

A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE CORPORATION
FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING IN REACTION
TO PROPOSED FUNDING CUTS

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Federal funding has been a frequent political issue for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). The corporation has come under the threat of being defunded many times since its inception. Those calls have been renewed with the election of President Donald Trump. The CPB defends its existence by citing an inability of the commercial broadcasting market to produce content for certain demographics such as minorities and children. Public media's opponents believe the opposite is true. This thesis critically examines the discourse of the CPB for appeals to fear that may be exuded as a result of existing in a state of frequent funding threat. A historical background is also established showing how public media in the United States exists as part of a broadcasting system that has been dominated by commercial interests, and how those commercial interests have been responsible for stifling non-profit and educational broadcasting in the country.

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For Sierra. Your food guy misses you.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On January, 19th, 2017, *The Hill*, a political newspaper in Washington D.C. published a story reporting that staff members for then President-elect Donald Trump were looking to include a line in the president's upcoming budget proposal that would privatize the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) (Sefton, 2017a). The CPB is a taxpayer supported funding source for public media organizations in the United States. It was created when the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson as part of his Great Society Campaign ("Public Broadcasting Act", 2010).

Privatizing the CPB would mean that no federal money would be allocated to the corporation, and that stations funded by the CPB would lose a substantial portion of their funding. The last allocation for the CPB was passed in 2016 for \$445 million, and it funds public media organizations through fiscal year 2018 ("CPB's Past Appropriations", 2015). Its current request is for flat funding of \$445 million ("CPB's Federal Appropriation Request", 2015). According to a financial audit of the CPB, the federal appropriation accounted for approximately 95% of the CPB's overall budget in 2016 (Grant Thornton LLP, 2017). If privatization of the CPB were to occur, and its 2018 budget request not be approved, public media organizations would lose their funding starting fiscal year 2018 (Sefton, 2017c; "CPB's Past Appropriations", 2015). *The Hill* article was the first time since the November election that a media organization reported that Trump staff members were toying with the idea of defunding public media.

The initial response from national public media organizations was muted. NPR and PBS did not report on the story through their traditional television and radio broadcast services. Nor did they report on the story on their website or social media pages. The CPB also chose not to put out a statement about *The Hill*'s article. The only response about the article came from *Current*, which published a story about *The Hill* article the same day it was published (Sefton, 2017a). *Current* is operated by American University's School of Communication and it covers news, "for and about public media in the U.S." ("About Current", n.d.). In essence, it is a trade publication for public media.

Despite the muted response to *The Hill*'s article in January, it appears that the CPB and other public media organizations were waiting for a more official budget proposal from the Trump administration before making more concrete statements. While they waited, they planned (Sefton, 2017b). A February 3rd, 2017, story in *Current* mentioned that a board meeting of the Major Market Group had public television leaders "talking at length" about how public media would respond in the event of a proposal to cut the CPB's budget (Sefton, 2017b).¹ The group's Executive Director Deanna Mackey was quoted in the article as saying, "People aren't panicking, but they are preparing [...]" This provides an opportunity for stations to remind audiences that the work public broadcasting does is critical to a lot of people in this country" ("Sefton, 2017b, para. 10-11).

In February, the CPB started pushing statements of public media's value (value statements) on its social media pages well before the official budget proposal was

¹ The Major Market Group is a collaboration between the 38 largest U.S. PBS markets ("Public media backers", 2017).

released. On February 9th, 2017, the CPB posted a story on its Facebook page about how public media helps veterans (Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2017a). On February 28th, 2017, it made another post on Facebook about how public media supports a life of learning (Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2017b). On February 28th, 2017, the CPB posted a testimonial with retired Army General Stanley McChrystal about why he supported public media (Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2017c). All three posts are important because they included value statements about public media that the CPB, NPR, PBS and smaller organizations would state frequently in their discourse following the release of President Trump's budget proposal. The posts show that the CPB had a plan concerning the statements of value it would push to the public.

On March 16th, the Office of Management and Budget released President Trump's budget proposal ("America First", 2017). As *The Hill* had reported, the proposal sought to remove federal funding of the CPB and other federal programs such as the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. After almost three months of waiting, public media organizations finally had confirmation that their figurehead organization and one of their major funding benefactors was under threat of having its funding cut. What followed was a deluge of discourse from national and local public media organizations about the value of public media. The CPB, PBS, NPR and other organizations unleashed a grassroots effort that sought to bring people together to sing the praises of public media.

The CPB released statements on its website and social media pages about how public media serves the American public. Its CEO and President Patricia de Stacy Harrison published statements on its website and testified before Congress about the

benefits of public media (“Statement from CPB”, 2017; “Statement of Patricia de Stacy Harrison”, 2017). PBS, pushed statements of value to its viewers by way of its social media pages. It also pushed people to the value area of its website. The area shared testimonials from viewers about how PBS affects them. It also shared information on how people could become involved in letting their representatives in Congress know they valued public media. PBS created the @ValuePBS Facebook and Twitter pages, a Facebook frame with the words I “heart symbol” PBS, and it created the #ILovePBS hashtag.

NPR took a less visible role in the grassroots effort to support public media, but it was no less active than PBS and the CPB. In collaboration with the America Public Television Stations organization (APTS), NPR created Protect My Public Media (PMPM) (“About Protect My Public”, 2017). According to PMPM’s website,

Protect My Public Media (PMPM) is an action network of Americans who are dedicated to protecting local public television and radio stations and the programming and services they provide. PMPM, in collaboration with local stations and partners, directs audiences to take action to protect the federal investment in public media (“About Protect My Public”, 2017)

None of NPR’s discourse pointed listeners to the PMPM website. Instead, NPR left that responsibility up to member stations who were taking part in the network. Some stations placed an image on their websites that linked to the PMPM website and some just included simple links (“KLCC NPR for Oregonians”, 2017; “PBS: Trusted. Valued”, 2017). The extent to which member stations pushed their viewers and listeners to the

PMPM website is unknown, but it must be assumed that some stations made references to the site during their on-air pledge drives or public service announcements.

Although public media's initial reaction to *The Hill's* article on proposed cuts to the CPB was slow, they were more than ready with a coordinated plan when President Trump's budget plan was finally released. Public media has had a lot of practice defending itself, and the latest round of threats to its funding is nothing new. The threat of funding cuts to the CPB is a scenario that has played out almost since the inception of public media in the United States.

In 1967, President Johnson and the Public Broadcasting Act's supporters naively envisioned a publicly funded broadcasting system that could harmoniously exist (and not compete commercially) among a gigantic ocean of commercial broadcasters (Rowland, 1986; Stavitsky et al., 2001). Starting with the Nixon administration and following with subsequent Republican administrations and congresses, the CPB's funding has come under frequent scrutiny (Mitchell, 2005; Rowland, 1986). While funding has never been completely cut off to the CPB, there have been many cuts to the system over the last 40 years (Mitchell, 2005). It is important to note that while public media has come under frequent scrutiny almost since its inception, the attempts to stifle its ability to exist didn't suddenly appear after the signing of the 1967 act. There has been a long history of holding back the interests of amateur, non-profit, and educational broadcasters through regulatory and monetary means, while at the same time advancing the interests of commercial broadcasters.

This research intends to provide a historical background that will establish how public media in the United States currently exists in a broadcasting system that has been

molded by commercial interests. Those commercial interests have dominated the broadcasting spectrum in the country, and they have fostered an environment that is hostile to any other forms of broadcasting. This historical research will show that telecommunications following the U.S. civil war, the invention and popularity of radio broadcasting, and regulatory decisions prior to the signing of the Broadcasting Act of 1967, have been influenced by the regulatory and monetary interests of big business. It will also be shown that the dominant form of commercial broadcasting in the United States was directly responsible for stifling the existence of non-commercial broadcasters prior to and following the Broadcasting Act of 1967. By looking at the history of broadcasting in the United States, and the influence that commercial interests have upon it, we can gain a better understanding of the forces that are directly responsible for the current calls to defund public media.

Public media broadcasters rely on government funds to operate, and it has been established that public media broadcasters are frequently under the threat of having their government funding taken from them. Given those threats, and the historic commercial broadcasting environment that is and has been directly opposed to their goals, it would be reasonable to assume that public media organizations would develop a state of fear each time their funding is at stake -- their ability to exist is at stake. This research is interested in how that fear may be exuded from public broadcasters during times of threat to their funding.

To gain a better sense of how fear is pushed by public broadcasters, this research will critically analyze discourse published by the CPB for appeals to fear in the time period immediately following the release of the article by *The Hill* and up to the end of

NPR's Coordinated Fundraising Week. It is in that analysis that the following question will be asked:

RQ1: How are fear-based appeals pushed by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's discourse during times of threat to its funding?

Addressing what will constitute a fear appeal in this analysis is not an easy task. According to Bettinghaus and Cody (1994), a fear appeal is a type of vocal or written statement that evokes the emotion of fear in a message in order to get the recipient to act in a certain way. The authors state that an appeal to fear is a type of emotional appeal similar to using humor to influence someone's actions (Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994). Nostalgia and sex are other types of appeals that appeal to a certain emotion to elicit a response from the recipient of a message (Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994).

Because this analysis is interested in finding how the CPB uses fear messages to elicit a response from the people it communicates with, there must be some standard of fear that is set before the analysis can move forward. According to Witte (1992), a common method for gauging an appeal to fear is in the form of strong language. The language will use threatening words to promote the appeal to fear. In another example provided by Witte (1992), words such as "choking" or "secretion" were used to convey the repercussions of smoking cigarettes in some anti-smoking ads. She also mentions that personalized language is often used to place the recipient of the message into a space where the repercussions can be imagined (Witte, 1992). Higbee (1969) says that in an appeal to fear, the consequences of not doing what the message is asking you to do are

conveyed in a detailed and threatening way. Using the criteria laid out above, two fear appeals will be sought in the analysis of the CPB's discourse. A blatant fear appeal and an indirect fear appeal.

A blatant fear appeal may present itself in the discourse by simply stating that something bad would happen. For example, a blatant statement of fear would be "These people (or you) are going to die if they do not consume this program." The statement blatantly evokes a statement of death to cause fear. Another example would be, "Give now, or you'll lose something valuable." Losing something valuable is the blatant appeal to fear. Blatant fear appeals evoke a sense of personalized language and repercussion as laid out by Witte (1992) and Higbee (1969)

An example of an indirect fear appeal would be using language that evokes a sense of foreboding, death, destruction or loss without stating directly that the recipient will lose something. The choice of words that are used insinuate that the recipient will lose something. Indirect fear appeals meet the criteria of strong language as laid out by Witte (1992).

The choice of this research to focus on discourse from the CPB and not other national public media organizations is not an accident. The CPB is a major funding source for public media organizations in the United States, and it is the only organization that directly deals with disseminating the federal appropriation. The CPB also sets the rules and procedures for public media organizations around the country that wish to receive federal dollars. While the CPB, NPR and PBS are relatively independent from each other and are able to make their own choices concerning value appeals, the CPB is the central organization that sets the tone and values used by most public media

organizations around the country in selling the value of public media to the public. This is to keep the message somewhat standardized across the system. The CPB is also the face of public media to Congress. The analysis will take CPB discourse from a variety of sources such as prepared statements published on its website and posts made from its social media accounts. Discourse will be selected for analysis that directly addresses the budget crisis, while discourse not addressing the budget will be left alone.

Through examination of the historical roots of commercial broadcasting's dominance over non-commercial broadcasting in the United States, and by analyzing the CPB's discourse for instances of fear, it is the hope of this research to gain a better understanding of the culture of public media in ways that aren't readily apparent. Revealing such instances of fear may help public broadcasters with future discourse.

CHAPTER II

A BRIEF HISTORY: COMMERCIAL DOMINANCE

Radio was heralded as a technology that could remove barriers to rapid long-distance communication that had been present before its inception (Rowland, 1986). Early adopters of radio in the United States believed that the technology would allow information to reach those living in the remotest places of the country (Rowland, 1986). Those same adopters also believed that the multidirectional structure of the radio spectrum, the ability for those to broadcast and receive messages with relative ease, would allow for the chance of a more democratic form of communication than had previously been possible (Streeter, 1996). No longer was regulation, terrain or cost, a factor in the delivery of information over large distances. All that was required to participate was the ability to purchase the equipment for sending and receiving radio signals.²

The dominant forms of communication at the time, including the telegraph, the mail service, newspaper services and to some extent the telephone, were all hampered by barriers to access and delivery. Those barriers included regulatory, physical (terrain), and monetary restrictions (Rowland, 1986; Schiller, 1982). It was difficult for individuals or organizations without sufficient regulatory or monetary capital to gain entry (Schiller, 1982). As such, large business interests were perfectly suited to the construction and maintenance of pre-radio communications systems (Schiller, 1982). As a result, the regulatory and in-practice landscape of communications prior to the invention of radio was molded by large business interests, creating a decidedly ultra-commercial and anti-

² Power costs, maintenance costs and technical know-how are assumed to be included.

democratic environment (Schiller, 1982). After a brief period of relative freedom for amateurs, tinkerers and educational broadcasters, those ultra-commercial and anti-democratic forces would exert the same regulatory and commercial influence over the radio spectrum that had been exerted over prior communications systems. In doing so, an environment was created within the radio-broadcasting spectrum that favored commercial interests and sought to squelch broadcasters with amateur, non-commercial and educational interests.

The Early Years

In the late 19th century, point-to-point communication systems such as the telegraph and telephone were dominated by corporations such as Western Union and the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (now American Telephone and Telegraph Corporation or AT&T) (McChesney, 1993). Western Union grew tremendously following the civil war in the United States, and AT&T grew by leaps and bounds following its formation in 1885 (Schiller, 1982). The civil war showed a military and commercial need for the ability to rapidly communicate across wide areas (Schiller, 1982). Although this history is primarily concerned with the commercial interests of broadcasting history, it is interesting to note the interconnection that often occurs between military and commercial interests regarding broadcasting practice and policy in the United States. That interconnection will show itself again a bit further down in this history.

If someone wanted to send a message from New York City to Boston, a wire had to be physically erected along a path to both cities. Developing telephone and telegraph services required the leasing, purchasing or acquisition of land across wide areas

(Schiller, 1982). Such a system required not only vast amounts of land along its routes, it also required physical materials such as wiring, the poles that carried the wires, the operations centers along the routes, and the human resources to maintain the system. When imagining such a system on a nationwide scale, one can see the monumental effort that such an undertaking would require. This type of communication system on a local or nationwide scale would have required an enormous amount of regulatory effort to ensure its legality. It would have also required a tremendous amount of monetary and human capital. Those requirements were well suited to large business interests and corporations like Western Union and AT&T (Schiller, 1982). The seemingly inherent ability of large businesses and corporations to create and maintain large infrastructure projects, sowed the seeds for future regulation and practice in the broadcasting industry that also favored big business.

Western Union and AT&T's telegraph and telephone systems developed right alongside the railroad system in the United States (Schiller, 1982). Railroads had similar regulatory and capital requirements (as outlined above) that telegraph and telephone systems had. The railroads had also already gone through the process of acquiring vast swaths of land to the same places that Western Union and AT&T wanted to serve (Schiller, 1982). Schiller (1982) notes that by the time Western Union and AT&T started building their systems, the railroad industry already had a history of influencing government to shape policies that were more favorable to the interests of themselves and other business interests (Schiller, 1982). Western Union and AT&T in the creation of their systems followed many of the same practices as the railroads, and were granted many of the same political and economic benefits (Schiller, 1982). By the time radio was

invented, attempts by Western Union and AT&T to influence government decision making were nothing new (Schiller, 1982). By affecting political decision making concerning the telegraph and telephone, Western Union and AT&T influenced and set the tone of how and when broadcasting would be developed and instituted in this country (Schiller, 1982). Large businesses and corporations would be the focus of future broadcasting policy and regulation.

As was mentioned, when radio was first conceived of and demonstrated, corporations were mainly interested in point-to-point communication technologies, because the telegraph and telephone were already proven to be profitable. Point-to-point technologies were also thought to be more secure than multidirectional broadcasting. Radio as we know it broadcasts in all directions, and that scared a lot of people, including the military, who wanted secure communication channels (Schiller, 1982; Streeter, 1996). Because of the unproven nature of radio, and the reluctance of the military to use the technology, radio broadcasting managed to stay relatively free of corporate and government influence in the years prior to World War I (McChesney, 1993). Broadcasting as a technique was unproven, and corporations were unsure of how to use radio's multidirectional nature (Schiller, 1982; Streeter, 1996). Because of the lack of interest from corporations, and by extension, a relative lack of interest from the government, an atmosphere of ownership and development among amateurs took hold in the early days of radio (Streeter, 1996). Amateurs took the technology, tinkered with it and explored an unfettered, wide-open broadcasting space (Streeter, 1996).

Streeter (1996) notes, "As major industrial technologies go, radio tend[ed] to be relatively small, lightweight, inexpensive, and flexible" (p. 60). The flexibility and cheap

nature of the early radio equipment made it possible for non-corporate educational institutions, scientists, hobbyists and amateurs to play a large role in the development of radio as a technology (Streeter, 1996). He says further,

Unlike steel, railroads, electric power, the telegraph, and the telephone, radio required no massive manufacturing plants or capital-intensive overland constructions. It could be assembled and experimented with by small entrepreneurs and hobbyists working in attics and backyard shacks (Streeter, 1996, p. 60).

The ease of access in terms of cost caused thousands of people with no intention of profit or restriction to use and develop the technology (McChesney, 1993; Razlagova, 2011). It was amateurs and non-profit organizations that developed an interest in the usage of radio as a broadcasting tool for entertainment, news and advertising (McChesney, 1993; Razlagova, 2011). This initial usage of the spectrum created a sense of use and community that existed outside of the commodity structure of the market. Within this group of people, radio was not something that could be bought and sold. It was a place to roam free. The non-commodified public broadcasting space of early radio was something that had previously been impossible within the corporate developed and dominated communication spaces of the time (Streeter, 1996). This free and democratic space, carved out by amateurs, education institutions and non-profits served as the underpinnings in an argument that broadcasting spaces should be used as a place for the enrichment of people and not just as a space to advertise goods and services. It's the base

justification for contemporary educational programming. The same argument has arisen with every major broadcasting technology since.³

The unfettered nature of the radio spectrum wouldn't last long as the militaries of western nations, fueled by imperialist notions of conquest, started to cordon off portions of the spectrum for military use (Berg, 2013). The Berlin treaty of 1906 was the first agreement between nations concerning access to the radio spectrum for military use (Streeter, 1996).⁴ 4 years later, as a result of pressure from the navy and under the guise of safety for naval operators, the Wireless Ship Act of 1910 was passed (Slotten, 2000). The act required that all long-distance sea vessels carry broadcasting equipment (Slotten, 2000). To control the unfettered nature of the spectrum (control how people used radio), the Radio Act of 1912 was passed by Congress (Razlagova, 2011). The act was the first time the U.S. federal government implemented limitations on how the radio spectrum could be accessed, and whom could access it (Slotten, 2000; Streeter, 1996). The act divided up the radio spectrum for naval interests as well as commercial interests (Slotten, 2000; Streeter, 1996). It also required radio operators to obtain licenses to broadcast outside of the shortwave part of the spectrum that was set aside for amateurs (Slotten, 2000; Streeter, 1996). Understandably, amateurs, educational institutions and non-profits were not happy being pushed out a space they were previously free to operate in (Slotten, 2000; Streeter, 1996). The democratic free space of radio broadcasting was over, and the federal government started the trend toward favoring commercial interests in

³ Especially television and the Internet.

⁴ The Berlin treaty of 1906 denotes the location of the signing of the treatise and not its official name. That's why treaty is not capitalized.

broadcasting prior to the medium's explosion in popularity. The trend toward market favoritism has been the norm ever since.

It is important to note that the rise of commercial influence in legislation during this time didn't appear out of nowhere. Although the radio spectrum prior to 1910 was dominated by amateurs and tinkerers, there were also commercial operators looking to advance their own interests. With the passage of the Wireless Ship Act of 1910, and the requirement that long-distance ships carry broadcasting equipment, the federal government ensured that commercial broadcasters who had already been providing broadcasting equipment to ships stood to gain a tremendous amount (Slotten, 2000). One such operator was Guglielmo Marconi, who by the time the 1910 act was passed had been operating broadcasting equipment on ships for quite some time (Slotten, 2000; Streeter, 1996). Marconi envisioned the radio spectrum as something that could be cordoned off, and he supported the navy in its attempt to cordon off the spectrum and require equipment on ships (Slotten, 2000). The marriage between Marconi's business interests and the interests of the federal government are one of the first examples of commercial and governmental influence pushing a communications technology away from its democratic roots.

Another example of the marriage between commercial and governmental interests came as the United States entered World War One. The navy assumed control of the entire radio spectrum, and all non-sanctioned operators were removed from the airwaves (Slotten, 2000; Streeter, 1996). Many amateur operators were enlisted in the military as radio operators (Streeter, 1996; Winn & Brinson, 2005). Corporations were paid large sums to meet the demand for radio equipment, and the military pooled patents on radio

technology, effectively creating a government controlled monopoly (Slotten, 2000; Streeter, 1996). This allowed patents to become unnecessary in the production of broadcast equipment. Following the war, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) was given control of those patents, giving them tremendous power in the broadcasting marketplace (McChesney, 1993; Slotten, 2000). The marriage between commercial and governmental interests were firmly in place prior to radio's boom in the 1920s.

The Boom

The massive growth of radio came as America's economy was booming in the 1920s. America was in the throes of "the roaring twenties" and the political culture of the country at the time was best summed up (intentionally or not) by president Coolidge who said, "the chief business of America is business" (Calvin Coolidge, n.d., para. 8). The radio spectrum in the early 1920s was regulated by the U.S. Department of Commerce (Rowland, 1986; Streeter, 1996). Herbert Hoover, who was Commerce Secretary at the time, along with other leaders, believed that the business market had the possibility to exist in harmony and cooperation with the federal government (McChesney, 1993; Rowland, 1986). Hoover believed that established, well-funded stations were better able to program toward audiences around the country (McChesney, 1993) The popular arguments about public policy at the time were that little needed to be done except make sure that the private market had the tools and protections to exist with relative freedom (McChesney, 1993; Rowland, 1986). Hoover also proclaimed that public service and profit were not in conflict with each other (Mitchell, 2006). That belief in the market's ability to serve the public was carried forward into future legislation concerning radio

broadcasting, and it is the same argument that continues to be used by public media opponents and free-market broadcasting proponents today.

Despite the spectrum access restrictions that were put into place by the Radio Act of 1912, for much of the 1920s radio was still somewhat unregulated at the federal level. There was a lot of signal crossover in larger media markets as a result (Richter, 2006). Stations would often share frequencies with other stations, and unregulated power and equipment requirements would cause multiple stations close to each other on the spectrum to interfere with each other's signals (Richter, 2006). There was also some uncertainty as to the legality of the Department of Commerce's authority to regulate the spectrum. In 1926, a court ruled that the Department of Commerce's authority to regulate broadcast licensing was unconstitutional (McChesney, 1993; Razlagova, 2011). That decision nullified the Commerce Department's authority (McChesney, 1993; Streeter, 1996). Without an enforceable governing body, signal crossover and transmissions from unlicensed broadcasters became problematic – the radio spectrum became a lawless land (McChesney, 1993; Razlagova, 2011). Under what Rowland (1986) calls, “the economic and political threat of continued spectrum crowding and signal chaos (pg. 253)” the Radio Act of 1927 was passed – creating the short-lived Federal Radio Commission (FRC).

The creation of the FRC solidified the federal government's ability to regulate the radio spectrum by removing authority from the Department of Commerce and placing it under the FRC (McChesney, 1993; Razlagova, 2011). The passage of the 1927 act also solidified Hoover's idea of broadcasting as a “public interest” (Richter, 2006; Rowland, 1986). Except instead of regarding “public interest” as what was best for demographics of

people, the interest of the public was what was in the interest of the nation and more importantly, the economy (McChesney, 1993). With the market crash of 1929 and the start of the Great Depression still two years away, the economic boom of the 1920s was still in the minds of broadcasting decision makers. Why fix what wasn't broken? As such, the overall health of radio as a business and its ability to do business was what was considered in the "public interest" (Richter, 2006). Rowland (1986) further notes that, "Indeed, in the optimistic, speculative, commercial euphoria of the 1920s, there was considerable sentiment that broadcasting licenses were best held by private business interests (pg. 253)."

Non-profit and education-based radio stations weren't non-existent during the 1920s, they comprised almost 30 percent of the licensed radio stations at the time (Streeter, 1996). Universities, labor unions and religious affiliated stations comprised the majority of non-profit stations (Mitchell, 2005) However, corporate networks were favored by the FRC due to their size and the belief that large stations and networks were better able to serve the public interest (McChesney, 1993). In a decision that greatly affected non-profit radio stations, the FRC granted 38 Class I-A licenses or "clear channels" to corporate owned stations and only 2 to non-profit stations (McChesney, 1993; Streeter, 1996).⁵ Clear channels are portions of the spectrum that are high-powered and clear of signal interference for long distances ("AM Station Classes", n.d.). The inability for non-profit stations to broadcast on clear channels hampered their growth, because it meant that their broadcasts would have to remain localized to small areas. Their audiences would remain small, resulting in smaller amounts of revenue

⁵ The I-A license designation changed in 1981 to the Class A license.

(McChesney, 1993; Streeter, 1996). In larger markets, non-profit stations were also forced to share frequencies with commercial stations (McChesney, 1993). This caused confusion among listeners as to what was being broadcast and by whom. Combined with technical requirements instituted by the FRC that were meant to curb signal interference, non-profit stations with small budgets and staffing levels started leaving the airwaves in droves (McChesney, 1993; Streeter, 1996). Mitchell (2006) notes that, “Only 10 percent of the original 200 non-commercial broadcasters survived the 1930s (pg. 17).”

With the crash of the stock market in 1929 setting off almost a decade of economic depression in the United States, commercial radio was one of the few areas of the economy that continued to see growth. That growth continued all the way to the start of World War II (Rowland, 1986). Commercial entertainment and news proved to be wildly popular and the broad reach of radio into rural places enticed and scared both educators and politicians (Rowland, 1986). McChesney (1993) notes that in 1929, CBS saw an increase in its advertising revenue in that was almost 6 times what it was in 1928.

The Communications Act of 1934 disbanded the FRC and formed the Federal Communications Commission -- the FCC -- as corporate telephone systems and telephone interests became more integrated around the country (Richter, 2006). The FCC was tasked as a regulatory agency that oversaw national communications as a whole instead of just radio (Richter, 2006). It’s a function the FCC still holds today (“What We Do”, 2010). Despite the tremendous gains commercial broadcasting was seeing as a result of advertising, non-profit radio was faltering. There was considerable debate in Congress before the act was passed about the role of non-profit and education radio in the country.

McChesney (1993) writes,

The number of broadcasting stations affiliated with colleges and universities declined from ninety-five in 1927 to less than half that figure in 1930. The number of overall non-profit broadcasters would decline from over 200 in 1927 to some sixty-five in 1934, almost all of which were marginal in terms of power and impact. By 1934 non-profit broadcasting accounted for only 2 percent of total U.S. broadcast time. For most Americans, it [non-commercial broadcasting] effectively did not exist (p. 31).

There was an attempt during discussion of the Communications Act of 1934 to set aside 25 percent of the AM radio spectrum for non-profit and educational use, but many in Congress (despite the economic crisis at the time) felt that non-commercial radio was a special interest group and that the market was more than able to fulfill the public service needs of the community (Rowland, 1986; Blakely, 1979). There continued to be widespread belief among decision makers that commercial networks and large stations would be able to provide non-profit services and community service based organizations with “adequate” airtime (McChesney, 1993).

In 1938, as a result of public support for Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal programs and the effectiveness of his paternalistic Fireside Chats, the National Association for Educational Broadcasters (NAEB) convinced the FCC to allocate some of the higher frequency portions of the AM spectrum toward non-profit and educational radio (Richter, 2006; Stavitsky et al., 2001). In 1941, the FCC allocated almost 20 percent of what was the new and then hardly used FM side of the spectrum (Rowland, 1986; Richter, 2006). The higher frequency portion of the AM band and the FM band had

few broadcasters, because very few people could listen (Richter, 2006; Rowland, 1986). Radio receivers had been relatively cheap and affordable for most Americans since the 1920s, but those receivers were unable to receive upper frequency AM and FM signals (Lessing, 1969; Rowland, 1986; Stavitsky et al., 2001). Receivers that were tunable to the FM band were still expensive to produce and purchase, and the FCC had no mandate that corporate producers of receivers include dual AM and FM reception functionality (Lessing, 1969; Rowland, 1986).

Although some considered the FM allocation to be a bit of a curse due to the lack of listeners and receiver requirements, others considered the allocation to be a blessing in disguise (Richter, 2006; Rowland, 1986). According to Richter (2006), having a place on the FM band gave non-profit and educational broadcasters a place of their own to broadcast and that place was mostly free of competition in the form of content from commercial broadcasters. For the time being, commercial broadcasters who had both AM and FM licenses chose to broadcast the same content on both channels instead of creating separate content (Richter, 2006).

Stavitsky et al. (2001) notes that the radio industry as whole basically stalled during World War Two and very little growth happened immediately afterward. Despite slow gains, non-commercial broadcasting still had a hard time keeping up with the commercial juggernaut. “By 1947 the FCC had granted 918 licenses to commercial FM stations, but only 38 non-commercial educational licenses” (Stavitsky et al., 2001 pg. 343).

In 1948, the FCC agreed to issue the Class D license (Richter, 2006; “1998 Biennial Regulatory Review”, 1998 pg. 28). The purpose of the new class of license was

to, “[create] a low power NCE [Non-Commercial Educational] FM Class D service [...] as an inexpensive means of encouraging the FM broadcasting service” (“1998 Biennial Regulatory Review”, 1998 pg. 28). Class D licenses changed the requirements for power output from 100 to 1000 watts to 10 watts or less (Richter, 2006; Stavitsky et al., 2001).⁶ Non-commercial stations were fewer in number prior to the issuance of Class D licenses, because of prohibitive startup and operating costs, as well as FCC mandated technical requirements for stations (Richter, 2006, Stavitsky et al, 2001, Streeter, 1996). Lower power requirements gave relatively cash-strapped organizations like school districts and small colleges the ability to start their own radio stations (Stavitsky et al. 2001).

The Class D licenses worked. Stavitsky et al. (2001) notes that, the number of educational FM stations on the air increased from 22 in 1948 to 106 in 1953, about 40 percent of which were licensed as low-power operations. In some cases the Class D service provided ‘a small community its first and only taste of a genuinely local radio station.’ [M]any of the Class D licensees eventually upgraded to full-power operation, as the FCC had hoped...” (Stavitsky et al., 2001, p. 343).

The class D licenses didn’t last however. Under pressure from commercial interests and surprisingly, higher-powered public broadcasters, the FCC discontinued class D licenses in 1978 (“Radio History Documents”, n.d.; Richter, 2006). The commission determined that Class D license holders were not using that part of the radio spectrum with much efficiency (“1998 Biennial Regulatory Review”, 1998). Once again,

⁶ The idea being that less power costs less money to maintain.

there was a decline in low-power broadcasters servicing their communities as a result (Richter, 2006).

Public Media as We Know It

The increasing popularity of television in the 1950s, caused a lot of broadcasting focus (both regulatory and economic) to be on that medium instead of radio (Richter, 2006). In 1962, Congress passed the Education Television Facilities Act. Many people saw television as the future of broadcasting and wanted educational and non-profit television to have an equal shot at success among stations in the commercial market (Richter, 2006). The act secured funds for educational broadcasters to set up and maintain their television broadcasting equipment and studios. During this time, many educational and non-profit radio stations continued to be funded by philanthropic single donations or institutions, and as such, had a much harder time seeing the same kind of growth that television was seeing (Mitchell, 2005; Richter, 2006).

As part of his Great Society campaign, Lyndon B. Johnson supported a broadcast system that programmed to audiences that were thought to be underserved by the commercial market (“President Johnson's Remarks”, 1967). The audiences generally thought to be underserved were children and minority groups such as African Americans and Latinos. The goal of the Great Society campaign was the elimination of poverty, and on the heels of The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the elimination of injustices based on race (“LBJ Launches the Great Society”, n.d.). Initially, television was the broadcast system that was envisioned for this part of the Great Society (Rowland, 1986). When the Public Television Broadcasting Act was up for debate in congress, the NAEB lobbied that radio could be equally important to a public broadcasting system (Richter, 2006). The NAEB

was also concerned that a public system of funding for television could further marginalize funding sources for educational and non-profit radio broadcasters (Richter, 2006; Rowland, 1986). Its efforts paid off, and radio was included in the legislation. The Public Television Act of 1967 became The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. It was passed by Congress on September, 21st 1967 and was signed into law by President Johnson on November 7th, 1967 (“Public Broadcasting Act”, 2010). Upon signing, President Johnson in a very quotable moment said, “It announces to the world that our nation wants more than just material wealth; our nation wants more than a "chicken in every pot." We in America have an appetite for excellence, too (“President Johnson's Remarks”, 1967, para. 7).”

The freshly signed act created the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and eventually helped in the creation of National Public Radio (NPR) and the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) (“Public Broadcasting Act”, 2010). The CPB was tasked with providing federal funds to non-commercial television and radio stations and to assemble a network of non-commercial and education radio stations. It was the first time that federal dollars were earmarked for non-commercial education broadcasting in the United States (Mitchell, 2005). It was also the first time the term “public” had been used for non-commercial education broadcasting in the United States (Mitchell, 2005). The creation of the CPB was also meant to alleviate concern for those who feared a non-commercial system would impinge upon the dominant commercial system of broadcasting in the United States (Rowland, 1986). By guaranteeing the public system’s financial needs would be met through CPB funding, the idea was that there would be no perceived governmental favoritism or subsidy in the overall broadcasting market (“Public

Broadcasting Act”, 2010). In a similar light, NPR and PBS were envisioned as independent (from the CPB and each other) with the former providing content to radio stations and the latter eventually providing content to television stations (“Public Broadcasting Act”, 2010). As with the CPB, the independent structures of NPR and PBS were designed to appear that the government was not favoring the public system over the advertising driven commercial system (“Public Broadcasting Act”, 2010). As such, the ability of public media organizations to bring in financial resources through traditional commercial means of advertising was severely restricted. Initially, public media organizations could mention business names in their underwriting, but mention of products, overall business status, business locations and open and closing times were not allowed (Richter, 2006; Waldman, 2011).

Almost from the start however, funding and the perceived independence of stations from the CPB proved to be a contentious issue (Richter, 2006). Much like the early days of broadcasting regulation in the United States, the CPB instituted criteria on how stations would and would not receive funding. Stations would have to fulfill certain requirements before the CPB would fund them. The requirements ranged from the type and amount of programming a station aired, the size of the market the station served and how many employees a station had (Richter, 2006; Stavitsky et al., 2001). Also under consideration was the reach of the station into the market it served. Stations that held Class D licenses were heavily impacted by the CPB’s rules, because class D licensed stations did not have the power to boost their signal to a range that the CPB felt was satisfactory (Richter, 2006; Stavitsky et al., 2001). As a result, class D license holders either continued broadcasting without CPB support or simply stopped broadcasting. The

similarities between early FRC requirements for broadcast stations and rules set by the CPB are hard to miss.

Further expounding the lack of independence that stations encountered due to adhering to the CPB's funding requirements was that when the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 was passed, there was no long-term funding structure in place (Rowland, 1986). Each year the CPB had to get approval from Congress for its annual appropriation, and as a result, the normal political processes that would come with any distribution of money from the government were inflicted upon the CPB and by extension those stations who depended up on the CPB for funding (Rowland, 1986; Richter, 2006). Rowland (1986) further states that the independent ideal envisioned for public broadcasting's funding went out the door and caused the CPB, "to behave and be treated in the policy view as any government agency" (pg. 259).

The insecurity of federal funds for public broadcasting came to light for the first time after the passage of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 when in 1972 the Nixon administration vetoed funding to the CPB and made it harder for public stations to receive new licenses from the FCC (Mitchell, 2005; Rowland, 1986; "Nixon Administration Public", 1979). Mitchell (2005) notes that there wasn't so much an ideological difference between the Nixon administration and public broadcasting as there was a general dislike for the media as a whole. Nixon believed that the media slanted toward a liberal end of the political spectrum (Nixon was a conservative) and that his dislike for public media rested on the critical viewpoint taken from PBS coverage of the Vietnam War (Mitchell, 2005; Rowland, 1986). Mitchell (2005) further explains that

Nixon believed the funding of public broadcasting to be a waste of money given that the audiences weren't watching or listening in any substantial way yet.

Clay T. Whitehead, who was the director of the White House Office of Telecommunications Policy summarized the Nixon administration's thoughts on public broadcasting to presidential aide and Nixon friend Peter Flanigan by saying,

[there needs to be a] strong statement from you to our friends on the [CPB] Board that, until CPB has demonstrated a more responsible attitude toward funding of controversial programming [Vietnam War coverage] and toward highly centralized networking operations, the Administration will be unwilling to support long-range funding or significant increases in CPB funds (“Nixon Administration Public”, 1979, para. 3)

With a brand new sense of doubt about the stability of federal funding, public broadcasters looked for ways to secure their funding sources from the influence of politics. Fortunately for them, 1974 saw the resignation of Richard Nixon and many in Congress believed President Nixon had overstepped his bounds regarding broadcasting regulation (Mitchell, 2005; Rowland, 1986). Public broadcasters, the CPB, the Ford administration and congress worked together to pass the Public Broadcasting Financing Act of 1975 (“Public Broadcasting Financing”, n.d.). The act removed the annual renewal of federal funds for public broadcasting and changed it to a two-year system that allocated time and money in advance (“Public Broadcasting Financing”, n.d.). If the CPB were to have its funding reduced by 10% as you're reading this, a public station would have two years of current funding until the 10% reduction took place.

As a result of the Public Broadcasting Financing Act of 1975 and a relatively quiet political landscape, Public broadcasting saw growth up until the beginning of 1980 (Richter, 2006). Rowland (1986) notes that,

With some certainty about their budgets for the forthcoming 2 to 3 years, local, regional, and national programmers were able to plan ahead sufficiently to begin undertaking more productions of generally higher quality and wider range. After all the uncertainties of the preceding period, the trend in the public broadcasting spirit of the mid-to-late 1970s was one of optimism and expansion (pg. 260).

Public broadcasting, despite relatively fruitful years from 1975 to 1980, came into the funding crosshairs again during the Reagan administration. Mitchell (2005) says that unlike Richard Nixon's dislike for the media in general, Ronald Reagan's disapproval of public media came from purely ideological reasons. Ronald Reagan found that funding public broadcasting in the United States was against his firmly-held belief that the market was better able to provide the same services (Mitchell, 2005; Richter, 2006; Rowland, 1986). Public broadcasting was seen as a waste of taxpayer money, and part of a system that stifled economic growth and contributed to a large government (Mitchell, 2005; Rowland, 1986). The Reagan administration also believed that public broadcasting was philosophically dangerous and counter to sacrosanct U.S. economic and spiritual values (Mitchell, 2005; Rowland, 1986). In 1981, Reagan proposed \$37 million in cuts to the CPB's funding ("Reagan Asks \$37 Million", 1981). In 1983, he got his wish, slashing 20% of the CPB's overall budget (Mitchell, 2005).

The same scenario as the Reagan administration cuts almost played out in 1994 when Georgia representative Newt Gingrich (R-GE) was incoming as Speaker of the

House of Representatives. Using the 1994 midterm election as a sounding board for what he said were his constituency's desires, Gingrich reignited the Reagan-era call to eliminate "wasteful spending" in the federal government (Witt, 1994; Chuh, 1995). The CPB's funding was once again cited as an example of the type of funding that was viewed as wasteful (Mitchell, 2005).

'One of the things we're going to do this year, I hope, is to zero out the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which has been eating taxpayers' money,' Mr. Gingrich said on Dec. 6 on the conservative cable channel [National Empowerment Television]. He also said that the nearly \$300 million the corporation gets in Federal money amounted to having the public pay taxes "involuntarily" for what he called biased television (Witt, 1994, para. 3).

Newt Gingrich's belief that public media is biased is a throwback to language used during the Nixon administration. President Nixon believed that public media's coverage of the Vietnam War was slanted in a way that made his administration look unfavorable ("Nixon Administration Public", 1979) The so called liberal bias in public media is a rhetorical point that's been used by public media opponents many times since. Newt Gingrich's threats never went beyond political posturing and media debates, but it wasn't long before the calls to defund the CPB on the grounds of wasteful government spending and liberal bias were renewed (Mitchell, 2005).

On June 10th, 2005, the U.S. House Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services Subcommittee voted to completely defund the CPB (Fahri, 2005). The move came as a surprise to public broadcasters, because there was no call from the White House to cut funding to public media (Lebaton, 2005). Even more surprising was that the

call to defund the CPB came from CPB Chairman Kenneth Tomlinson (Fahri, 2005; Lebaton, 2005). The reasoning behind the proposed cuts was the same as the 1994 proposed cuts. To some Republican lawmakers there appeared to be a liberal bias in public media, and those lawmakers felt that the government shouldn't help pay for that content (Fahri, 2005; Lebaton, 2005). Like cuts proposed in 1994 by Newt Gingrich, the 2005 proposed cuts didn't go anywhere. The U.S. House of Representatives voted to reinstate funding to the CPB (Murray & Fahri, 2005). 5 years later, the ouster of NPR analyst Juan Williams and the threat of a looming government shutdown would reignite calls that public media is a waste of taxpayer money and holds a liberal bias.

In February, 2010, as an attempt to assess federal spending, President Barack Obama signed Executive Order 13531 forming the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform (NCFRR) ("Executive Order 13531", 2010). The commission was tasked with "identifying policies to improve the fiscal situation [in the United States] in the medium term and to achieve fiscal sustainability over the long run" ("Executive Order 13531", 2010). The commission was also asked to recommend ideas that would, "improve the long-run fiscal outlook, including changes to address the growth of entitlement spending and the gap between the projected revenues and expenditures of the Federal Government" ("Executive Order 13531", 2010).

One of the proposed recommendations by the NCFRR was the elimination of federal funding to the CPB (Eggerton, 2010; "Bipartisan Debt Commission Gives", 2010). In a statement regarding the commission's recommendations, Congressman Doug Lamborn (R-CO-05) said,

I am encouraged to see the co-chairs agree that NPR can stand on its own. In a world of 500-channel cable TV and cell phone internet access, government-funded broadcasting is completely unnecessary. The government has no business being a broadcaster, especially when there is a thriving private market (“Bipartisan Debt Commission Gives”, 2010, para. 3).

Lamborn introduced H.R. 5538 to the U.S House of Representatives in June of 2010. The resolution was intended to act on the commission’s recommendations and eliminate federal funding for the CPB, but like the 1994 and 2005 proposals, it didn’t go anywhere. The resolution was introduced and then basically forgotten about. Although nothing came of H.R. 5538, the idea of defunding the CPB continued onto the 2012 presidential race with Mitt Romney echoing the call of Rep. Lamborn. Romney said he would support defunding the CPB and PBS (no mention of NPR), and that federal funding would end, even though he loved the Sesame Street character Big Bird (Lee, 2012).

This chapter has shown that broadcasting in the United States has been manipulated by commercial forces since its earliest days. Prior to the invention of radio, point-to-point communication systems such as the telegraph and telephone were dominated by corporate interests. It comes as no surprise that those same commercial forces would be instrumental in the development of broadcasting regulation and practice as we know them today. Commercial influence can be seen all throughout the history of broadcasting in the United States. We can see that manipulation in the displacement of groups of people who developed the medium as amateurs, in the politicians who viewed commercial broadcasting interests as superior, in regulations that were passed to

encourage commercial inclusion and with non-commercial broadcasters whose existence has always been on the precipice of life and death.

Given that broadcasting has always been influenced by commercial interests in the United States, it's no wonder that public media has had a tumultuous existence since President Johnson signed the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967. It's an existence that has had many twists and turns. From Richard Nixon's dislike of all liberal media, to Ronald Reagan's belief that a publicly funded media system was unamerican, and all the other fights since then, the history of public media highlights an ongoing fight in the United States over a broadcasting system that is dominated by commercial interests and the ideals of a free market. One has to sense a bit of irony in the current conservative belief that a broadcasting market free of government interference can best serve the interests of the people. It is in essence the same stance that Herbert Hoover advocated for in the inaugural years of radio broadcasting. Whereas Hoover sought to help commercial broadcasters accomplish their end goals via government regulation, Reagan and his successors sought the same goals by the removal of those regulations. The end goal was always the same – the advancement of commercial interests in broadcasting. From the historical perspective that this research has highlighted, it would be of no surprise to find that public media exudes fear when threats to funding come to the surface.

CHAPTER III

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting

This analysis critically analyzes discourse from the CPB from January 18th, 2017 to April 7th, 2017. The purpose of this analysis is to look for fear-based appeals in the CPB's discourse. As was noted in the introductory chapter, two different forms of fear appeals will be sought in this analysis. The first is a blatant appeal to fear that may present itself by stating that something bad would happen should the recipient of the message do something, or should something happen to the recipient of the message. For example, a blatant statement of fear would be "People may drown should flood information not go out to people." The statement blatantly evokes a scene of death to cause fear. The second is an indirect fear appeal. Indirect fear appeals use language that evokes a sense of violence, destruction or loss without stating directly that the recipient will lose something. Singular uses of words are used to form an indirect fear appeal and insinuate that the recipient will suffer or lose something.

The choice to examine discourse from the CPB during this time period is strategic. The CPB was created as part of the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 and is responsible for disseminating money that is appropriated from Congress for the purpose of funding public media organizations. The CPB is also the face and unified voice of public media to Congress. The CPB does not produce content, but it does encourage the production of different types of content through grant funding.

The CPB acts on behalf of smaller public media organizations across the United States. Whether those actions are the dissemination of information and money, the development of standards and practices or the production of content, its existence is based on providing services to the more than 1,500 public media stations across the United States. One of the functions of the CPB is provide reaction points and information to stations that are concerned with letting their viewers or listeners know how a threat to funding affects their stations (and how people can help). Analyzing discourse from a national level about threats to funding gives a sense of what is being distributed to smaller public media organizations. The role of the CPB becomes more important during times of threat to funding, because as we'll see in our analysis, there is a belief that larger urban public organizations have the staff to provide reaction points and information about funding cuts to their listeners and viewers. It is believed that smaller organizations do not. Even larger organizations find the talking points useful to have a unified voice across the country.

On January, 19th, 2017, *The Hill*, a political newspaper in Washington D.C. published a story that staff members for newly election president Donald Trump were looking to include a proposal in the president's upcoming (at the time) budget proposal that would privatize the CPB (Sefton, 2017a). Privatizing the CPB means that no federal money would be allocated to the corporation, and that stations funded by the CPB would lose a substantial portion of their funding. *The Hill's* article was the first by a major media organization that watches politics to mention that work was being done by the Trump administration to cut funding to the CPB. If any information concerning the

proposed budget cuts to the CPB were to be disseminated by the CPB, it would have started after January, 19th.

The ending date for the examination of discourse in this research was April 7th, 2017. From April 1st, 2017 to April 7th, 2017, NPR conducted what is called a Coordinated Fundraising Week, and the end of that week is a natural concluding point to this study. Coordinated Fundraising Weeks happen three times a year during the fall, winter and spring and are used to help member stations in their fundraising efforts.⁷ The 7-day coordinated weeks are pre-determined weeks where NPR recommends that member stations hold their fundraisers. During the coordinated weeks, NPR pushes stories and information that touts the value of public media toward the listening audience. It also structures its major news programs All Things Considered and Morning Edition in a way that is friendly toward stations that want to jump in and out of the programs for fundraising breaks.

The period leading up to and during fundraising drives is important, because it's when stations promote the value of public media as hard as they can to their listening audience in trying to convince that audience to give. It's also when national public media organizations, like the CPB, are trying to help those stations achieve their goals by touting the values of public media on the national level. Although the ending date for NPR's coordinated week is being used as the stopping point for this study, PBS isn't being factored out. Many PBS stations held their fundraisers in March, and were concluded by the end of NPR's coordinated week.

⁷ Fall and Winter Coordinated Weeks for 2017 are September 9th through the 15th and December 9th through the 15th.

It's important to note that public radio stations are by no means required to follow NPR's suggestion on when to hold their fundraisers. Many do not. Some stations held their fundraisers earlier than April 1st, and others held theirs after April 7th. While there is a possibility that discourse from the CPB may have been distributed after April 7th, it is believed that value appeals and fear appeals used in the discourse after that date would have changed very little. Stations that held their fundraisers after April 7th would have changed their messages very little. Because most PBS stations concluded their fundraisers in March and NPR as a national entity concluded its efforts on April 7th, that date seemed like a natural ending point to this study.

Corporation for Public Broadcasting Discourse

The discourse that were examined from the CPB consisted mostly of content from its website and social media pages. News releases from the CPB's Press Room page on its website were also examined.⁸ The CPB's main social media pages were also examined. Those pages include Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Public testimony by the CPB's President and Chief Executive Officer Patricia de Stacy Harrison to the House Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services Subcommittee was examined as well.⁹ That testimony will constitute the majority of this analysis. There are also a few instances of statements and editorials that were made by Ms. Harrison on behalf of the CPB that were published other organizations. They are included because they contain comments from Ms. Harrison about federal funding of public media and are considered a form of discourse pushed by the CPB.

⁸ <http://www.cpb.org/pressroom>

⁹ There is some confusion over Ms. Harrison's name. It is unclear why some of the discourse cites her name as Patricia Harrison and other discourse uses Patricia de Stacy Harrison. In some instances, both are used in the same discourse. This research uses the neutral moniker Ms. Harrison.

There are two reasons for choosing discourse available via the CPB's social media pages and web site. First, the majority of information being passed on to listeners and viewers of public media is delivered by social media or the web. As a national organization serving the interests of more localized stations, the CPB is trying to reach a national audience. Social media and the web are able to disseminate large amounts of information with relative ease. Second, the CPB is not a licensee of public radio or television stations, and does not produce content for broadcast.

We Lose If Trump Kills

On March, 16th, 2017, Ms. Harrison wrote a public opinion piece in *The Hill* titled "If President Trump kills public broadcasting, America loses" (Harrison, 2017). The op-ed was also pushed on the CPB's Twitter and Facebook accounts the same day (Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2017d; Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2017e). In the piece, Ms. Harrison is making a case for why public media in the United States is for everyone, and how everyone will be affected negatively should funding to the CPB disappear. Ms. Harrison invokes points about the value of public broadcasting that will come up frequently in our analysis. Those value points include children's education, quality of programming, unity as a country, community togetherness, American values, non-commercialism, public safety, and veterans. Although fear appeals are not heavily pushed in the piece, appeals to fear are not completely absent. As we'll see, the values above are linked together as to why public media is important, and why so many people would be affected negatively should Trump decide to "kill" public broadcasting.

A fear appeal is presented right at the start of the piece in the way of the title, “If President Trump kills public broadcasting, America loses.” President Trump is looking to kill public broadcasting with his budget proposal. Ms. Harrison is saying, if he succeeds at killing public broadcasting, America will lose. By saying that someone is killing something and thus invoking the idea of death or loss, that is a very strong way in which to influence how people might view the seriousness of the situation. It’s not entirely clear through the title what America will lose, but those losses are clarified through the rest of the piece.

What follows the title is a photograph that is credited to Vegas PBS, a Las Vegas based PBS affiliate. In the photograph, two young girls are seated at a table, holding a computer tablet that has either a game or a cartoon visible on the screen. It’s assumed that the content is PBS LearningMedia content. The girls are smiling toward the camera. There are two other girls in the background who are also holding a tablet. The setting appears to be a school, because more tables or desks are seen in the background and there’s just a hint of a cork board visible in the image. All the girls in the photograph appear to be of Latino descent.

What can be read from this photograph is that education for minority children using technology and public media content is attainable. The girls in the image are the visual embodiment of the current mission of the CPB to serve underserved audiences, particularly minorities and children. The girls are enjoying themselves, and thus enjoying being educated by public media. Education is a huge portion of the CPB’s value appeal, and the inclusion of the children in the photograph is Ms. Harrison’s way of visually telling us who will be killed (or lost) if the CPB should be defunded. While an appeal to fear is

not explicit in Ms. Harrison’s words, the fear of death or loss to children and their education is strongly implied.

In the piece, Ms. Harrison says,

Families across the country, in small rural towns and big cities alike, turn to public media for our high-quality children’s content, to provide a safe place where children can learn [...] Through ‘PBS LearningMedia,’ we provide millions of parents and teachers across the country a free online service that optimizes our high-quality content for use in the classroom or home (Harrison, 2017, para. 2 – 9)

The quote is clear in its statement that if public media is “killed”, those smiling Latino girls and others will no longer have access to PBS LearningMedia. They will lose their high-quality content, they will lose their “safe” place to learn, and they will be forced to pay for content in the commercial broadcasting marketplace that PBS and the CPB view as inferior. That is, if they can pay at all. Ms. Harrison notes that economic factors might prevent those girls or others from being able to access entertainment, news and safety information should the CPB be defunded. Affordability is a big part of Ms. Harrison’s argument. Later in the piece Ms. Harrison writes,

We serve the heartland, from coal miners’ kids in West Virginia who have access to educational programming 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to seniors who rely on our content throughout the day for news and public affairs, health and safety information (Harrison, 2017, para. 8).

The quote makes a reference to the children of coal miners. The statement is a direct rebuttal to a statement made by Office of Management and Budget director Mick Mulvaney who in defending the idea to defund the CPB said,

When you start looking at the places that will reduce spending, one of the questions we asked was 'Can we really continue to ask a coal miner in West Virginia or a single mom in Detroit to pay for these programs?' And the answer was no (Kessler, 2017, para. 1).

In this piece Patricia Harrison is directly stating to Mr. Mulvaney and his supporters that people's in rural areas, coal miners and their children are also consumers of public media and they would have a lot to lose should public media be defunded. We saw in earlier how she invoked children's education, "in small rural towns and big cities alike" (Harrison, 2017, para. 2) Coal miners and their children's education are referenced again later in the piece when she writes,

Frankie and Patricia are in their late sixties and live in an isolated area near Cookeville, [Tennessee], in Overton County. Their father was a coal miner, and when he died, there was little money to sustain the two sisters [...] the only television they receive is over-the-air through WCTE [a PBS affiliate in Cookeville]. Public media is their link to the world, where they get safety information as well as stories that celebrate the region, something that gives them great pride. Frankie and Patricia are proud people who have worked hard all of their lives, but they are barely able to make ends meet. While they can't afford a cable bill, they also will tell you that they can't afford to do without WCTE home (Harrison, 2017, para. 11 -14)

What's interesting to point out in both Ms. Harrison's story about the sisters and Mr. Mulvaney's original statement, is their belief that rural peoples are struggling, poor and vulnerable. This isn't to say that rural peoples across the U.S. aren't struggling, but there is a bit of coddling going on and a belief on their part on how rural people's lives "should be". If people should be living their lives one way, but are struggling, it means they're living their lives in a way that is viewed as backward or unacceptable. Both statements are an affirmation that rural peoples fill the role of the "other" in the United States. Radio and television as a technology was thought of as a way to bring rural peoples into modern life. Modern urban life being the standard that everyone should strive for. Non-profit educational broadcasting was a way to bring those people into the fold. It is the basis of the CPB's mandate to serve underserved audiences. With Mr. Mulvaney's statement, we see an othering of rural peoples as unable to afford modernity, unable to compete with those in "richer" areas of the country. Ms. Harrison, in her rebuttal, is saying the same thing. The only difference between the two is their methods of improving the "other".

The op-ed's pairing of children with seniors is an interesting choice and probably not accidental. Both age groups are viewed by the CPB and public broadcasters as being underserved by the commercial market. Children were a selling point in the signing of the Broadcasting Act of 1967 and have long been viewed as a vulnerable demographic in the U.S. Seniors, while not outwardly considered in the same vein as children in the selling points of public media, can be viewed as just as underserved by the commercial media market. Most seniors are believed to be isolated from the rest of society, and due to cost restrictions or mobility issues are thought to have difficulty in receiving programming

and information that is useful to them as citizens. While that isolation is not explicitly stated in the op-ed, it is implied through Ms. Harrison's selling of public media as being important in the dissemination of public safety information.

“And we also serve as a lifeline for public safety and emergency alert communications linking communities to lifesaving information.”

Much like its othering of rural citizens, Ms. Harrison's op-ed others seniors and children by painting them in the same light – as vulnerable and disconnected. Her viewpoint isn't necessarily wrong. Seniors and children more than likely do need special attention. However, it is easy to place both children and seniors inside a metaphorical box full of stereotypes about their mobility and intelligence. Those stereotypes may make sense when viewed by people from the outside, but a box is still a box. Especially a box that has walls that are hard to break free from. Not only do boxes keep things in, in this case things are services, thoughts and ideas – they also keep things out. What is concerning about focusing more attention on groups that appear needy is that most of the attention stays on those groups. If those groups receive most of the attention, other groups might not. In the world of public media, where resources are finite, focusing on the most needy makes sense. It'd be hard to justify that a 30-something person might need the services and information just as much as a child or senior. In that case, we're dealing with the idea of appealing to a bigger audience, and placing a greater value of one people versus another. In a system where everyone contributes through their tax dollars, othering one group over another is an interesting choice.

At the end of the piece, Ms. Harrison goes for a full-on fear appeal.

I hope that day never comes [That PBS affiliate WCTE will not be there for its viewers]. The elimination of federal funding would ensure that this great American public private service delivering measurable benefits to all citizens would go dark [...] And that would be a bad day for not only Frankie and Patricia [the two sisters mentioned in the piece], and Overton County, [Tennessee] but for all of America (Harrison, 2017, para. 15-16).

The takeaway that Ms. Harrison is trying to convey in this piece is that public media fills gaps in broadcasting that commercial media leaves open. To her, the CPB is fulfilling its mandate to serve underserved audiences. Should funding for the CPB stop, those people would have difficulty or stop receiving vital education and information programming. The appeal to fear is clear. Should federal funding be eliminated, Ms. Harrison is evoking fear that “a great American service” would go dark, die, or be killed. Even worse, those services would go dark for underserved audiences. While there is some mention of urban audiences, her justification primarily lies with audiences that are rural, senior and young. The othering of the people who are underserved by public media was an unexpected finding.

Congressional Testimony

On March 28th, 2017, roughly 12 days after President Trump released his proposed budget plan, The House Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services Subcommittee held a hearing in Washington, DC about the proposed budget. Ms. Harrison testified for two hours before the subcommittee on why the corporation should continue to be funded by the federal government. The corporation had asked Congress for flat funding of \$445 million dollars. Flat funding would mean that the CPB would receive

the same amount of money it had during the last appropriation cycle. It's the same amount they received the year before. It had been almost 10 years since a representative from the CPB had testified before a subcommittee of Congress.

The testimony was in the formal style that is stereotypical of most Congressional proceedings. Ms. Harrison was seated at a rectangular table in the middle of a meeting room. The simple table included a microphone, bottled water and a glass for that water. There was not much frivolity in the setting with which Ms. Harrison was seated. She was joined by Anne Brachman who is the Senior Vice President of Government Affairs for the CPB. Ms. Brachman's role at the hearing appeared to be ancillary as she would often write notes and time warnings for Ms. Harrison during the testimony.

Members of the subcommittee were seated in a semi-circle set of tables that partially surrounded Ms. Harrison's table. The subcommittee members' tables resembled to table Ms. Harrison was seating at. Each had a name card and a microphone with chairs behind them for staff members or onlookers. Although the tables were simple, the semi-circle enclosed nature of the tables gave the appearance that those subcommittee members who were seating at the semi-circle had an authority over the person who was seating at the table in the middle.

Behind Ms. Harrison were a set of seats intended for use by an audience of onlookers. Though the audience members were not allowed to speak during the testimony, they were facing the semi-circle of subcommittee members' tables, and also facing the same direction as Ms. Harrison. This furthered the feeling that the subcommittee members seated at the semi-circle of tables were the ones who held power

in regards to the proceedings, and the ones facing that semi-circle were subordinate to them

The proceedings were mostly jovial, with many of the members of subcommittee showing an obvious approval of public media, the corporation, and its overall mission to serve audiences that are underserved by the commercial market. Ms. Harrison was greeted warmly the subcommittee's chair, Representative Tom Cole (R-OK). Ms. Harrison was the co-chair of the Republican National Committee while Rep. Cole was the committee's chief of staff (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 3:40). Rep. Cole said of Ms. Harrison "She's been my dear, dear friend for 16 or 17 years now. I've watched with admiration the job you've done over at the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and appreciate very much that job" (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 3:50).

Despite the jovial nature of the hearing, Ms. Harrison was asked tough questions about the direction of the corporation and public media. Because this research is solely interested in analyzing the fear responses in the answers provided by the CPB, the questions that were asked of Ms. Harrison will be omitted. Her answers will instead be the focus of this analysis. In some instances, the questions that were asked contained information that Ms. Harrison herself states in her testimony. Repeating that information would be redundant. Despite the omissions of the questions in our analysis, nothing is lost in Ms. Harrison's answers. The questions give very little context to any fear that may come from her testimony. Live testimony is the perfect avenue to take when investigating discourse and how fear appeals are pushed from organizations. While Ms. Harrison's testimony is no less scripted than a written statement, due to the nature of it being live, there were greater possibilities of off-script statements where fear presented itself.

Testimony Start

To start off the testimony, Patricia Harrison read from a prepared statement about the CPB's request for flat funding of \$445 million (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 18:08). A similar written statement with the CPB's concerns about funding was also released on its website's press room area the same day. It was titled *Statement of Patricia de Stacy Harrison President and CEO, Corporation for Public Broadcasting Before the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, House Committee on Appropriations*. To alleviate any confusion between the prepared statement read during the testimony, and the written statement on the CPB's website, future references to the website statement will just use the moniker *the website statement*. The website statement and the statement read by Ms. Harrison use the same values points as her *The Hill* op-ed piece detailing why public media is necessary. Although there are similarities between the two, the statements differ slightly in their structure. Before delving into Ms. Harrison's full testimony, it would be beneficial to unpack the text from the website statement. Doing so will reveal those structural differences.

The Website Statement

The website statement mentions the CPB's funding request from the beginning, and it describes how necessary that funding is to the operation of stations across the country.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) requests level funding of \$445 million for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, \$55 million in FY 2018 for the replacement of the public broadcasting interconnection system, and \$30 million for Ready To Learn at the Department of Education. ("Statement of Patricia", 2017, para. 1)

It then eases in to the value of public media.

Through the nearly 1,500 locally owned and operated public radio and television stations across the country, public media reaches 99 percent of the American people from big cities to small towns and rural communities. At approximately \$1.35 per citizen per year it is one of America's best infrastructure investments—paying huge dividends in education, public safety and civic leadership for millions of Americans and their families. (“Statement of Patricia”, 2017, para. 2)

The prepared statement on the website continues to describe how public media is fulfilling its original mission of serving underserved audiences and growing in that mission. It focuses on how public media serves to broaden children's education, deliver public safety information, bring together communities and foster civic engagement through news and entertainment. Those values are brought up again and again in the CPB's discourse since Trump's cuts were mentioned in the January 19th article in *The Hill* (Sefton, 2017a). Those values are repeated as Ms. Harrison ends the website statement. She writes,

With your support, CPB [sic] will continue to serve as a trusted steward of the federal appropriation; by investing these precious taxpayer dollars in ways that strengthen the health of our democratic system and our civil society—helping to educate our youth, making Americans more aware of our nation's challenges and opportunities, connecting to our history, and engaging our citizens in their communities. (“Statement of Patricia”, 2017, para. 14)

The website statement, while full of statements about the value of public media, is devoid of any fear appeals. Ms. Harrison sticks to the values of public media and why

those values make public media worth the federal appropriation. The closest she gets to a fear appeal is when she gets a dig in at the quality of commercial media.

In this disruptive and fragmented media environment, public media’s commitment to serving as a trusted source of information—providing in-depth factual coverage, when it comes to news and fact-based information, as well as a civil place for the exchange of ideas locally and nationally—is more important and relevant to people’s lives than ever. (“Statement of Patricia”, 2017, para. 8)

She goes on to say,

Public broadcasters have retained the trust of the American people for accurate, balanced, objective, fair, transparent, and thoughtful coverage of news and public affairs—the essential resources for an informed citizenry, the foundation upon which a well-functioning democracy depends. (“Statement of Patricia”, 2017, para. 8)

While the quote above does not invoke an appeal to fear per se, it does use language that paints public media in a better light than other media. In her words, a “well-functioning democracy” and a “place for the exchange of ideas” are things that could go away should funding to the CPB cease. In a sense, she is otherizing non-public media outlets for the betterment of public media. By stating that other media is “disruptive” and “fragmented”, Ms. Harrison is also saying that public media is not. To Ms. Harrison, public media provides “accurate, balanced, objective, fair, transparent [...] thoughtful [and] in-depth coverage”, “fact-based information” and is “trusted” as well as a “civil place for the exchange of ideas.” By invoking those values, she is saying that other media do not fill those values. There is not an explicit appeal to fear that Ms. Harrison uses in

the website statement, but by otherizing mainstream media and describing how public media is different, she is describing all the values that would be lost if public media were lost.

What is not addressed in Ms. Harrison's argument is that public media is a big part of that fragmented media environment. Public media's opponents frequently claim that there is a liberal bias present in its news coverage. They perceive that bias as a violation of the CPB's mandate. Clearly, those opponents feel some fragmentation and alienation from public media. Media consumers have choice, and public media is one choice in hundreds of other choices. By othering media outlets, and looking at themselves as being on a better tier [othering themselves] from those outlets, Mr. Harrison and the CPB are contributing to the "disruptive" and "fragmented" media environment that she claims public media to be better than. In her statement, Ms. Harrison says that public radio's mission is to, "deliver value to the American people in the form of content that gives them the information they need to understand our changing world, to raise their families, teach their children, improve their communities" ("Statement of Patricia", 2017, para. 14). Community is defined as a group of people coming together under like-minded interests and goals (Community, n.d.). If public media's goal is unity and the improvement of communities, further fragmenting the media environment by othering itself and its competitors is a dangerous precedent to set. Especially during times when its funding is under threat.

Testimony Statement

Unlike the website statement, the prepared statement that Ms. Harrison reads at the beginning of her testimony is not without fear appeals. As was mentioned, the

structure of her statement during the testimony is different compared to the website statement. In the testimony statement, Ms. Harrison completely removes asking for money and solely focuses on value appeals. Value appeals were also a large part of the website statement, but that statement was prefaced with the funding request. A request for funding does come up later in the testimony, but it is prompted by a congressperson's question and not included in Ms. Harrison's testimony statement.

The values included in her testimony statement are virtually the same as the website statement and the other CPB discourse analysis thus far. The values include children's education, civic engagement, collaboration between stations, and diversity in programming. Ms. Harrison also mentions veterans and how public media helps military men and women who are returning home or in need of resources. It is unclear whether the choice to exclude the monetary ask from the Ms. Harrison's testimony statement was a choice to utilize time more effectively or an attempt to place the values of public media ahead of money in the minds of the congresspersons in attendance. It could also be the case that it was already apparent to everyone in attendance what she and the subcommittee were doing in the room. Ms. Harrison had asked for funding and stated her case in the website statement, and Rep. Cole said at the beginning of the hearing that the intent was to discuss the federal appropriation.

The first fear appeal in the testimony statement came as she talked about how much stations rely on federal dollars to operate. Ms. Harrison, reading from the statement said, "Federal funding represents on average 10% to 15% of a station's budget" (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 20:57). Here she meant the budgets of stations in larger cities. She continued, "But to the stations serving rural, minority and other underserved

communities, federal funding can be as much as 40% to 80% of their budget”

(HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 21:00).

The CPB’s mandate is to deliver programming to audiences that are underserved by the commercial market. The act specifically mentions children and minorities. The roots of public broadcasting, and early commercial broadcasting, included the desire to urbanize rural and minority citizens or prop them up to live the kind of life that urban people led (Rowland, 1986). An urban life meant that one was educated, economically stable, healthy and progressive – moving forward (Rowland, 1986). It was the kind of life that urbanites and early educational broadcasting advocates were convinced was superior to rural life (Rowland, 1986). This kind of thinking is visible in Ms. Harrison’s statement, and is the root of an appeal to fear about rural peoples not being able to live an educated informed life – an urban life.

She says, “Through the appropriation, we ensure that these stations, in some cases the only local source of vital news, weather and emergency alert notifications in addition to education content continue to serve their communities” (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 21:12).

This analysis has shown examples of how CPB discourse seeks to otherize people for the sake of its own existence. With the CPB’s mandate to serve audiences that are underserved, that othering occurs frequently with rural stations. Because of the CPB mandate, othering is a heritage in public media and educational programming. The comparison in Ms. Harrison’s statement about the difficulties of rural stations’ ability to fundraise compared to urban stations, while factual from a monetary standpoint, is another example of that othering. She furthers this point by ending the prepared statement

with, “The bottom line is that our country needs us to keep working for that more civil, more informed society” (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017,22:08).

From the quote above, we can read that people served by rural stations are not informed, and by that lack of education, nor are they sufficiently civil. She says rural stations can’t make it on their own, and by the CPB’s mandate, the people served by those stations need to be educated, need to be economically stable, need to be healthy and need to be progressive. The CPB wants, “A country in which all citizens can learn and thrive” (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 22:16). They want all Americans to be urban. As they are now, rural people are not urban. Urbanity, the pie in the sky goal of public media and educational programming formed so long ago. “Only through Congress’ financial support can public media remain true to its mission” (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 22:20).

The appeal to fear comes in the otherizing of rural people. Ms. Harrison is saying that the only way to make urbanity possible with the media is through the CPB, and the CPB can only do it with federal funding. Without it, rural people will remain rural.

Testimony Questions

Following Ms. Harrison’s prepared statement, representatives of the subcommittee were allowed to ask questions about the direction of the CPB and public media. As was the hope of this analysis, this portion of the testimony while still very “canned” in terms of the value statements, allowed for more of Ms. Harrison’s personality to shine through. In parallel to the standard CPB value statements of education and community were twinges of fear appeals that have been latent in the analysis of CPB discourse up to this point.

To start, Ms. Harrison described a 2007 study by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). According the GAO's About Us page on its website, "[The] GAO investigates how the federal government spends taxpayer dollars" ("About GAO", n.d.). Ms. Harrison notes that the study found that there was no "alternative viable source of funding [for public media]" (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 23:50). She states further that the 2012 study by Booz & Company (now Strategy&) came to that same conclusion (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 24:10).

The fear appeal comes as Ms. Harrison says, "the bottom line from both of these studies which I thought was interesting, because they were both very independent. It would mean the collapse of public media" (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 24:18).

The word "collapse" denotes falling, failing or destruction. Ms. Harrison is invoking a fear in her testimony that should funding go away, the public media system, according to research not done by the CPB, would collapse. As has been the case with the fear appeals we've seen up to this point from the CPB, Ms. Harrison is not directly employing a "chicken little the sky is falling" tone in her testimony. She is not directly saying it is her opinion that the system will collapse. Instead she is using the words of two studies done by the independent research firms to send the fear appeal. By using this technique, there appears to be some effort at projecting and maintaining a level-headed appearance on her part (and that of the organization), while placing the onus of pushing fear on someone else. She is saying she is not projecting fear--they are.

Further along in her testimony, Ms. Harrison pushes another fear appeal that once again deals with the divide between rural and urban stations. The point is very similar to the rural urban otherizing examples we've seen thus far. She says,

The problem is that with rural stations, they don't have this in-depth donor base. They just don't have what some of the other stations...the bigger [urban] stations have. And they really depend upon the federal investment. So what would happen if the federal investment, if the appropriation would go away? There would be this domino effect and it would start first with rural stations" (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 25:11)

The fear appeal here is about how the lack of federal funds would affect public media stations as a whole. A domino effect, stations collapsing one after the other, would happen if the CPB should be defunded. This collapse would start with rural stations and continue through the rest of the stations in the system. We again see the call that rural stations, by their very nature of being rural, and lacking the resources to operate by themselves, are vulnerable and in need of support. The urban stations, who can usually carry themselves, will essentially fail one after the other once the rural stations fail. There is a guarantee, an assuredness in Ms. Harrison's words that rural stations will fail, and by their lack of resources, by their ruralness, cause the collapse of the whole system. The othering of rural stations and the appeal to fear are both clear here, but there appears to be a bit of contradiction or lack of clarity in Ms. Harrison's statement.

"The problem is that with rural stations, they don't have this in-depth donor base...There would be this domino effect and it would start first with rural stations" (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 25:11).

What is unclear is exactly how urban stations with a large donor base would be affected by this domino effect? It's been assumed that she means urban stations will fall due to the domino effect, but her statement isn't very clear. She (the CPB) has noted

many times in the discourse we've seen up to this point that rural stations are the ones who are unable to survive on their own. Nowhere in her testimony has it been said that urban stations' ability to fundraise (survive) was in questions. The link from rural station to urban station isn't there. Would the collapse of rural stations have a detrimental effect on urban station's ability to raise funds? Would there be programmatic holes in the system? It's clear why the rural stations would fail, but the path from rural station failure to urban station failure remains unclear.

Ms. Harrison invokes another fear appeal in her testimony just a few minutes later when she discusses how public media impacts public safety.

We connect to 99% of all Americans in terms of public safety and emergency.

Let's just look at West Virginia for example. It's not just an idea public safety and service because of what they do and also because of our interconnection system. Their emergency alert in terms of floods, it's lifesaving [...] Without public media in West Virginia, the losses are on so many different levels [...] Here stations are vital to public emergency, safety, letting people know what is happening in terms of dire emergencies (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 31:33).

Safety and death are powerful fear motivators. Ms. Harrison is saying that during times of public emergency, public media in West Virginia saves lives. That impact isn't just limited to West Virginia though. By stating that public media reaches 99% of Americans, she is giving the appearance of including the population of the country as a whole. The underlying meaning of her statement is that public media includes everyone, including those with little resources. Public safety information is available to people in rural areas that aren't served by any other means.

“So, it is a domino effect, if the funding were to go away, this vital service for rural communities in addition to emergency alert and public safety...[sic]”

(HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 33:20).

Ms. Harrison is once again making a fear appeal based on the comparison between urban and rural places. There is a division between urban and rural places in her testimony, and public media offering public safety information is exploiting that division for its own survival. An appeal to public safety is a clever fear appeal when public media organizations are under some form of threat. If stations lose their funding, there is a possibility that rural people will lose their lives as a result. In essence she is saying, if we want rural people want to survive, we (public media) need to survive.

Continuing the discussion of a rural and urban divide in her testimony, Mr. Harrison mentions coal miners in West Virginia.

In terms of what we do with the early learning, and I know there’s been a lot of talk about coal miners and coal miner’s kids, and we serve those people. In West Virginia, public television, there was this story that this man, he had lung cancer, he needed a lung transplant. He was a coal miner [...] he didn’t have any means to get the help he needed, and so the station told his story (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 33:37).

The language in the quote above is the same as Ms. Harrison’s March 16th op-ed piece in *The Hill*. Both the quote above and *The Hill* piece are a rebuttal to Office of Management and Budget director Mick Mulvaney’s statement asking if the country can continue asking a coal miners in West Virginia to support funding for public broadcasting. Like the analysis of Ms. Harrison’s op-ed piece found, using coal miners in

West Virginia as a value point for public media is an affirmation that those miners are a vulnerable population in need of protection. They are an otherized people that fit public media's contemporary and historical mission of serving those who are underserved or raising up non-urbanized others. Ms. Harrison and Mr. Mulvaney seem to agree on that point, they only differ on how they should be helped.

Perhaps the most interesting fear appeal in Ms. Harrison's testimony came as she discussed the woes of public media's inability to compete in a highly competitive media market. Public media as an alternative to media fragmentation was mentioned in Ms. Harrison's website statement. Here, she is stating how public media is a victim of that fragmentation. In this part of the testimony, she is responding to a question about long-time PBS children's show Sesame Street moving content to HBO. Sesame Street is produced by the non-profit Sesame Workshop, and in 2015 Sesame Workshop gave HBO the first-run rights to the show (Goldstein, 2016). PBS is allowed to broadcast Sesame Street shows 9 months after they are released on HBO (Goldstein, 2016). The move to HBO surprised many people, because Sesame Street is thought of as a staple program in the PBS lineup. The show is synonymous with PBS, and the move to a subscriber-based channel is seemingly contradictory to the non-profit educational ethos of the show and PBS. The decision to move Sesame Street to HBO was a result from PBS's inability to support the show financially (Goldstein, 2016). Children and their parents are consumers in a highly competitive and fragmented media market, and they just don't support Sesame Street like they used to (Goldstein, 2016). Support in this case is mean monetarily via merchandise as opposed to the number of eyeballs watching the show. The non-

commercial basis of PBS also hinders the show's ability to bring in money (Goldstein, 2016)

At the beginning of her testimony, Ms. Harrison described public media as a light in a highly fragmented media market. It's a media market that Ms. Harrison wants public media to be a player in, but as we've seen with Sesame Street, that's becoming a harder and harder task. She says, "we're competing with filmmakers and content producers. Netflix has just announced they're going to be paying 10 times more than HBO for content" (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 41:17).

Keeping in mind HBO was able to financially support Sesame Street. She continues,

So, we're competing for the best of the best. And we're so grateful for people like Ken Burns and Doctor Henry Louis Gates and Hector Galan who have chosen public media. We still have it [Sesame Street], but we're existing a very commercial world [...] I don't know if any of you are a fan of Mercy Street [it] was original content focused on the civil war and there were 2 seasons. It was so well done, high production values. They're not doing a 3rd season. PBS can't raise the money (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 41:27).

Ms. Harrison is very clear what the repercussions would be for public media should federal funding for the CPB drop or disappear. She is appealing to a fear that programming of a high quality would disappear from the network. Without adequate funding, it would be difficult to attract new talent and content to the network, and as was seen with Sesame Street, it would be difficult to keep high-value shows on the network or in production. Ms. Harrison established that PBS is far reaching in the United States. It

reaches 99% of Americans free of charge and without commercials. If that content were to disappear, people would only have commercialized content left. While Ms. Harrison doesn't outwardly point out the groups of people that would be affected most by content leaving public media, it is clear through the choice to use Sesame Street as an example, that she is talking about children. Ms. Harrison (and by extension the CPB) has already shown in previous discourse that she has concerns about commercialized media being the only option for vulnerable populations, and this part of her testimony falls in line with that discourse.

Ms. Harrison's allusion to the vulnerability of children who rely on the commercial media marketplace to get their programming becomes a fully explicit fear statement later in her testimony. She does not mince words that she fears the marketplace is unable to provide the content children need. She is blunt in stating that quality children's content is not cheap, and the ability to pay for the production on quality content is public media's weakness. Not only is a fear appeal used to show concern for children in a highly commercialized media market, Ms. Harrison relies on the othering of rural peoples to once again prove her point.

Children's content is very very expensive, and if your goal is to treat the child as a consumer then you can pay for that content that's surrounded by commercials. If your goal is to build a young citizen to provide a safe place where a child can learn, and you are not focused on a commercial return on investment but on a return on investment on that child's entire life, we couldn't do it without the federal appropriation. Ready to Learn would go away (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 54:18).

According to the PBS website, Ready to Learn is “an effective children's media program targeted toward America's most at-risk kids, but made available to all families and children across the country” (“Ready to Learn”, 2017). Ready to Learn is not a singular program meant for broadcast on television or radio. It is a program in the sense that it creates content like games, learning materials and traditional media for broadcast that incorporates skills the program believes children can use to advance their education. Ms. Harrison’s statement above tries to make the distinction that children need to be thought of as more than consumers, they should be thought of as young citizens. There is a strong anti-consumer tone that is being pushed by Ms. Harrison in her statement. The message is children as consumers in the commercial media market can’t be strong citizens. She uses the words “safe place” to describe public media children’s programming. If public media’s children’s programming is a safe place, then children’s programming produced by commercial media lies in a dangerous place. Dangerous places aren’t meant for children. She bluntly states, “A commercialized Ready to Learn would not work” (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 54:53)

As this analysis has shown, there is an othering of rich and poor in the CPB’s discourse. In other CPB discourse, this othering has manifested itself as an urban and rural divide. A similar type of othering continues in Mr. Harrison’s testimony when she justifies the need for Ready to Learn and PBS children’s programming as a method that poor parents and students can use to lift themselves up to the same level as people who have more monetary means.

These parents cannot afford to pay for the money that goes into the research, the evaluation, the boots on the ground [For Ready to Learn]. It’s another example of

understanding at a profound level that no matter where these kids come from, how poor their families are, every child starts school not saying ‘Gee, I hope I’m going to drop out 5 to 10 years from now.’ They’re excited about school. We want them to be able to compete with their more affluent peers (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 54:56)

While there is a lot of noble sentiment about children being put on a level playing field when they start their education, there is a lot of negative assumption being placed on lower-income families in Ms. Harrison’s comment. She is more than likely right that the parents of children in a lower income family may not have the resources available to provide what the CPB, Ready to Learn and their partners think is best for a child’s education. That being said, automatically placing low-income children into a box that says they will drop out of school without this content is a bold assumption and quite troubling. She says further,

it [Ready to Learn] gets these young children ready to get to school and not feel almost intellectually intimidated, not feel that they’re second-class citizens. That they’re in there, they know the work, they have a future. And we have to continue it. [The loss] of the appropriation, to me on so many different levels as an American, but just to be specific in terms of early childhood it would be disastrous (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 55:39)

Ms. Harrison pushed a fear appeal with the word “disastrous” when describing how educational materials for low-income and minority children [one of the CPB’s target audiences] would disappear if the federal appropriation should be taken away. While Ms. Harrison makes her point clear, and leaves no doubt that low-income and minority

children would be severely affected by the loss of federal money, her fear appeal is troubling. What is troubling is her use of the words “second-class citizens” to describe how low-income children must feel about themselves in difficult school situations. It’s possible that Ms. Harrison is basing her statement off research that points to low-income children feeling “intellectually intimidated” and inferior, but the term “second-class citizen” is a such a broad leap in language, it’s difficult to understand why it was used to prove her point. It begs the question, do low-income and minority children view themselves as second-class citizens? If so, is it solely due to disparities in income and educational opportunities or are there other reasons? If not, why would Ms. Harrison say they view themselves as second-class citizens? The rural and urban divide comes up again in Ms. Harrison’s testimony when she said,

It’s easy if you don’t live in a rural area to even imagine that you don’t have every single thing at your fingertips and all the wherewithal to get what you need, and so 129 million of our appropriation goes to rural stations but we also want those rural stations to succeed (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 59:17).

She continues with how rural stations are encouraged to partner with urban stations for things like fundraising and content (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 59:47). It is the crux of the CPB’s argument that rural stations do not have the same type of resources as urban stations do. Due to that fact, rural stations are at a greater risk of failing than the urban stations. Here, we see a continuation of that argument and the continued othering of rural stations.

We also see a new type of othering in her argument. Ms. Harrison uses the word “succeed” following the statement about rural stations’ appropriation. \$129 million goes

to rural stations, given by the CPB to help them stay afloat, and that money accounts for 40% to 80% of a rural station's budgets. The appropriation accounts for 10% to 15% of an urban station's budget. She wants rural stations to succeed. It can be interpreted that the 25% to 65% budget discrepancy between rural and urban stations constitutes failure or at least a path to failure. Pairing poorer rural stations with more affluent urban stations is a way of showing that stations in the system help each other succeed, but it is also a way of showing poorer stations that the urban stations are what should be aspired to. Are rural stations less able to fulfill their missions given the resources they have? When you state that you have a desire for something to succeed, and you pair that something with something else that in your mind is succeeding, you are saying that the thing you want to succeed is indeed not.

The ideal of programming to underserved audiences has a lot of merit, but as we've seen with the fear appeals up to this point, there seems to be a lot of otherizing and assumptions being placed on people by the CPB. There is a lot being assumed toward what kind of lives otherized audiences lead. While the CPB and Ms. Harrison do state that they use research to guide some their decisions, it seems that it is impossible to not make generalizations about people, even with research. It seems far-fetched that public media has such a strong grasp on the lives of people that generalizations aren't made. The CPB is selling an idea. An idea that the money taxpayers are spending is worth the cost. It appears in the analysis up to this point that some people must be otherize and generalizations must be made about their lives to form a narrative about why it's worth the effort and cost to the CPB and the American taxpayer. Those generalizations, as

we've seen, can easily lead to an othering of people that may not be intended. Ms.

Harrison continues,

We have to show [to justify the Ready to Learn program]; how do you know?

And we can prove that these children, when they start and after they're evaluated, that the content makes a difference. It's so rewarding because it tells you that if you make an investment early on you're not doing triages at age 16 or 17 (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 1:08:09).

With the rural urban educational justifications thus far, and the comment about triage, not only are the generalizations in Ms. Harrison's statement insulting to parents as far as their ability to care for their children are concerned, they also devalue the children as predestined to live their lives as "second-class citizens" without the aid of the CPB and public media. It's also alluded to in her statement that they are second-class citizens only by the fact that they happen to be poor. There are no similar calls directed toward propping up affluent children through public media programming. Affluent children are of course part of the 99% of Americans that Ms. Harrison claims the CPB reaches, but they are obviously not a focus in her testimony. That makes sense, affluent children have means that poor children don't. Affluent children don't appear to have the same need to be served as poor children. Poor children are others that need to be propped up, cared for and nurtured. However, does that mean being left alone or falling outside of the CPB's focus is a sign of success? Is affluence the path to first-class citizenship? Telling children that they can exist beyond being a second-class citizen, through programming, is still telling them they're a second-class citizen only by the virtue of being poor.

There are obvious concerns in Ms. Harrison's testimony when it comes to the commercial broadcasting market's ability to provide content that is based on the needs of people, and not based on the needs of profit. Children are used by Ms. Harrison over and over as an example of a vulnerable population that needs more consideration than how much money can be brought in through advertising. The anti-market concern Ms. Harrison has is interesting when considering that she is trying to convince, not just Congress, but Americans as a whole, why there's a place for public media in a broadcasting system that was created and continues to be maintained with commercial interests in mind. Ms. Harrison appeared to be in a tough spot, because the mission of public media is to serve underserved audiences, but public media also relies on donations and support from businesses who support the market which is underserving those audiences.

Addressing concerns about the commercial broadcasting market's ability to adequately program toward children again in her testimony, Ms. Harrison pushes a fear appeal without overtly doing so. She starts by laying the foundation of how business works,

The focus of business, and I ran a company, is to make a profit. If you do good along the way, that's fine. But the focus is to make a profit. And if you're not mission focused [like the CPB], then and you're focused on profit, you'll find ways to cut corners (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 1:09:08).

She is clearly differentiating public media from commercial broadcasting. Where commercial broadcasting cuts corners for profit, public media does not. She continues, Research is expensive. We go over this over and over again, it's required. The

content takes a long time to develop. They're studying children, they're investing in the long term. Look at what we did with Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood. Incredible you can still watch it, it still has great value, but it doesn't speak to today's child and the things that today's children are facing. So based on research, evaluation, measurement, we now have Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood, which takes Mr. Rogers into this child's modern environment (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 1:09:29).

The accuracy of whether public media content is better for children than commercial content is beyond the scope of this research. It is clear, however, that Ms. Harrison and the CPB believe so. Earlier in the analysis with Ms. Harrison's comment about Sesame Street moving to HBO, we saw the focus of her argument was that production was expensive, and public media is having difficulty attracting and holding onto quality content producers. Here she is saying that research toward children's programming is expensive and "required". Expense seems to be inevitable. Required is the key word in her fear appeal. Research is something that public media believes it needs to adequately fulfill its mission. Without research, public media content for children would be no better than commercial content. There is a fear that public media will become the same as commercial media. This is under the assumption that quality is derived from research, and that commercial broadcasters cut corners. It's also under the assumption that for public media to fulfill its mission, it must provide a higher quality of content instead of a higher quantity to fill the underserved hole created by the market. Ms. Harrison cements her opinion by stating,

The private sector hasn't done this, in fact, YouTube said too, and this is all in the open and it's perfectly legitimate because that's their mission to return money to their shareholders or whoever, that the focus with our children's content is to bring the parents in. To sell to the parents and then to keep the kids on a trajectory [toward profit] (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 1:10:13).

Fear appeals appeared more frequently as Ms. Harrison's testimony came near to its conclusion. Responding to a question about stations increasing corporate support and donations as a way to make up funds, Ms. Harrison said,

There is no way, all of our studies show, that as dedicated as supporters of KQED are, and they are, and this the speaks to the connection that public media stations have with their community as they serve their community, they could not make up the federal appropriation. And you would then see the deconstruction of the quality of content, the mission would be watered down, and I'd be particularly concerned about early childhood education and also about journalism (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 1:14:05).

Perhaps this is the answer to the question this analysis raised about how the domino effect would topple larger urban stations? The fear appeal comes in the sense that KQED, and by extension similar sized urban stations, would not be able to provide the same type of content that they do now. Instead of focusing on the mission of underserved audiences, stations would instead focus on money. And focusing on money would impact the quality of the programming. Public media stations would, and this is where the fear comes in, make decisions and cut corners in a similar way the she said commercial media does. She is restating the fear that public stations would become commercial stations. It

was shown earlier in her testimony that she believes journalism and children's programming are a large part of public media's mission and a light in the darkness among commercial broadcasters. She believes that should KQED lose its CPB funding, the watering down of its mission would make that light a bit dimmer. There is a real fear showing through here.

While Ms. Harrison was in a tough spot regarding her need to follow the CPB's mission and her seemingly anti-market comments about children's programming, it wasn't much of a surprise that she talked about public media as a way for America to be "strong" (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 1:40:14). Her argument as to why public media is important is a dichotomy of sorts. Public media programs to underserved audiences, but her message on why Americans should support the service has to include how it benefits all Americans and not just the underserved. National defense seems like a natural way to do that. A lot of Americans find national defense very important to the health of the nation. Ms. Harrison used a personal appeal from retired U.S. Army General Stanley McChrystal to further that point,

I met with 4-star retired general Stanley McChrystal and he was talking to us about why he supports public media. A country can't be strong unless we're smart. We want a strong defense and a strong defense militarily, but we also want to make sure that we have that civil society knowledge infrastructure that our citizens are aware and strong, and we need to tell the stories of all Americans (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 1:39:37).

There is a lot about forms of power and forms of dominance in that statement. It's an acknowledgement of America's desire for both power and dominance, and an

acknowledgment that America harbors fears that both are slipping. It's not a blatant type of fear that Ms. Harrison and General McChrystal are stating here, but a subtle fear about America's assertion of power in the rest of the world. There is a clear linking of the idea that being smart is powerful. What is also clear is the distinction that while military strength is important, it's not enough anymore. It can be assumed that General McChrystal's support of public media is an acknowledgment that commercial media is unable to make Americans as smart as they should be. And an acknowledgement that commercial media, on its own, cannot keep America powerful and dominant. The health of America comes up again when she said,

There's so many things that can divide us today. And by becoming America's storyteller we unite people. But that's our goal. It's not something happens immediately and especially right now, I think, we have a very divided America. Economically, politically, it's not good for the country (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 1:41:03).

Mentioning the health of the country and public media's relation to it is not a blatant fear appeal, but fear is indeed there. There is a fear that the country is divided and that the division is not good for the country. The appeal plays off the same imagery of strength from Ms. Harrison's statement about General McChrystal. A division amongst people is not strong, but unity amongst people is strong. For America to be strong, we must have unity, and public media creates that unity. Whether Ms. Harrison believes public media creates unity is not in doubt, we have seen throughout this analysis that she does. What is in doubt is whether the discourse of the CPB and by extension the media that it funds actually does create that unity. We have seen many examples throughout this

analysis of Ms. Harrison and the CPB using otherizing language between rural and urban stations for the corporation's own benefit.

The final fear appeal of Ms. Harrison's testimony comes near the end of the testimony as she says,

I just think that the idea that the marketplace is going to take care of public media means, we may as well be honest, is the elimination of public media. It would be no more (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 1:47:12).

There is no doubt about the fear is Ms. Harrison's words in the final part of her testimony. The word "elimination" evokes a sense that something is being destroyed or killed. It's the same type of language Ms. Harrison used in her *The Hill* op-ed piece. Should the budget cuts go through, public media will be killed. It will no longer exist.

Social Media

On April 5th, 2017 the CPB pushed a post on its Facebook and Twitter pages linking to an op-ed piece retired U.S. Army General Stanley McChrystal wrote for the New York Times in support of public broadcasting (Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2017f). The op-ed was not the first time Stanley McChrystal had come out in support of public broadcasting since the proposed budget cuts to the CPB came to light. He was a speaker at a summit organized by the American Public Television Stations organization (APTS) in February, where he spoke about the benefits of public media. That event was pushed by the CPB on its Facebook page as well, but it contained no fear appeals (Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2017c).

The post from April 5th was different as the words said by General McChrystal and pushed by the CPB had twinges of fear imbedded in the meaning. The op-ed was

titled, “Save PBS. It Makes Us Safer” (McChrystal, 2017). The title alone is an appeal to fear. The text says that PBS is an organization that needs saving. There’s an appeal that if public media is not saved, it will be lost. A secondary fear appeal is presented in the title through the assertion that we (“Us”) are safer because of public media. The appeal to fear here is that if public media were to not be saved, its absence would put us in more danger.

The post mentions a part of Gen. McChrystal’s op-ed where he writes,

We need public media that acts as our largest classroom. We need broadcasting that treats us as citizens, not simply as consumers. We need a strong civil society where the connection between different people and groups is firm and vibrant, not brittle and divided (McChrystal, 2017, para. 12).

The anti-market statements Gen. McChrystal writes are very similar to the statements in Patricia’s Harrison’s testimony to the House Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services Subcommittee. There is a concern (a fear) that the commercial broadcasting market is unable to provide content to people as citizens and not consumers. Ms. Harrison used the words, “cut corners” and “profit driven” in her testimony to describe how commercial broadcasters are unable to adequately program to certain audiences – especially children (HouseAppropsGOP, 2017, 1:09:08). While Gen. McChrystal does not use the exact wording as Ms. Harrison, he does mention children as the age group that holds his concern. The anti-market sentiment is the same between the two though. Gen. McChrystal saying that American’s need programming for citizens and not consumers is an affirmation that public media fulfills that role and commercial broadcasting does not.

Gen. McChrystal also invokes the idea of power in his statement. A strong civil society is a form of power. Similar language was used in Ms. Harrison’s testimony where

she invoked Gen. McChrystal to draw a comparison between a country that is strong both militarily and civically. There is a recognition in his writing that military power isn't enough. To be powerful, the country should be strong in other ways. If a country is "brittle and divided" it can't be strong. While there is not a blatant fear appeal in the CPB's post or in Gen. McChrystal's words, there is latent feeling of fear under the surface. Strength is something that America values about itself, and if it wants to continue to be strong, it needs to exist in a certain way. Otherwise, America will be weak.

On April 4th, 2017, the CPB pushed a post on its Facebook page that described comments StoryCorp founder David Isay made to the to the board of the CPB (Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2017g). The post says,

StoryCorps Founder David Isay spoke to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Board today saying, 'Without CPB [sic] there would be no StoryCorps.' He described how, with CPB [sic] support, StoryCorps is building something enduring by capturing the voices of Americans from all walks of life. A record 200,000 StoryCorps interviews with 400,000 participants in all 50 states are preserved in The Library of Congress, including over 1,900 interviews with veterans and their families. He shared several interviews and animations with the CPB Board, including one from the brother of an astronaut Robert McNair who died on the space shuttle and one from a coal miner saying how grateful he was to share his life story that he hoped one day his children and grandchildren would listen to it and know he loved them (Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2017g).

This post has a blatant fear appeal and a subtle one. The blatant fear appeal comes as the CPB uses Isay's words that StoryCorps would not exist if it did not have support from the

CPB. The statement is appealing to the fears of those people who value StoryCorps. The post expounds this fear by saying that StoryCorps as a service will cease to exist if the CPB is unable to the service. Here we see language that again uses imagery of death to get its point across. Death, killing and ceasing to exist are examples of death imagery in CPB language that we've a lot in its discourse thus far.

The not so blatant fear appeal comes as Isay and the CPB lay out stories of the people who are affected by StoryCorp. They mention the large number of people that StoryCorp has recorded, but they also single out types of people that they believe Americans might find important or have an attachment to. Deceased space shuttle astronauts, coal miners and veterans are the types of people mentioned in the post. Veterans and astronauts are people that are envisioned as heroes in American culture, and obviously hold a high place of value to Mr. Isay and the CPB. There is a fear that should StoryCorps not exist, Americans that are held in high value in the country's imagination will not have their stories recorded and preserved for all time.

Coal miners in Mr. Isay's appeal are a bit different. In Ms. Harrison's testimony, coal miners were used as a rebuttal to the statement made by Office of Management and Budget director Mick Mulvaney's claim that coal miners could not afford to pay for public media content through their taxes. The CPB has used coal miners as an example of people who use public media, and as an example of how public media saves the lives of coal miners. This analysis has shown how Mr. Mulvaney and the CPB have otherised certain groups of people, including coal miners, to show them as vulnerable and in need of support. Mr. Isay's usage of coal miners as a vulnerable group of people in need of having their story told continues that otherizing trend. Their inclusion as a group whose

stories need to be preserved does not come across as a group that holds high regard in the American imagination (like veterans or astronauts), but as a group that has been otherised as poor and forgotten. Their inclusion is Mr. Isay's and the CPB's way of saying, "Oh, and these people too."

Much of the discourse that was published on the CPB's social media pages does not give an impression of an outright fear appeal, but the language of fear is there in quite a few posts. On the day that president Trump published his proposed budget (March 16th, 2017), the CPB published a post on its Facebook and Twitter pages titled, "If President Trump kills public broadcasting, America loses" (Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2017d; Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2017e). The post linked to the op-ed piece by CPB President and CEO Patricia Harrison that has already been discussed earlier in this analysis. The body text of the post also says, "Opinion: Don't let America's lifeline go dark (Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2017d).

In a similar fashion to Ms. Harrison's op-ed piece, the Facebook and Twitter posts pushing the op-ed piece use threatening language that evokes a sense that the CPB, and by extension public broadcasting, is being attacked by President Trump. Being attacked is a threatening and fearful action to most people. According to the CPB, that attack, if successful, would kill public broadcasting. Fear is pushed in the posts by using the imagery of death. Being killed is death. America will lose if public broadcasting dies. The CPB is asserting that no one wants to lose; they don't want to die. They want to gain. They want to live.

The imagery of death is further used in the post by asking people to not let "America's lifeline go dark." Ms. Harrison describes public media as America's lifeline.

It is a line that pulls people up from the murky water or some other dark depth (profit driven commercial broadcasting) and gives them life (education, knowledge, power). If Trump's attack succeeds, that lifeline will go dark. The lifeline will exist at the same dark depth it is trying to save people from. A lifeline that goes dark is a lifeline that has died. The language of the posts is powerful when looking from the standpoint of trying to make people fearful of death and of that loss.

Similar social media posts were made the same day (March 16th) that used the word "elimination" in conjunction with the loss of federal funding to the CPB. The corporation made a post to Facebook that used the wording, "Patricia Harrison, president and CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), made the following statement regarding the President's proposed elimination of the federal funding for public media" (Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2017h). Another post on Twitter the same day used, "Statement from CPB on the President's Budget Proposal Eliminating Funding for Public Media" (Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 2017i).

In both posts, federal funding to the CPB was not to be lost, removed or taken away, it was to be eliminated. Destroyed. There is not a direct call-to-action that is associated with a fear appeal in the titles of both posts, but the language uses descriptive words that are violent. Violence as a form of power is not something that is usually enjoyed by those on the receiving end. Much like the "lifeline going dark" death imagery from the earlier posts, violence and elimination are the means that cause the darkness. Violence is something to be feared. By evoking the language of violence, the CPB is evoking the language of fear.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The following question was the basis of this research:

RQ1: How are fear based appeals pushed by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's discourse during times of threat to its funding?

This analysis has shown that the answer is: frequently though not always directly. It was shown that fear based appeals were present in much of the discourse the CPB pushed concerning the proposed budget cuts, but blatant appeals to fear that made a call-to-action or a "Chicken Little the sky is falling" type statement were not as common.

The CPB's President and CEO Patricia de Stacy Harrison used fear in her March 16th op-ed piece in *The Hill* to note that a central tenet of the CPB and public broadcasting in the United States is the education of children. She described a scenario where minority children or children in rural areas would go without education materials that could help them compete with more affluent children. The same appeals toward the education of children came up in Ms. Harrison's testimony before Congress as well. The loss of education to children was a major value point in the CPB's discourse as to why public media matters, and that value point as an appeal to fear was frequently found in this analysis.

The loss of service in general (not just to children) was a frequent appeal to fear in this analysis as well. The CPB's discourse often quoted how certain types of people would lose services should public media be defunded. There were appeals to fear

concerning public safety, news and information and the civility of the country. As the discourse featuring General Stanley McChrystal showed, there was also an appeal to fear concerning the strength of the country beyond its military capability.

Perhaps the most used fear appeal in the CPB's discourse came indirectly through the use of language. This analysis saw direct examples of the CPB using fear appeals in its messages to try and convince people about the value of public media. Many of the fear appeals took the form of violence driven language. Frequently used descriptive words such as "elimination", "destruction", "darkness", "collapse", and "domino effect" were all used in the CPB's discourse to evoke a sense that something was being lost or destroyed. By using language that gave an indirect fear appeal, the CPB gave an impression that itself and the organizations it funds are under attack or being victimized. The language is encouraging people to fear those attacks. Ms. Harrison also frequently used language to evoke a sense of death or loss concerning public media. Her March 16th op-ed piece was titled, "If President Trump kills public broadcasting, America loses" (Harrison, 2017). The op-ed title is a perfect example of using the language of fear to evoke a sense of loss or death.

An unexpected finding of this analysis was how much the CPB otherized people in its discourse. Otherizing was used to justify the CPB's and public media's continued existence. This analysis showed the CPB otherizing rural people against urban people over and over in its discourse. Rural stations, by the fact that they are rural, lack the donor base and monetary resources to provide the same services that urban stations do. Urban stations were regarded in the discourse as something that could prop up those poor rural stations. The urban stations were something the rural stations could aspire to. In the

discourse, affluence was used as a synonym for urban, and poor was used as a synonym for rural. The CPB's justification was that rural people need more education resources, rural people need more safety information, rural people don't have the money to pay for commercial services.

It makes sense that the CPB would use underserved audiences like rural people to sell its own value, it's a central part of its current and historical mission, but there was a lot of generalization happening in the way the CPB was describing how the otherized people lived their lives. For example, during Ms. Harrison's testimony, she stated that children in rural communities thought of themselves as "second-class" citizens due to their lack of access to educational material. The statement is troubling, because even with audience research, there is no way of verifying that statement to any measurable degree. It gives rural children a label that says they are destined to fail without help from public media.

In the history chapter of this research, it was noted that opponents of public media often cite a bias in the coverage that public media provides. It was noted that in a way, those opponents often feel otherized by what they perceive as a lack of content that falls in line with their beliefs. They are an other that believes public media doesn't cover them. Ms. Harrison noted in her testimony to Congress that public media was a light in the darkness of commercial broadcasting. She said part of public media's job was to build communities. The frequent othering of people by the CPB and public media seems counter to those beliefs. Othering seeks to alienate and fragment community.

This research has shown how public media pushes fear in its discourse during times of threat to its funding. Given the unexpected finding of rampant othering in the

CPB's discourse, perhaps an avenue for future research would be to analyze if fear leads to that othering? Or, if othering is a constant in public media discourse? What could also be beneficial for public media research on fear and othering is to focus more on a local level as opposed to national. Local analyses would prove to be challenging as far logistics are concerned, but focusing attention at a local or regional level would give a broader view as to how fear and othering are projected by public media organizations.

Finally, it could be said that any instances of fear that may come up in the CPB's discourse are the result of a calculated effort on the part of the organization (and public media) to evoke a sense of fear that garners sympathy and action among its supporters and staff. That kind of strategic communicative effort would seem out of place given the value appeal laden communication that has been pushed already. As was noted earlier in this introduction, the CPB and other public media organizations exercised patience in their reaction once the January 19th article in *The Hill* was published. They were also very organized and thorough in their messaging and grassroots efforts once the budget proposal was finally published.

An April 16th article in *Current* described an atmosphere at PBS that was trying to foster "positive vibes" at member stations (Goldsmith, 2017, para. 4). A tip sheet that was handed out to member stations, said to not "focus on the threat to CPB funding [...]" but rather include the situation as a subtext within a greater possible and passionate message about the mission, vision and value of your station" (Goldsmith, 2017, para. 5). The article further quotes Vickie Lawson, the CEO of East Tennessee PBS, "If you call 'woe is me' and it doesn't happen, it gets harder to ask for help the next time" (Goldsmith,

2017, para. 6). A strategic deployment of fear-based appeals would seem out of place given the scenario described in the *Current* article.

This analysis has shown historically how broadcasting in the United States has been dominated by big business and commercial interests since well before the invention of radio. Commercial broadcasting interests and the interests of non-commercial broadcasters are directly opposed to each other, and it has been shown that there is a traceable history of commercial interests quelling the interests of non-commercial broadcasters. If pushing fear was not the intention of the CPB and other public media organizations in their discourse, then the instances of fear appeals discovered in this research could be interpreted as being the result of that difficult historical relationship. This finding is important because it reveals that there is an inherent fear that is part of the underlying culture of public media. As has been shown, that fear can manifest itself unintentionally through the discourse public media organizations push to the public. Realizing that an underlying fear is present in the culture of public media organizations can better help those organizations in the development of value appeals and discourse during future threats to their existence.

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