channels between 88 and 92 MHz were set aside exclusively for noncommercial use.<sup>3</sup>

Over the next twenty years, still more changes occurred in the broadcasting industry which affected educational radio. In 1948, "the Commission issued notice that in order to encourage the construction of new facilities at minimal expense, educational FM stations could be operated with a power of 10 watts or less (as compared to the previous minimum power of 250 watts)." Although this helped educational radio initially, the FCC turned its attention to educational television at this time. As a result, "educational radio was at a loss for major accomplishments during the 1950s,"<sup>4</sup> and essentially through much of the

1960s as well. The next big step for public radio was the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. At that point in time, "educational radio joined educational television as a beneficiary of the federal funds that would be distributed by the newly created Corporation for Public Broadcasting."<sup>5</sup> Three years later,

National Public Radio (NPR) was created both to produce and distribute programming, thus operating more like a traditional network than its television counterpart. However, because of public radio's low profile--some would say invisibility--it was spared public, Congressional, and White House debate and criticism.<sup>6</sup>

It appears that public radio is becoming too strong a media force to be overlooked any longer:

The nomenclature of noncommercial radio has changed and the medicinal-sounding term "educational" radio is no longer used. Public radio as we know it today consists of that group of 210 stations which have met the minimum standards of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB): not less than 3,000 watts of power at an antenna height of 300 feet, service at least 18 hours a day 365 days a year, a full-time professional staff of at least five people, and a budget of not less than \$90,000 annually. In addition, there are non-commercial stations which either by choice or by circumstance, have not achieved "CPB-qualified" status.<sup>7</sup>

NPR's president, Frank Mankiewicz, believes NPR's new satellite system will significantly aid radio's expansion, offering a complete menu of regional and local programming.<sup>8</sup> Already in the second year of satellite use, public radio has had eight channels available for simultaneous transmission of programs.

Later, as program sharing increases and new special public service uses develop, public radio

stations will have access to 12 or more satellite channels, all of which could be operating at the same time. As the public radio satellite system grows, it will become increasingly capable of simultaneously transmitting many programs from many sources to many stations and many listeners.<sup>9</sup>

It is obvious that as public radio continues to expand both in the number of stations that exist and in the number of services these stations provide, its role in the mass media will change:

Thus while public broadcasting has always been expected to attend to the needs of dispossessed interests and to provide a wider range of services--to be the "alternative"--those expectations have now been magnified. In the eyes of many it is no longer sufficient for public broadcasting to offer just a few different programming opportunities. Instead, it is seen as being responsible for providing an increasing range of public services. As cable, satellites, and other new technological developments have become available, public broadcasting has proved itself more willing than commercial broadcasters to adapt such changes to public service ends.<sup>10</sup>

### Review of Literature

A survey of the literature for the general research area of public audiences reveals that very little work has been done. There are, however, some studies that provide background and others that, related to other dimensions of electronic media, provide information on media audiences in general.

#### Public radio literature

Michael John Hopkinson examines the problems of FM radio's "public image"--its definition in the minds of those who listen, those who reject it, and those who guide its

development in the industry. The study is not directed at public radio audiences, but the rationale is similar. Hopkinson reviews previous literature and finds confusion among programmers concerning their audiences and programming rationale. Hopkinson then bases his study on the need for better understanding of the role that the listening public assigns to FM radio. He finds that FM radio has an "image" problem; there are people who do not listen to FM radio because their image of it is different from what FM radio is in reality.<sup>11</sup>

A study of Wenmouth Williams, Jr. examines public radio audiences by comparing life-styles of a sample taken from the general population to those of theatre subscribers who were found (through earlier research) to be more apt to listen to public radio. Theatre subscribers are more likely to be heavy listeners of public radio, male, educated, older, professionally employed, less favorable towards classical music, voters, members in many civic groups, and regular play attenders.<sup>12</sup>

Donald P. Mullally's study of public radio looks at why people do not listen to it. He singles out four outstanding reasons:

- (1) First, some of public radio's programming is not up to commercial standards, partly due to the fact that many of the stations pay such low salaries that they cannot attract the kind of talent required to provide quality programming . . .
- (2) Paradoxically, it can also be said that a reason for the small audience for public radio is that much of its programming is very good . . . . Listeners weaned on commercial radio may find much of public radio too rich to digest . . . .
- (3) A third facet of the audience problem is public radio's programming format. Most of the programming

supported through National Public Radio (NPR) is what is called block programming. Block programming. . . is based upon the notion that there are specific and identifiable programs which people will tune in, much as they tune in specific television programs. This is a demonstrably false premise, however, because research shows that people have high station loyalty in radio, and high program loyalty in television. That is, people tune in for a specific kind of service when they use radio, based on an expectation that a station is a rock station or a classical music station or an information station, and if they don't know what to expect they don't tune in . . . .

- (4) The fourth facet of the audience problem is one of promotion. It is an unfortunate fact that public radio does not promote itself very well, either at the national or the local level.<sup>13</sup>

Notwithstanding the fact that there is very little research concerning public radio (audiences), there are some who feel much should be done concerning this area of study. They suggest important questions and important reasons for research in this area. Dignam describes formative research methods in radio. As mentioned earlier, she emphasizes the fact that ratings services' abilities are limited, and follows this by briefly describing methods of research like the case study, content analysis, and the questionnaire.<sup>14</sup>

Wenmouth Williams, Jr. and David J. LeRoy, deputy director of audience research for the CPB study alternate methods of measuring public radio audiences. Their concern for the lack of relevant public radio audience information is obvious:

The paucity of radio research is most evident when educational or public radio is concerned. Most current radio research is now limited to ratings or crude head-counting studies designed primarily to establish rate cards for commercial stations. Public radio suffers dramatically from this method of locating radio audiences, because of the nature of its programming. Since many public radio stations broadcast programs found on few commercial stations, audiences are typically very small. The public

radio audience is often so small that it is not included in many local rating books. Besides, knowing how "popular" a station is in the ratings is not especially valuable information for the public radio station manager. This broadcaster has other legitimate information needs in terms of knowing who is in the audience and their program preferences. While these information needs are rather clear cut, the methods for obtaining them have yet to be developed.<sup>15</sup>

George Bailey, director of WUWM-FM in Milwaukee, and Tom Church, senior research analyst in the CPB's Office of Communication Research, present an overview of the ways the CPB/Arbitron audience research reports can be used by any station in evaluating and delivering more effective program services. Myths concerning public radio are dispelled, like the one which theorizes that there are many exclusive listeners of public radio. The purpose of their paper is to point the way to sound analysis of public radio audiences. Questions are provided concerning public radio audiences, such as who listens to public radio, to which stations are the listeners most loyal, do families listen together to public radio, etc. Say Bailey and Church: "Our point is that there are many questions, important questions, that can and should be answered through the use of research."<sup>16</sup>

In an article which is devoted to qualitative audience research in public television, Carol A. V. Keegan discusses the need for more extensive audience research. If one were to substitute the word "radio" every time "television" is mentioned in the following excerpts, there would be no loss of meaning:

Although public television [radio] has established special programming goals for itself, it has failed to

develop parallel research activities with which to evaluate the achievement of these goals. . . . In general, supporters of qualitative television [radio] research call for the establishment of an expanded viewer [listener] feedback channel. Currently, viewers [listeners] have a very limited, nonverbal vocabulary with which to comment on the value of various television [radio] programs--they can turn them on or turn them off.<sup>17</sup>

Research on public radio seems to indicate that more information about audiences is needed than what ratings services provide and what currently is available. Why people listen to a particular show is one question which needs answering. This seems particularly true for public radio, where competition for advertising dollars is not important but where programming and promotional decisions still rely on how broadcasters perceive their audience. What would these new types of research provide the broadcaster? It seems "they would provide entirely different kinds of information which reveal the extent to which program offerings provide worthwhile viewing experiences to their audience."<sup>18</sup>

#### Uses and gratifications literature

There are now methods of communication research which can lead researchers into finding out why people listen to public radio. This approach to audience analysis, commonly referred to as "uses and gratifications" analysis, seeks to find out what types of programming

attract and hold audiences to the kinds of media and the types of content which satisfy their social and

psychological needs . . . . this approach has persisted, grown in sophistication, and even undergone something of a revival lately.<sup>19</sup>

The uses and gratifications approach provides a way of understanding media effects.

The uses and gratifications approach to audience research may be labeled a functional approach:

It argues that people bend the media to their needs more readily than the media overpower them; that the media are at least as much agents of diversion and entertainment as of information and influence. It argues, moreover, that the selection of media and content, and the uses to which they are put, are considerably influenced by social role and psychological predispositions.

Viewing the media in this way permits one to ask not only how the media gratify and influence individuals but how and why they are differentially integrated into social institutions. Thus, if individuals select certain media, or certain types of content, in their roles as citizens, or consumers, or church members, we gain insight into the relationship between the attributes of media (real or perceived) and the social and psychological functions which they serve.<sup>20</sup>

"Utilization of Mass Communication by the Individual" by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler and Michael Gurevitch discusses gratifications of broadcast media and looks briefly at the theory, method, and value of this type of research. The authors point out that audience gratifications can be derived from at least three distinct sources: media content, exposure to the media per se, and the social context that typifies the situation of exposure to different media.<sup>21</sup> Looking at these three sources can provide some insight into why people listen to public radio, but a more holistic view seems to be needed.

K. E. Rosengren's uses and gratifications approach seems to meet this need. He suggests that uses and

gratifications research may be profitably connected with the long-established tradition of inquiry into public perceptions of the various media and the dimension to which their respective images and qualities are differentiated.<sup>22</sup> Other areas explored in this article are the social origins of audience needs:

The social and environmental circumstances that lead people to turn to the mass media for the satisfaction of certain media needs are also little understood as yet . . . . one may postulate that it is the combined product of psychological dispositions, sociological factors, and environmental conditions that determines the specific use of the media by members of the audience.<sup>23</sup>

Rosengren's ideas concerning uses and gratifications research are helping researchers to look more extensively at this area of study:

The "uses and gratifications" paradigm suggests that viewer attitudes toward a program can be conceptualized as either being associated with: one, a motive to view the program (or select another behavior), or two, a post-viewing evaluation of a program episode as providing a gratification or non-gratification. It is clear that most researchers have not identified this important distinction, although it may seriously impact the nature and range of reactions to the program.<sup>24</sup>

There have been numerous studies done in the past thirty years, although very few study radio only. The first uses and gratifications study is Herta Herzog's 1944 investigation. Herzog tried to find out what needs radio soap opera fulfilled for its women listeners. "That [study] was a semi-clinical, intensive attempt to obtain expressions of media content needs."<sup>25</sup> Herzog suggested

three major types of gratifications:

Some listeners found emotional release from listening. A second form of enjoyment came from the opportunities for wishful thinking provided in listening. A third form of gratification concerned the advice obtained from listening to daytime serials.<sup>26</sup>

Tsiyona Peled and Elihu Katz looked at use of mass media in general in a time of crisis. They studied mass media use in Israel during the Yom Kippur war of 1973. While they found different results for the different media (radio, television, newspapers, etc.), they concluded that the people in Israel use these media: (1) to find out the most current news about the war; (2) as a tension release; and (3) as a way of socially integrating themselves with the rest of the people in their situation.<sup>27</sup>

Jack J. McLeod and Lee B. Becker tested the validity of gratification measures through political effects analysis. Personal interviews were conducted using 389 potential voters in Madison, Wisconsin. The authors found that their interviewees use television for surveillance, vote guidance, anticipated communication, excitement, and reinforcement.<sup>28</sup>

In addition, several uses and gratification studies focus on how children use the mass media. Because they are not germane to this particular study, they are not included but are found in The Uses of Mass Communications by Blumler and Katz.<sup>29</sup>

The methods used in many of these studies of adults and children were influenced by Harold Lasswell's article, "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society."<sup>30</sup> Lasswell notes three major functions that communication may serve: "(1) the surveillance of the environment; (2) the correlation of the parts of society in responding to the environment; (3) the transmission of the social heritage from one generation to the next."<sup>31</sup> Since the article was written, scholars in the field of communication research have added a fourth category--entertainment.<sup>32</sup> Charles R. Wright explains these categories further:

Surveillance refers to the collection and distribution and information concerning events in the environment, both outside and within any particular society, thus corresponding approximately to what is popularly conceived as the handling of news. Acts of correlation, here, include interpretation of information about the environment and prescriptions for conduct in reaction to these events. In part this activity is popularly identified as editorial or propagandistic. Transmission of culture includes activities designed to communicate a group's store of social norms, information, values, and the like, from one generation to another or from members of a group to newcomers. Commonly it is identified as educational activity. Finally, entertainment refers to communication primarily intended to amuse people irrespective of any instrumental effects it might have.<sup>33</sup>

One major study looks at radio audiences in particular. In New York City in 1961, Harold Mendelsohn studied WMCA-AM's audience by interviewing one thousand people randomly selected from nineteen telephone directories in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area.

Most of the listeners interviewed in the study (78 percent) considered radio to play an important role in their everyday lives.

Radio's overall role is one of an "important and versatile presence" that can stimulate, and yet relax; that can be intimately companionable, yet unobtrusive; that can bring into focus the great events of the world outside.<sup>34</sup>

Mendelsohn's study resulted in some specific findings. He found that radio served four major functions according to those interviewed. These interviewees say they listen to WMCA for

- (1) Utilitarian information and news
- (2) Active mood accompaniment
- (3) Release from psychological tension and pressure
- (4) Friendly companionship.<sup>35</sup>

Mendelsohn did explain these functions in more detail. Radio's function as a conveyor of information and news is explained thusly:

44 percent of the WMCA listeners in the Qualitative Sample reported that they tune in their radios "especially to hear the news."

The possibility of surfeit with the very frequent presentation of news (often the same news) is remote. Listeners simply do not seem to get enough news.<sup>36</sup>

Radio's function as an active mood accompaniment is explained in the following manner:

Radio serves as an accompaniment to the rhythms of the days' activities. To many listeners, radio "brackets" the day. First, it "cues in" the listener in the morning, thereby preparing him for his encounters with the outside world, with reports about the events of the previous night, the status of the world today, and the possible threats to his normal routines. The cueing in function of morning radio very often helps set the listener's mood and his frame of mind . . . .

Where morning radio serves a general alerting function that sets the listener psychologically, the function of nighttime radio is generally reassuring and more pacifying . . . .<sup>37</sup>

Radio's use as a release from psychological tension and pressure is explained this way:

Corollary to radio's major function as a companion is its adaptability to the listener's mood or psychological frame of mind at any given time. The wide variety of radio stations available to the average listener affords him the opportunity to select programs that either (1) correspond to his state of mind or (2) can effect a change of mood in the listener . . . .

The two basic mood functions of radio--that of sustaining and creating desired psychological climates--to a great degree affect the listener's choice of kinds of stations and programs. This is particularly true, in regard to music. If the listener is looking for active mood accompaniment, he will seek out music that is in his words "peppy and lively. . . ." On the other hand, if the listener desires to eliminate an unpleasant or disagreeable mood tone, he will seek out the releasing music that he considers to be relaxing. . . .

It is interesting to note that no particular form or style of music is considered to be any more suitable for active moods or for "relaxing" than others. Consequently, classical music, jazz, rock-and-roll, operetta, country music, are all considered to be equally appropriate to the two functions.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, radio's role as a friendly companion is explained in this manner:

Generally speaking, radio functions as a diverting "companion," and it helps to fill voids that are created by (1) routine and boring tasks and (2) feelings of social isolation and loneliness.

To the harried mother whose environment is child--and work--centered for the good part of the day radio introduces an "adult" element that is perceived to be both companionable and diverting. . . .

To the individual who by virtue of either his occupation or incapacity is cut off from much social participation during the normal course of the day, radio serves as a reliable, nonthreatening, pleasant human surrogate that sustains him by keeping him "in touch" with the realities of normal social life.<sup>39</sup>

Mendelsohn found some other minor functions of radio. It allows the listener to participate in the great events of the day, to be informed at all times, and to participate "psychologically" in the news events of the day. Radio's ability to broadcast an event to many listeners at the same

time is another function that attracts many listeners.<sup>40</sup>

One other finding of this study should be noted:

The WMCA study demonstrates that the "one-station-only" listener is merely a fiction. Rather, a radio listener is likely to tune in a number of different radio stations at varying times of the day. Why a listener will select one radio station at one time and another at some other time depends largely on what the station will do for him at a given time under given circumstances. . . .

It is clear from these data that a listener selects different radio stations in accordance with the functions he expects them to perform. It is also obvious that the listener does not expect any one station to fulfill all four major listening functions equally as well. . . . switching from one radio station to another by the same listener reflects a quest for satisfaction of specific needs, that, first radio itself appears to satisfy effectively, and secondly, that one specific radio station can satisfy more effectively than another.<sup>41</sup>

#### Justification/Purpose of the Study

Public radio has been largely ignored by commercial and academic researchers, but this is changing today:

For most of its early history, noncommercial or public broadcasting has been subject to a minimal amount of attention, due to its generally insignificant levels of support, its widespread unavailability, and the relatively narrow, non-controversial definitions of its role. During the past decade, however, it has increasingly come under official scrutiny. The reasons are several. They bear on public broadcasting's role as a recipient of federal funds, questions about the adequacy of its performance, its position relative to the rapid technological changes throughout communications, and the associated resurgence of traditional libertarian economic theory in policy thinking.<sup>42</sup>

One of the biggest reasons that public broadcasting is coming under intense scrutiny lately is financial. "Since the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 . . . and particularly since the subsequent Financing Acts of 1975 . . .

and 1978 . . . the amount of federal funds [for public broadcasting] has increased markedly."<sup>43</sup> This increase has been large enough to raise questions about public broadcasting's accountability. Is the public getting its money's worth for their support of public broadcasting in the form of taxes? It is not surprising that some citizen's groups have charged public broadcasting with "serious deficiencies in such social interest areas as the nature of its program services, its unemployment of minorities and women, its fiscal practices, and its use of independent producers."<sup>44</sup>

Public broadcasting in general seems to be of great interest to many because of these financial reasons, but the importance of public broadcasting is not due to financial reasons alone. Because public broadcasting's audiences have grown larger and more loyal, public broadcasters have strengthened their political and social power. Public broadcasting is now a legitimate threat to some private commercial forms of telecommunication. Because commercial broadcasters have resisted change and experimentation with programming in the past, "there has been an increasing tendency to invest in the noncommercial public media a large share of the burden and hope for the ameliorative role of modern communications technology."<sup>45</sup>

Public radio must be cognizant of audience desires also. As public broadcasting's popularity has grown, the public's perceptions of the media have changed. Audiences

are now more selective than ever, as the mass media continue to grow and give audiences more programming choices. This may force radio to change its present formats. "It could also be that imagination and creativity, stifled for so long, are at last reviving."<sup>46</sup>

The importance of public broadcasting in general seems clear. As for public broadcasting audiences, the jury is no longer out:

Why should public radio be concerned about the size of its audience if it has always claimed that it does not strive to be a mass-audience medium? The answer is that the whole point of broadcasting is to reach significant numbers of people at a reasonable cost, and public radio is not yet doing that. It is not competing effectively for audiences which have shown a preference for the kind of programming available on public radio. For example, millions of people turn to radio for news and information every day, but public radio's most popular program, the Emmy-award-winning "All Things Considered," attracts only 2 million people a week--1.1 percent of the 178 million people in the American audience.<sup>47</sup>

Ratings research even with demographic analysis does not provide the answers. Michael R. Cheney advances four objections to demographic analysis:

- (1) The first objection is that the audience is reported as "fictitious average." In any analysis relying upon demographic data, the audience information comes in the form of a nonexistent composite of the audience. . . . Although this information may indeed represent an "average" viewer, it offers little information for the programmer to understand the viewer better. . . .
- (2) The second objection has been described as a "minority skew."<sup>48</sup> This term explains that demographic data may be indistinguishable for the particular programs. Take the case of Jacques Cousteau's underwater explorations. These programs may appeal to a wide audience from all demographic groups. The programmer has no way of characterizing the audience for that program. . . .

- (3) A third objection to demographic analysis is the "insightless number" produced by demographic analysis. . . the picture one has of the audience offers no insight into why one particular group watches a particular program and another group does not.<sup>49</sup>
- (4) The fourth objection . . . is the tendency of demographic analysis to treat particular combinations of demographic data as a homogeneous group.<sup>50</sup>

Those who advocate the use of demographic analysis as the only legitimate method that ratings services should employ would do well to answer Cheney's objections.

These objections are based on the method itself, not the way it is used. The concern running through all these objections is that demographic analysis provides at best only a limited description of the audience. Demographic analysis does not reveal what programs particular individuals may be interested in, how they integrate television viewing into their lives, and why they watch what they watch. It simply provides us with a profile of the audience based on a limited number of factors that usually describe the person's physical being and environment. It does not tell us about the interests and needs of the individual.<sup>51</sup>

It seems clear that demographic audience analysis does not provide all the answers to the question, "Why do certain people consume certain types of programming?" Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch describe some additional theoretical reasons for other kinds of research:

our position is that media researchers ought to be studying human needs to discover how much the media do or do not contribute to their creation and satisfaction. Moreover, we believe it is our job to clarify the extent to which certain kinds of media and content favor certain kinds of use--to thereby set boundaries to the overgeneralization that any kind of content can be bent to any kind of need. We believe it is part of our job to explore the social and individual conditions under which audiences find need or use for program material aimed at changing their image of the status quo. . .<sup>52</sup>

There are other more practical reasons for a study like this one to be done:

Some of the functions that radio currently serve for its listeners are obvious and have been well documented. For example, it is clear that radio entertains people, provides suitable background "noise," allows people to carry out other tasks while being either entertained or informed, fills in "dead time," dissipates boredom. The catalogue is familiar and can be expanded almost infinitely. If further research in this area is not to fall into the trap of "redocumenting the obvious," it must of necessity examine the totality of the radio listening experience. It must not only describe the obvious uses to which the listener puts radio, but it must also seek to uncover the more subtle and oftentimes unacknowledged functions that listening to the radio serves the individual.<sup>53</sup>

Williams and LeRoy discuss further the problems one encounters when trying to survey a public radio audience. They report that the most popular survey technique, random sampling of a given market, does not work well for public radio because usually very few listeners are located. This and other methods of data collection are oftentimes too expensive when one considers the size of the audience for a station operating on limited funds. They conclude that "A more economical, valid sampling method is necessary if the public radio station manager is to meet audience needs."<sup>54</sup>

It seems clear that public radio is an important mass medium which has had problems trying to attract a large enough audience to justify an existence which depends on tax dollars to function properly. Further, the literature suggests a need for specification of why people listen to public radio and what function it serves. Additionally,

there is a lack of knowledge and understanding about public radio audiences and public radio itself. This study is an attempt partially to fill this void by implementing the uses and gratifications approach to audience analysis for public radio audiences.

As the great mass audience increasingly shifted total time spend on radio listening to television watching, the immediate salience of radio seemed to fade further away from the consciousness of the people. Yet the radio is almost ubiquitous, from which it can be conjectured that it continues to perform a variety of functions which are not served by other media.

The lack of immediate and apparent salience of radio to its listeners forces the researcher in this area to rely on the tools of intensive qualitative research to uncover the various psychological "uses" the listener makes of radio and the kinds of gratifications he derives from it. Of much of this the listener himself is unaware, and thus to the naive question, "Why do you listen to radio?" he more often than not replies simply, "In order to hear the news and to listen to the music I like."

Obviously this is not enough to explain the choice of radio over the many other possible sources of information and entertainment. The answer to why an individual listens to radio can be found through intensive probing of his psychological needs, attitudes, motivations, preferences, and habits.<sup>55</sup>

Additionally, this study is intended to help public radio personnel by providing data about their audiences so they can better adapt to their audience's characteristics, needs, and desires while reassessing their own role as a public radio station.

Other purposes of this study can be shown by looking at some parallels between Hopkinson's study and this one. The findings should provide a better understanding of the role that the listening public assigns to public radio by looking at some of the uses and gratifications that public

radio provides its listeners. This is similar to Hopkinson's thesis which attempted to find the role the listening audience assigned to FM broadcasting. There had been little research done concerning FM radio at the time Hopkinson wrote his thesis, and there has been little research completed concerning public radio today. Finally, this thesis will provide a baseline for assessment of later research concerning uses and gratifications of public radio.

### Research Questions

This study attempts to find out why people listen to public radio. The following research questions were specified by assimilating Lasswell's function categories with the gratifications categories of Mendelsohn--as applied to public radio. In addition, miscellaneous questions were added after an informal questionnaire was shown to some public radio personnel. Specifically, this study explores the following questions:

- (1) What is the demographic profile of a public radio listener?
- (2) What are the listening habits and preferences of public radio listeners?
- (3) What do listeners like most and least about public radio?
- (4) How do public radio listeners use public radio?  
Do listeners use public radio:
  - (a) for miscellaneous reasons?
  - (b) as a means of obtaining news and information about the world?

- (c) purely for entertainment?
- (d) as a friendly companion?
- (e) as a release from psychological tension and pressure?
- (f) to participate vicariously in the great events of the day?
- (g) as an active mood accompaniment?
- (h) to correlate the parts of society in response to the environment?
- (i) as a transmitter of social heritage from one generation to the next?
- (j) to gain personal information? (for example, to understand other points of view, to give the listener something to talk about, etc.)
- (k) as a means of diversion?
- (l) to hear special programming (not found on commercial radio)?

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Monica Dignam, "Formative Research Methods in Radio," Public Telecommunications Review, March/April 1979, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>S. E. Frost, Jr., Education's Own Stations: The History of Broadcast Licenses Issued to Educational Institutions. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937, p. 464. As appeared in Robert K. Avery and Robert Pepper, "Balancing the Equation: Public Radio Comes of Age." Public Telecommunications Review, March/April 1979, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Avery and Pepper, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup>Avery and Pepper, pp. 22-23.

<sup>5</sup>Robert K. Avery, "Has the FCC Misplaced Public Radio?" Public Telecommunications Review, January/February 1976, p. 26.

<sup>6</sup>Robert K. Avery and Robert Pepper, "An Institutional History of Public Broadcasting," Journal of Communication 30 (Summer 1980):132.

<sup>7</sup>Donald P. Mullally, "Radio: The Other Public Medium," Journal of Communication 30 (Summer 1980):189-90.

<sup>8</sup>"Revving up for the 1980's," Broadcasting, September 10, 1979, p. 40.

<sup>9</sup>"For the Sake of Sound--Public Radio by Satellite," Pamphlet published by National Public Radio (date unavailable).

<sup>10</sup>Willard D. Rowland, Jr., "The Federal Regulatory and Policymaking Process," Journal of Communication 30 (Summer 1980):141.

<sup>11</sup>Michael J. Hopkinson, "The Public Image of F. M. Radio Broadcasting--A Comparative Analysis of the Responses of F. M. Listeners, Non-F. M. Listeners, and F. M. Broadcasters" (M.A. Thesis, University of Oregon, 1969), Thesis Abstract.

<sup>12</sup>Wenmouth Williams, Jr., "Two Approaches to the Identification and Measurement of Public Radio Audiences: Locating Unique Subgroups," Journal of Broadcasting 21:4 (Fall 1977):401-12.

<sup>13</sup>Mullally, pp. 192-93.

<sup>14</sup>Dignam, pp. 89-91.

<sup>15</sup>Wenmouth Williams, Jr. and David J. LeRoy, "Alternate Methods of Measuring Public Radio Audiences: A Pilot Project," Journalism Quarterly (Autumn 1976): 516.

<sup>16</sup>George Bailey and Tom Church, "Public Radio and the Ratings," Public Telecommunications Review, November/December 1979, pp. 47-49.

<sup>17</sup>Carol A. V. Keegan, "Qualitative Audience Research in Public Television," Journal of Communication 30 (Summer 1980):164.

<sup>18</sup>Corporation for Public Broadcasting, Proceedings of the 1980 Technical Conference on Qualitative Television Ratings--Final Report (Washington, D. C.: Corporation for Public Broadcasting, [1980]), p. 2.

<sup>19</sup>Elihu Katz, Michael Gurevitch and Hadassah Haas, "On the Use of the Mass Media for Important Things," American Sociological Review 38 (April 1973):164.

<sup>20</sup>Katz, Gurevitch and Haas, pp. 164-65.

<sup>21</sup>Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler and Michael Gurevitch, "Utilization of Mass Communication by the Individual," as appeared in Jay G. Blumler and Elihu Katz, eds., The Uses of Mass Communications (London: Sage Publications, 1974), p. 24.

<sup>22</sup>K. E. Rosengren, "Uses and gratifications: an overview." (Sweden: University of Lund, 1972)(only information available). As quoted in Blumler and Katz, p. 26.

<sup>23</sup>Blumler and Katz, pp. 26-27.

<sup>24</sup>Corporation for Public Broadcasting, p. B-13.

<sup>25</sup>Herta Herzog, "What do we really know about daytime serial listeners?" as quoted in P. F. Lazarsfeld and F. Stanton, eds., Radio Research (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944) (page numbers unavailable). As quoted in Blumler and Katz, p. 71.

<sup>26</sup>Herta Herzog, "Motivations and Gratifications of Daily Serial Listeners," in Wilbur Schramm, ed., The Process and Effects of Mass Communication (University of Illinois Press: Urbana, 1954), pp. 50-55. As quoted in Jenny Lee Jones, "The Motivation and Gratifications of Daily Television Serial Viewers" (M. A. Thesis, Colorado State University, 1973), p. 2.

<sup>27</sup>Tsiyona Peled and Elihu Katz, "Media Functions in Wartime: The Israel Home Front in October 1973," in Blumler and Katz, pp. 49, 57-65.

<sup>28</sup>Jack McLeod and Lee B. Becker, "Testing the Validity of Gratification Measures through Political Effects Analysis," as quoted in Blumler and Katz, pp. 137, 156-57.

<sup>29</sup>Blumler and Katz, pp. 35-47, 71-112.

<sup>30</sup>Harold D. Lasswell, "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society," as quoted in L. Bryson, ed., The Communication of Ideas (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), pp. 37-38.

<sup>31</sup>Lasswell, p. 38.

<sup>32</sup>Anthony Dexter and David Manning White, eds., People, Society and Mass Communications (London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), p. 97.

<sup>33</sup>Dexter and White, p. 97.

<sup>34</sup>Harold Mendelsohn, "Listening to Public Radio Station WMCA--A Study of Audience Characteristics, Habits, Motivations, and Taste" (only information available). As appeared in Dexter and White, pp. 239-42.

<sup>35</sup>Dexter and White, pp. 246-47.

<sup>36</sup>Dexter and White, p. 244.

<sup>37</sup>Dexter and White, p. 242.

<sup>38</sup>Dexter and White, pp. 243-44.

<sup>39</sup>Dexter and White, pp. 242-43.

<sup>40</sup>Dexter and White, pp. 244-45.

<sup>41</sup>Dexter and White, p. 246-47.

<sup>42</sup>Rowland, p. 139.

<sup>43</sup>Rowland, p. 139.

<sup>44</sup>Rowland, p. 140.

<sup>45</sup>Rowland, p. 140.

<sup>46</sup>Bernard D. Mayes, "Public Radio: Assessing Service Needs," Public Telecommunications Review March/April 1979, p. 66.

47Mullally, p. 191.

48Ruth Ziff, "The Role of Psychographics in the Development of Advertising Strategy," in W. D. Wells, ed., Life Style and Psychographics (Chicago: American Marketing Association, 1974), pp. 129-55.

49Wells, pp. 129-55.

50Michael R. Cheney, "What We Really Need From Audience Research and Analysis," Public Telecommunications Review, March/April 1980, pp. 27-28.

51Cheney, p. 28.

52Blumler and Katz, p. 30.

53Dexter and White, p. 240.

54Williams, Jr. and LeRoy, p. 516.

55Dexter and White, p. 241.

## CHAPTER TWO

### METHOD

This chapter describes the methods used to ascertain why people listen to public radio. Because this study uses a functional approach to researching public radio audiences, explanation of this approach is necessary. Dennis McQuail and Gurevitch provide this explanation as follows:

mass media use is not necessarily seen as related to all, or even most, human needs, but rather to certain, well-defined, albeit varied, areas of need for which mass communication might be especially suited. It either meets a need (e. g. for information) for which it is the "natural" solution or it stands in as a substitute, or "functional alternative," for some missing "natural" solution to a need. . . .<sup>1</sup>

In the functional approach, the audience uses media as (1) an escape from the constraints of routine, (2) as an escape from the burdens of problems, or finally (3) as an emotional release. McQuail and Gurevitch explain here why and how this approach might be used:

Functional sociological analysis, from which this perspective derives, is based on the assumption that the actions and phenomena of the social world are functionally interdependent, i. e., systematically related in causal chains and circles. Accordingly, behavior is explained in terms of meeting certain needs, the origins of which might be varied. Media consumption by the individual is seen as behavior that meets (or fails to meet) needs generated through

all interactions of the individual's psychological dispositions and experience of his social situation. . . .<sup>2</sup>

McQuail and Gurevitch discuss how this approach is being used today. Their explanation seems to be an accurate description of the idea behind this study: "More recently, a greater emphasis has been placed on eliciting from respondent's retrospective and subjective versions of why they attend to the media in general or to specific media contents in particular, and what they have derived from such behavior by way of need gratification."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the functional approach, closely tied with the "uses and gratifications" approach discussed earlier, is used for this study.

In order to use the functional approach, subjects should be familiar with public radio. Special considerations should be made concerning the choice of a particular sampling technique, as Williams and LeRoy have noted:

The most popular survey technique, random sampling of a given market, usually locates so few public radio listeners to be useless to the station manager. Further these methods of data collection are very expensive given the size of the audience for a station operating on a very limited budget.<sup>4</sup>

This statement concurs with Williams and LeRoy's conclusion that "A more economical, valid sampling method is necessary if the public radio station manager is to meet audience needs."<sup>5</sup> Further, the 1980 Roper survey conducted for NPR<sup>6</sup> revealed that so few people were familiar with NPR programming that sending questionnaires to the general population would result in very few returned questionnaires.

For efficiency of sample size and accessibility, the four public radio stations in northern Colorado were invited to submit their lists of listener/contributors as subjects for the study. Two stations, KCSU in Fort Collins and KUNC in Greeley, accepted and their identified listener/contributors made up the sample. Without duplication of households and disregarding business addresses, the lists of listener/contributors consisted of 389 people.

After these lists were secured, the study was carried out as follows: a questionnaire was devised which addressed the research questions identified in Chapter One. The questions for the questionnaire were formed by assimilating questions from other uses and gratifications studies. Some questions were added by this author to assure internal validity of the instrument. Specific identification of questions and categories and their derivation are explained immediately after the following discussion of the pretest questionnaire.

The questionnaire was pretested on the staff of KCSU in Fort Collins and some of the graduate students and faculty from Colorado State University's Speech and Theatre Arts Department's Speech Communication Division. These thirty-five respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and to identify any problems they had with understanding the questions or with completing the questionnaire. Some minor alterations were suggested, most having to do with changing the question order and format.

No questions were eliminated as all of them revealed specific listening purposes when the pretest questionnaires were tabulated. Revisions consisted of a reorganization of the section on demographics and the addition of specific categories which could be checked off by the respondents to indicate their specific likes and dislikes. These categories were selected after analyzing the pretested questionnaires' section on likes and dislikes and included the most common responses on the final questionnaire. The resulting instrument consists of 73 questions (See Appendix B). These questions are categorized as follows: 10 one-question miscellaneous uses for public radio, 11 other uses categories which consist of varying numbers of questions, 2 questions which ask for specific likes and dislikes, and 14 questions which seek demographic information and listening habits of the respondents. The categories and inclusive questions are: (categories 1-12 should be preceded with the phrase "I listen to public radio. . .")

1. Miscellaneous --single questions which indicated a specific use for public radio. The miscellaneous questions come from suggestions by public radio personnel who were involved in the pretesting of the questionnaire and the Speech Division of the Speech and Theatre Arts Department of Colorado State University as well as this writer's own ideas. These questions do not fit into any other of the categories but seem still to be valid reasons for using public radio. These include questions:

1. just to pass the time.
2. because it brings our family together.
3. out of habit.
4. because it is something I have in common with my friends.
5. because the music is meaningful.

6. because it comes in well on my radio.
  7. to be emotionally moved or excited.
  8. because it is an alternative to TV.
  9. because it is an alternative to record albums.
  10. because it is an alternative to movies.
2. To hear the news (surveillance). This category is derived from the studies of Lasswell and Mendelsohn.<sup>7</sup> Questions:
11. to hear news and information.
  23. to learn about what is going on in my community.
  40. because it gives me useful information for daily living.
  43. to get more in-depth news than what is provided in other media.
3. To be entertained. This category is attributed to Lasswell but other scholars<sup>8</sup> added this category to Lasswell's original three (surveillance; to correlate man and his environment; to transmit culture from one generation to the next).<sup>9</sup> Questions:
12. because I can just sit there and be entertained.
  24. because I find the music is entertaining.
  41. because I find the announcers are entertaining.
4. For a sense of companionship. This category is derived from Mendelsohn's study.<sup>10</sup> Questions:
13. because it is company when no one else is around.
  25. because the announcers seem like good friends instead of just radio announcers.
  39. because I sometimes feel isolated and lonely.
5. To relax and/or be released from life's pressures. This category is derived from Mendelsohn's study.<sup>11</sup> Questions:
14. because it relaxes me.
  26. because the music is soothing and relaxing.
  38. because the announcers sound pleasant and relaxing.
  44. because it allows me to unwind and forget my problems.
  49. because it releases tension and pressure from my daily life.
6. For vicarious participation--to get the feeling of "being there" at an event which is being broadcast.

This category is derived from Mendelsohn's study.<sup>12</sup>  
 Questions:

- 15. because it gives me the feeling of "being there" at the event which is being broadcast.
  - 48. to be challenged in figuring out what's going to happen or what someone is going to say.
7. For mood accompaniment--listening either to change the mood of the listener or to accompany or reinforce that mood. This category is derived from Mendelsohn's study.<sup>13</sup> Questions:
- 16. because it fits the mood I am feeling at a particular time.
  - 27. because my work day becomes more enjoyable as I listen.
  - 34. to help change the mood I am feeling.
  - 55. to help make routine and boring tasks more exciting.
8. To correlate parts of society to the environment--to interpret information about the environment and prescriptions for conduct in reaction to these events. This category is derived from Lasswell's study.<sup>14</sup> Questions:
- 17. because it allows me to understand the events of the day.
  - 28. because it tells me how I should react to the news of the day.
  - 45. because it helps me form an opinion of what should be done in response to events of the day.
9. To transmit culture from one generation to the next--includes activities designed to communicate a group's store of social norms, information, values, etc. from one generation to another or from members of a group to newcomers. This category is derived from Lasswell's study.<sup>15</sup> Questions:
- 18. because it helps me tell my relatives what is happening outside of our home.
  - 29. because it tells me what events are considered "normal" in today's society.
  - 36. because it expresses reverent values.
10. For personal information--to learn more about one's self; to know what others are thinking about everyday issues and problems; to give the listener ideas to think about, etc. This category is derived from suggestions by public radio personnel

and this author's own assessment of the need for such a category. Questions:

- 19. to gain insight into myself.
- 30. so I can talk about it with my friends.
- 35. because it is a good way to find out what other people are concerned with.
- 37. because it prepares me for the day ahead.
- 46. because it helps me to understand other points of view.
- 50. because it gives me something to talk about.
- 51. to obtain advice on everyday problems I face.
- 52. to pick up information related to my own interest or work.
- 54. to give me helpful consumer information.
- 56. to give me something to think about.
- 57. to develop my interests and tastes.

11. For diversion -- to keep one's mind off of personal problems; to allow one to think freely without concern for immediate problems, etc. This category is similar to the companionship category and is therefore derived from Mendelsohn's study.<sup>16</sup> Questions:

- 20. to keep my mind off of my personal problems.
- 31. because it allows me to "daydream."

12. For public radio's special programming -- to hear better written shows from what is heard on commercial radio; to hear top quality programming; for a change of pace from commercial radio, etc. Because public radio carries programs which are not found on other types of radio, there seemed to be a need for a category which asked if respondents used public radio because of its special programming and so this category was included. Questions:

- 21. because I hope to hear something new and different.
- 22. because the programming will be well written.
- 32. to feel cultured.
- 33. because I think the programs either will be real or realistic.
- 42. because I can hear top quality productions.
- 47. because I think the shows will not be an insult to my intelligence.
- 53. for a change of pace from what is heard on commercial radio.

13. Open ended -- what people like most and least about public radio. These questions are included to get more background information about the respondents' specific likes and dislikes of public radio.

## Questions:

- 65. What do you like most about public radio?
- 66. What do you like least about public radio?

14. Demographics and listening habits. These questions are derived from any of a number of studies in the past which ask for basic listening habit and demographic data.<sup>17</sup> Questions:

- 58. favorite type of music.
- 59. what public radio station(s) one listens to.
- 60. how often one listens to all radio each day.
- 61. how often one listens to just public (or non-commercial) radio each day.
- 62. what hour of the day does one listen to public (or non-commercial) radio each day.
- 63. what hour of the day one listens to other radio each day.
- 64. where does one listen most frequently.

## Demographic questions include:

- 67. age
- 68. sex
- 69. income
- 70. marital status
- 71. educational level
- 72. occupation
- 73. residence

Validity was determined in a number of ways. Face validity resulted from analysis of the pretested questionnaires. Internal validity exists by having similar areas of concern covered by different questions on the instrument. For example, if one wanted to ask if a listener used public radio to hear the news of the day, questions could ask if one listened to public radio to learn about what is going on in the community, or if one listened because public radio provided useful information for daily living. External validity is limited, as not all parts of the country are similar to northern Colorado. However, the demographic information collected helps determine the generalizability

of the data. Reliability was measured (like internal validity) by asking the same question to the respondent in different manners.

The procedure for data gathering was as follows: a copy of the questionnaire was mailed to the 389 people on the listener/contributor lists of KCSU and KUNC. Included along with the questionnaire was a self-addressed, stamped envelope and a cover letter which solicited participation and gave directions for filling out the questionnaire (See Appendix A). The mailed questionnaire method was chosen "to uncover more useful data for future programming decisions. . . . Mail respondents. . . were more likely to list likes and dislikes concerning programs preferences leading to the conclusion that data collected via mail surveys are more likely to produce premeditated responses."<sup>18</sup> Follow-up postcards were mailed to improve the response to those who did not return the questionnaire after two weeks.

Of the original 389 questionnaires that were mailed, 195 were sent to KUNC listener/contributors and 194 to KCSU listener/contributors. One hundred and twelve were returned by the KUNC sample and seventy-eight respondents were from the KCSU list. After the follow-up postcards were sent out, an additional twenty-four questionnaires (11 from KUNC's list and 13 from KCSU's list) were returned making a total of 214 questionnaires that were returned in time to be included in the results of the study.

After the questionnaires were returned, the answers were coded and computer analyzed. The computer program was formulated for this particular study, and it is named "Scooter."<sup>19</sup> The scores for each question were recorded with 5 representing the strongest use and 1 representing virtually no use by the respondent. The uses and gratifications of public radio were tabulated in raw percentages as were the mean scores. Scores for the questions in each uses and gratifications category were also averaged; the percentages and mean scores representing the extent to which respondents used public radio for that reason. Separate tables were developed corresponding to each research question for presentation of the data. These data are the basis for a narrative analyzing the uses and gratifications of public radio. The results of the questionnaire are found in Chapter Three.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Blumler and Katz, p. 288.
- <sup>2</sup>Blumler and Katz, pp. 288-89.
- <sup>3</sup>Blumler and Katz, pp. 289-90.
- <sup>4</sup>Williams, Jr. and LeRoy, p. 516.
- <sup>5</sup>Williams, Jr. and LeRoy, p. 516.
- <sup>6</sup>Marilyn Farley, "Public TV and the Ascertainment Issue," Educational Broadcasting, Sept./Oct. 1974, p. 24.
- <sup>7</sup>Lasswell, p. 38 and Dexter and White, pp. 97, 244, 246-47.
- <sup>8</sup>Dexter and White, p. 97.
- <sup>9</sup>Lasswell, p. 38 and Dexter and White, p. 97.
- <sup>10</sup>Dexter and White, pp. 242-43, 246-47.
- <sup>11</sup>Dexter and White, pp. 243-44, 246-47.
- <sup>12</sup>Dexter and White, pp. 244-45.
- <sup>13</sup>Dexter and White, pp. 242, 246-47.
- <sup>14</sup>Lasswell, p. 38 and Dexter and White, p. 97.
- <sup>15</sup>Lasswell, p. 38 and Dexter and White, p. 97.
- <sup>16</sup>Dexter and White, pp. 242-43, 246-47.
- <sup>17</sup>See the following studies which were referenced in Chapter One: Jones, pp. 58-61; Herzog, pp. 50-55; Peled and Katz in Blumler and Katz, pp. 49, 57-65; McLeod and Becker on Blumler and Katz, pp. 137, 156-57. Also see the following sources: Bradley S. Greenberg, "Gratifications of Television Viewing and Their Correlates for British Children," in Blumler and Katz, pp. 71-74 and Charles H. Ingold, "The Nature of the Audience for a Religious Radio Station," (M. A. Thesis, Colorado State University, 1978), pp. 102-06.
- <sup>18</sup>Williams, Jr. and LeRoy, p. 521.

<sup>19</sup>"Scooter" was an arbitrarily chosen name used to designate the computer program that was conceived by this author.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PRESENTATION OF DATA

Use of methodology described in Chapter Two provided the data necessary to answer the research questions posed at the outset of this study. The purpose of this chapter is to report the results of the survey. The demographic composition of the sample is presented along with their listening habits. Uses and gratifications are then discussed in response to the research questions.

Tables are presented which summarize the data found on the questionnaires after the results were tabulated with a computer. A brief discussion follows these tables. A more lengthy discussion of these results and the conclusions derived from them are presented in Chapter Four.

#### The Survey Sample

Of the 389 questionnaires that were sent to the listener/contributors of KCSU and KUNC, forty-nine percent (192) have all of the uses and gratifications questions answered. Some demographic questions were not answered so some of the demographic questionnaire results do not total 100%. Twenty-two other questionnaires were returned but were not included in the results due to the failure on

the part of some respondents to answer large portions of the uses and gratifications section of the questionnaire.

### Demographic summary

Tables one through seven include the results of the demographic section of the questionnaire. All numbers represent percentages on a 100-point scale. (See Tables 1-7).

As shown, the tendency is for respondents to be age twenty-five to thirty-four; male; earn \$25,000 per year or more; married; have taken at least some graduate level courses; earn a living as some type of professional; and live in Fort Collins or Denver. There is a high percentage of respondents who: are twenty-five to thirty-four years old (forty-eight percent); earn \$25,000 per year or more (forty-one percent); are married (fifty-eight percent); have taken some graduate level courses (forty-four percent); are professionally employed (twenty-nine percent); and finally live in Fort Collins or Denver (thirty-five and thirty-four percent respectively).

TABLE 1  
AGE OF RESPONDENTS

|    | 18 - 24 | 25 - 34 | 35 - 49 | 50 - 64 | 65 or over |
|----|---------|---------|---------|---------|------------|
| 67 | 11.46%  | 47.92%  | 30.21%  | 5.21%   | 5.21%      |

TABLE 2  
SEX OF RESPONDENTS

|    | MALE   | FEMALE |
|----|--------|--------|
| 68 | 53.13% | 44.79% |

TABLE 3

INCOME

|           |               |                 |                 |                 |
|-----------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| \$0-4,999 | \$5,000-9,999 | \$10,000-14,999 | \$15,000-24,999 | \$25,000 + over |
| 69        | 7.29%         | 14.58%          | 17.71%          | 19.79%          |
|           |               |                 |                 | 40.63%          |

TABLE 4  
MARITAL STATUS

|    | Married | Single | Divorced | Widow(er) | Other |
|----|---------|--------|----------|-----------|-------|
| 70 | 58.33%  | 34.38% | 4.17%    | 2.08%     | 1.04% |

TABLE 5  
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

|    | Some High School | Grad. High School | Some College | Grad. College | Post Grad. |
|----|------------------|-------------------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| 71 | 1.04%            | 2.08%             | 25.00%       | 27.08%        | 43.75%     |

TABLE 6  
OCCUPATION

|                                | Profes-<br>sional | Clerk/<br>Sales | Blue<br>Collar | Stu-<br>dent | Re-<br>tired | Other |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| 72 What is your<br>occupation? | 29.46%            | 18.75%          | 17.71%         | 21.88%       | 4.89%        | 7.42% |

TABLE 7  
RESIDENCE

|                       | Fort Collins | Greeley | Denver | Boulder | Other |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------|--------|---------|-------|
| 73 Where do you live? | 35.42%       | 12.50%  | 33.54% | 13.54%  | 3.00% |

Listening habits and preferences

Tables eight through fourteen include the results of the section of the questionnaires that asked the respondents about their listening habits and preferences. (See Tables 8-14).

Looking just at the mean scores, the respondents favorite to least favorite types of music are as follows: classical, jazz, folk, bluegrass, blues, rock, and "other." Classical music is the overwhelming favorite with thirty-nine percent listing it as their top choice and twenty-nine percent as their second choice. The second most popular music format, jazz, has twenty-four percent listing it as their favorite type of music and twenty-three percent as their second choice. Folk music, the third most popular musical variety, has forty-two percent listing it as their first or second favorite type (nineteen and twenty-three percent respectively). Bluegrass, blues, and rock music all are very close as is indicated by their mean scores (4.51, 4.58, and 4.63 respectively) but none rank very high among these respondents. The "other" category is the least favorite music type as seventy-one percent indicate it as such.

As might have been predicted from the sample used, the public radio stations most listened to are KUNC (fifty-eight percent) and KCSU (fifty-three percent). KCFR and KGNU<sup>1</sup> follow.

According to the mean scores, respondents listen to public radio approximately two and one-half hours per

TABLE 8  
LISTENERS' MUSICAL TASTES

| Music Type   | Favorite<br>1 | 2      | 3      | 4      | 5      | 6      | Least<br>7 | Mean |
|--------------|---------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------|------|
| 58 Classical | 38.54%        | 29.17% | 14.58% | 5.21%  | 7.29%  | 5.21%  | 0.00%      | 2.29 |
| Jazz         | 23.96%        | 22.92% | 18.75% | 21.83% | 9.38%  | 2.08%  | 2.08%      | 2.83 |
| Folk         | 18.75%        | 22.92% | 16.67% | 9.38%  | 21.88% | 6.25%  | 4.17%      | 3.28 |
| Rock         | 3.13%         | 10.42% | 17.71% | 15.63% | 11.46% | 26.04% | 15.63%     | 4.51 |
| Blues        | 0.00%         | 3.13%  | 17.71% | 27.08% | 23.96% | 26.04% | 2.08%      | 4.58 |
| Bluegrass    | 4.17%         | 10.42% | 10.42% | 17.71% | 23.96% | 29.17% | 4.17%      | 4.51 |
| Other        | 11.46%        | 4.17%  | 2.08%  | 5.21%  | 1.04%  | 5.21%  | 70.83%     | 5.79 |

TABLE 9  
STATIONS LISTENED TO

|    | Station | Yes    | No     |
|----|---------|--------|--------|
| 59 | KCSU    | 53.13% | 45.83% |
|    | KUNC    | 58.33% | 39.58% |
|    | KCFR    | 39.58% | 58.33% |
|    | KGNU    | 33.33% | 65.63% |

TABLE 10  
HOURS OF LISTENING PER DAY

|  | None  | One    | Two    | Three  | Four   | Five<br>or<br>More | Mean |
|--|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------------------|------|
| 60 How many hours do<br>you listen to <u>all</u><br>radio per day?       | 1.04% | 6.25%  | 21.88% | 23.96% | 20.83% | 26.04%             | 4.35 |
| 61 How many hours do<br>you listen to<br><u>public</u> radio<br>per day? | 4.17% | 30.21% | 23.96% | 21.88% | 13.54% | 6.25%              | 3.29 |

TABLE 11  
 MOST POPULAR LISTENING TIMES OF THE DAY

|  | 6AM-<br>10AM | 10AM-<br>3PM | 3PM-<br>7PM | 7PM-<br>12PM | 12PM-<br>6AM | Mean |
|--|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|------|
| 62 When do you listen<br>to <u>public</u> radio<br>most often? | 42.71%       | 13.54%       | 22.92%      | 20.83%       | 0.00%        | 2.22 |
| 63 When do you listen<br>to "other" radio<br>most often?       | 34.38%       | 28.13%       | 23.96%      | 13.54%       | 0.00%        | 2.17 |

TABLE 12  
MOST FREQUENT LISTENING LOCATION

|  | Home   | Work   | Car    | Other |
|--|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| 64 Where do you listen most frequently to the radio? | 59.38% | 19.79% | 20.83% | 0.00% |

TABLE 13  
FAVORITE PUBLIC RADIO FEATURE

|  | Spe-<br>cials | No<br>Commer-<br>cials | News<br>Quality | Alter-<br>native<br>Music | Inform-<br>ative | Public<br>Affairs<br>Prg. | Other |
|--|---------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------|
| 65 What do you like most about public radio? | 11.46%        | 26.04%                 | 28.13%          | 23.96%                    | 2.08%            | 5.21%                     | 3.13% |

TABLE 14  
LEAST FAVORITE PUBLIC RADIO FEATURE

|   | Excess<br>Non-Music | Only<br>Classical<br>Music | "Holier Than<br>Thou" Attitude | Lack of<br>Profession-<br>alism | Other  |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------|
| 66 What do you like<br>least about<br>public radio? | 21.88%              | 32.29%                     | 11.46%                         | 4.17%                           | 16.67% |

day (see Table 10). However, they listen to all radio approximately three and one-half hours per day. The two and one-half hour figure for public radio and the three and one-half hour figure for all radio were derived by analyzing the mean scores. A 3.29 mean score for public radio meant that the average response fell halfway between the third and fourth possible response--or halfway between two and three hours of listening per day. A 4.35 mean score for other radio meant that the average response fell halfway between the fourth and fifth possible responses--or halfway between three and four hours of listening per day. A closer look at the percentages indicates the highest percentage of respondents listen to all radio five or more hours per day (twenty-six percent). However, the highest average of respondents listen to public radio for one hour per day (thirty percent), followed by two hours (twenty-four percent), and three hours (twenty-two percent) of listening per day.

Respondents listen to public radio and other radio most often from 6-10 A. M. (forty-three and thirty-five percent respectively) and least often from 12 P. M.-6 A. M. (no listeners whatsoever). The great majority of listening to the radio is done in the home, with fifty-nine percent of the respondents indicating it was their favorite place to listen. The remainder of the respondents' listening time is spent in their cars (twenty-one percent) and their jobs (twenty percent).

All questions which asked for the respondent's most and least favorite public radio features appeared as open ended questions on the pretest and actual questionnaire. If any response appeared more than once in the open ended answers in the pretest questionnaire, they were given their own separate response category which easily could be checked off by the respondent on the actual questionnaire (thus becoming closed questions). Thus on the questionnaire separate questions were asked regarding public radio's special programming, non-commercial programming, quality of news, alternative music, informative aspect, and public affairs programs in addition to the "other" section which is open ended. The choices for the least favorite features of public radio were its inclusion of too much non-music programming, its movement to all classical music, its "holier than thou" attitude, and its lack of professionalism in addition to the "other" section which is also open ended. The top choices for the favorite features of public radio are its news quality (twenty-eight percent), non-commercial programming (twenty-six percent), alternative music (twenty-four percent), special programming (eleven percent) and "other" (three percent). The open ended "other" list included such favorite features as carrying classical music, having an enjoyable format, featuring popular programs such as "All Things Considered," and that public radio is more likeable than commercial radio. The least favorite features of public radio are its movement to all classical music

(thirty-two percent), its excess of non-music programming (twenty-two percent), "other" (seventeen percent) and its "holier than thou" attitude (eleven percent). The open ended "other" list included various complaints about the music played on public radio, its poor reception, its use of fund-raisers, the time certain programs are played, its problems with news coverage, and its liberal bias.

### Uses and gratifications of public radio

The actual uses and gratifications of public radio can now be discussed. It should be noted that each of the first ten questions are considered to be miscellaneous categories which will be analyzed as separate uses and gratifications. After that is completed, eleven other uses and gratifications categories, each with a varying number of questions included, are analyzed.

Each uses and gratifications category is discussed separately in the chapter in the order that specific research questions were asked in Chapter One. However, in order to provide initial clarification and perspective, Table fifteen presents the results in rank order of all of the uses and gratifications categories.

KEY:     SD - STRONGLY DISAGREE  
           DS - DISAGREE SOMEWHAT  
           NAND - NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE  
           AS - AGREE SOMEWHAT  
           SA - STRONGLY AGREE

Mean scores are based on the five point Likert scale with 5 representing "strongly agree" and 1 representing "strongly

TABLE 15  
SUMMARY OF ALL USES AND GRATIFICATIONS  
(continued on next page)

|  | SD    | DS    | NAND  | AS    | SA    | MEAN |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 1 To hear the news                                     | 4.95  | 9.11  | 16.93 | 35.94 | 33.07 | 3.83 |
| 2 For special programming                              | 9.67  | 8.04  | 15.03 | 36.01 | 31.25 | 3.71 |
| 3 To be entertained                                    | 9.03  | 13.54 | 21.18 | 33.68 | 22.57 | 3.47 |
| 4 For mood accompaniment                               | 5.73  | 16.41 | 32.03 | 35.16 | 10.68 | 3.29 |
| 5 For relaxation                                       | 5.42  | 18.33 | 29.79 | 36.46 | 10.00 | 3.27 |
| 6 To correlate man and his environment                 | 10.42 | 17.36 | 29.86 | 26.74 | 15.63 | 3.20 |
| 7 For vicarious participation                          | 7.29  | 16.15 | 37.50 | 29.69 | 9.38  | 3.18 |
| 8 For personal information                             | 12.59 | 16.00 | 23.67 | 38.16 | 9.56  | 3.16 |
| 9 For companionship                                    | 15.97 | 15.63 | 26.39 | 35.42 | 6.60  | 3.01 |
| 10 For miscellaneous reasons                           | 22.29 | 15.62 | 26.67 | 25.62 | 9.79  | 2.85 |
| 11 To transmit culture from one generation to the next | 24.31 | 26.04 | 33.33 | 13.19 | 3.13  | 2.45 |

TABLE 15-continued

|                  | SD    | DS    | NAND  | AS    | SA    | MEAN |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| 12 For diversion | 36.46 | 25.00 | 23.96 | 14.58 | 0.00  | 2.17 |
| Total            | 13.68 | 16.44 | 26.36 | 30.05 | 13.47 | 3.13 |

disagree." All responses (except for the mean scores) are shown in percentages. (See Table 15).

As a category, the miscellaneous questions rank third lowest in the study with a 2.85 mean score. However, to get more value out of these results, the questions have been analyzed separately. Respondents apparently feel very strongly about using public radio because the music is meaningful (mean score of 4.14) and because it is an alternative to television (mean score of 3.66). Over eighty percent of the respondents agree that they listen because the music is meaningful (forty-one percent agree somewhat, forty percent strongly agree). Over fifty-nine percent agree that they use public radio as an alternative to television (thirty-two percent agree somewhat, and twenty-seven percent strongly agree). They do not feel strongly about using public radio because it is something they have in common with their friends (over sixty-seven percent disagree--thirty-seven percent strongly disagree, thirty-one percent disagree somewhat, mean score of 2.13) nor because they believe it brought their family together (over fifty-six percent disagree--forty-four percent strongly disagree, thirteen percent disagree somewhat, mean score of 2.14). The other miscellaneous uses and gratifications categories indicate only moderate reasons for using public radio.

Each question in Tables sixteen through twenty-seven should be preceded with the phrase "I listen to public radio . . . "

TABLE 16  
 MISCELLANEOUS USES AND GRATIFICATIONS  
 (continued on next page)

| QUESTION  | SD     | DS     | NAND   | AS     | SA     | MEAN |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| 1 Just to pass the time                                 | 28.13% | 23.96% | 17.71% | 30.21% | 0.00%  | 2.50 |
| 2 Because it brings our family together                 | 43.75% | 12.50% | 32.29% | 9.38%  | 2.08%  | 2.14 |
| 3 Out of habit  | 26.04% | 16.67% | 29.17% | 28.13% | 0.00%  | 2.59 |
| 4 Because it is something I have in common with friends | 36.46% | 31.25% | 16.67% | 14.58% | 1.04%  | 2.13 |
| 5 Because the music is meaningful                       | 2.08%  | 2.08%  | 15.63% | 40.63% | 39.58% | 4.14 |
| 6 Because it comes in well on my radio                  | 21.88% | 16.67% | 40.63% | 14.58% | 6.25%  | 2.67 |
| 7 To be emotionally moved or excited                    | 12.50% | 14.58% | 28.13% | 36.46% | 8.33%  | 3.14 |
| 8 Because it is an alternative to television            | 8.33%  | 4.17%  | 28.13% | 32.29% | 27.08% | 3.66 |
| 9 Because it is an alternative to record albums         | 17.71% | 9.38%  | 29.17% | 33.33% | 10.42% | 3.09 |

TABLE 16-continued

| QUESTION                                     | SD     | DS     | NAND   | AS     | SA    | MEAN |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|------|
| 10 Because it is an alternative<br>to movies | 26.04% | 25.00% | 29.17% | 16.67% | 3.13% | 2.46 |
| Total  | 22.29  | 15.62  | 26.67  | 25.62  | 9.79  | 2.85 |

"To hear the news" has the highest mean score (3.83) of any category in the entire study. Question eleven, "to hear the news," has a mean score of 4.42 as thirty-two percent agree somewhat and fifty-seven percent agree strongly that they use public radio for that reason. Combining the agree and strongly agree responses results in over eighty-nine percent of the respondents indicating that they listen to public radio to hear the news. Further supporting the use of public radio for news is question forty-three: "to get more in-depth news than what is provided in other media." That question has a mean score of 4.22 with twenty-nine percent agreeing somewhat and fifty-one percent agreeing strongly for a combined total of over eighty-eight percent listening to public radio for in-depth news. The other two questions in this category still indicate a relatively high use of public radio, as over fifty-eight percent of the respondents agree to some extent that they use public radio because it gives them useful information for daily living. Over forty-seven percent agree to some extent that they use public radio to learn what is going on in their community. The average for the agree responses in this category is also high, as over sixty-nine percent of the respondents agree to some extent with all four questions (thirty-six percent agree somewhat, and thirty-three percent strongly agree). See Table seventeen for the complete results.

"To be entertained" has the second highest mean score as a uses and gratifications category (3.47). One question is

TABLE 17  
TO HEAR THE NEWS (SURVEILLANCE)

| QUESTION   | SD     | DS     | NAND   | AS     | SA     | MEAN |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| 11 To hear news and information                                  | 1.04%  | 3.13%  | 6.25%  | 32.29% | 57.29% | 4.42 |
| 23 To learn about what is going<br>on in my community            | 5.21%  | 21.88% | 25.00% | 36.46% | 11.46% | 3.27 |
| 40 Because it gives me useful<br>information for daily<br>living | 11.46% | 6.25%  | 23.96% | 45.83% | 12.50% | 3.42 |
| 43 To get more in-depth news than<br>that of other media         | 2.08%  | 5.21%  | 12.50% | 29.17% | 51.04% | 4.22 |
| Average  | 4.95%  | 9.11%  | 16.93% | 35.94% | 33.07% | 3.83 |

most responsible for the relatively high mean score: the question that asks if respondents listen because the music is entertaining. This question's mean score is 4.22, and over eighty-nine percent agree to some extent with this use's question (over thirty-eight percent agree somewhat, and over forty-five percent agree strongly). Over thirty-three percent agree somewhat that they listen because they can just sit there and be entertained. The highest percentage for the question which asks if respondents listen to public radio because the announcers are entertaining appears in the neither agree nor disagree choice (over thirty-six percent), indicating not as strong use of public radio for this reason. The average for this entire category reveals that over fifty-six percent of the respondents agree to some extent with all of the questions in the category (over thirty-four percent agree somewhat and over twenty-three percent agree strongly). So while the category ranks second highest, the music as entertainment seems to account for the most entertainment usage by respondents. These first two categories also show some relationship to public radio's favorite features, as discussed. See Table eighteen for the complete results.

The use of radio for companionship has the third lowest mean score as a uses and gratifications category: 3.01. The highest use question for this category is the one which asks if the respondents listen because the announcers seem like friends and not announcers. This question has a 3.40 mean

TABLE 18  
TO BE ENTERTAINED

| QUESTION  | SD     | DS     | NAND   | AS     | SA     | MEAN |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| 12 Because I can just sit there<br>and be entertained | 12.50% | 21.88% | 19.79% | 33.33% | 12.50% | 3.11 |
| 24 Because I find the music is<br>entertaining        | 0.00%  | 8.33%  | 7.29%  | 38.54% | 45.83% | 4.22 |
| 41 Because the announcers are<br>entertaining         | 14.58% | 10.42% | 36.46% | 29.17% | 9.38%  | 3.08 |
| Average   | 9.03%  | 13.54% | 21.18% | 33.68% | 22.57% | 3.47 |

score, as over forty-five percent agree somewhat with this question. However, the neutral response draws over thirty-one percent. Forty-three percent agree somewhat that they use public radio when no one else is around, but the mean score is relatively neutral (3.19) as only nine percent agree strongly with this question. The question which asks if respondents listen to public radio because they sometimes feel isolated and lonely received the lowest score of any in this category. Over fifty percent disagree to some extent with this question (over twenty-nine percent disagree somewhat and over twenty-one percent disagree strongly) while over twenty-nine percent neither agree nor disagree. On the average, over thirty-five percent agree somewhat with all of the questions in this category, but over twenty-six percent neither agree nor disagree, indicating no strong use of public radio for companionship. See Table nineteen for the complete results.

The use of public radio for relaxation has a relatively neutral uses and gratifications ranking (fifth highest) as its mean score is 3.27. When asked simply if public radio is used for relaxation, this category scores rather high, as over sixty-seven percent agree with this use to some extent (over fifty-three percent agree somewhat, over fourteen percent agree strongly, 3.68 mean score). An even higher mean is seen when respondents are asked if public radio is used because the music is soothing and relaxing (3.79 mean score), as over forty-six percent agree somewhat and twenty percent

TABLE 19  
FOR COMPANIONSHIP

| QUESTION  | SD     | DS     | NAND   | AS     | SA    | MEAN |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|------|
| 13 For company when no one else<br>is around                  | 13.54% | 15.63% | 18.75% | 42.71% | 9.38% | 3.19 |
| 25 Because the announcers seem<br>like friends not announcers | 5.21%  | 10.42% | 31.25% | 45.83% | 7.29% | 3.40 |
| 39 Because I sometimes feel<br>isolated and lonely            | 29.17% | 20.83% | 29.17% | 17.71% | 3.13% | 2.45 |
| Average   | 15.97% | 15.63% | 26.39% | 35.42% | 6.60% | 3.01 |

agree strongly. However, other relaxation questions reveal lower scores. When asked if they use public radio because the announcers sound smooth and relaxing, over thirty-five percent agree somewhat, but over thirty-two percent neither agree nor disagree. Forty-one percent neither agree nor disagree that they use public radio because it releases tension and pressure from daily life, with twenty-eight percent disagreeing somewhat and twenty-one percent agreeing somewhat. The question which reveals the weakest use of public radio in this category is the one which asks if respondents use it to unwind and forget their problems. While thirty-one percent neither agree nor disagree with this use, over thirty-seven percent disagree to some extent (twenty-five percent disagree somewhat and over thirteen percent disagree strongly). On the average, the most common response for this entire category is agree somewhat, as over thirty-six percent respond in this manner while thirty percent neither agree nor disagree. See Table twenty for the complete results.

The vicarious participation category indicates neither a use or non-use for public radio listeners (3.18 mean score), as it is ranked close to the middle of the categories as the fifth lowest. Both question's highest percentage is the neither agree nor disagree response, and both percentages are exactly the same--thirty-seven and one-half percent. However, thirty-four percent agree somewhat that they use public radio to get the feeling of "being there" at an event which is being broadcast. Only twenty-five percent agree somewhat

TABLE 20  
FOR RELAXATION

| QUESTION  | SD     | DS     | NAND   | AS     | SA     | MEAN |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| 14 Because it relaxes me  | 0.00%  | 14.58% | 17.71% | 33.13% | 14.58% | 3.68 |
| 26 Because the music is soothing<br>and relaxing                  | 1.04%  | 5.21%  | 27.08% | 46.88% | 19.79% | 3.79 |
| 38 Because the announcers sound<br>pleasant and relaxing          | 8.33%  | 18.75% | 32.29% | 35.42% | 5.21%  | 3.10 |
| 44 To unwind and forget my<br>problems                            | 12.50% | 25.00% | 31.25% | 26.04% | 5.21%  | 2.86 |
| 49 Because it releases tension and<br>pressure from my daily life | 5.21%  | 28.13% | 40.63% | 20.83% | 5.21%  | 2.93 |
| Average   | 5.42%  | 18.33% | 29.79% | 36.46% | 10.00% | 3.27 |

that they use public radio to be challenged in figuring out what is going to happen or what someone is going to say on a show, while twenty-two percent disagree somewhat with this question. Not surprisingly, the highest most common response after averaging the two questions was neither agree nor disagree, which draws thirty-seven and one-half percent. See Table twenty-one for the complete results.

The next category has a ranking of fourth highest with a 3.29 mean score. Using public radio to make the work day more enjoyable draws the highest mean score (3.59), as thirty-nine percent agree somewhat while over thirty-one percent neither agree nor disagree. However, forty-six percent agree somewhat that they use public radio because it fits the mood they are in while twenty-eight percent neither agree nor disagree. Thirty-five percent neither agree nor disagree that they use public radio to help make routine and boring tasks more exciting, while thirty-two percent agree somewhat with this use. Respondents indicate they rarely use public radio to help change the mood they are feeling, as thirty-three percent neither agree nor disagree and thirty-one percent disagree somewhat. As is indicated by the mean score, the average for this entire category draws thirty-five percent in the agree somewhat choice, and thirty-two percent in the neither agree nor disagree choice. See Table twenty-two for the complete results.

A use of public radio to correlate parts of society to the environment has a mean score of 3.20 which ranks

TABLE 21  
FOR VICARIOUS PARTICIPATION

| QUESTION   | SD    | DS     | NAND   | AS     | SA    | MEAN |
|--|-------|--------|--------|--------|-------|------|
| 15 Because it gives me a feeling of "being there" at a broadcasted event                   | 8.33% | 10.42% | 37.50% | 34.38% | 9.38% | 3.26 |
| 48 To be challenged in figuring out what's going to happen or what someone is going to say | 6.25% | 21.88% | 37.50% | 25.00% | 9.38% | 3.09 |
| Average  | 7.29% | 16.15% | 37.50% | 29.69% | 9.38% | 3.18 |

TABLE 22  
FOR MOOD ACCOMPANIMENT

| QUESTION   | SD    | DS     | NAND   | AS     | SA     | MEAN |
|--|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| 16 Because it fits the mood I am in                    | 4.17% | 10.42% | 28.13% | 45.83% | 11.46% | 3.50 |
| 27 Because it makes my work day more enjoyable         | 2.08% | 10.42% | 31.25% | 38.54% | 17.71% | 3.59 |
| 34 To help change the mood I am feeling                | 9.38% | 31.25% | 33.33% | 23.96% | 2.08%  | 2.78 |
| 55 To help make routine and boring tasks more exciting | 7.29% | 13.54% | 35.42% | 32.29% | 11.46% | 3.27 |
| Average  | 5.73% | 16.41% | 32.03% | 35.16% | 10.68% | 3.29 |

in the middle of the study--it is the sixth highest. This can be attributed primarily to the question which asks if respondents use public radio because it helps them understand the events of the day. This question receives a thirty-three percent agree somewhat and forty-four percent agree strongly response. The other two questions do not indicate a strong use for this category. When asked if they listen to public radio because it helps them form an opinion of what should be done in response to events of the day, forty-one percent of the respondents neither agree nor disagree with this use, while thirty-four percent agree somewhat. However, respondents specifically indicate that they do not listen to public radio because it tells them how to react to the news of the day, as thirty-two percent disagree somewhat, thirty-one percent neither agree nor disagree, and twenty-two percent disagree strongly with this use. The most common response when all questions in this category are averaged is neither agree nor disagree (thirty percent) but the agree somewhat response was a close second (twenty-seven percent). See Table twenty-three for the complete results.

The next category results in the second lowest mean average in this study (2.45) and therefore indicates low use. The largest percentage of respondents neither agree nor disagree that they use public radio because it expresses reverent values, and twenty-three percent disagree somewhat. Forty-five percent neither agree nor disagree that they use public

TABLE 23  
TO CORRELATE PARTS OF SOCIETY TO THE ENVIRONMENT

| QUESTION   | SD     | DS     | NAND   | AS     | SA     | MEAN |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| 18 Because it helps me understand<br>the day's events                      | 0.00%  | 5.21%  | 17.71% | 33.33% | 43.75% | 4.16 |
| 28 It tells me how to react to<br>the day's news                           | 21.88% | 32.29% | 31.25% | 12.50% | 2.08%  | 2.41 |
| 36 To form an opinion of what to<br>do in response to events of<br>the day | 9.38%  | 14.58% | 40.63% | 34.38% | 1.04%  | 3.03 |
| Average  | 10.42% | 17.36% | 29.86% | 26.74% | 15.63% | 3.20 |

radio because it helps them tell their relatives what is happening outside of their home, and an additional forty-three percent disagree to some extent with this use. The lowest mean question is included in this category (2.10). Over sixty-five percent of the respondents disagree to some extent (thirty-four percent disagree strongly, and thirty-one percent disagree somewhat) that they use public radio because it tells them what events are considered "normal" in today's society. An additional twenty-four percent neither agree nor disagree with this use. The average for the entire category reveals thirty-three percent neither agree nor disagree, twenty-six percent disagree somewhat, and twenty percent disagree strongly with this category. See Table twenty-four for the complete results.

The next category contains the largest number of questions of any category, has a mean score of 3.16, and ranks fourth lowest in the study. However, individual questions within the category do reflect high use of public radio for some areas of personal information. The highest use question has a mean of 3.89 as over seventy-six percent agree to some extent (fifty-five percent agree somewhat, twenty-one percent agree strongly) that they use public radio because it helps them understand other points of view. Many respondents agree to some extent (forty-six percent agree somewhat, twenty-one percent agree strongly) that they listen to public radio to give them something to think about (3.65 mean score). Another high use question asks if

TABLE 24  
TO TRANSMIT CULTURE FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT

| QUESTION  | SD     | DS     | NAND   | AS     | SA    | MEAN |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|------|
| 18 Because it helps me tell relatives about the outside world                 | 18.75% | 23.96% | 44.79% | 9.38%  | 3.13% | 2.54 |
| 29 Because it tells me what events are considered "normal" in today's society | 34.38% | 31.25% | 23.96% | 10.42% | 0.00% | 2.10 |
| 36 Because it expresses reverent values                                       | 19.79% | 22.92% | 31.25% | 19.79% | 6.25% | 2.70 |
| Average   | 24.31% | 26.04% | 33.33% | 13.19% | 3.13% | 2.45 |

respondents use public radio to develop their interests and tastes. Forty percent agree somewhat that they do while twenty percent agree strongly (3.59 mean score). The next few questions reveal less direct use for public radio listeners. Sixty-one percent agree somewhat that they use public radio because it is a good way to find out about other people's concerns (3.50 mean score). Fifty-two percent agree somewhat that they use public radio to hear helpful consumer information (3.39 mean score). Fifty-one percent agree to some extent (forty percent agree somewhat, eleven percent agree strongly) that they use public radio to pick up information related to their own interests and work, while twenty-four percent neither agree nor disagree (3.27 mean score). Using public radio to give respondents something to talk about results in thirty-six percent of the respondents agreeing somewhat but thirty-six percent neither agreeing nor disagreeing (2.93 mean score). The question which asks respondents if they use public radio because it prepares them for the day ahead draws the same mean as the previously discussed question (2.93 mean score). Thirty-one percent agree somewhat, but twenty-nine percent neither agree nor disagree. The remaining questions in this category reveal little use of public radio by respondents for these reasons. Respondents spread themselves across the board when they are asked if they use public radio to gain insight into themselves: twenty-five percent neither agree nor disagree, twenty-four percent disagree strongly, twenty-three percent

disagree somewhat, and twenty-one percent agree somewhat (2.65 mean score). Similarly, when asked if they listen to public radio so they can talk about it with their friends, thirty-one percent neither agree nor disagree, twenty-four percent disagree strongly, twenty-three percent agree somewhat, and nineteen percent disagree somewhat (2.63 mean score). Finally, the lowest use of public radio results when respondents are asked if they use public radio to obtain advice on everyday problems they face. Thirty-nine percent disagree somewhat, twenty-seven percent neither agree nor disagree, and twenty percent disagree strongly (2.36 mean score). When all questions in this category are averaged, the most common response is agree somewhat (thirty-eight percent) followed by neither agree nor disagree (twenty-four percent). See Table twenty-five for the complete results.

Including only two questions, the next category produces the lowest use of any in the study (2.17 mean score). Over sixty-six percent of the respondents disagree to some extent (thirty-nine percent disagree strongly, and twenty-eight percent disagree somewhat) that they listen to public radio because it allows them to daydream. The average response for this category is highest in the disagree strongly response (thirty-six percent) followed by disagree somewhat (twenty-five percent) and neither agree nor disagree (twenty-four percent). See Table twenty-six for the complete results.

TABLE 25  
FOR PERSONAL INFORMATION  
(continued on next page)

| QUESTION   | SD     | DS     | NAND   | AS     | SA     | MEAN |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| 19 To gain insight into myself   | 23.96% | 22.92% | 25.00% | 20.83% | 7.29%  | 2.65 |
| 30 So I can talk about it with my friends                                    | 23.96% | 18.75% | 31.25% | 22.92% | 3.13%  | 2.63 |
| 35 Because it is a good way to find out what other people are concerned with | 8.33%  | 7.29%  | 16.67% | 61.46% | 6.25%  | 3.50 |
| 37 Because it prepares me for the day ahead                                  | 14.58% | 10.79% | 29.17% | 31.25% | 5.21%  | 2.93 |
| 46 Because it helps me understand other points of view                       | 0.00%  | 8.33%  | 15.63% | 55.21% | 20.83% | 3.89 |
| 50 Because it gives me something to talk about                               | 18.75% | 10.42% | 32.29% | 36.46% | 2.08%  | 2.93 |
| 51 To obtain advice on everyday problems I face                              | 19.79% | 38.54% | 27.08% | 14.58% | 0.00%  | 2.36 |
| 52 To inform me of news related to my interest or work                       | 10.42% | 14.58% | 23.96% | 39.58% | 11.46% | 3.27 |
| 54 To give me helpful consumer information                                   | 8.33%  | 13.54% | 17.71% | 62.08% | 8.33%  | 3.39 |

TABLE 25-continued

| QUESTION                               | SD     | DS     | NAND   | AS     | SA     | MEAN |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| 56 To give me something to think about | 5.21%  | 12.50% | 15.63% | 45.83% | 20.83% | 3.65 |
| 57 To develop my interests and tastes  | 6.21%  | 9.38%  | 26.04% | 39.58% | 19.79% | 3.59 |
| Average                                | 12.59% | 16.00% | 23.67% | 38.16% | 9.56%  | 3.16 |

TABLE 26  
FOR DIVERSION

| QUESTION                                    | SD     | DS     | NAND   | AS     | SA    | MEAN |
|---|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|------|
| 20 To keep my mind off my personal problems | 38.54% | 23.13% | 16.67% | 16.67% | 0.00% | 2.11 |
| 31 Because it allows me to "daydream"       | 34.38% | 21.88% | 31.25% | 12.50% | 0.00% | 2.22 |
| Average                                     | 36.46% | 25.00% | 23.96% | 14.58% | 0.00% | 2.17 |

The second highest uses category, that of special programming, has an overall mean score of 3.71. Individual questions within the category reflect particularly strong use of special programming, the most notable of which asks if respondents listen to public radio for a change of pace from commercial radio. Sixty-six percent agree strongly that they do, while twenty-two percent agree somewhat for a combined agree score of over eighty-seven percent. The next four highest questions have very similar mean scores--4.02, 3.98, 3.93, and 3.89. Respondents indicate they do use public radio to hear top quality productions (over seventy-nine percent agree to some extent, thirty-nine percent agree somewhat, and forty-one percent agree strongly), because they feel the shows will not be an insult to their intelligence (over seventy-three percent agree to some extent, thirty-nine percent agree somewhat, and thirty-five percent agree strongly), because they hope to hear something new and different (over seventy-seven percent agree to some extent, forty-two percent agree somewhat, and thirty-five percent agree strongly), and because the programming will be well written (over seventy-one percent agree to some extent, forty-four percent agree somewhat, and twenty-eight percent agree strongly). When asked if they listen to public radio because the programs are realistic, forty percent agree somewhat, but thirty-two percent neither agree nor disagree (3.38 mean score). The last question in this category discussed here is whether respondents feel

they use public radio to feel cultured. An interesting scale results here, as forty percent disagree strongly, but twenty-eight percent agree somewhat (2.38 mean score). The average for all the questions indicates also a strong use for this category in general. Over thirty-six percent agree to some extent with this category, as thirty-six percent agree somewhat and thirty-one percent agree strongly. See Table twenty-seven for the complete results.

### Summary

It appears that the "average" respondent for this study likes classical music the most over other music types. S/he listens to KUNC or KCSU, listens an average of three and one-half hours to all radio and two and one-half hours to public radio per day, and listens to other radio and public radio mostly from 6-10 A. M. in his/her home. His/her favorite qualities of public radio are its news quality, non-commercial programming, and the fact that it is an alternative to commercial radio. His/her least favorite features are that public radio is providing too often only classical music, and that there is too much non-music programming. The average listener is twenty-five to thirty-four years old, male, earns \$25,000 per year or more, is married, has taken some post graduate education, is professionally employed, and lives in Fort Collins or Denver.

This average respondent uses public radio primarily for its news, its special programming, or because it is

TABLE 27  
FOR PUBLIC RADIO'S SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

| QUESTION   | SD     | DS     | NAND   | AS     | SA     | MEAN |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------|
| 21 Because I hope to hear new and different things | 7.29%  | 5.21%  | 10.42% | 41.67% | 35.42% | 3.93 |
| 22 Because the programming will be well written    | 2.08%  | 7.29%  | 18.75% | 43.75% | 28.13% | 3.89 |
| 32 To feel cultured                                | 39.58% | 15.63% | 14.58% | 28.13% | 2.08%  | 2.38 |
| 33 Because the programs are real or realistic      | 8.33%  | 8.33%  | 32.29% | 39.58% | 11.46% | 3.38 |
| 42 To hear top quality productions                 | 6.25%  | 5.21%  | 9.38%  | 38.54% | 40.63% | 4.02 |
| 47 Because its shows do not insult my intelligence | 1.04%  | 9.38%  | 15.63% | 38.54% | 35.42% | 3.98 |
| 53 For a change of pace from commercial radio      | 3.13%  | 5.21%  | 4.17%  | 21.88% | 65.63% | 4.42 |
| Average  | 9.67%  | 8.04%  | 15.03% | 36.01% | 31.25% | 3.71 |

entertaining. His/her least likely reasons for using public radio are for diversion or to transmit culture from one generation to the next. The remaining uses and gratifications categories indicate moderate reasons for using public radio.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> KGNU went off the air March 1981 before the survey was mailed in June but was included in the study because it had gone off the air only three months before.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the research questions posed at the outset of this study, to discuss the implications of the findings, and to suggest future directions of research in this area. However, every study has limitations that affect evaluation of its results and conclusions. For this reason, a discussion of the limitations precedes the discussion of the conclusions drawn and the study's implications for further research.

#### Limitations

Because of the growing popularity of uses and gratifications research, it logically follows that this area of research has come under increased scrutiny. Typically, criticisms have arisen concerning this area of study as they have with other research methods. Philip Eliot observes that "the attention given. . . to uses and gratifications theory should not obscure the fact that it is basically a very atheoretical approach."<sup>1</sup> Blumler and Katz note that uses and gratifications may be regarded by some "simply as an approach to data collection" and speak of "the lack of a uses and gratifications theory as such."<sup>2</sup> David L. Swanson notes

four conceptual problems of uses and gratifications:

(1) First, the nature of the conceptual framework underlying uses and gratifications research is not totally clear. . . . McQuail and Gurevitch have argued, in fact, that uses and gratifications research could be pursued from any of three different theoretical positions: functionalism, a structural/cultural position, or an action/motivation position. . . .<sup>3</sup>

The difficulty, of course, is that these positions are fundamentally contradictory such that combining them in the same conceptual framework necessarily produces confusion about the nature of the very data were are trying to explain.

(2) A second related difficulty is confusion and equivalence in the meaning of major concepts and terms employed in uses and gratifications studies. . . . concepts which are used loosely and without precise meaning include "use," "gratification," "motive," and "need."

(3) A third conceptual difficulty is considerable confusion over the underlying explanatory apparatus which presumably unifies the diverse lines of inquiry pursued under the imprimatur of uses and gratifications research. It is not clear (1) what are the necessary components of a uses and gratifications explanation, (2) how these components serve to provide a satisfactory account, or explanation, or (3) how a uses and gratifications explanation differs from other accounts which might be offered to explain the same behavior.

(4) the uses and gratifications program has not sought to investigate how persons perceive and interpret the content of messages and whether those interpretations do indeed provide the expected link between needs, uses, and gratifications. The typical uses and gratifications research design investigates nearly every stage in the process--need, goal or expectation, media exposure, consequence of exposure (gratification)--except the perceptual activity of interpreting or creating meaning for messages.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to this general critique of the limitations of uses and gratifications, there are other limitations to this study. Limiting the study to public radio may have caused some confusion on the part of the respondents, e. g., while a questionnaire item asked about public radio,

the respondent may have been thinking in terms of radio in general, and the response thus would be based more upon impressions of all radio instead of public radio. There is no way to eliminate this limitation using the method employed for this study unless the questionnaire indeed sought uses and gratifications for all radio.

Another limitation of this study concerns the sample used. The results of the section on demographics and listening habits show that the cross-section of respondents cannot be considered representative of the entire country's population. Such seems particularly important in questions where reference is made to music. It is highly unlikely that people are actually responding to public radio. Instead, they are probably responding to the music on one specific public radio station.

Because this study seeks to find out the uses and gratifications of public radio, and not just radio, certain tendencies result in this information related to demographics and listening habits as was discussed in Chapter Three. Because of the problems discussed in Chapter Two with locating public radio listeners<sup>5</sup> the listener/contributors of KCSU and KUNC were selected as subjects. The results of this study could not have been obtained, however, without directly seeking known users of public radio. If expense was not an issue, the problems of limited generalizability of the results could have been avoided to an extent through a mass distribution of the questionnaire to a random sample of the

population the researcher chose to analyze. Even at that, some demographic results are consistent with other public radio research.<sup>6</sup>

The last major limitation of this study is the method used to analyze the data. While uses and gratifications categories were formulated by assimilating other proven uses and gratifications studies,<sup>7</sup> the categories analyzed were more or less arbitrarily chosen. The data were not analyzed using a factor analysis as the categories formed seem to respond to the research questions that this study sought to answer. By using a factor analysis instead of placing questions in only one uses category, perhaps other important information would result. One additional limitation must be considered. Some questions in this study were found to be "loaded" questions; i. e. some questions were phrased so that answering them in a certain manner might incriminate the respondent as the respondent would admit having problems if s/he agreed with the question. These questions are pointed out in the discussion section itself.

Certainly, these limitations should be considered within the context of the discussion. However, the study has produced some new information that can now be discussed.

#### Discussion and Implications of Results

Research question 1: What is the demographic profile of a public radio listener?

Even though a bias exists because financial contributors to KCSU and KUNC made up the survey sample, other studies

conducted of general public radio listeners who were not necessarily financial contributors show comparable tendencies in the demographic data regarding such items as higher income, higher numbers of respondents who were professionally employed, and a higher level of education for these respondents than exists in the general United States population.<sup>8</sup> Over forty percent of the respondents to this study are earning \$25,000 or more per year. These respondents are young (forty-eight percent are age twenty-five to thirty-four), highly educated (forty-four percent have taken some post graduate coursework), and many are professionally employed (twenty-nine percent) or are students (twenty-two percent). It seems that these people and their tastes should be given heed, especially by KCSU and KUNC, as these listeners are supplying funds that are greatly needed by most public radio stations.

Research question 2: What are the listening habits and preferences of public radio listeners?

Listening habits of the respondents for this study provide a useful guide for programmers at public radio stations, specifically KCSU and KUNC. Classical music should be emphasized, as it is the overwhelming musical preference of the listener/contributors for this study. However, jazz and folk music should also play a part in public radio's programming plans (to the extent that audience preferences determine programming) as jazz was the second favorite musical preference and folk music was third. The remaining

musical choices in order of preference--bluegrass, blues, rock and "other"--all scored particularly lower in this survey of respondents' musical preferences.

Respondents indicate they listen to all radio anywhere from two to five or more hours per day (twenty-two percent listen two hours, twenty-four percent three hours, twenty-one percent for four hours, and twenty-six percent for five or more hours). However, they indicate they listen to public radio predominantly for only one hour per day, followed by two hours per day (twenty-four percent), three hours per day (twenty-two percent) and four hours per day (thirteen percent). Programmers for public radio should realize that this means there is no such thing as "public radio only" listeners, as the respondents in this study listen much more to all radio than they do just public radio. This result supports the conclusions of Church and Bailey and Anthony Dexter and David Manning White which are discussed in the review of literature of this study.<sup>9</sup> This result could indicate that the special programs on public radio (shows like "Morning Edition," "All Things Considered," "Metropolitan Opera," "Jazz Alive," etc.) will each have a loyal audience willing to use public radio for one show per day rather than listen to all radio at any time of the day in general. The time of the day in which respondents use public radio and all radio provides further evidence for this conclusion. Respondents listen to public radio predominantly from 6-10 A. M., followed by 3-7 P. M., 7-12 P. M. and

10 A. M.-3 P. M. respectively. While respondents also use all radio mostly from 6-10 A. M., as is consistent with ratings research, there is a smaller percentage of respondents who listen to all radio between 6-10 A. M. than there are who listen to public radio at this time.

Close to sixty percent of radio listening is done in the home, while twenty-one percent is done in the car, and twenty percent at work. The ramifications of this information still need to be explored at this time. These percentages may indicate that respondents listen to the radio while doing everyday chores in the home (eating meals, getting dressed, etc.) but that many still listen on their way to and from work in their cars. This possibility is further validated by the most common listening times of the day as discussed.

Research question 3: What do listeners like most and least about public radio?

The section which looks at the most and least favorite public radio features is open ended, but still includes the most common responses to these questions which were procured from the pretest questionnaire and which could easily be checked off by the respondents. Looking first at the closed responses, the most popular feature of public radio is its high quality news. This was followed by its non-commercial programming, its alternative music, and its special programming. Public radio's emphasis on news with shows like "Morning Edition" and "All Things Considered" is probably responsible for these results. Many respondents also enjoy

the absence of commercials, the emphasis on alternative music (most likely classical, jazz, and other music not heard as often on commercial radio), and the special programming (live music shows like "Metropolitan Opera" and "Jazz Alive" and special coverage of events such as the Watergate Hearings, the Panama Canal Treaty negotiations, etc.) which is not as prevalent on other radio.

The least favorite features of public radio are its movement to all classical music, its excess of non-music time, "other," its "holier than thou" attitude, and its lack of professionalism. It should be noted that this movement to all classical music is not necessarily a predilection of public radio nationwide, but can be attributed to KCSU's shift from a variety of music programming to "90.9" percent classical music in March 1981.<sup>10</sup> Ironically, public radio's excess of non-music time, while being the second least favorite feature, allows public radio to include many of its special programs which are so popular ("All Things Considered," "Morning Edition," etc.). Public radio's "holier than thou" image seems just that--an image conjured up in the minds of those who are accustomed to the more forthright style and "lighter" content of commercial radio. This image probably stems from public radio's original concept--it was labeled "educational" radio.

The open ended questions are divided into three categories: those with only positive comments, those with only negative comments, and those with both positive and negative

comments. Of the twelve respondents who added only positive remarks, seven of them wrote that they are most happy to be able to hear classical music. Two others wrote that they believe the music is good or that they enjoy the format. And two write specifically that they enjoy "All Things Considered."

The negative comments only response is the largest, as sixty-two respondents add such remarks. Although listening to music is potentially one of the strongest uses for public radio listeners, most of the negative comments centered around problems with the music played on public radio. Nineteen respondents commented on some facet of the music. Two wrote that there is a problem with the music but did not clarify this complaint. Of those who did, three commented that the music is bland or dull, two commented that there is too much diversity in the music while four others wrote that there is not enough diversity in the music. Three wrote that there is too much repetition of musical selections, while another complained of too much non-classical programming. Two wrote that there is not enough non-music programming, while two more simply wrote the word "opera" in the open space. Apart from complaints about the music, eight respondents wrote that the station's signal, KCSU's in particular, is too weak to be heard. Three others complained of public radio's "begathons," or fund-raisers. Six respondents complained about the news--four wrote that there is not enough

local news while another wrote that there is too much. One complained of newscasts that are too long, another that the news is repetitive, while another wrote that there is not enough same day news coverage. Three others complained that "All Things Considered" was moved to a time when they can no longer listen. Three complained of a liberal bias, while another wrote simply "Washington D. C. emphasis." There were many miscellaneous, single complaints such as: "commercials about the station itself," "overkill of station logo," "too few stations to choose from," "lack of knowledge about classical music," "too many changes in KCSU format," "not enough schedule information or incorrect station info. [sic]," "no 24 hr operation [sic]," KUNC's change to "easy listening" format, and not enough Christmas music last Christmas.

Eighteen respondents included both positive and negative comments. Fifteen of those wrote that they like classical music and/or special programming ("All Things Considered," "Morning Edition," radio theatre such as "Earplay," etc.). Three of the respondents wrote that they like public radio much more than commercial radio. As for the negative comments, five respondents complained of unprofessional or amateurish announcers, and two others wrote that they do not like the time that "All Things Considered" is aired, while another wants only music programming in the morning. There were three more complaints about too much classical music programming, and another respondent who feels there is too

much non-music programming. The other two complaints centered around public radio's poor reception, and its bias for liberal views.

In sum, then, it appears as if the likes and dislikes of public radio reflect the uses and gratifications the respondents indicate are most popular. News programs that are of high quality top the list ("All Things Considered," "Morning Edition") while special programming ("Earplay," live music programs like "Metropolitan Opera," "Jazz Alive," etc.) and music are also very popular. While classical music is the favorite of the listeners, four others indicated in the open ended questions that they want to hear a more diverse mixture of music. This lack of diversity is one of the biggest complaints of listeners, though other problems they identified are that there is too much non-music programming, poor transmission of public radio's signal (KCSU's in particular), and poor announcing at times. The positive comments about music and the negative comments about announcers are reflective once again of the answers to be explained further as uses and gratifications are discussed.

Before moving to the actual analysis of the uses and gratifications of public radio, one more item should be noted. The questionnaires of listener/contributors of both KCSU and KUNC were analyzed together, but had they been analyzed separately, the results might have shown that one group of listeners from one of the stations used public radio for news while the other group from the other station

used public radio for music/entertainment. Both stations have in the past and are presently featuring about the same amount of news which is limited to such shows as "All Things Considered" and the "Morning Edition," so this statement has to be classified as speculative.

Research question 4: How do public radio listeners use public radio?

An analysis of the uses and gratifications of public radio is now in order. The ten miscellaneous questions will be discussed first followed by an analysis of the eleven uses and gratifications categories.

Research question 1 (a): Do listeners use public radio for miscellaneous reasons?

This category ranks third lowest in the study with a 2.85 mean score. In order to get the true value from these responses, the questions in this category are discussed separately. Of all the miscellaneous questions, the highest use is indicated for the question which asks if the music is meaningful. While "meaningful" is probably a vague concept used in this sense, the response to this question indicates that respondents see the music heard on public radio as an important part of their lives. Because other questions in the study ask for more specific information about music, this discussion will be continued later. The second highest response is that respondents use public radio as an alternative to television. Radio and television appear to be somewhat interchangeable media, as respondents do not indicate

that they use public radio as an alternative to the movies or to record albums, only to television. Respondents indicate that they do not use public radio either because it is something they have in common with their friends or because it brings their family together. Respondents do not seem concerned about listening to public radio because their friends are listening to it, perhaps because their friends are not listening to public radio. Also, thirteen respondents indicate that they have no family to discuss public radio with so they neither agree nor disagree with this question. One hundred and seven others disagree with this question possibly because television serves to bring the family together more effectively and more often than does radio. The remaining miscellaneous questions indicate moderate uses and gratifications (from highest to lowest based on mean--to be emotionally moved or excited, because it is an alternative to record albums, because it comes in well on my radio, out of habit, just to pass the time, because it is an alternative to movies). In sum, respondents indicate they listen to public radio for some miscellaneous reasons but not for others.

Research question 4 (b): Do listeners use public radio as a means of obtaining news and information about the world?

Generally, respondents agree with this question, indicating a stronger use for public radio to hear the news than for any other category. Further, the individual question which asks respondents if they listen "to hear news

and information" has the highest mean score in the survey (4.42) along with "for a change of pace from commercial radio" which also has a mean score of 4.42. Another strong reason for listening in this same category is to get more in-depth news than from other media. Weaker responses in this category, which still indicate a use of public radio for news and information, are because it provides useful information for daily living and to learn what is going on in the community. News is the number one reason for respondents to listen to public radio, possibly because public radio has in-depth news programs like "All Things Considered" and the "Morning Edition" which air at public radio's peak listening times--6-10 A. M. and 3-7 P. M. "All Things Considered," public radio's most popular program,<sup>11</sup> and the "Morning Edition" are two major daily news and feature series that provide comprehensive and lively coverage of current events. "All Things Considered" has won repeated acclaim for its excellence in broadcast journalism, including the Dupont and Peabody awards, since its inception in 1971. "Morning Edition," which began in 1979, appears to be traveling down a similar path.<sup>12</sup> Apparently, national news is more popular than local news as respondents do not express as strong a preference for learning about the community as for news in general. News provides useful information for daily living by providing information such as weather, film and theatre reviews, etc. News also allows these highly educated respondents to know what is happening that day before

they face the world. In general, over sixty-nine percent agree to some extent that they use public radio to hear the news.

Research question 4 (c): Do listeners use public radio for entertainment?

The next uses and gratifications category, "to be entertained," is the third highest in the study based on the mean score (3.47). This ranking is due primarily to the question which asks respondents if they listen to public radio because the music is entertaining. The other questions in this category indicate moderate uses based on mean scores--respondents listen to public radio because they can just sit there and be entertained and because the announcers are entertaining. As was mentioned earlier, music is very important to the respondents and probably serves as the main form of entertainment even on public radio. It is interesting to note that respondents do not feel that they listen because the announcers are entertaining as strongly as they do because the music is entertaining. This fact would seem to indicate that there are other more important concerns for public radio programmers (such as the programming itself) besides having entertaining announcers. This result does not, however, take into consideration other attributes of announcers which should be considered, such as being professional, knowledgeable about music, etc. In sum, then, this category points to a tendency to use public radio to be entertained, most notably by the music.

Research question 4 (d): Do listeners use public radio for companionship?

Respondents indicate a low use of public radio for companionship as this was the third lowest mean score (3.01) in the study. The strongest use is for the question which asks if respondents use public radio because the announcers seem like friends and not announcers. So, while it is not very important for the announcers to be entertaining, they should be friendly over the air as this style apparently attracts many respondents. Ninety-eight respondents indicate that they use public radio for company when no one else is around; apparently another role for public radio. However, when asked if they use public radio because they sometimes feel isolated and lonely, more disagree than agree. This question as well as a few others on the questionnaire which are discussed later appear to be "loaded" against the respondent, i. e., by answering that they use public radio because they sometimes feel isolated and lonely, they are admitting that they do indeed occasionally feel isolated and lonely. This could be the reason for a low mean score for this question and others which are discussed later. Nevertheless, as structured this was not considered to be a high use category, nor do respondents show strong agreement with any of the individual questions.

Research question 4 (e): Do listeners use public radio for relaxation or for a release from psychological tension and pressure?

The next uses category, "for relaxation," is the fifth highest in the study with a 3.27 mean score. The question

which scores highest asks if respondents find the music soothing and relaxing. This is just another indication of the importance of music to the respondents. Closely behind this question (3.68 mean score) is the one which asks if respondents listen because it relaxes them. Public radio's emphasis on classical music probably helps account for this use at least for listeners of KCSU. After these two questions, there is a substantial drop in the mean scores for the remaining three questions in this category. Respondents are basically neutral when they are asked if they listen because the announcers sound pleasant and relaxing. This score seems to indicate the relative unimportance of the announcers on public radio once again. When asked if they listen to unwind and forget their problems, sixty respondents chose the neutral response. This seems to be another "loaded" question, i. e., respondents have to admit to having problems before saying that public radio would allow them to forget them, which could be why this was the lowest ranked question in the category.

Research question 4 (f): Do listeners use public radio for vicarious participation?

The next uses category has a mean score of 3.18 and a ranking of fifth lowest in the study. The category, vicarious participation, contains only two questions. When asked if they listen to public radio because it gives them the feeling of "being there" at an event which is being broadcast, seventy-three neither agree nor disagree or agree somewhat.

Seventy-two respondents neither agree nor disagree that they listen to be challenged in figuring out what is going to happen or what someone is going to say on a show. Vicarious participation may be more a latent function than other uses categories already discussed which might be why most respondents neither agree nor disagree with this entire category.

Research question 4 (g): Do listeners use public radio for mood accompaniment?

Mood accompaniment ranks fourth highest in the study with a mean score of 3.29. The highest use question asks respondents if public radio makes their work day more enjoyable. This result is possibly because those who can listen at work agree somewhat, while those who cannot listen at work neither agree nor disagree. Many agree somewhat that they listen because public radio programming fits the mood they are feeling at a particular time. Respondents may seek programming that fits the mood they are feeling and find this programming on public radio, but this is not a strong use. The next question might also be considered "loaded," as respondents have to admit they are doing routine and boring tasks before they can comment on whether public radio makes these tasks more exciting. Respondents apparently do not use public radio to change the mood they are feeling, maybe because public radio is not influential enough to accomplish such a task.

Research question 4 (h): Do listeners use public radio to correlate parts of society in response to the environment?

The use for public radio to correlate parts of society in response to the environment has a 3.20 mean score and is the sixth highest in the study. While a great majority of respondents agree to some extent that public radio helps them understand the events of the day, this is probably related back to public radio's popularity as a source of news. Far fewer respondents agree that they use public radio because it helps them form an opinion of what should be done in response to events of the day. This appears to be another "loaded" question, i. e., respondents have to admit that public radio helps form their opinions instead of allowing them to do this for themselves. Very few respondents agree that they use public radio because it tells them how to react to the news of the day. There seems to be the same problem here with another possible "loaded" question, i. e., in order to agree with this question, respondents have to admit that public radio personnel tell them how to react to the news of the day instead of allowing respondents to react as they choose.

Research question 4 (i): Do listeners use public radio as a transmitter of social heritage from one generation to the next?

One of the lowest uses and gratifications categories (second lowest) is the one which asks if respondents use public radio to transmit social heritage from one generation to the next (2.45 mean score). Many wrote on the

questionnaire that they do not know the meaning of "reverent," which is why they answered as they did. However, the question concerning reverent values scored even higher than the other two in this category! In general, most respondents do not use public radio to transmit social heritage from one generation to the next, as can be seen by the low scores in this category.

Research question 4 (j): Do listeners use public radio to gain personal information?

The mean score for this category is 3.16 and it ranks fourth lowest in the study. However, questions should be considered separately to see where the real uses exist. The largest use for public radio in this section is for public radio's help in understanding other points of view. This is another question which can be related back to surveillance--respondents possibly want to stay informed of opinions concerning the news of the day. They also want something to think about and to find out with what other people are concerned, possibly so they may form their own opinions after knowing the opinions of others. Somewhat surprisingly, the third highest question in this category asks respondents if they listen to develop their interests and tastes. This question seems to be earmarked similarly to the other "loaded" questions discussed previously, i. e., public radio being used to tell people how to think, feel, live, etc., but apparently it is easier for respondents to accept help in developing their interests and tastes than it is for

them to be told how to react to the news of the day or what events are considered normal in today's society, for example. Respondents are interested in hearing helpful consumer information, which seems to be a trend across all of the mass media--on television during news and in shows like David Horowitz's "Fight Back," in magazines such as "Consumer Reports" which does not need advertising revenue to exist, etc. Still another news-related question draws agreement responses as respondents indicate they use public radio to pick up information related to their interest or work. The lowest ranked uses questions apparently do not reference information that is as important as the previously discussed questions. Fewer respondents listen because it gives them something to talk about or because it prepares them for the day ahead. The latter is somewhat of a surprise; possibly these respondents feel they need to know more about the news of the day so they can prepare themselves in their own way for the day ahead. Once again, because the respondents are highly educated, they might be more independent thinkers than other radio listeners, which can account for their high disagreement with questions which ask if they listen to public radio either to gain insight into themselves or so they can talk about it with their friends. Finally, another "loaded" question may be the reason why many disagree with the lowest ranked question in this category; i. e., the one which asks if respondents listen to public radio to obtain advice on everyday problems they face. Once again, they have to admit

having problems before they can say they use public radio to obtain advice on these problems. Also, very little public radio programming seems to be geared towards helping people with their problems whereas commercial radio features programs like phone-in talk shows, etc. which are geared towards this end.

Research question 4 (k): Do listeners use public radio for diversion?

This is the lowest ranked category in the study (2.17 mean score). Most disagree that they use public radio because it allows them to daydream. These educated listeners are apparently more active listeners than others who listen to less public radio. This explanation might be the reason why so many respondents complain of too much classical music, which is often considered background music if for no other reason than the lack of lyrics and singing. Also, this explanation might indicate why the special programs and news related material is so popular, as listeners are apparently paying close attention to the programming material. The other question in this category may be "loaded," as it asks respondents if they listen to public radio to keep their minds off of their personal problems. Like other questions which ask respondents about their problems (see questions forty-four and fifty-one), respondents may not agree with questions that imply they have problems.

Research question 4 (1): Do listeners use public radio to hear special programming (not often found on commercial radio)?

This category has the second highest ranking in the study with a 3.71 mean score. The biggest reason for public radio use in this category and one which produces a tie for the highest mean question in this study asks respondents if they listen for a change of pace from commercial radio. This possible explanation can be deduced from the favorite feature section of the questionnaire, as respondents indicate they like to hear more in-depth news that is of high quality, no commercials, classical music, and special programming in general. This reasoning accounts also for the high use of public radio for top quality productions, programs that will not be an insult to their intelligence, new and different things (that are most likely not found on commercial radio), and because the programming will be well written. All of these questions seem to point out inherent characteristics of public radio. Fewer respondents indicate they listen to hear shows that are real or realistic, which may be because there is drama such as "Earplay" and fiction shows like "Star Wars" that do not necessarily seek to be realistic, or because radio is a medium that inherently causes the listener to use his/her imagination to feel the full impact of programming. One question indicates a low use for listeners of public radio: the question which asks if respondents listen to feel cultured. This response may be attributed to public radio's old label of

"educational" radio. This observation relates to the "holier than thou" least favorite feature discussed previously. Public radio employees are trying to erase the stigma of existing for education's sake alone. While public radio still provides more cultural and educational programming than is found on commercial radio, it is still very important that listeners are able to use it for entertainment as discussed earlier.

#### Summary

In sum, public radio appears to be used primarily for purposes of surveillance (to hear the news), because of its special programming, and because it is entertaining. It is apparently not being used for diversion or to transmit social heritage from one generation to the next. The remaining categories in the study show some tendency for respondent use, but reflect a basic neutrality. Ranked by mean in order of highest to lowest use, these moderate categories are for mood accompaniment, to relax or be released from life's pressures, to correlate parts of society in response to the environment, for vicarious participation, for personal information, and for companionship. The miscellaneous questions are not summarized here because they do not fall into any categories but should still be considered.

When the review of literature is analyzed along with the results of this study, some interesting results appear. As Mullally writes, public radio has stripped the educational

label so it can be considered more than just educational.<sup>13</sup> This conclusion appears to be justified, as entertainment is the third highest ranked use found in this study. As Mul-lally and Willard D. Rowland point out,<sup>14</sup> public radio can no longer limit its programs and serve just a small number of listeners. Even public radio must strive to reach significant numbers of people at a reasonable cost which it has failed to do, especially with the upcoming governmental cuts in funding to public radio.<sup>15</sup> If these cuts become a reality, public broadcasters may have to rely even more on financial contributions from their listening audience. This possibility means that the six complaints of respondents for this study concerning musical diversity should be given heed, as music and the entertainment it provides are very important to the respondents. Also, more attention should be paid to programming than to announcers.

Comparing the actual uses and gratifications studies cited earlier with the results of this study also provides some interesting conclusions. As expected, the results of this study greatly differ from Herzog's, whose study of radio soap opera listeners found that they use these shows for emotional release, wishful thinking, and to obtain advice.<sup>16</sup> Public radio listeners would not seem to share much in common with radio soap opera listeners, so these results seem logical. Peled and Katz's study of media use in a time of crisis produces only one use similar to this public radio study--surveillance or to hear the news.<sup>17</sup>

Similarly, McLeod and Becker's study of gratification measures through political effects analysis produces the same use common with this public radio study as Peled and Katz's--surveillance.<sup>18</sup>

Lasswell's study of the functions that communication may serve also finds surveillance to be a top reason for using the mass media. His study found the correlation of the parts of society to the environment to be another use for mass media. Respondents for this study of public radio find the latter to be a moderate function (3.20 mean score, sixth highest). Going one step further, Lasswell's discovery that communication serves to transmit social heritage or culture from one generation to the next does not concur with the results of the public radio study, as this use is apparently one of the lowest for public radio.<sup>19</sup> The fault of these seemingly contradictory results may be that Lasswell is referring to communication in general, which includes interpersonal communication, while this study is looking at a mass medium that relies on complex instrumentation and mechanical transmission. Wright's discussion of the importance of the entertainment aspect of communication does hold true for this study, as this is one of the top reasons respondents indicate they listen to public radio.<sup>20</sup>

Mendelsohn's results from a study of a commercial station when compared to the results for public radio seem very similar to previously discussed studies such as Peled and Katz's and McLeod and Becker's--all studies including that

of public radio listeners indicate a strong use for surveillance or news and information. The other uses Mendelsohn found, including active mood accompaniment (3.29 mean, fourth highest), release from psychological tension and pressure (3.27 mean, fifth highest), and finally companionship (3.01 mean, third lowest), are all found to be uses in varying degrees for public radio listeners. Another minor finding of Mendelsohn's is the use of WMCA-AM for vicarious participation.<sup>21</sup> This concurs with the public radio listeners who find vicarious participation to be a moderate use (3.18 mean, fifth lowest).

The differences between the studies reviewed and this study of public radio listeners probably can be attributed to the uniqueness of public radio itself. These differences should be scrutinized so that other researchers studying public broadcasting or uses and gratifications research can discover if these findings are consistent with stations nationwide and with the results of current and future uses and gratifications studies.

#### Future Directions of Research in this Area

This study attempts to answer the question "Why do people listen to public radio?" It follows the various suggestions made by researchers as to how and why this study should be done. Dignam suggests various methods of researching information for broadcasters to use, among them the questionnaire<sup>22</sup> as is used for this study. Keegan discusses

also the need for expanded consumer feedback in broadcasting<sup>23</sup> which this study helps provide. The various kinds of information about the consumer that ratings do not provide (i. e., why they listen) is provided in this study as Rosengren,<sup>24</sup> Katz, Blumler, Gurevitch,<sup>25</sup> and Dexter and White<sup>26</sup> suggest. Still, this work can serve as a first step leading to further investigation of the uses and gratifications of public radio. The purpose here is to suggest areas in which such research may focus.

The first problem that must be dealt with is that of finding an unbiased sample large enough to produce valid results. Williams, Jr. and LeRoy note that the most popular survey technique, random sampling of a given market, does not work well for public radio because very few listeners are usually located. Sampling is the most perplexing question facing those who would like to duplicate or replicate this study in the future. Williams, Jr. and LeRoy feel the answer to this problem "is to spend slightly more money for a general sample or develop other samples that may be more representative and still be within the budget of most public radio stations."<sup>27</sup> They suggest analyzing the audience attending leisure activities, such as an artists series or play, for their views on public radio as they may be more representative of the general listening audience. The focused sampling technique, which uses a filter question at the beginning of an interview that can eliminate non-listeners of public radio while still using a

randomly generated sample method, is another suggestion of Williams, Jr. and LeRoy.<sup>28</sup> The second suggestion, the focused sample, should be used to determine the validity of this survey and any other methods which may be suggested.<sup>29</sup> The survey method used here has problems which must be solved before studies like this one can be generalizable to the entire country or even part of the country's public radio listeners.

As for the uses and gratifications method itself, McLeod and Becker conclude, "we have applied effects analysis to show that there is no reason to abandon the use of self-report measures of gratifications and avoidances."<sup>30</sup>

However, Charles Ingold adds that

The status of gratifications research is apparently developmental. Much systemization and validation is still needed, as well as innovative experimentation. There also seems to be a need to satisfy some media and social science researchers as to the accuracy, generalizability, and, thus, the utility of uses and gratifications research. The deficiencies and uncertainties involved in this type of research may be alleviated with further research; continued inquiry of this nature may bear out the merit of such research or lead to a worthwhile variation.<sup>31</sup>

Swanson's solutions to the problems of uses and gratifications research that were discussed earlier may also provide some help to the future researcher using the uses and gratifications approach:

The need at this point is not for more data to further confuse matters, but rather for rigorous conceptual analysis. Concepts and terms must be defined; their relations must be clearly specified within a theoretic framework; the key assumptions of the approach, including the assumption of an actively perceiving audience, must be identified and consistently implemented in the conceptual edifice.

At the same time, our evaluation must be tentative, for like any new position, the uses and gratifications approach is rapidly evolving. Many of the difficulties we have identified are currently being thrashed out and, may ultimately be resolved in ways which will make the approach more useful.<sup>32</sup>

Another useful suggestion is to analyze the data using a factor analysis. This method can provide important information that other methods of data analysis, including the one used for this study, do not provide. Another method of data analysis is to cross tabulate the demographic information, listening habits, and likes and dislikes of public radio with the uses and gratifications section of the questionnaire. For instance, what differences exist amongst higher educated, low income listeners and higher educated, high income listeners? Or what effect does musical preference and the hours listened per day have on uses and gratifications? Analysis of such cross tabulations may reveal tendencies that may provide valuable programming ideas to public radio personnel.

Another suggestion is to try to involve all the uses and gratifications which can be considered for a particular study. Some other possible uses and gratifications, found after the questionnaires for this study were distributed, are that media may help establish or reinforce value systems, or serve as a substitute for real social ties for some people.<sup>33</sup> An attempt must be made to include all possible uses and gratifications to add useful, valid data.

The instrument itself can be improved. Oftentimes, respondents were asked to choose one answer or to identify

the most or least favorite feature of public radio, and they chose instead to respond in a couple of different ways. This can be avoided by having the respondents use computer cards to punch in their answers and by explaining to the respondents in the cover letter that if more than one answer is chosen for any question, the results will not be counted by the computer. There is also a mistake in question sixty-one which asks respondents how many hours they listen to public (or non-commercial) radio each day. The last response should have read "5 hours or more," not "5 hours or less." This should be noted and corrected if this instrument is utilized again.

Another suggestion for future research is to use this questionnaire, or a similar one to find out the uses and gratifications of all radio, not just public radio. This study could provide additional valuable information. Then, a follow-up study could be done which seeks information about the uses and gratifications of public radio, and the results of both studies compared for some potentially valuable results.

#### Concluding Comments

The results of this study have provided some answers as to how listener/contributors of public radio use this media. Some questions about these data and some suggestions concerning the method used have been discussed. Conducting the research necessary for completion of this study makes evident

the fact that more research needs to be done to improve the uses and gratifications approach to audience analysis. The identification of the uses and non-uses of public radio have helped lay a foundation for future research into this area. Using the information provided in this study as a starting point, an extensive study of the uses and gratifications of all radio and public radio could be conducted and would add greatly to the body of literature relating to broadcast audience analysis.

The areas for future research mentioned previously are but a few of many possibilities. Qualitative data on mass media audiences has not been given proper emphasis in the broadcast arena in the past. It should be given more emphasis in the future. Information obtained in this study should be of value to both the public radio programmer and the broadcast scholar. This study not only provides insight into the area of uses and gratifications research, but should also act as a guide for others interested in the audiences of public radio.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Philip Eliot, "Uses and Gratifications Research: A Critique and a Sociological Alternative," as appeared in Blumler and Katz, p. 256.

<sup>2</sup>Blumler and Katz, pp. 14-15.

<sup>3</sup>McQuail and Gurevitch, pp. 287-301.

<sup>4</sup>David L. Swanson, "The Uses and Misuses of Uses and Gratifications," Human Communication Research 3 (Spring 1977):215-21.

<sup>5</sup>See Williams, Jr. and LeRoy, p. 516. and Farley, p. 24.

<sup>6</sup>For example, see sections on demographics and listening habits in Denise Mongeau's study from 1977, "KCSU Annual Programming Survey" (Typewritten). Also see Roper Survey, Office of Audience and Program Research, "Survey of Public Awareness of Public Radio," 1980 (Mimeographed).

<sup>7</sup>See in particular the Blumler and Katz text; Rosengren; Herzog; Lasswell; and Dexter and White.

<sup>8</sup>See Mongeau and Roper studies, pp. 7-10 and 3-4 respectively for demographic related information.

<sup>9</sup>See Bailey and Church, pp. 47-49 and Dexter and White, pp. 246-47.

<sup>10</sup>This researcher was employed at KCSU at the time, and this assumption is based on his observations of the community feedback of this change.

<sup>11</sup>Roper Survey, pp. 7-8.

<sup>12</sup>National Public Radio, "National Public Radio--A World of Difference," 1981, p. 9 (Mimeographed).

<sup>13</sup>Mullally, pp. 189-90.

<sup>14</sup>Mullally, p. 191 and Rowland, Jr., p. 141.

<sup>15</sup>Richard Harrington and Doug Hall, "Public radio Mulls Fate After Reagan Economies," Billboard, February 28, 1981, pp. 1, 10.

<sup>16</sup>Herzog, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup>Peled and Katz, pp. 49, 57-65.

- <sup>18</sup>McLeod and Becker, pp. 137, 156-57.
- <sup>19</sup>Lasswell, p. 38.
- <sup>20</sup>Dexter and White, p. 97.
- <sup>21</sup>Dexter and White, pp. 244-47.
- <sup>22</sup>Dignam, pp. 89-91.
- <sup>23</sup>Keegan, p. 164.
- <sup>24</sup>Blumler and Katz, pp. 26-27.
- <sup>25</sup>Blumler and Katz, p. 30.
- <sup>26</sup>Dexter and White, p. 240.
- <sup>27</sup>Williams and LeRoy, p. 521.
- <sup>28</sup>Williams and LeRoy, p. 521.
- <sup>29</sup>Williams and LeRoy, p. 521.
- <sup>30</sup>McLeod and Becker, p. 160.
- <sup>31</sup>Ingold, pp. 38-39.
- <sup>32</sup>Swanson, p. 220.
- <sup>33</sup>Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, p. 29. As appeared in  
Ingold, p. 34.

## APPENDIX A



**Division of Speech Communication Studies**  
(303) 491-6140

- Rhetorical & Communication Theory
- Television-Radio-Film
- Mass Media Criticism
- Rhetorical & Public Address Criticism

**Colorado State University**  
Department of Speech and Theatre Arts  
Fort Collins, Colorado  
80523

Dear Respondent:

Congratulations! You have just been given the opportunity to help an aspiring broadcasting student who is working on his Master's degree at Colorado State University. Your help in completing this questionnaire is the main determinant of the success of my study. You see, public radio personnel want to find out more about why people are listening to public radio so that they can better adjust to YOUR needs and desires. Therefore, it is very important that you answer these questions as honestly, accurately, and completely as possible so the results of this study will be valid. There is no need for you to give me your name as the individual questionnaire results will be kept confidential. The questionnaire will not take too long to complete, and there are no right or wrong answers.

So please take a few minutes of your time as soon as possible and complete this questionnaire. Please return it using the self-addressed, stamped envelope provided for your convenience. One more item. If more than one member of your family has contributed money to public radio, please allow the person who is most familiar with public radio to fill out the questionnaire. Thanks a lot for your time, trouble, and cooperation. Your local public radio station and I appreciate your help.

Thank you.

*Scott Bluebond*

Scott Bluebond

P.S. If you would like a copy of a summary of the results of this study, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope and mail to:

Scott Bluebond  
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*Dennis D. Phillips*

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APPENDIX B

PUBLIC RADIO LISTENING SURVEY

I am conducting research on radio audiences in your area. I greatly appreciate your cooperation in helping me gather information by filling out this survey.

SECTION 1--INSTRUCTIONS: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Circle your responses. Each statement should be preceded with the following phrase:

"I LISTEN TO PUBLIC RADIO. . ."

KEY: Strongly disagree -- SD  
Disagree somewhat -- DS  
Neither agree or disagree -- NAND  
Agree somewhat -- AS  
Strongly agree -- SA

|  | SD | DS | NAND | AS | SA |
|--|----|----|------|----|----|
| 1. just to pass the time.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 2. because it brings our family together.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 3. out of habit.   | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 4. because it is something I have in common with my friends.                             | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 5. because the music is meaningful.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 6. because it comes in well on my radio.   | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 7. to be emotionally moved or excited.   | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 8. because it is an alternative to television.   | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 9. because it is an alternative to record albums.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 10. because it is an alternative to movies.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 11. to hear news and information.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 12. because I can just sit there and be entertained.                                     | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 13. because it is company when no one else is around.                                    | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 14. because it relaxes me.   | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 15. because it gives me a feeling of "being there" at an event which is being broadcast. | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 16. because it fits the mood I am feeling at a particular time.                          | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 17. because it allows me to understand the events of the day.                            | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 18. because it helps me tell my relatives what is happening outside of our home.         | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 19. to gain insight into myself.   | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 20. to keep my mind off my personal problems.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 21. because I hope to hear something new and different.                                  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 22. because the programming will be well written.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 23. to learn about what is going on in my community.                                     | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |

-2-

|  | SD | DS | NAND | AS | SA |
|--|----|----|------|----|----|
| 24. because I find the music is entertaining.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 25. because the announcers seem like good friends instead of just radio announcers.              | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 26. because the music is soothing and relaxing.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 27. because my work day becomes more enjoyable as I listen.                                      | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 28. because it tells me how I should react to the news of the day.                               | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 29. because it tells me what events are considered "normal" in today's society.                  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 30. so I can talk about it with my friends.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 31. because it allows me to "daydream."  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 32. to feel cultured.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 33. because I think the programs either will be real or realistic.                               | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 34. to help change the mood I am feeling.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 35. because it is a good way to find out what other people are concerned with.                   | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 36. because it expresses reverent values.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 37. because it prepares me for the day ahead.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 38. because the announcers sound pleasant and relaxing.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 39. because I sometimes feel isolated and lonely.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 40. because it gives me useful information for daily living.                                     | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 41. because I find that the announcers are entertaining.   | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 42. because I can hear top quality productions.  | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 43. to get more in depth news than what is provided in other media.                              | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 44. because it allows me to unwind and forget my problems.                                       | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 45. because it helps me form an opinion of what should be done in response to events of the day. | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 46. because it helps me to understand other points of view.                                      | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 47. because I think the shows will not be an insult to my intelligence.                          | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 48. to be challenged in figuring out what's going to happen or what someone is going to say.     | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 49. because it releases tension and pressure from my daily life.                                 | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |

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|  | SD | DS | RAND | AS | SA |
|--|----|----|------|----|----|
| 50. because it gives me something to talk about.               | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 51. to obtain advice on everyday problems I face.              | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 52. to pick up information related to my own interest or work. | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 53. for a change of pace from what is on commercial radio.     | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 54. to give me helpful consumer information.                   | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 55. to help make routine and boring tasks more exciting.       | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 56. to give me something to think about.                       | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |
| 57. to develop my interests and tastes.                        | 1  | 2  | 3    | 4  | 5  |

## SECTION 2 -- INSTRUCTIONS: Please fill in the following information.

58. Please indicate your musical response -- rank your favorite (1) to least favorite (7) choices.

Classical\_\_\_\_ Jazz\_\_\_\_ Folk\_\_\_\_ Rock\_\_\_\_ Blues\_\_\_\_  
 Bluegrass\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)

59. Which public radio stations do you listen to?

KCSU (Ft. Collins)\_\_\_\_ KUNC (Greeley)\_\_\_\_ KCPR (Denver)\_\_\_\_  
 KGNU (Boulder)\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)

60. On the average, how many hours do you listen to all radio stations each day? (choose one)

None\_\_\_\_ 1 hour or less\_\_\_\_ 2 hours\_\_\_\_ 3 hours\_\_\_\_  
 4 hours\_\_\_\_ 5 hours or more\_\_\_\_

61. On the average, how many hours do you listen to public (or non-commercial) radio each day? (choose one)

None\_\_\_\_ 1 hour or less\_\_\_\_ 2 hours\_\_\_\_ 3 hours\_\_\_\_  
 4 hours\_\_\_\_ 5 hours or less\_\_\_\_

62. At what time(s) of the day do you listen to public (or non-commercial) radio most often?

6:00-10:00 AM\_\_\_\_ 10:00 AM-3:00 PM\_\_\_\_ 3:00-7:00 PM\_\_\_\_  
 7:00-12:00 AM\_\_\_\_ 12:00-6:00 AM\_\_\_\_

63. At what time(s) of the day do you listen to other radio most often?

6:00-10:00 AM\_\_\_\_ 10:00 AM-3:00 PM\_\_\_\_ 3:00-7:00 PM\_\_\_\_  
 7:00-12:00 AM\_\_\_\_ 12:00-6:00 AM\_\_\_\_

64. Where do you listen most frequently to the radio?

Home\_\_\_\_ Work\_\_\_\_ Car\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)

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65. What do you like most about public radio?

Special programming\_\_\_\_ No commercials\_\_\_\_ Quality of news\_\_\_\_  
 Alternative music\_\_\_\_ Informative\_\_\_\_ Public affairs programs\_\_\_\_  
 Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

66. What do you like least about public radio?

Too much non-music programming\_\_\_\_ Movement to all classical music\_\_\_\_  
 "Holier than thou" attitude\_\_\_\_ Lack of professionalism\_\_\_\_  
 Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

67. Age: 18-24\_\_\_\_ 25-34\_\_\_\_ 35-49\_\_\_\_ 50-64\_\_\_\_ 65+\_\_\_\_

68. Sex: Male\_\_\_\_ Female\_\_\_\_

69. Income: \$0-4,999\_\_\_\_ \$5,000-9,999\_\_\_\_ \$10,000-14,999\_\_\_\_

\$15,000-24,999\_\_\_\_ \$25,000+\_\_\_\_

70. Marital status: Married\_\_\_\_ Single\_\_\_\_ Divorced\_\_\_\_

Widow(er)\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_

71. Educational level: What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Some high school\_\_\_\_ High school grad\_\_\_\_ Some college\_\_\_\_

College grad\_\_\_\_ Post grad\_\_\_\_

72. What is your occupation?

73. Where do you live?

Fort Collins\_\_\_\_ Greeley\_\_\_\_ Denver\_\_\_\_ Boulder\_\_\_\_

Other (please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

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PLEASE BE SURE TO RETURN THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED -- NO POSTAGE IS NECESSARY. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION.

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