INDEPENDENT VOICES:
THIRD SECTOR MEDIA DEVELOPMENT
AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN SASKATCHEWAN

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By

PATRICIA W. ELLIOTT

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines nonprofit, co-operative, and volunteer media enterprises operating outside Saskatchewan's state and commercial media sectors. Drawing on historical research and contemporary case studies, I take the position that this third sector of media activity has played, and continues to play, a much-needed role in engaging marginalized voices in social discourse, encouraging participation in community-building and local governance, fostering local-global connectedness, and holding power to account when the rights and interests of citizens are jeopardized. The cases studied reveal a surprising level of resiliency among third sector media enterprises; however, the research also finds that the challenges facing third sector media practitioners have deepened considerably in recent decades, testing this resiliency. A rapid withdrawal of media development support from the public sphere has left Saskatchewan's third sector media at a crossroads. The degree of the problem is largely unknown outside media practitioner circles, even among civil society allies. I argue this relates to the lack of recognition of nonprofit, co-operative, and volunteer media as a distinct third sector, thus obscuring the global impact when hundreds of small undertakings shed staff and reduce operations in multiple locations across Canada. At the same time, there is increasing recognition that such media have the potential to fill a void left by commercial and state media organizations that have retreated from local communities. Accordingly, this dissertation makes the case for a coordinated media development strategy as a component of the social economy. The challenge is to build useful mechanisms of support among civil society allies that do not replicate oppressive donor-client relationships that are all too common in the arena of governmental and private sector support. While never simple, the opportunities and social benefits are considerable when citizens devise the means to participate in the creation of a robust, diverse media ecology.

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DEDICATION

To my parents, Helen and Harvey Elliott

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMARC: *Association mondiale des radiodiffuseurs communautaires*

AMNSIS: Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan

APP: Aboriginal Peoples Program

APTN: Aboriginal Peoples Television Network

ARC: The Art of Regional Change

ARC du Canada: *Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada*

ARCQ: *Association des radiodiffuseurs communautaires du Québec*

ATP: Aid To Publishers

BDU: Broadcasting Distribution Unit

BIPP: Business Innovation for Print Periodicals

CAB: Canadian Association of Broadcasters

CACTUS: Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations

CAJ: Canadian Association of Journalists

Cancom: Canadian Satellite Communications Incorporated

CBC: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

CC: Canada Council for the Arts

CCIR: Canadian Centre for Investigative Reporting

CCPA: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

CCTA: Canadian Cable Television Association

CDI: Co-operative Development Initiative

CED: Community economic development

CEP: Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada

CIDA: Canadian International Development Agency

CFRC: Community Radio Fund of Canada

CFSC: Communication for Social Change

CLC: Canadian Labour Congress

CMF: Canada Magazine Fund

CMFE: Community Media Forum Europe

CMPA: Canadian Magazine Publishers Association

COLP: CUSO-Oxfam Labour Project

CP: Canadian Press

CPF: Canada Periodical Fund

CRIS: Communication Rights in the Information Society

CRTC: Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission

CUPE: Canadian Union of Public Employees

DNS: Department of Northern Services

DSS: Department of Social Services

EZLN: *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional*

FCC: Federal Communications Commission

FHQTC: File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council

FNUniv: First Nations University of Canada

FSIN: Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations

GATT: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

GDI: Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

IBC: Inuit Broadcasting Corporation

ICTV: Independent Community Television Co-operative

IDRC: International Development Research Centre

IMC: Independent Media Center

INCA: Indian Communication Arts

LIP: Local Inititiaves Program

LPIF: Local Programming Improvement Fund

MBC: Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation

MNN: Manhattan Neighborhood Network

MSSK: *Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan*

NAB: National Aboriginal Broadcasting

NCP: Native Communications Program

NCRA/ANREC: National Campus and Community Radio Association/*Association nationale des radios etudiantes et communautaires*

NDP: New Democratic Party

NDP: Northern Distribution Program

NET: National Educational Television

NFB: National Film Board

NNBAP: Northern Native Broadcasting Assistance Program

NWICO: New World Information and Communication Order

PAP: Publications Assistance Program

PDAP: Publications Distribution Assistance Program

RAPM: Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry

RICDEP: Rural Interchurch Development Education Program Co-operative

SAC: Saskatchewan Action Committee, Status of Women

SALM: Support for Arts and Literary Magazines

SBDSMP: Support for Business Development for Small Magazine Publishers

SCA: Saskatchewan Co-operatives Association

SCAN: Saskatchewan Communications Access Network

SCN: Saskatchewan Communications Network

SCIC: Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation

SEC: Support for Editorial Content

SFL: Saskatchewan Federation of Labour

SGEU: Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union

SICC: Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College

SID: Support for Industry Development

SIFC: Saskatchewan Indian Federated College

SIGA: Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Association

SILP: Saskatchewan International Labour Program

SNCC: Saskatchewan Native Communications Corporation

SOEEA: Saskatchewan Outdoor Environmental Education Association/SaskOutdoors

STF: Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation

SUN: Saskatchewan Union of Nurses

TNI: Taqramiut Nipingat Incorporated

TSO: Third Sector Organization

TVNC: Television Northern Canada

UDP: Uranium Development Partnership

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WAN-IFRA: World Association of Newspapers and Newspaper Publishers

WGINC: Working Group on the Information Needs of Communities

WTO: World Trade Organization

CHAPTER 1
"OF WHAT USE IS A NEWSPAPER?"
MEDIA THEORY FROM BELOW

1.1 Introduction

It is April 3, 2009, in the Canadian prairie city of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Inside a comfortable conference room at the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel, mining industry executives, government functionaries, and news reporters take their seats. At the front of the room Dr. Richard Florizone, head of Saskatchewan's Uranium Development Partnership (UDP), stands ready with a copy of *Capturing the Full Potential of the Uranium Value Chain in Saskatchewan*. The report—developed by a panel of 12 "stakeholders" and mining industry representatives (p. i)—contains 20 recommendations on how to best exploit the province's considerable uranium resources (Uranium Development Partnership, 2009). The morning's photo op has been well choreographed. At the appropriate moment, Florizone will step forward and present the document to Saskatchewan Enterprise and Innovation Minister Lyle Stewart and Crown Corporations Minister Ken Cheveldayoff (Saskatchewan, 2009, April 3), generating applause and camera flashes. But there's a disturbance near the front of the room, where members of the media have been assigned to sit. One of the journalists looks unfamiliar, at least to those in charge. Marcel Petit is a recognizable figure on the streets outside the hotel's glass-fronted entrance, an independent filmmaker who supports his documentaries by working for the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op, located just a few blocks away. Inside these doors, however, he is an unknown factor: long-haired, Aboriginal, and, by extension, considered likely to disrupt the morning's choreography. Next to him sits Saskatoon bookstore owner and community activist Peter Garden. It was Garden who heard about the press conference and decided it should be captured for the public record. "I just wanted to document it," he explains later. "We wanted to see who the players were and hear what they had to say. So that was my interest in being there"

(personal communication, 2012, April 16). At this point, Garden doesn't know Petit well. He has turned to him as a media practitioner who seems accessible, a local figure with some shared community connections. Petit is new to the topic of uranium development, but he certainly knows how to operate a camera. He has brought along his occasional editor, Angela Mae Edmunds, an award-winning filmmaker who has experience working on environmental and treaty education film projects in the school system. Entering the room, none of the three plans to disrupt the press conference (M. Petit, personal communication, 2012, April 16). Their very presence precipitates disruption nonetheless. The video-recorded exchange is later posted on Vimeo:

> Unidentified official: "Please move to the back of the room, or I'll have to ask you to leave the room.
>
> Petit: And why?
>
> Official: Because…
>
> Petit: Because we're media.
>
> Official: No you're not." (O'Shea, 2012)

After a five-minute standoff, the trio moves two rows back, satisfying officialdom in the short term. In the long run, though, the choreography has been indelibly altered. The photo op plays out as planned, but now with awareness that peripheral eyes are looking in on the scene, moving the discourse from lockstep to heteroglossia in an instant.

The press conference ends with a promise of further public consultation. Guessing that people in rural and northern communities are likely unaware of the process and its potential impact, the documentarians develop a plan to get the word out. Over the next three months they will create and produce three short videos, in partnership with the environmental group Clean Green Saskatchewan. Although relegated to the back seats at the press conference, their work now moves front and centre, energizing, informing, and rallying the public to participate in an

important public debate. Between April and July 31, 2011, a total of 2,167 individuals unaffiliated with any previously identified stakeholder group make presentations at UDP meetings, adding their voices to 1,257 individual responses received by letter and email (Perrins, 2009). From a policymaker's point of view, the response is remarkably robust and immediately useful to forward planning, revealing that industry insiders had failed to read the depth of public opposition to nuclear power development, or to address the flaws in their economic model that were uncovered by citizen-researchers (Saskatchewan, 2009, Dec. 17).

For Edmunds' long hours of editing, Petit buys her supper (M. Petit, personal communication, April 16, 2012). He himself receives nothing. The videos are just another shoestring media operation, here today, gone tomorrow, significance unmeasured.

The link between independent media-making and citizen engagement in decision-making has been demonstrated in similar cases around the globe. An earlier example is the role community radio played in empowering citizen input into a shopping mall development in a *kampung* neighbourhood in Bandung, Indonesia, in 2000. Radio Cibangkong took to the air after 1,800 households received eviction notices to make way for a shopping mall development (Siriyuvasek, 2004). In addition to acting as a voice for affected community members, the station brought historically disenfranchised residents into the process of local decision-making for the first time. *Kampung* was originally a generic term for rural villages, many of which had been engulfed by urbanization during a time when the town of Bandung and other sleepy colonial-era way stations grew into booming metropolises. Although allowed to retain some of their own local laws, such communities were never afforded legal land tenure in the new urban landscape. When rural dwellers flooded into Bandung to escape post-independence political violence, what had once been semi-autonomous *kampungs* evolved into an impoverished collection of squatter communities that lived at the mercy of local government decisions, such as

the decision to build a shopping complex on land already occupied by an established, albeit poor and disentitled, neighbourhood (Reerink, 2006). The remarkable aspect to note is that Radio Cibangkong was established not to report on the protests, but rather to facilitate and help catalyse community opposition, with little separation between the medium and *kampung* dwellers. The station's volunteers monitored the mall's construction, which was also polluting and disrupting the nearby streets; they kept the community informed, rallied *kampung* dwellers, and at times acted as the people's representatives in meetings with mall owners (Siriyuvasek, 2004). While the protests did not achieve legal land titles for the occupants, they marked a sea change in relations with local government:

> *kampung* dwellers no longer accept land acquisition at any price. Negotiations over compensation last long and are cantankerous…These are not just power games. Local officials and politicians now acknowledge that *kampung* dwellers have a right to compensation. (Reerink, 2006, p. 14)

Volunteer-run and embedded in the community, Radio Cibangkong represents just one example of how grassroots media, comprised of non-state, non-commercial media enterprises that operate as civil society organizations, can contribute to the democratization of local governance. Yet such activity often remains outside the lens of local governance discourse and, indeed, outside the lens of dominant social movement and media theorizing, as observed by Downing (2001) and Hackett and Caroll (2004). As a result, the daily struggles of community-based media practitioners tend to go overlooked and unsupported, even by natural allies such as trade unions, development agencies, and co-operatives. Globally, these citizen journalists encounter the same human rights threats experienced by professional journalists, although their experiences tend not to be as well documented by international bodies (World Association of Newspapers and Newspaper Publishers, 2013). At the same time, they face the additional pressure of withdrawal of government/agency funds, legal marginalization via regulatory

restrictions, and ethnic language media bans, to name a few common barriers (Elliott, 2007; Murillo, 2010). Added to this is simple neglect, as observed by Hackett and Carroll (2004):

> As one media activist pointed out to us, relatively well-resourced groups such as labour unions pour millions of dollars into their advertising campaigns, and thus into the coffers of the corporate media, while projects for media democracy remain chronically under-financed and barely visible to the public eye. (p. 3)

The low level of support for third sector media is a significant challenge. As argued by Ó Siochrú (1996): "Building beyond isolated, often spontaneous and self-sacrificing, media projects towards an enduring and mutually sustaining democratic media sector is going to demand a qualitatively new level of organization" (p. 7).

This statement forms the premise for my research, and builds on my earlier research into the social impacts of community radio. My M.A. thesis, *Another Radio Is Possible: Community Radio, Media Reform and Social Change in Thailand* (Elliott, 2007), demonstrated that small, volunteer-run community radios offered an empowering forum through which ordinary people could take a lead role in local governance discussions in areas ranging from forestry policy, to flood compensation, to major development projects such as dams and pipelines. Furthermore, the sudden emergence of autonomous, semi-legal radio stations in rural and ethnic communities decentred the Thai nationalist project and presented a direct challenge to the manner in which the state controlled the airwaves and, ultimately, people's lives. The impacts extended beyond Thailand's borders, creating pressure for media reform in neighbouring countries, building skills among migrants who would one day return to their countries of origin, and linking local actors to transnational social movements concerned with media reform within a wider palette of 'people power' initiatives. From this example, I argued that grassroots media—although seemingly small in scale and isolated from mainstream society—represent some of the world's most rich, diverse, and socially powerful media, capable of toppling dictators and engendering major societal paradigm shifts. My Ph.D. dissertation takes this theoretical groundwork one step

further, examining how such media might be better recognized and supported for its potential to democratize public discourse and local governance.

To date, much of my work as a journalist and university-based researcher has been internationally focused. For this research project, I return to my home province of Saskatchewan, Canada, which—common to other research environments I have encountered—enjoys its own particular mix of regional specificity and global generalizability. This dissertation reveals how media operating outside Saskatchewan's traditional state and commercial media spheres have played, and continue to play, significant roles in engaging marginalized voices in social discourse, encouraging participation in community-building and local governance, fostering local-global connectedness, and holding power to account when the rights and interests of citizens appear to be overlooked or jeopardized. Further, the cases studied reveal a surprising level of resiliency despite the long odds engendered by shoestring budgets, volunteer burn-out, and, on occasion, the wrath of powerful interests. The research finds, however, that the challenges have intensified considerably in recent decades, testing this resiliency. A rapid withdrawal of media development support from the public sphere has left Saskatchewan's third sector media at a crossroads. While cuts to the state broadcaster are relatively well known and have been contested by a national organization, Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, to date no comparable movement has emerged to support many hundreds of small magazines, community broadcasters, and online newspapers that are suffering under the same paradigm across Canada. This dissertation makes the case for the creation of a coordinated media development strategy among Saskatchewan's third sector media practitioners and their civil society allies, including the co-operative movement, labour organizations, universities, and Indigenous governments and organizations. The challenge is to build useful mechanisms of support that do not replicate oppressive donor-client relationships that are all too common in the arena of governmental and

private sector support. While never simple, the opportunities and social benefits are considerable when local citizens devise the means to participate in the development of a robust, diverse media ecology.

1.2 Literature

While the aforementioned initiatives of Petit and Garden are admirable from a citizen-activist perspective, we cannot deny that today's global mediascape appears to be dominated by large corporate and state media conglomerates. When turning on your television, or picking up your daily paper, whether in Saskatoon or Singapore, oligarchic control of media appears overwhelming, inescapable, and irrefutable. Within this mediascape, it seems improbable that two people with a video camera, lacking budget or broadcaster, and reaching a relatively minuscule audience, might provide any sort of competitive—or even noticeable—social impact. Yet we have seen many examples in history that suggest ordinary citizens are capable of stunningly effective and impactful media praxis. During the Arab Spring popular uprising, for example, digital media were used by thousands of citizens to sidestep state-controlled media (Emiroglu, 2012). Examining Egyptian popular protests between 2004 and 2011, Lim (2012) observes that online blogs and social media served as a tipping point for long-standing grievances, in that they provided additional platforms for creating emergent group identities, which became blended and extended via traditional communications networks associated with soccer clubs, mosques, coffee houses, and taxi drivers. In an earlier work, Lim (2003) explores a remarkably similar example of Suharto's Indonesia, where the ruling elite appeared to have a lock on all media of consequence, including the newspaper and broadcast industries. However, in 1998 a single email titled *Dafter Kekayaan Suharto*—A List of Suharto's Wealth—was photocopied, passed around, and shared word-of-mouth, bringing thousands of protestors into the streets to overthrow a regime that had seemed unassailable (Lim 2003). Whether handbills or

Twitter, while the technological platforms change over time, grassroots communications and social change are inseparable through history, from the Chartists' "ephemeral, unlicensed, scabrous, and surreptitious" placards, pamphlets and broadsides (Findlay, 1997, p. 52), to Burma's secret network of prison newspapers (Linn, 2001), to underground video screenings during Chile's Pinochet regime (Gumucio Dagron, 2004).

Despite their demonstrated power to alter social and political landscapes, grassroots communication networks and their media have long remained "unmeasured, uncounted, and poorly known in official circles or outside their localities" (Downing, 2001, p. 27). This is not to say scholarship addressing alternative media is nonexistent. Scholars such as Downing (2001), Atton (2002), Hackett (2000; 2004), Langlois and Dubois (2005), and Coyer (2008) have consistently paid attention to independent grassroots media. However, it is safe to say that in recent decades the media of mass popular culture—under serious study in the academy at least since 1960 (Nelson, 2006)—has undergone a much more significant opening of theoretical space than the space afforded to low-tech, small-scale media projects (Weaver & Daspit, 2005). This has included the development of a related critical pedagogy, led by Giroux (1994), Storey (2003), Hinds, Motz, and Nelson (2006), and others, and has been accompanied by the establishment of entire academic departments and numerous journals devoted to the study of pop culture and mass market entertainment. Thus, one may observe that the critical study of U.S. sitcoms, international pop stars, Hollywood movies, comic books, and online video games is by now a relatively crowded field. Outside the context of occasional mass protests that spill over into mainstream global media consciousness, much less theoretical attention has been paid to the political projects of myriads of small, localized, grassroots media endeavours (Elliott, 2007).

In the industrialized West, an environment long sheltered by its material comforts from dramatic political upheaval, this is perhaps to be expected. Those comforts are now slipping,

however; the ruptures of Occupy Wall Street, Idle No More, the Maple Spring, and the Ferguson protests suggest greater attention to grassroots communication in all its forms, is warranted. Meanwhile, some of the world's most notable and effective media initiatives have been emanating from barrios, refugee camps, Indigenous communities, and rural villages around the globe. This emergent media activity is worth exploring, along with the growing body of 'media theory from below' that is expressed in orientation handbooks, newsletters, web discussions, meeting declarations, and personal testimonies. Those who care to look are offered an enriched perspective on the world and a new framework for understanding human relations and social movements.

It is one thing to observe that dominant theory misses a large portion of the picture. Anyone who engages in the study of alternative media eventually takes up the same lament, usually at the moment a journal reviewer demands 'recognized' western academic sources, as opposed to tattered community radio handbooks. It is another thing to sort out how and why the theoretical deficit occurs. Just as Smythe (1977/1994) argued that communications was the "blindspot of western Marxism" (p. 267), one might argue that communications theory itself suffers from a blind spot. In the words of Langlois and Dubois (2005), "little documentation and discussion on autonomous media exists, even though knowledge and analysis around it abounds within activist communities" (p. 11). This is a phenomenon not restricted to media studies, appearing also, for example, in the field of business studies, where co-operative forms of ownership have historically generated new economies and introduced novel business practices adopted outside the co-operative sector, yet "remain largely invisible in business school curricula or in mass media" (Findlay, 2012, p. 1). In the field of media studies, Downing (2001) posits the blind spot occurs because "the established research and theory agenda…has a predilection for the seemingly obvious and easily counted" (p. v). There is more than lazy science at work, however.

Following a review of foundational media theory literature, this dissertation advances the premise that our media blind spot has historical roots in the industrialized West, where communications and media studies first emerged alongside theories of mass society, *de facto* privileging mass media as the only media of account. The original historical anchoring of media theory within mass society discourse continued even as media studies penetrated and intermingled with the fields and schools of critical theory, political economy, post-modernism, and cultural studies, influencing the degree to which 'ordinary people' might be regarded as meaningful media producers capable of enacting social change. As shall be discussed later in this literature review, dissenting voices such as Antonio Gramsci (1916/trans.1996), and the later emergence of post-colonial, civil rights, feminist, and queer discourse promoted more de-centred frameworks through which to view media producers and audiences as having social agency unto themselves rather than acting merely as passive cogs in the industrial machine of mass media.

Meanwhile, the historical experience of colonized peoples in the Global South and the Americas contributed anti-oppressive perspectives on media activity. Grounded in popular movements and anti-colonial struggles, theorists and practitioners such as Ngũgĩ (1983), Espinoza (1969/trans.1979), Diallo (2008) and others revealed the possibility of social change through action, as shall be expanded upon in the latter section of this literature review. Importantly, their worldview placed human communications, rather than material production, at the centre of social life, leading to explorations of how media praxis might be constructed and employed differently, a dialogue long muted in the academy of the industrial West.

1.2.1 Seen From Above, We Look Like Ants

In Europe, media theory emerged alongside mass society theory at a time when modern humans began to extend their social ties well beyond family and village. As early as the 17th Century, English elites began to take notice of the gathering 'mob' or 'crowd' as a social

phenomenon. With the French Revolution, "the power of the crowd for the transformation of society was realized" (Marshall, 1997, p. 28), a historical development welcomed by some, feared by others. Between the Paris Commune and the Russian Revolution, the crowd grew, staking claims in social and political territory occupied by the ruling class, and coalescing into workers' parades that marched toward the democratic revolutions of 1848 (D. Schiller, 1996; Ely, 2002). Cultural elites expressed alarm at penny press novels, racy newspapers, and dancehall tunes that threatened high culture (D. Schiller 1996), while political and social theorists grew even more alarmed at the crowd's potential to pelt gendarmes and social elites with paving stones. Such developments were also viewed by many members of the scholarly class as "a permanent threat to civilization" (McClelland, 2010, p. 214).

In the 1890s, workers' strikes and May Day parades occupied European streets, occasionally resulting in police suppression and riots; observing these events from a criminological perspective, Scipio Sighele argued that the crowd's "unified soul" was "more susceptible than the individual to the baser emotions of a primitive man" (cited by Marshall, 1997, p. 34). Social psychologist Gustave Le Bon (1896/trans. 1999) described the crowd as feminine: emotional, feeble-minded, and easily led by strong men. In his introduction to the 1999 edition of Le Bon's *The Crowd* (*Psychologie des foules*), a treatise still popular enough to require regular reprints, Nye (1999) writes that crowd science, from its very beginnings, has suffered from a fundamental epistemological problem: "the fact that the vast majority of observations of crowd behavior have been made from above by members of the upper classes, who have the most to lose from the depredations of the mob" (p. 5). The crowd's ability to form organizations, to establish newspapers, and to elucidate political demands in carefully crafted statements such as the People's Charter of 1838, did little to elevate its status in the eyes of

propertied citizens who feared those who might "fire the cornstock and the barn" (as cited by Epstein & Thompson, 1982).

Early proponents of co-operativism were less alarmed, viewing the growth of industrial workers' associations as a natural order "as ancient as society itself," in line with the pre-industrial commons that were central to agriculture and the fisheries (Giddings, 1887). Far from viewing themselves as barbarians at the gate, early working class radicals understood themselves and their confreres as contributors and providers, "those that are willing to work" as opposed to "those who are not" (*The Poor Man's Guardian*, as cited by Epstein & Thompson, 1982). Indeed, both agrarian and urban workers of the 19th Century spent their major efforts not in 'mob depredations,' but in the formation of combines and co-operatives through which working citizens forged rational alternatives to the negative impacts of rapid industrialization and urbanization, and brought hope for a better world (Hammond & Hammond, 1947; Fairbairn, 1991).

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels also stood among 19th Century thinkers who welcomed the emergence of a new social class, elevating 'the crowd' to 'the masses' and 'the proletariat,' the only social entity capable of resisting the exploitation of a rising capitalist class:

> the workers begin to form combinations [trade unions] against the bourgeois; they club together in order to keep up the rate of wages; they found permanent associations in order to make provision beforehand for these occasional revolts. (Marx & Engels, 1848/ 1959, p. 16)

Far from emotional and primitive, Marx and Engels' proletarian masses comprised the rational, organized forces that humanity needed to survive and progress in a rapidly evolving world. This was not pitchfork-waving counter-reaction; rather, the working class was deeply tied to the process of industrialization: "with the development of industry the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more" (Marx & Engels, 1848/ 1959, p. 16).

The concept of mass society as an outgrowth of industrialization would influence communications scholars for many decades to come, as they sought to define the basic nature of modern media through Marxist principles. Reading Marx, media theorists applied the concept of capital accumulation, surmising that media were a product invented and sold for the gratification of profiteers. Prominent among these theorists were Louis Althusser and the French Marxists, who turned the humanist notion of a free press on its head, pointing out that the presses were the ideological instruments of capitalists intent on increasing their profits (Kperogi, 2008). They were not the first to view media as the mouthpiece of capitalism, nor were they the only stripe of socialist to do so. Ferdinand Lasalle, leader of a German socialist political movement that Marx ardently opposed, deeply distrusted the popular press, declaring newspapers in particular to be "the commonest of vulgar commercial operations" (as cited by Theobold, 2006, p. 22). Lasalle issued this warning to socialists:

> The true enemy of the people, its most dangerous enemy, and even more dangerous since it appears in the guise of a friend, is today's press! Be sure to remember with burning soul this motto which I hurl at you: hatred and contempt, death and destruction to today's press! (as cited by Theobold, 2006, p. 22)

In fact, Marx himself had little to say about media, but what he did say often ran counter to the dominant socialist/Marxist discourse on communications. Twentieth Century Marxists soundly rejected Marshall McLuhan, for example, even though Marx had earlier observed that the printing press, as a replacement for epic poems and ballads, fundamentally changed how stories were constructed and told—a decidedly McLuhanesque notion (Grosswiler, 1998). As well, Marx was considerably less judgmental than his followers of populist media forms like newspapers, although he critiqued the notion of 'freedom of the press' as being too closely associated with 'freedom of enterprise' (Splichal, 2006). Beyond this critique, he imagined media as a creature that need not be exclusively tied to enterprise; in fact, he considered modern communications important to the socialist project (McChesney, 2007).

This openness should not surprise us. McChesney reminds us that Marx was a newspaper writer who is considered one of the founders of modern political journalism. In addition to co-authoring more than 800 newspaper articles with Engels, he served as European correspondent for *The New York Daily Tribune* for 10 years (McChesney, 2007). Doubtless this background in the popular press contributed to Marx's view of newspapers as victims, not tools, of capitalist oppression. "The press is the most general way by which individuals can communicate their intellectual being. It knows no respect for persons but only respect for intelligence," he wrote, adding that conflicts over censorship represented a struggle between authorized and unauthorized voices (1842/trans. 1975, p. 175). Similar to Kant's distinction between the rights of publishers and the rights of authors, Marx drew a distinction between freedom of ownership and freedom of expression (Splichal, 2006). Writing in *Rheinische Zeitung* on the subject of freedom of the press, Marx (1842/trans. 1975) argued:

> The primary freedom of the press lies in not being a trade. The writer who degrades the press into being a material means deserves as punishment for this internal unfreedom the external unfreedom of censorship, or rather his very existence is his punishment. (p. 175)

It is worth noting that Marx arrived in London as a refugee of censorious press policy. "You know that every day the censorship mutilates our paper so much that it has difficulty appearing," he wrote in 1842, while editor of *Rheinische Zeitung* (as cited by McLellan, 1973, p. 58). Although he forcefully challenged Prussian censorship at every turn, the battle cost him his position in 1843, which was followed by the closure of the journal two weeks later (Marxist Internet Archive, n.d.). With this history in mind, it seems plausible that a Marxian view of media should simultaneously occupy a place in hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourse, as described by the early 20th Century writings of Antonio Gramsci. In a brief commentary titled "Newspapers and the Workers," Gramsci (1916/trans. 1996) drew a distinction between "the bourgeois press" and "the Socialist press," urging workers to boycott the former (para. 7). It

must be noted, however, that Gramsci's works were not translated or widely distributed until the 1970s. By this time, a generation of theorists had already firmly situated media as having no purpose or potential beyond a mode of production, subject to the iron law of profit. In the words of Bücher, a founder of the field of media research: "The modern newspaper is a capitalist enterprise, a kind of news-factory in which a great number of people …are employed on a wage, under a single administration, at very specialized work" (cited by Splichal, 2006, p. 44). From this standpoint, there was little possibility that journalists and other media producers might engage in counter-hegemonic work within a capitalist society. Regrettably, Marxism-inspired thinkers seemed deaf to the hum of their own presses, which might have inspired more dynamic, less static, explorations of media.

1.2.2 From Masses to Audiences

The idea of media as an industrial product, rather than a form of communication, was advanced in Europe and North America by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. They shared Marx's experience of exile from Germany, but the media landscape they left behind was quite different. Marx experienced media as a place of struggle; Horkheimer and Adorno experienced totalitarianism's triumph. They arrived in the United States in the 1930s as refugees from Nazism, having witnessed the worst abuses of media power (Theobold, 2006). Hitler's inner circle understood that the emotional persuasion of film and art could maneuver a population into acquiescence and ignorance more effectively than the gun, recalling Le Bon's theory of the easily swayed 'feminine' crowd. Little wonder, then, that Adorno and Horkheimer came to view the masses as mere pawns in a campaign of domination, a stance that would imprint itself on media theory for much of the 20th Century. Observes D. Schiller (1996):

> Their critique of the culture industry…betrayed, in characteristic combination, both a mandarin mistrust of the new popular forms of film and broadcasting and a politically charged insight into the repressive historical complex stretching 'from Caligari to Hitler' and, indeed, across all of capitalist modernity. (p. 67)

In 1944's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno (1944/1986) dropped the term 'mass culture,' in favour of 'cultural industry,' clarifying that modern mediated culture represents an industry product, as opposed to spontaneous populist expression. They arrived at this nomenclature via their research exposure to American mass media. As part of a radio research project of the late 1930s, Adorno (1941/2006) posited that the technology of radio itself allowed only one possible outcome: "When a private person in a private room is subjected to a public utility mediated by a loudspeaker, his response takes on aspects of a response to an authoritarian voice even if the content of that voice or the speaker to whom the individual is listening has no authoritarian features whatsoever" (p. 113). Radio, according to Adorno, was a blunt instrument of monopoly capitalism over which the listener exercised no control beyond twiddling the dial, writing letters to the station manager, or switching off. Studying a program called 'The Home Symphony'—which invited listeners to play along with an orchestra—Adorno concluded that attempts to democratize the medium through audience participation were rigid, futile undertakings in which "the amateur's participation only harms the resulting musical phenomenon" (p. 169). In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, he and Horkheimer developed these observations into the meta-theory that "films, radio and magazines make up a system which is uniform as a whole and in every part" (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944/1986, p. 120). Within the "iron system" the audience is subjected to the "ruthless unity" of the culture industry, in which "something is provided for all so that none may escape" (p. 123). Significantly, Horkheimer and Adorno included oppositional media (which at the time they may have observed in pacifist, left, and avant-garde circles) as part of this scenario, stating: "Even the aesthetic activities of political opposites are one in their enthusiastic obedience to the rhythm of the iron system" (p. 120).

Following close in the footsteps of this influential theoretical work, in 1948 Canadian Dallas Smythe launched the first formal class in the political economy of communications at the

University of Illinois' newly established Institute of Communications Research. Clearly the words of Horkheimer and Adorno resonated through the halls of the Institute. Together with Herbert I. Schiller, Smythe explored media as "a total system under capitalist domination" (McChesney, 2007, p. 63). Explaining this concept to the Adult Education Council of Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 1960, Smythe began:

> Modern media man is a personable, likable chap. And he means well. But he cannot be understood unless one recognizes that he lives and works in a corporate environment. (Smythe, 1960/1994, p. 109)

By now, the concept of mass society had become what Daniel Bell called "probably the most influential social theory in the Western world" (as cited by D. Schiller, 1996, p. 65). Under this influence, Siebert, Peterson and Schramm's (1963) *The Four Theories of the Press* equated 'the press' with "all the media of mass communication" (p. 1). First published in 1956, *The Four Theories* became assigned reading for media students for decades to come. This work framed media—whether operating under authoritarian, libertarian, 'social responsibility,' or Soviet dictums, as mass media, owned by either states or capitalist profiteers—as bound up in the U.S. versus U.S.S.R. dichotomy. Thus in the halls of the western academy, the outlook for the common person was geographically limited and decidedly gloomy. One exception was Herbert Marcuse (1964), a Frankfurt scholar who noted the "paralysis" of critical theory: "Confronted with the total character of the achievements of advanced industrial society, critical theory is left without the rationale for transcending this society" (pp. i, xiv). A California resident, Marcuse gained popularity in the 1960s for suggesting "the possibility of emancipatory escape" via alliances among intellectuals, students, and oppressed groups (Theobold, 2006, p. 29); however, he still counted the masses as manipulated objects incapable of transcending media messages:

> Our insistence on the depth and efficacy of these controls is open to the objection that we overrate greatly the indoctrinating power of the 'media,' and that by themselves the people would feel and satisfy the needs which are now imposed upon them. The objection misses the point…. The people enter this stage as

> preconditioned receptacles of long standing; the decisive difference is in the flattening out of the contrast (or conflict) between the given and the possible, between the satisfied and the unsatisfied needs. (Marcuse, 1964, p. 8)

The 1971 translation of Gramsci's prison notebooks added new grist to debates about humanity's revolutionary potential. Gramsci studied and came of age intellectually in Turin, Italy, a manufacturing centre with an active industrial working class. Like Marx, he wrote for and edited progressive newspapers throughout his years of activism, which primarily involved founding and later leading the Communist Party of Italy (Hoare & Smith, 1971). Imprisoned by the fascist dictatorship in 1926, he used his decades of prison time to delve deep into the philosophical and political debates that marked his years of involvement in the Communist International, substituting the phrase 'philosophy of praxis' for Marxism to dodge the prison censors. In his notebooks, which spanned topics ranging from Italian history to American Fordism, Gramsci presented an egalitarian decentering of society, arguing all persons are intellectuals and philosophers, no matter their social station or education. He understood the individual as a part of an ensemble of social relations, with no man truly standing alone in thought and action. Acting within this great ensemble, he theorized, humanity is defined as a continuous process of social action and social change—in this sense, Gramsci argued, all persons are political.

> Possibility means "freedom." The measure of freedom enters into the concept of man. That the objective possibilities exist for people not to die of hunger and that people do die of hunger, has its importance, or so one would have thought. But the existence of objective conditions, of possibilities or of freedom is not yet enough: it is necessary to "know" them, and know how to use them. And to want to use them. (Gramsci, 1929-1935/trans.1971, p. 360)

In the Gramscian worldview, passivity is an impossible state, a position that leads Marcuse's "preconditioned receptacles" more toward "the possible" than toward "the given" (p. Marcuse, 1964, p. 8). This concept would migrate into the field of media studies, albeit with varying degrees of agency assigned to the audience, and often at odds with prevailing views of

the power of media as an industrial product. Murphy (1977), for example, waded into the debate of whether audiences were "puppets or people" (p. 345), erring on the side of individuals being less susceptible to influence than proposed by theoreticians of the 1940s. He further argued that "mass audiences, to the extent that one exists, consist of smaller audiences, each with its own identity and individual characteristics" (p. 372). However he ultimately felt the majority of the populace could not escape a dominant media power that was dangerously anti-social and beyond human control (Murphy, 1977).

Jürgen Habermas (1979) took human agency a step further when he advanced the idea of mass media as a public sphere that might provide a forum for public communication. He began with the argument that Marx viewed the movement of history not as a single ironclad law, but rather as a mixture of empirical conditions and social agency, subject to the influence of social agents acting in response to their own conditions and constructs. In *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (1979), Habermas questioned the Frankfurt School's pessimism, although he acknowledged that Adorno "had good reasons to reject the demand for a positive conception of social emancipation and ego autonomy" (p. 72). However, he further argued that Adorno's reference to Kantian concepts of character contained a self-contradiction through which the possibility of freedom might be glimpsed; from this point, Habermas offered a counter-theory of communicative action through which social norms "can be changed and can find different historical expression" (p. 98). His reciprocal, fluid theory of speech-act consensus-building (Habermas, 1998) stood in counterpoint to the worldviews of Weber and Adorno, whom Habermas felt put too much weight to "the automization of instrumental rationality," which, according to Habermas, presented only one possible realization for the modern state and economy (Habermas, 1979, p. 128). He argued that the idea of economically-determined, media-steered social interaction was not a sufficiently broad theory to "explain social action as a whole

in terms of strategic action" (1998, p. 235). In contrast, Habermas looked to the formative influence of 19th Century proletarian insurrections and theorized:

> critical developments do not always have to count as indicators for the exhaustion of structurally limited steering capacities; under certain circumstances they are also signs that the rationality structures that became accessible in the modern age have not yet been exhausted and that they allow for a comprehensive institutional embodiment in the form of extensive processes of democratization. (p. 129)

This included not only room for economic and political reform, but also for reform of public consciousness, potentially ushering in a world where the pursuit of happiness would become delinked from material gain and linked to a new era of mutuality. For expressing the latter sentiment, his proposal was widely critiqued as "idealisation of public reason;" it was an awkward fit within a dominant discourse that stretched back to Le Bon's easily swayed mob (Macnamara, 2003, p. 5).

Authors such as C. Wright Mills (1968) challenged any sense of optimism regarding humanity's ability to transcend 'the media,' which Mills described in its entirety as "a malign force" (p. 35) that served only to build markets and facilitate "psychological illiteracy" among the populace (p. 32). Far from the revolutionary potential of the masses envisioned by Marx, the academy's prevailing view was of legions of dupes who were universally subject to, in the words of U.S. theoretician Dwight MacDonald, "the deadening and warping effect of long exposure to movies, pulp magazines and radio" (as cited in D. Schiller 1996, p. 65). D. Schiller (1996) observes: "The new scientists of communication were never able, in these circumstances, to lift their field of study free and clear of a widespread attribution (at least among members of the educated middle class) of corrosively debilitating media effects" (p. 66). In an essay titled 'Of Happiness and Despair We Have No Measure,' Ernest van den Haag (1968) encapsulated a dystopian media landscape, writing, "The mass media do not physically replace individual activities and contacts—excursions, travel, parties, etc. But they impinge on all…and

everywhere it isolates the bearer from his surroundings, from other people, and from himself" (p. 5). Furthermore, there was little sense that these debilitating effects could be challenged. McChesney (2007) recalls:

> Even the most brilliant work of the late 1980s, say Herman and Chomsky's *Manufacturing Consent*, allowed little hope that changing the media system of the society as a whole was a plausible goal. We were simply learning how the system worked for intellectual self-defense. We were speaking truth to power, but we had no illusions that we were in any position to contest that power. (p. 84)

Manufacturing Consent (Herman & Chomsky, 2002) stood as a seminal work in the field of political economy of the media. The work presented a propaganda model in which the original moral intentions of journalistic practice had become engulfed and filtered by a hegemonic power complex—obscuring the hand of manipulation behind apparently seamless public consensus on issues such as U.S. military actions abroad. However, Chomsky also presented the case for alternative media sources as a viable and needed counter-hegemonic option to the propaganda machine (Achbar & Wintonick, 1992).

Meanwhile, beginning in the 1950s, researchers toyed with the idea that the audience might have some ability to react independently to media products. This was the hypothesis that led Gerbner (1958) to *True Story* magazine, curious to discover whether or not individual readers might interpret and use the information in confessional stories. However, rather than interviewing the readers themselves, whom he described as uneducated females who were "more emotional" than middle class women, Gerbner corresponded with editors, writers, and "experts" (p. 32). While the editors reported a more dynamic media-audience relationship than previously theorized, Gerbner firmly concluded this relationship was a manipulation ultimately designed to enforce the social norms of capitalist society.

As media studies departments expanded and multiplied throughout U.S. universities, this remained the dominant theoretical position. Yet when Klapper (1960) studied the effects of

media messages on audience members' beliefs and attitudes, he observed the messages tended to merely reinforce attitudes audience members already held. His 'limited effects' theory, published in 1960, attracted wide criticism for "resurgent individualism" that skirted "the fundamental social purpose and institutional structure of the contemporary mass media" (D. Schiller 1996, p. 59). Yet similar studies had concurred, most notably the 1955 work of Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955/2009), who accused their contemporaries of presenting humanity as no more than "an atomist mass…prepared to receive the Message" within a society "characterized by an amorphous social organization and a paucity of interpersonal relations" (p. 16).

Media effects research presented a wealth of variables, personal contacts, and influences at work. Schramm (1971) summarized:

> Indeed, the most dramatic change in general communication theory during the last forty years has been the gradual abandonment of the idea of the passive audience, and its replacement by the concept of a highly active, highly selective audience, manipulating rather than being manipulated by a message—a full partner in the communication process. (p. 8)

Such media effects studies coincided with the substantial influence of Michel Foucault (1994), who departed from conventional Marxism by co-joining oppressor and oppressed. In the Foucauldian world, power relations resembled a tangled ball of string, occasionally separated but never parted. Thus the poor collude in their own oppression and "revolution is a different type of codification of the same relations" (pp. 122-123).

Feminists recognized a dangerous depoliticization in this stance, yet remained attracted to Foucault's post-structuralism and his recognition of patriarchal manifestations in discourse (Whitehead, 2002). While there were few women faculty in traditional media studies departments, throughout the wider academy, feminism, queer theory, critical race theory, and post-structuralism gained ground. As the viewpoint shifted from centre to periphery, hegemonic discourse fell into question as an all-powerful social force. Academia itself was deconstructed to

accommodate more diverse ways of knowing by scholars such Gayatri Chakravorti Spivak (1998), who called on western theorists to state their positionality as investigating subjects, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2005), who advanced the concept of Indigenized post-colonial research. Notably, Stuart Hall (1973) developed a communications theory that accorded more power to the audience as co-author and co-producer of communications.

Patricia Hill Collins' (1990) classic work *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* found currents of effective resistance in the everyday lives of Afro-American women, echoing the earlier writings of Du Bois (1903/2006), whose 1903 *The Souls of Black Folks* presented the daily experiences of black Americans as a repudiation of segregation and a celebration of the other. Similarly, Afro-American and Southeast Asian experience informed the work of James Scott (1990), whose *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* revealed hidden transcripts of grassroots discontent, which he observed held the power to radically challenge and unbalance the dominant social order. Significantly, Bakhtin's (1935/1981) ontology of dialogism was unearthed from the dustbin of history to take its place in post-structuralist discourse. Bakhtin, a linguist, proposed that our language is in constant interplay with the world around us; every utterance shapes future utterances, just as it is shaped by utterances past. Further, every word is "at the same time determined by that which has not yet been said but which is needed and in fact anticipated by the answering word. Such is the situation of any living dialogue" (p. 280). This allowed for the development of a more fluid communications theory capable of responding to the uses of media technology, whether new or old, as wielded by grassroots actors.

Much of this theorizing held great promise for a re-conceptualization of media power. While Bagdikian (1971), for example, accorded "enormous power" to the captains of media, writing, "Where once priests and kings decided what the populace would hear, the proprietors of

the mass media now decide" (p. xii), he also grasped the possibility of turning power on its head through the advent of cable television, which held the potential of affordable access for local, citizen-directed endeavours that might "bring the news more nearly into balance with how people actually live," and provide "a new communication to serve people in their family and community life" (p. 303).

Picking up from this theme, Raymond Williams (1989) posited that, rather than complaining about media constructs, the Left could better work toward utilizing new cable technology to develop co-operative and community-based programming alternatives. He advanced the discussion further in *The Year 2000* (1983), noting that alternative cultural producers were "already working or waiting at the edges of existing centralized systems," giving rise to the possibility of citizen-directed media (p. 148). A major barrier lay within leftist political discourse itself, he posited, where interpretations of historical materialism had become production-centric to the point where the concept had become "a prisoner of the social orders which it is offering to analyse" (p. 263). "If you have a fixed idea of 'the masses,' you cannot really take them into account," he wrote in *Communications* (1979). As a remedy, he suggested a move from the language of 'production' to the language of 'livelihood,' creating theoretical space for co-operative relationships and people-centric social change. Pointing to the world of economy and power, he concluded, "It is not in staring at these blocks that there is any chance of removing them. They have been named so often that they are not even, for most people, news. The dynamic movement is elsewhere, in the difficult business of gaining confidence in *our own* energies and capacities." Williams (1979) himself found it instructive to actually meet with radio and television producers, through which he gained increased respect for their work and aspirations. He consequently recommended the teaching of media production techniques. "If we are to feel that our communications system belongs to the society, instead of feeling that it is

what 'they' have set up for us, this kind of understanding of method must grow," he wrote (1979, p. 146).

However, Williams' call for dynamic action and new political projects experienced a rather soft landing, arriving just as the conversation around media shifted from political economy to the burgeoning field of cultural studies in the final decades of the 20th Century. At first glance, this would seem to be a field ripe for the study of grassroots media activities, providing a framework capable of breaking down the mass audience into multiple collectives. "Cultural studies has been…most interested in how groups with the least power practically develop their own readings of, and uses for, cultural products—in fun, in resistance, or to articulate their own identity," explained During (1993), presenting a framework that appeared highly amenable to the actions of grassroots actors engaged in communicative action for social change through small community radios and photocopied newsletters. Importantly, Marshall (1997), helping to advance the conception of a mediascape that blurred the line between audiences and producers, added, "Unlike in crowd theory, the collective is not silenced into manipuable automatons" (p. 47).

However here, as in political economy studies, the lens remained strongly directed toward mass culture and First World technological environments, which engendered its own cultural assumptions and influenced the objects of study chosen by many of the new leading theorists. As I have observed in previous work (Elliott, 2007), the emergence of new topics such as virtuality, cyber-reality, and hyper-reality (Baudrillard, 1993; Everett and Caldwell, 2003; Hayles, 1999), along with a heightened interest in visual images over spoken-word culture (Mirzoeff, 1998), and fascination with spectatorship and celebrity (Rogoff, 1998; Marshall, 1997), proved valuable for understanding some aspects of western media culture, and should be appreciated for this contribution. However, such texts tended to globalize the experience of a

tiny minority of the world's people who happen to be highly mobile, connected through technology, and largely disconnected from oral and traditional culture. While, for example, Tsagarousianou's (2004) framework of "late modern transnational mobility" certainly seems to describe the 21st Century world we imagine ourselves to inhabit, such theory was a poor fit with my research on migrants and refugees from Burma, who travelled long distances on foot, who experienced borders as formidable, life-threatening obstacles, and whose access to communications technology was restricted by law in both Burma and Thailand.

Perhaps such life experiences explain why, as Castells (2004) observes, the broadly held assumption of a universalized, globalized, rootless world has not materialized in the expected way; rather, people continue to "assert their own culture and experience in their own localities" (p. 30). Nonetheless, Welsch (1999) observed that the bulk of western cultural studies texts advanced in the academy tended to cast people's demands for specific identity in a marginalized, retrograde light. Accordingly, there was little incentive to pay attention to media tied to local ethnic and cultural identity struggles, including the rich array of media production by and among colonized and oppressed populations. The impact in the field of media studies, Kamalipour and Mowlana (1994) note, was a tendency "to ignore traditional, organizational, and group [communications] channels that are unique to the region's culture" (p. xviii). Said (1994) further argued that "incoherent" post-structuralism has little to do with the daily political and economic struggles of ordinary people around the globe, adding complexity around the question of how well cultural studies might respond to systems of direct repression as experienced by grassroots media practitioners (p. 168).

Some scholars further argue that at a certain point in the development of cultural studies, its political edge was blunted. Mellor (1992) contends this trend took place as cultural studies began to take a more prominent place in the academy, creating pressure to produce "a less

abrasive form of cultural studies" (pp. 664-665). During (1993) points to "the French model" as downgrading economic scarcity as a systemic issue, leading to a relatively depoliticized analysis unconcerned with equitable distribution of resources, a trend that developed in concert with the rise of the new right in the U.S. and Europe (p. 11). Scholars of the Birmingham School, including Stuart Hall (1992), openly worried that a highly textualized cultural studies divorced from the tensions of oppressive institutions and relationships "will have renounced its 'worldly vocation'" (p. 284). Warned Hall: "If you lose hold of the tension, you can do extremely fine intellectual work, but you will have lost intellectual practice as politics" (p. 284). The potential outcome is, as Agger (1992) argued, the transformation of cultural studies from a political project concerned with power relations into a highly specialized "cult" of conference-goers and intellectual superstars, speaking their own rarified lingo and doing little to solve real problems in the world (p. 153). "Disciplined academics engage in self-referential discussions that legitimize their common enterprise rather than solve real empirical and political problems," he observed (p. 154). This was echoed by Said (1994), who wrote that, with the exception of "Chomsky and a few others who persist in telling the truth," the public realm has become "full of tokenized intellectuals who had been once perhaps symbols of resistance and principle and have now become media figures and stars of the lecture platform. As a result, the message has become muted" (p. 168). Such a muting becomes a problem for the study of grassroots media, whose participants typically represent economically and politically marginalized voices engaged in very real struggles for survival and social change, in some locations facing exile, imprisonment, and execution as a result of their media work.

Meanwhile, adherents to a more politicized, critical realist outlook within the political economy legacy found themselves on the margins of media studies, as described by McChesney (2007): "By the time I came into the academy, citing Marx, unless it was to dismiss him, was

something one had to be very careful about doing, for fear of being dismissed as an ideologue" (p. 58). It seemed the feeling was mutual:

> As for myself, I was never big on high theory, and I had little attraction to post-modernism. When it made sense to me it was sometimes provocative and sometimes self-evident; and too much of the time it made no sense to me at all. I like low-brow theory that was grounded in politics and could make sense to people outside a seminar room. (p. 59)

Regrettably, however, political economists like McChesney seemed unable or unwilling to lift their gaze beyond corporate-dominated American mass media, to where there might be more hopeful models and compatible theorizing. Like many of their counterparts in cultural studies, political economists who were engaged in media studies failed to widen their focus to include the Global South, where a tapestry of ethnic, Indigenous, and local media production was mounting serious challenges to the established order, locally and globally. In *Communication Revolution*, McChesney (2007) writes that he cringes at the prospect of reading more student works that "glorify some lost cause social movement or alternative media, many times in some locale like Bolivia or Central America" (p. 88). Yet in locations like Bolivia, unheralded by western scholarship, a communications revolution had been underway for several decades.

1.2.3 Viewed From Below, Ants Can Move Mountains

Lasalle's identification of the press as "the true enemy of the people" (as cited by Theobold, 2006, p. 22) can find no sharper contrast than the words of Moses Kotane:

> Of what use is a newspaper to a people? A newspaper is a very useful weapon in the hands of a people or a class or to whoever possesses it. Without a newspaper we would never know what other people want, see, think or do; and what was happening in the world today…. We need a paper which will tell the people the truth of what is happening and what is to be done. (as cited by Jones, 1997, p. 352)

How may we account for such disparate views? The *Four Theories* (1963) would classify Kotane's view as libertarianism standing opposite communism. Yet Kotane wrote the above passage for the maiden issue of *Inkululeko* (Freedom), launched by the South African

Communist Party in 1921 (Jones 1997; Tomaselli & Louw 1991). It is important, therefore, to look beyond the familiar dichotomies of the West for answers. To begin with, it is worth considering that Africans communicated with each other quite effectively for thousands of years before the arrival of the modern press. Societies were highly mobile, and word flowed along the 'bush telegraph' of drums and market grounds (Hachten, 1971). When the printing press arrived, it was not solely delivered by the hands of capitalists, for there was little profit in trekking bundles of papers across the continent's far-flung, challenging geography. Following the flow of the bush telegraph, some of the first and most popular newspapers were produced by Christian missions for native African readers in rural settings, some published in the local vernacular. Launched in 1873, the Presbyterian-sponsored Xhosa-language *Isigidimi* enjoyed some editorial autonomy under an African editor, and contained "a sustained, albeit muted, level of protest" against colonial rule (Switzer, 1997, pp. 25-24). Through such publications, the ground was laid to adapt the press to later Africanist and nationalist discourse, leading to a vibrant black media culture. In 1884, when the Presbyterian mission felt *Isigidimi* had gone too far, editor Tengo Jabavu resigned and started his own paper, *Imvo Zabantsundu* (Native Opinion), becoming one of the first editor-nationalists in a growing continental trend (Switzer, 1997). In Egypt, turn-of-the-century newspapers such as *Al-Liwa'a*, *Muayyad* and *Al-Garida* were the first voices to openly challenge colonial rule and call for democratic reform (Dabbous, 1994). Speaking of British West Africa, Hachten (1971) writes:

> The press gave to nationalism its prime means of diffusion, the medium through which the idea could be disseminated. Nationalism gave to the press its principal message, its raison d'être, in extending circulation. But the separation of the two is not feasible because they were wedded by a common heart and a mind—that of the editor-nationalist. (p. 144)

Some editor-nationalists, such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, founder of Ghana's *African Morning Post* (and, later, president of Nigeria), launched their publications as liberal-entrepreneurial projects

(Hachten, 1971). Other papers, such as *Inkululeko*, were connected with left-wing movements and parties. Yet their pages shared the central idea that African media were fully joined to anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles.

At the same time, the anti-colonial struggle reshaped Marxism to African ends. Similar to early British Chartists, African Marxists were willing to seek alliances across class divides, linking with students, soldiers, and "progressive members of the middle class" (Ngũgĩ 1986, p. 2). This included progressive journalists, publishers, and writers. Literary critic Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o (1983) argues the experience of imperialism influenced cultural expression more deeply than class struggle:

> On the cultural level, in the colonies and neocolonies there grew two cultures in mortal conflict: foreign imperialist; national and patriotic. And so, out of different nationalities often inhabiting one geographic state, there emerged a people's literature, music dance, theatre, art in fierce struggle against foreign imperialist literature, music, dance, theatre, art imposed on colonies, semicolonies and neocolonies. Thus the major contradiction in the third world is between national identity and imperialist domination. (p. 80)

Placing media and culture within the field of change, instead of acquiescence, expanded the possibilities and expectations surrounding the expected role of media in society. In his address to the Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists, held in Rome in 1959, Sékou Touré stated:

> To take part in the African revolution it is not enough to sing a revolutionary song; you must fashion the revolution with the people. And if you fashion it with the people, the songs will come by themselves, and of themselves. (as cited by Fanon, 1963, p. 206)

This activist stance seems a polar opposite to the dark and despairing world of Adorno and Horkheimer. Indeed the circumstances of colonized peoples afforded no other response. As well, the idea of people power was no pipe dream in the global south. While the industrialized world grew mired in the social stasis of advanced capitalism, Ghandi's non-cooperation movement led India toward independence and Mao Zedong's army of peasants and workers

marched into Beijing. The Viet Cong defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu, while in Cuba Castro and Guevara assembled highland farmers into a successful revolutionary army. In Kenya, the Mau Mau battled British forces; the Algerian FLN battled the French (Ngũgĩ, 1983). Throughout Africa, 35 new nations emerged between 1956 and 1966 (Hachten, 1971). One could not defend the idea that liberation was impossible, when liberation seemed to be happening all around. Further, the liberation framework entertained polarities that, although fading from western worldviews, remained an undeniable presence in people's daily lives in the south. In the words of Frantz Fanon (1963): "The colonial world is a world cut in two…. It is obvious here that the agents of the government speak the language of pure force" (p. 38).

Fanon, a Martinique-born psychiatrist who practiced in Algeria, instantly recognized Algeria's anti-French resistance as his own, a struggle shared by millions around the globe. Taking direct aim at western mass society theory, he called for a new 'native intellectual' capable of leading change: "Instead of according the people's lethargy an honored place in his esteem, he turns himself into an awakener of the people; hence comes a fighting literature, a revolutionary literature, and a national literature" (Fanon, 1963, pp. 222-223). A turn toward local wisdom marked a further divergence from prevailing western theory. Fanon urged intellectuals to "discover the substance of village assemblies, the cohesion of people's committees, and the extraordinary fruitfulness of local meetings and groupments" (p. 47). It was a worldview that looked beyond unenlightened masses to "the enlightened actions of men and women" (p. 204). In other words, the study of humanity required a return to humanity:

> Today we are present at the stasis of Europe. Comrades, let us flee from this motionless movement where gradually dialectic is changing into the logic of equilibrium. Let us reconsider the question of mankind. Let us reconsider the question of cerebral reality and of the cerebral mass of all humanity, whose connections must be increased, whose channels must be diversified and whose messages must be re-humanized. (p. 314)

Some 20 years later, Ngũgĩ (1986) echoed the call to recognize local knowledge not as an island, but as part of the sea that moves history. Further, he argued communications was the central process by which this is accomplished. Although Ngũgĩ acknowledged the Marxist dictum that production is the birthplace of communication, he added: "But there is more to it; communication between human beings is also the basis and process of evolving culture" (p. 15). The movement from a production-centric view of human relations toward a communications-centric view was a significant development in southern media theory. "Communication is at the very heart of social experience," wrote Washington Uranga (1985), a pastor based in Argentina (p. 72). Canadian theorist Hackett (2000) added that all social movements are in themselves a form of communication, from the moment an idea is first shared, to the gathering of momentum, to the movement's ultimate success or demise. This position has the effect of elevating cultural production, including media, above material production in terms of defining the basic construction of social relations, introducing more multi-sited avenues for contestation and change.

Like McLuhan's 'global village' theory, Ngũgĩ (1983) anticipated the development of what would become an essential tenet of alternative media praxis: the idea of a pluralist, diverse, particularist approach to media production "very much like a universal garden of many-coloured flowers" (p. 24). Yet he noted that to engage in the nationalist project, he and many of his contemporaries were forced to communicate in the language of their oppressors, a contradiction that led him to write in Gikuyu or Ki-Swahili instead of English (Smith, 2005). This method was confronted by hooks (1994), who advocated reclaiming and changing the language of oppressors as a space of political resistance. Addressing Ngũgĩ 's dialectic also became a signature contribution made by Indigenous peoples to anti-colonialist discourse. Indigenous activists demonstrated that cultural and linguistic preservation could occupy an important place in anti-

colonial struggles. This was made possible in part by breaking away from the strategy of forming a singular nationalist counter-identity within what were essentially colonial geographic boundaries. Calling their peoples the Fourth World, pan-Indigenous leaders understood that, while Indigenous Peoples were connected to specific territories, they traded and communicated across and between continents (Masaqueza & B'alam, 2000). This understanding called for the promotion of sovereignty through international bodies (Wilson & Stewart, 2008), in addition to pressing for rights under national governments. After World War II, pan-Indigenous leaders began to lobby the newly formed United Nations to advance their land claims, seizing on the discourse of international human rights. Ravi de Costa (n.d.) describes the approach: "The strategy has been to bypass nation-states—who have rarely recognized Indigenous rights, sometimes even denying the existence of Indigenous peoples within their borders—and to present Indigenous concerns to higher political forums" (para. 2). The result was an activism that was simultaneously global, and "decidedly localist, respecting the autonomy and distinctiveness of disparate Indigenous groups" (Wilson & Stewart, 2008, p. 8). National discourse was recast in the light of Indigenous, as opposed to colonial, nations, in a movement de Costa defines as Indigenism. The blending of local, First Nations, and global concerns was articulated in the Zapatista movement's email communiqués, linking Indigenous resistance in Chiapas to social movements around the world. Although *The First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle* (1993) was addressed to "Mexican Brothers and Sisters," its call was clearly intended for the world, its authors describing themselves among "the dispossessed, we are millions" (EZLN General Command, 1993).

1.2.4 Another Media

It stands to reason that against this emerging theoretical background, a different media praxis should emerge. Throughout Latin America, Africa, and Asia, new movements developed around alternative media constructions and theories. In the words of Raghu Mainali of Nepal:

> We are trying to produce an act of communicating. We are not manufacturing consent. We are not manufacturing the news. We are trying to develop discussion and consensus about common issues. (as cited by Deane, 2008, p. 40)

Over decades of development, certain shared principles emerged in practice. An early step was the introduction of the 'amateur' journalist. Following the idea that media worked best when they flowed along traditional communication lines, *Inkululeko* attempted to recreate the bush telegraph in print, calling on readers to become reporters. In a 1944 article, the editor of the day explained:

> *Inkululeko* has no paid writers. Those who write for our paper are ordinary people who have no training in journalism. From towns and villages in all parts of South Africa they send news to *Inkululeko* of what is happening in their lives…What is news?...Suppose that in some location there is no street lighting and a donga [hole] in the road. A man is walking on this road at night and falls and breaks his leg. That's news—and we want to hear about it. (as cited by Jones, 1997, p. 352)

Similarly, the New Latin American Cinema movement of the 1960s called for 'imperfect' filmmaking. Espinosa's 1969 manifesto 'For an Imperfect Cinema' argued that films attempting to achieve the high production values of a Hollywood film were "almost always reactionary" (Espinosa, 1969/trans. 1979). In response, he called for a new poetic embracing film and video production in the style of "folk art" tied to human liberation:

> Imperfect cinema finds a new audience in those who struggle, and it finds its themes in their problems. For imperfect cinema, "lucid" people are the ones who think and feel and exist in a world which they can change. In spite of all the problems and difficulties, they are convinced that they can transform it in a revolutionary way. Imperfect cinema therefore has no need to struggle to create an "audience." (Espinosa, 1969/trans. 1979, para. 32)

The concept migrated beyond cinema to other media forms, contributing to present-day theorization of the citizen journalist:

> We think of Indigenous film and video in particular as 'imperfect media' whose locally based 'embedded aesthetics' and concern for making political and cultural interventions may contribute to the theorization of a politically emancipated form of citizen's media. (Salazar & Córdova 2008, p. 55)

While African nationalists centred much of their work on newspapers, theatre, and novels, Latin American activists experimented with emerging broadcast technology. As in the case of early African print media, small-scale, low-wattage FM radio was introduced to rural areas by Christian missionaries, rather than profit-seeking corporations. On October 16, 1946, a Catholic priest's assistant named Joaqin Salcedo Guaurin launched a volunteer-run community radio station to help disseminate information among the farmers of Colombia's Tenza Valley, 80% of whom were illiterate (Ibrahim, n.d.; Gumucio Dagron, 2003). Two years later, Bolivian tin miners established *Radio Sucres* in the mining town of Cancaniri and *Radio Nuevos Horizontes* in the southern city of Tupiza (Buckley, 2000). Supported by union dues, tin miners' radio represented "an extension of literally centuries of struggle by workers against the exploitative oligarchy" (Huezca, 1995, p. 151). Thus radio entered a space that Adorno had declared could only be occupied by the iron voice of authority. Importantly, the adoption of radio technology allowed for the introduction of dialogue, a process more difficult to achieve in print media. Tin miners' stations were set up not as broadcasters, but as communications hubs for public meetings and discussion among the workers. It was an idea that had been briefly floated in the west by Bertolt Brecht (1932):

> The radio would be the finest possible communication apparatus in public life, a vast network of pipes. That is to say, it would be if it knew how to receive as well as to transmit, how to let the listener speak as well as hear, how to bring him into a relationship instead of isolating him. (p. 1)

Brecht's suggestion was destined to be drowned out by Adorno's theory of radio as monologue. To give credit to western scholars, there were attempts to introduce dialogic media concepts, a difficult task in a non-receptive environment. Convinced it was too late to introduce two-way TV in the U.S., Dallas Smythe (1973/1994) tried to take the idea to China. At meetings with Chinese officials and academics in late 1971 and early 1972, he argued that technically it was "quite possible to design it as a two-way system in which each receiver would have the capability to provide either a voice or voice-and-picture response to the broadcasting station, which might then store and rebroadcast these responses or samples of them" (p. 232). His Chinese colleagues never took up the idea, which Smythe attributed to their inability to see the capitalist tendencies of a one-way television signal. It is plausible, however, that Chinese officialdom knew very well the potential of two-way broadcast communication, including the potential for diversity and dissent on the air. In any case, Smythe returned from China with a deeper appreciation of anti-imperialist struggles. In an essay distributed to members of the UNESCO international communications research committee, he argued that western ideological content arrives hand-in-hand with media development strategies—a position that prompted his swift removal from the committee and a severing of his long-standing ties with UNESCO (Smythe, 1973/1994; Guback, 1994).

In Latin America, however, the field for such ideas was fertile. The model of dialogic, empowering media fit hand in glove with Freirian (1969/trans. 1993) education reforms and community-based action research units set up by scholar-activists such as Orlando Fals Borda (2008). The open structures of grassroots media attracted the participation of women, ethnic minorities, and Indigenous communities. In the words of a Mixe woman from Oaxaca:

> The information we are looking for and that we broadcast on the radio has to do with our culture and the recognition of our language, but also we deal with important themes for women that men have not dealt with. For example, they will never talk about how men are beating their women and children, or at least not

> talk about it the way we do, with a woman's sensibility. (as cited by Chávez, 2008, p. 103)

By 2008, there were an estimated 10,000 community radio stations in Latin America, spread from Mexico to Argentina (Gumucio Dagron, 2008). Indigenous communities in particular enlisted community radio in the quest to reclaim cultural sovereignty (Murillo, 2008). Community radio arrived somewhat later in Africa, with the deregulation of state media in the 1980s (Karikari, 2000). No longer considered an important technology in the west, radio adapted well to local conditions of isolation and illiteracy, practical because "almost everyone has one at home and people have only to stretch out their arm to turn it on" (Boussof & Medani, 2008, p. 68). Grounded in Freire's Cultural Action for Freedom, station managers understood "the biggest challenge we have is to change our society" (Tiemoke Kone, as cited by Perkins, 2000,, p. 1). Flattened hierarchies and democratic decision-making were considered the ideal structure for this to take place:

> I have been the Director of Radio Bélékan in Kati, Mali, since 2000 and I have always directed the organization with a high sense of responsibility, in other words democratically…. Decisions are taken collectively and by consensus. (Diallo, 2008, pp. 61-62)

As these and other participatory media initiatives—such as video collectives, village media centres and vernacular newspapers—spread through Africa and Asia, they attracted loyal audiences and state repression in equal doses. Taking a cue from pan-Indigenous movements, many grassroots media organizations today defend their existence within the discourse of international human rights. The essential argument is that communication is the foundation of human experience, and that therefore the right to communicate must be guaranteed. After decades of debate, the right to communicate has never been successfully established in official multilateral declarations; however, it continues to be consistently expressed in activist statements such as the People's Communication Charter (n.d.):

> Communication is basic to the life of all individuals and their communities. All people are entitled to participate in communication within and between societies. (People's Communication Charter, n.d.)

There has been debate, however, regarding the limitations of a rights-based emphasis under current legal frameworks. Alice Munyua and Emamanuel Njenga (2004) advised a Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS) campaign meeting that "communication rights campaigns as a lone concept would not be easily understood in many African countries particularly outside civil society groups unless linked to livelihood issues and civic education activities" (p. 21). Speaking of the Asian context, Siriyuvasek (2004) agrees that a narrow rights-specific focus does not adequately address the broad challenge of gaining freedom to express and to dissent. With this in mind, addressing grassroots media as a communications rights project requires a broader view of human rights, one that accepts that rights can be developed and contested locally, placing everything from the re-ordering of interpersonal relations to the drafting of municipal bylaws on the same field as universalist multi-lateral statements and initiatives.

White (1993) argues that this fluid, bottom-up construction of rights—as opposed to static, top-down construction—takes in the whole field of grassroots struggle, thus widening the array of actors and issues involved. A people's media framework therefore envisions rights not only through the narrow frame of a legalistic master narrative, but also encompasses a broad field of specific local and personal struggles—between farmer and district governor, husband and wife, panhandler and police officer, for example—as part of the struggle to communicate and relate to others in fairness, equality, and dignity. Central to this thinking is the idea that media and social movements are one and the same, deeply tied to processes of democratization and people's empowerment. This position is clarified by the Association Mondiale des

Radiodiffuseurs Communautaires/World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC):

> What is Community Radio? Not the media moving into community but the community moving into the media. We…are not the media but the facilitators of social movements, the voice of civil society. (AMARC, 2007, p. 22)

Conceptualizing media activity as a social movement geared toward social change has given grassroots media a central role in people's democracy movements around the globe. It also results in media activity that is less tied to a particular technological approach than to the movements themselves, resulting in a fluid use of communications tools according to available opportunities and circumstances. For example, following the 2005 military coup in Nepal, an order came down barring broadcast of news on the radio, and allowing only music. Kunda Dixit (2008) of *The Nepali Times* describes how radio operators reacted:

> They resisted in creative ways and not without a sense of humour. One radio station in central Nepal…started singing the news in popular folk tunes. Another community station in Dang district took its entire studio down to the sidewalk and read the news to passersby every evening at 6PM until large crowds started to gather and the news reading ritual itself became a form of protest. (Dixit, p. 24)

Nepal's community radio networks facilitated the organizing of protests and linked remote communities to national-level conversations about the future of democracy. By April 2006, hundreds of thousands of rural dwellers marched toward Kathmandu, leading to the restoration of parliament (Dixit, 2008). Following the crisis, community radio continued to play a role in the reorganization of government by providing horizontal communications channels:

> Throughout this political transition community radio stations took the news from the capital to the remote rural areas, and brought feedback and reaction of the nation to Kathmandu. Several syndicated services for radio exchange were set up to facilitate this two-way conversation between the centre and the periphery. The end result was that there was maximum public participation in the political evolution through horizontal nationwide communication via the FM network. (Dixit, 2008, p. 28)

A similar scene played out in Venezuela, when the government of Hugo Chavez was threatened by a military coup in 2002. After the mainstream media refused to cover street demonstrations, grassroots media came to the fore:

> Grassroots radio and television stations broadcast the initial resistance to the coup and consequently helped to mobilize tens of thousands of people who took to the streets in protest. The resistance was further amplified through the use of cell phones to distribute information and mobilize popular resistance. Two days after it had begun, thanks in part to grassroots media, the coup regime collapsed. (Uzelman, 2005, p. 26)

But nowhere was the connection to social movements and the fluidity of technological innovation more apparent than in Seattle in 1999, when the Independent Media Centre (IMC) movement introduced to the world an Open Source content management system that allowed easy uploading of text, video, audio, and photographs to the Web. Five hundred IMC reporters covered events from inside the protest, attracting more viewers than CNN (Coyer, 2005). At the same time, radio pirates roamed the streets with suitcase radio stations and climbed into trees and other high points with transmitting equipment hidden under their clothes; from these vantage points they delivered reports via low frequency FM simultaneously broadcast on the Internet (Van der Zon, 2005). Seattle also marked the coming-of-age of media as temporary autonomous zone, following the ideas of anarchist Hakim Bey. Employing moveable autonomous media in the form of pirate radios and event-specific IMCs and blogs, "activists are able to build global networks, offering an alternative vision of our world, and challenging the corporate control over media at a fraction of the cost" (Van der Zon, 2005, p. 34). This contrasted mightily with the corporate media's early fumblings with the Internet and social media, viewed as an external threat that could not be molded to existing business models (Quandt, 2008).

In addition to frequent reference to Hakim Bey, indy media activists point to Zapatismo as a guiding influence. A communiqué issued by IMC New York, in response to the shooting death of indy reporter Brad Will in Oaxaca, stated: "Indymedia was born from the Zapatista

vision of a global network of alternative communication against neoliberalism and for humanity" (New York City Independent Media Centre, 2006). Frequent exchanges between global activists and Chiapas have clearly figured in the development of a 'third option' media philosophy that looks beyond the binaries introduced by traditional western media theory. In a video communication to a Free the Media Teach-In held in New York City, Zapatista leader Subcomandante Marcos (2001) summed it up as a choice between stasis and liberation, both in thought and action:

> We have a choice. We can have a cynical attitude in the face of the media and say that nothing can be done about the dollar power that creates itself in images…. Or we can simply assume incredulity. We can say that any communication by the media monopolies is a total lie. We can ignore it and go about our lives. But there is a third option that is neither conformity, nor skepticism, nor distrust. It's the option to construct a different way…. Here in North America—the United States, Canada and Mexico—independent media has, on occasion, been able to open spaces even within the mass media monopolies, to force them to acknowledge the news of social movements. (pp. 174-175)

Adopting this concept, thousands of grassroots alternatives have moved forward across North America, forming media collectives, co-ops, and nonprofit organizations. Indeed, McChesney (2007) was taken by surprise by the level of grassroots activity present in U.S. society, after he and a few colleagues put out a call to challenge a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) proposal that supported further deregulation of U.S. corporate media ownership:

> John, Josh and I thought it would take years of hard organizing to get to the point where we could really have any appreciable effect on media policymaking…. Then something wonderful and magical happened: The massive grassroots uprising against media consolidation that caught everyone, including me, by surprise. (p. 156)

Activists on the ground would undoubtedly be less surprised by this turn of events. As Cameroonian media theorist Francis Nyamnjoh observes, "However repressive a government is and however profound the spiral of silence induced by standardized global media menus, few people are ever completely mystified or wholly duped" (as cited by Ndlela, 2010, p. 91). In any

case, the events prompted McChesney to remark that the idea that "what we as citizens do—or don't do —in the coming decade will make all the difference" (p. xii). Noting that technological availability had collided with spreading social inequality in North America, he concluded:

> If we act as if social change for the better is impossible, we guarantee it is impossible…. Let's not blow this opportunity. Let's have a real communications revolution. (p. 221)

His words indicate that the discourse of human agency and liberating social change through alternative media praxis has seeped from the barrios of the Global South to university hallways of North America, offering myriad new possibilities for future media studies literature.

In the United States, it took a full-blown crisis in the commercial media sector to bring these possibilities into focus in the policy realm. Between 2005 and 2009, newspaper advertising revenues plummeted 47%; the global economic collapse of 2008 added to fuel to the fire, touching off a series of prominent daily newspaper closures and staff contractions across commercial media platforms (Waldman & The Working Group on the Information Needs of Communities [WGINC], 2011). By 2011, a federal commission of inquiry found 520 local U.S. television stations reported no local news at all (Waldman & WGINC, 2011). This trend threatened the Jeffersonian notion of a free press as the people's watchdog, long taken for granted as bedrock of American society. A spate of reports and roundtables generated amid this crisis found promise in alternative models, particularly nonprofit and co-operative media projects. Central to this literature pool is the 2010 report of the Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities, a national inquiry financed by the the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the Commission's follow-up series of 15 white papers, including: *Community Information and Civic Engagement: Five Strategies to Revive Civic Communication* (Levine, 2011); *Assessing Community Information Needs: A Practical Guide* (Harwood, 2011); and *Rethinking Public Media: More Public, More Local, More Interactive*. (Cochran & Hurly,

2011). The media reform group Freepress also issued a study in 2011, *Saving the News: Toward a National Journalism Strategy*, (Pickard, Stearns, & Aaron, 2011), which identified nonprofit, low-profit, and co-operative models as "new ideas for challenging times" (p. 12).

1.3 Organization

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 lays out the theoretical foundations that gave rise to the research questions central to this work. This is accomplished in the form of a review of literature. Chapter 2 outlines terminology, research questions, and methods. Chapter 3 provides a historical overview of media development in Canada, while Chapter 4 provides Saskatchewan context. Chapter 5 presents a detailed case study of *Briarpatch* magazine, through a combination of interviews and document analysis. Chapter 6 presents additional cases and perspectives intended to reveal challenges and potential solutions from the standpoint of third sector media practitioners. This chapter also includes perspectives gained from a focused discussion among community actors, as a means to determine if and how the issues encountered during my research impact life at the grassroots. Chapter 7 returns to the literature, situating my findings as new contributions to local governance and social economy theorizing. It concludes with a call for organized labour, the co-operative movement, Indigenous governments and organizations, and our universities to join with other civil society actors for the purpose of establishing a more diverse, people-centred media ecology.

CHAPTER 2
BUILDING A FRAMEWORK:
UNDERSTANDINGS, QUESTIONS, AND METHODS

2.1 Terminology

2.1.1 Third Sector Media

At the conclusion to a gathering of community media practitioners in Amman, Jordan, in 2006, the *Association mondiale des radiodiffuseurs communautaires* (AMARC) issued a statement calling for recognition of community media as a "distinct media sector" that is alternative to state-owned broadcasters and private commercial media (AMARC, 2006). This language is echoed in the writings of Foster (2011), who suggests the term 'Third Media' to describe minority media activities that seek to "transform society through competitive discourses and oppositional spheres that gain momentum and support for cultural democracy as a social movement" (p. 5). Gumucio Dagron (2004) also uses the term Third Media to describe media that are "in their flesh and bone a part of social movements" (p. 44), and whose key defining characteristic is their independence.

As discussed in the preceding literature review, concepts of liberatory transformation, alterity, dialogism, and the inseparability of communications from social change infuse the type of media praxis that is the focus of this dissertation. Such a brew forms a creature that is hard to pin down, realized in myriad media forms and described by many names, none of which seem to express the entire recipe (see Table 2-1). Scholars such as Atton (2002) tilt toward 'alternative media' as the most broadly applied, understood, and accepted name. Downing (2001) argues the word 'alternative' fails to capture the social change imperatives at work, and offers the term 'radical media' as a better descriptor. Meanwhile, Rodriguez (2001) has coined 'citizens' media' as a way to capture the idea of social transformation within a less marginalizing and oppositional discourse. The term 'community media' is advanced by organizations such as AMARC, to

signify a particular type of organizational imperative rooted in the concept of community-based ownership and empowerment, with links to community development and action (AMARC, n.d.). Siriyuvasek (2004) proffers 'people's media' and 'grassroots media' as inclusive of spontaneous unorganized media activities that are often at the heart of popular uprisings. The term 'third sector media' is a less common title, advanced by the Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE), a civil society organization founded in 2004 to advance community media development across Europe. (It should be noted that CMFE's use of the term is thus far restricted to membership-oriented communications; 'community media' remains the group's preferred term in submissions to EU decision-making bodies, suggesting language may be determined by audience.) Speaking of its member organizations, CMFE describes the "Third Sector Media" as being "made up of non profit-making media serving a local community and has as such a clearly distinct identity alongside the national public service sector and private commercial media" (Community Media Forum Europe, n.d.).

Table 2-1. Examples of terminology in use

Term	Associated with:
Alternative media	Atton; popular usage
Community media	AMARC, UNESCO, civil society organizations
Citizens' media	Rodriguez
Grassroots media	Various
People's media	Sirayuvasek
Another media	World Social Forum
Radical media	Downing
Independent media	Indy Media Centres, Wiki and Open Source movements
Third sector media	CMFE

In adopting the term third sector media, CMFE has borrowed language from the world of multi-lateral agencies and civil society planners to describe what Anheier and Salamon (1996) call "a third complex of institutions, a definable 'third sector' occupying a distinctive social space outside the market and the state" (p. 1).

'Third sector' was employed by Etzioni (1973), who discerned the emergence of "a private economy with a public ingredient and a public economy with a private element" at the end of the 1960s and early 1970s (p. 314). Etzioni's third sector included charities and nonprofits, as well as government-business partnerships and quasi-governmental arms-length programs such as health insurance, student loans, NASA, the U.S. Postal Service, and Amtrak. An almost simultaneous critique using the term third sector was put forward by Levitt (1973), who challenged an already "old" third sector of charitable foundations and public-private partnerships with a "new third sector" of grassroots citizens' organizations that expressed "an overall discontent with things and values as they are" (p. 73). As the phrase 'third sector' made its way into the lexicon over the next several decades, it is Levitt's version which seems to have had the greater influence, present, for example, in M. Taylor's (2010) description of TSOs as organizations that mobilize citizens and challenge existing hegemonies. Similar to debates around the term 'alternative media,' arguments have been marshaled for moving 'third sector' beyond a description of what it is not, because, in the words of Corry (2010), "residual categories are naturally prone to becoming loose and baggy" (p. 11). To this end, Anheier and Salamon (1996) offer five positively defining features:

1. Organized
2. Private (non-governmental)
3. Self-governing
4. Nonprofit distributing
5. Noncompulsory

I have not used the term 'third sector media' in previous works, nor would I consider it universally appropriate to do so. However, third sector as defined by Anheier and Salamon (1996) seems the most useful term available to capture Saskatchewan's mediascape,

encompassing ad hoc projects such as the Clean Green video series; small-scale volunteer media collectives such as *Making the Links Radio*; profit-making co-operative enterprises such as *Prairie Dog* magazine; registered nonprofits such as *Briarpatch* magazine; and First Nations band-funded community radio such as Creek FM. Together, these undertakings serve a diversity of community interests, from oppositional politics to international linkages, to coverage of community events. The term 'third sector' also corresponds to usage in the field by practitioner-theorists such as Marcos (2001), Gumucio Dagron (2004), and the Community Media Forum Europe. Finally, the term has roots in co-operative sector enterprises, offering an alternative to liberal-tinged voluntary sector categorization, which elevates the work of volunteers above the work of people who might like to receive a living wage for their media production.

Recognizing that third sector media may contain a mix of volunteer and professional practice aligns with a social economy viewpoint, defined by Gide as "all efforts made to improve the conditions of the people" (cited by Moulaert & Ailenei, 2005, p. 2040). Bouchard, Ferraton, and Michaud (2006) note that the social economy is simultaneously embedded in both social and economic activities, and therefore encompasses a diverse range of practices that shift according to the situated experiences and needs of its participants. They argue that, however fluid these boundaries may be, the social economy should be considered a distinct form of the economy broadly characterized by four criteria: production of goods and/or services; not pursuing individual profit as a primary goal; voluntary association; and democratic governance. At the same time, they recognize that each criterion contains its own complexities and limitations, and that attempts at categorization cannot capture all possible variations of social economy organization (Bouchard, Ferraton & Michaud, 2006). Following from this observation, I place third sector media under the broader umbrella of Restakis's (2006) description of the social economy as being comprised not of particular organizational structures or capital flows, but as a

commonwealth of ideas, solidarity, and social benefit that may be manifested in a variety of environments. From this perspective, the breadth of Saskatchewan's media praxis may be contained in the social economy's "vast range of organizations, activities, and relationships that encompass a rich spectrum of goals, values, and structures" (Restakis, 2006, p. 12). This viewpoint does not overly distance third sector media practitioners from journalists employed in commercial and state media. Instead, it recognizes shared aims of democratic empowerment and accountability, as demonstrated in codes of conduct laid out by professional associations, such as the Canadian Association of Journalists (CAJ) Ethics Guidelines:

> We serve democracy and the public interest by reporting the truth. This sometimes conflicts with various public and private interests, including those of sources, governments, advertisers and, on occasion, with our duty and obligation to an employer. Defending the public's interest includes promoting the free flow of information, exposing crime or wrongdoing, protecting public health and safety, and preventing the public from being misled. (CAJ, 2011)

Likewise, this view does not confine participatory media praxis only to the third sector, recognizing that it can be nurtured in other environments, for example, the National Farm and Citizen's Radio Forums of 1941 to 1965, produced by a state broadcaster, CBC, in partnership with a non-governmental organization, the Canadian Association of Adult Education (Dale & Naylor, 2005).

Indeed, R. Taylor (2010) recommends a post-structural view of third sector organizations, noting that with the "increasing convergence and blurring of boundaries between state, market and third sector, there is real reason to challenge the appropriateness of both a tri-sectoral model of society and of ever achieving standardization of the field" (p. 6). He points to social economy research as a field that has long accepted the concept of sectoral convergence, a standpoint media scholar McChesney (2007) believes is crucial to media democratization:

> What is striking about the current critical juncture is how strongly journalists and media workers feel alienated from the corporate system. I believe it is crucial we

> establish and maintain close ties to the media professional and draw their perspectives into our work. (p. 25)

Lewis (2007) further argues that the timing of this convergence is crucial, writing, "More than at any time I can remember in the past 30 years, respected journalists in the U.S. and around the world, frustrated by what has become of their profession, appear to be increasingly interested in…starting, leading or working in new nonprofit newsrooms locally, nationally, and even internationally" (para. 28). Related to this condition, social economy theorist Vidal (2010) calls on us to recognize that private, public, and third sectors hold common ideals of social good and ideally should work in concert:

> Any society that hopes to achieve sustainable growth must have a very efficient public sector, a lucrative private sector that is competitive and socially responsible, and a strong and visible third sector. All three sectors are necessary. With unique strategies or action plans, each one meets different, occasionally divergent, objectives, but they all work together toward sustainable development. (p. 70)

However, to wholly abandon sectoral terminology within a broad social economy framework would do a disservice to the organizations described in this dissertation. In their relations with funding agencies and regulatory bodies, such media enterprises have a practical need to identify as a distinct 'third' sector requiring unique policies, evaluative frameworks, and support programs suited to their conditions and structures.

Finally, in any discussion involving the third sector and the social economy, care must be taken not to focus overly on growth and development paradigms, even couched in Vidal's friendly language of 'sustainable development.' Likewise, one should avoid viewing third sector activity solely as an opportunity to take on the devolved social obligations of the neo-liberal state; in the media sphere, this would include stepping into the void left by retreating public broadcasters. The very nature of independent, vibrant, politically challenging media activism requires a broader, more questioning view of the way things are. Third sector media praxis is

ultimately about rebalancing power relations; it is the periphery demanding voice and space at the centre. This is a concept well articulated in Kumar's (2010) essay, "The Question of the Poor," in which he calls for rejection of the "neutral, managerial, donor-driven, and client-oriented developmentalism of the 'third sector'" in favour of a "theoretically new paradigm that is centered on the emancipatory political project of transforming dominant structures of power, protecting human rights, and increasing the sphere of democratic life for the poor" (p. 281). This paradigm, he observes, is illustrated by India's third sector, comprised of civil society organizations and a "rainbow coalition" of social movements (p. 283). Kumar notes that while some voluntary and charitable organizations collaborate closely with government on mainstream development objectives in areas such as education and health care, other third sector citizens' organizations take on more oppositional goals and human rights-centred goals, for example the Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres' campaign for legal and civil rights for pavement dwellers, and the work of Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MSSK), a coalition of rural people and middle-class social activists engaged in a struggle for the right to information on land ownership and development projects in their communities. Such third sector activity represents "an open-ended process whereby inegalitarian structures of power, discrimination, and exclusion are interrogated, criticized, challenged, and ultimately reversed" (p. 296). Kumar concludes:

> If the notion of the third sector evokes a typical de Toquevillian associational space where 'social capital' is generated and deployed to maintain an uneasy balance between capital and labour, it also refers to a deeply contested 'political project' that essentially means resisting dominant structures of power, enhancing the hold of popular sovereignty in decision-making, and also, more importantly, reconceptualizing the agency and rights of the poor in general. (p. 296)

Kumar's over-arching framework of power and resistance lends itself well to the study of third sector media development, a field rife with tension between the objectives of donor organizations and the free-spirited, democratizing impulses of grassroots journalists.

2.1.2 Media Development

Simply put, just like agricultural development or community development, media development is comprised of policies and programs aimed at enhancing a specific sector of human activity, often deemed to be in the national interest. For example, in the name of furthering democratic ideals, U.S. presidents Jefferson and Madison created subsidy systems for newspaper mailing and printing costs (Nichols & McChesney, 2009). The subsidies were an effective and practical means to help publishers keep pace as the country expanded; between 1830 and 1840 the number of U.S. newspapers grew from 650 weeklies and 65 dailies to 1,142 weeklies and 138 dailies (Schudson, 1978). While this seems a simple matter on the surface, the nature of media subsidization is complex and contested, particularly in relation to third sector media enterprises. As the case studies in this dissertation demonstrate, media development projects are generally subject to entrenched donor-recipient power relations, whether the donor is a government agency or a sympathetic labour union. This contradicts media practitioners' impulse to operate free of outside interference. Furthermore, government-sponsored media development in most countries developed along lines related to cultural sovereignty, which placed media development initiatives on a collision course with the instruments of globalizing capitalism (see rulings of the World Trade Organization [WTO], 1996; WTO, 1997). Internationally, UNESCO (2008) has played a role in addressing donor-recipient imbalances and re-aligning success indicators to meet community aspirations; how and if this dialogue plays out in Saskatchewan remains to be seen.

2.1.2.1 Historical overview

State-sponsored media initiatives have existed throughout human history, from the Roman *Gazette* to Han Dynasty *tipao* bulletins, and most countries of the modern world have incorporated some form of media development into national infrastructure planning. For

example, in 1873, Burma's King Mindon introduced 17 Articles guaranteeing a free press for "the benefit of the citizens to hear general news from Europe, India, China, and Siam for enriching their thoughts and improving their trade and communication" ("Chronology," 2004). In neighbouring Siam, early experiments in radio broadcasting undertaken by the royal palace grew into a full-fledged national broadcasting system, which became the vehicle for establishing an official language and promoting a modernist national identity for the new nation of Thailand (Thailand. Public Relations Department, 2007). This kind of legacy is fairly common throughout the world, resulting in media development programs that are historically tied to nationalism and cultural sovereignty.

Running counter to this tendency has been the inexorable internationalization of modern communications technology, beginning with the laying of a transatlantic cable in 1858. Wireless telegraphy was invented in 1895, leading to radio telephony, and by the 1920s empires were broadcasting homeland news and culture to their colonies via radio (McIver & Birdsall, 2002). The fact that the means of international communication were developed and owned in the West, and that international regulatory bodies, such as the International Radio-Telegraph Union, were headquartered in Europe, became an issue of global concern in the post-colonial world (Thussu, 2000). The idea of a communications imbalance underscored the 1955 Bandung Conference, which concluded with a call for more mutually beneficial information and cultural exchanges between imperial powers and the nations of Asia and Africa (Asian-African Conference of Bandung, 1955). The concept of media development as a process of social change, not just technological change, was furthered by Jean d'Arcy (1969), the UN's Director of Radio and Visual Service, whose 1969 article "Direct Broadcast Satellites and the Right to Communicate" cast the concerns of the developing world in the language of human rights.

In a 1965 UN meeting on satellite communication, the Director-General of All India Radio argued that freedom of the press should be interpreted "not merely as a removal of censorship, but as a creation of opportunities" (as cited by H. Schiller, 1969, p. 124). However, the range of opportunities on the menu was limited by the theoretical blindspot described in Chapter 1. At the UNESCO table, American political economists such as Noam Chomsky and Herbert Schiller raised an alarm over the wholesale global export of American market culture via emerging communications technology. Schiller believed broadcasting could only be established with American training and aid, because it was "an extremely demanding business, one which requires skills and experience, not easy to come by" (p. 111). He warned such assistance ultimately stood to replace national and local cultures with a mush of U.S. programs that lacked artistic and intellectual merit. Such observations shone needed light on the coming age of neoliberal globalization in its early stages; however, there remained a tendency to view the Global South as a blank slate, despite two decades of community radio broadcasting in South America, and more than a century of activist vernacular press in Africa. As well, although Schiller recognized the democratizing potential of video, he remained unconvinced of its value to niche communities in comparison to gaining greater control over mass media (H. Schiller, 1969). Accordingly, policy discussions mainly looked toward establishing international covenants to limit western cultural exports, with less attention paid to strengthening existing non-market, low-tech, and local media in the Global South, or actively assisting experimentation with cheap new tools, such as video.

Voices from the Global South, meanwhile, continued to insert a broad analysis that challenged fundamental power relationships. The 1973 Algiers Non-Aligned Summit agreed that developing countries should fundamentally re-organize communications channels, and in 1976 the 19th UNESCO General Conference in Nairobi responded with a call for the

establishment of an International Commission for the Study of Communications Problems. One year later, in 1977, the Commission was launched under the leadership of Irish human rights activist Sean MacBride (UNESCO, 1980). In a presentation to the Commission's third session, Tunisia's Secretary of State for Information, Mustapha Masmoudi (1978), highlighted global inequalities:

> what must be noted right away is that the present international information system shows a profound imbalance between developed and developing countries. This imbalance is characterized by the fact that the developed countries dominate the information circuit from start to finish. (p.1)

To correct this imbalance, Masmoudi prescribed not mere technology transfer, but rather recognition of a basic right to information and communication, decolonisation of global communications systems, and a combination of tax policies, incentives, and international aid to support Third World media organizations. This stance echoed discussions among members of the Non-Aligned Movement, who advocated the creation of a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), along the lines of the UN's 1974 New International Economic Order resolution.

Much of the Commission's early research and meetings remained focused on mass media; however, when the hearings were opened up to ordinary citizens, journalists, and civil society organizations, heretofore overlooked alternative media forms came to light, and the debate broadened to include fundamental economic, cultural, and human rights as the building blocks for media development. The Commission observed that enterprises such as community radios were relatively tiny in scope compared to mass media, yet their emergence was worth noting:

> the radical departure from the dominant assumptions of vertical flow and the capacity it provides to develop horizontal networks, the achievement in strengthening the self-awareness of coherent groups, give it a significance out of all proportion to its quantitative scale. (UNESCO, 1980, p. 171)

The Commission's final report, *Many Voices, One World*, popularly referred to as the MacBride Report, was presented to and accepted by the 21st UNESCO Conference Session in Belgrade in 1980. Third sector media comprised fewer than three of its 275 pages. However, their inclusion carried with it an inextricable argument for the democratization of communications and the recognition of communication as a social process.

The MacBride Report presented many concrete suggestions for action, such as the establishment of community media centres and the modification of cultural programs to support the social function of mass media (UNESCO, 1980). It was premised on the understanding that media owners and producers held shared responsibility to uphold a more just, equitable, inclusive world, given the power of the tools they employed. This included removing the communications gap between the developed and developing world, and curbing the ascendancy of profit over human dignity. To gain this renewed vision, however, certain obstacles had to be removed—and herein lay the MacBride Report's undoing, namely its recommendation to curtail the growth of media monopolies and to "seek and improve models which would ensure greater independence and autonomy of the media concerning their management and editorial policy, whether these media are under private, public or government ownership" (p. 266).

The report did not fall on fertile soil. Between the Commission's founding and its conclusion, the world had undergone a seismic shift that would profoundly impact future media development initiatives. The Commission's advocacy of market regulation, foreign ownership limits, and curbs on the commercialization of news media stood no chance against the emerging power of neo-liberalism. U.S. President Ronald Reagan and U.K. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, backed by powerful communications conglomerates, proclaimed that restricting access to global media markets was akin to attacking freedom of the press. Both countries withdrew UNESCO funding in protest, instantly impoverishing and sidelining the NWICO initiative

(Kleinwachter, 1993). In the aftermath, UNESCO was restructured and "swept clean, so that not even a residue of this [NWICO] research remained" (Halleck, 2002, p. 2). This cleared the path for a de-regulated market-oriented view of media development.

2.1.2.2 Rise of the Market Model

UNESCO's setback brought bilateral and private aid to greater prominence in media development. Today, major donor agencies such as BBC World Trust, USAID, and the Open Society Institute are prominent on the scene, providing technology and training for commercial practitioners within a free market paradigm. The largest single donor country is the U.S., which spent an estimated $142 million on overseas media development projects in 2006, via government agencies and private organizations such as the Gates Foundation and the Ford Foundation (Center for International Media Assistance, 2008). The bulk of assistance, 43.7%, went toward training programs dedicated to the "professionalization" of local journalists, seen through western eyes as unskilled and corrupt (p. 6; p. 23). In its inaugural report, the Center for International Media Assistance (2008), an offshoot of the National Endowment for Democracy, highlighted the role of overseas assistance in promoting free market sustainability, noting the example of media training projects in former East Bloc countries:

> Some media had no sales or business staff, and their managers had only the vaguest ideas of how to support a news organization through advertising…. From the start, say USAID officials, training in business skills was given a high priority. And it is no less important today. Integrating sound business practices into media assistance is widely recognized as essential to making projects sustainable. (p. 57)

Training courses, tours, and internships are regularly offered at CNN, BBC, and other western media headquarters. Meanwhile, observers such as Ngũgĩ (1983) question the underlying premise of such aid:

> The USA and the West control the production, training and even placement of most Third World intellectuals. A good number become trained and cultured into drawing pictures of the world in harmony with the needs of US imperialism. (pp. 52-53)

With this model comes training on how media should be constructed, without thought to hearing from local people how it might be constructed differently. A case in point is Romanian television in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Ceauşescu, described by poet Andre Codrescu (1991) as a riveting experiment in people's television. Anyone with a story to tell could enter the station and tell it live on air to a national audience.

> A lean peasant dressed in the ethnic costume of the Maramures region sat under the tricolour, speaking. On his left he had a bottle of plum brandy, and on his right, a pleated bread called cozonac. He was bringing New Year's greetings from his village to the entire country…. He mentioned his friends and relatives by name and named also their children. He told the story of the 'disappeared' from his village, the theft of the young men. It was a well-documented chronicle of pain, unfolding in a rhythm akin to folk epics, hypnotic and eerily beautiful. (p. 109)

Concluded Codrescu: "The immediacy was stunning. I had never seen television like this" (p. 110). This intriguing model of people's television has since been well tamed by the influence of U.S., British, and European Union media development aid, aimed at professionalizing the media and providing a 'sustainable' market model based on advertising revenues.

The appropriateness of the foreign training assistance has been questioned by some media managers:

> When we go to a country where TV is very advanced, we learn that TV production is very expensive, but in Romania, we have the opposite of 21st century technology. They come back after training … and the journalists are very confused. (Couti, 2009)

In interviews conducted 20 years after the fall of the regime, editors complained that without a supportive market economy, only tabloids and party organs find easy survival in Romania under a commercial media model (Calian, 2009; Couti, 2009). A similar situation has been reported in the Latin American context:

> Crucial developments that nurtured the rise of a market-oriented press in the US never happened. Nowhere in the region do we find a commercial revolution similar to the one that US newspapers experienced, a process in which the

> economic bases of the press industry shifted from party coffers to the market. (Waisbord, 2000, p. 51)

As a result, Waisbord (2000) argues, attempting to insert liberal free-market mass media into Latin America is like "fitting square pegs into round holes" (p. 50). As shall be discussed later in subsequent chapters, a similar conundrum has unfolded within Canadian domestic media development initiatives under neo-liberalism, with third sector media being the square pegs.

2.1.2.3 Alternative Approaches and the Role of UNESCO

A market-oriented approach generally relies on circulation numbers and broadcast ratings as evidence of success. More than 40 years ago, Hachten (1971) argued that such 'counting exercises' were inaccurate, leaving out vibrant Third World media production because of fluctuating news stand sales and the lack of reliable census and audience-tracking data. He argued, "Lack of *mass* media, which implies technology, does not mean that no media have been in use" (p. 11). Opening one's eyes to Indigenous and alternative media forms would logically lead to greater support for the full range of media and media practices that exist in the world today. Observing the dawn of citizen-operated video players, Schiller (1969) theorized, "The 'wastefulness' of alternative [media] systems may in reality be the most promising method of assuring an industrial society some measure of informational liberty" (p. 160). Yet following the MacBride fall-out, NWICO was replaced by the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), a move that significantly changed the language from 'communication,' containing an inherent social dynamic, to the more technologically focused term 'information.' The idea of media development as a counter-hegemonic, liberating praxis was replaced at the international donor level by a Communication for Development model, which recognized the role of communications in "seeking change at different levels," but primarily in the context of a consultative tool for development planners (World Congress on Communications for Development, 2007, p. xxxii).

The Communication for Development paradigm was not without critics—particularly among third sector media practitioners—for its perceived hierarchical view of relations between decision-makers and the grassroots. In the late 1990s, an alternative Communication for Social Change (CFSC) model emerged. At a series of meetings in Italy and South Africa between 1999 and 2001, community activists and media practitioners reached a consensus that:

> Communication for social change should be empowering, horizontal (versus top-down), give voice to previously unheard of members of the community, and be biased toward local content and ownership…. Communities should be agents of their own change. (Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani & Lewis, 2002, p. ii)

In a working paper derived from the discussions, the group—which would later coalesce into the Communication for Social Change Consortium—expressly traced the theoretical roots of CFSC to the work of Latin American scholar-activists of the 1960s (Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani & Lewis, 2002, p. iii). This is clear in CFSC's prevailing emphasis on dialogue over dissemination. As well, although the consortium's initial working paper does not credit feminist thought, certainly feminist influence can be discerned in the emphasis on voice, plurality, and empowerment.

The concept of media development as a rebalancing of power relations remains present in the work of UNESCO as well. Despite the trouncing of the MacBride Report, UNESCO, to its credit, did not retreat on its members' guiding consensus that communications channels needed to be re-ordered. The organization quietly moved forward on communications democratization, facilitating community workshops and publishing handbooks for media practitioners at the local level. This work has included publishing and translating a practitioner-authored handbook, *How To Do Community Radio,* into various languages (Tabing); funneling support through Community Media Centres in developing countries, with the assistance of Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) (Gumucio Dagron, 2003); and funding gatherings such as a 1999 regional community media seminar in Kampala, Uganda (Boafo, 2000). UNESCO's *Media Development Indicators: A Framework for Assessing Media Development* (2008)

recognizes media production can be considered "an advocate and social actor in its own right" (p. 3) and that community-based media in particular "have an especially important role in serving minority or marginalized groups" (p. 35). Although national media development programs in Canada appear entrenched in neo-liberalism, as shall be discussed in Chapter 3, ideas being generated internationally by UNESCO and CFSC create space for media development as a significant topic within discussions of local governance and civic engagement.

2.1.3 Local Governance

In recent decades, the idea of a more direct democracy has worked its way into governance policy discussions under a number of names and forms, including 'new localism' (Corry, 2004; Stoker, 2004.), collaborative governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008), multi-level/multi-stakeholder governance (Bache & Finders, 2004; Chapelle, 2008; Toemmel &Verdun, 2009; World Economic Forum 2005), place-based governance (Bradford, 2005; Cantin, 2010; Locke, Powers, Felt & Close, 2006), deliberative democracy (Melo & Baiocchi, 2006), community governance (Clarke & Stewart, 1998), and citizen-centred governance (Shah & Shah, 2007). Much of this discourse relates to, or directly springs from, evolving concepts of citizen participation and cultural self-determination, which this dissertation places under the general rubric of local governance.

The roots of contemporary local governance discourse can be seen in the 1980s, when critics such as Barber (1984) began calling for a new "participatory politics" as an alternative to traditional liberal politics rooted in individualism. This imagining of alternative democratic forms became a more urgent task with the advance of neo-liberal globalization and subsequent deepening of social and economic inequalities. Bauman (1998) and Putnam (2000) observed that citizens had become increasingly disconnected from family, friends, neighbours, and democratic structures in a rapidly globalizing, increasingly corporatized world. Concern for a "democratic

dilemma" that pits small political units against large political units (Dahl, 1994, p. 23) led to rising apprehension that a deepening democratic 'deficit' was unfolding within an economic regime that spawns and thrives on inequalities (Garcea, 2008; Institute on Governance, 2005).

These concerns set the stage for understanding local governance as something more than simply downloading fiscal responsibility to underfunded local authorities and boards, in accordance with neo-liberal deconstruction of the state. A review of decentralization theory carried out by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 1999 drew on the Tocquevillian concept of subsidiarity that emerged from the First Vatican Council. The report presented the basic premise of subsidiarity as a means to transform decentralization initiatives into genuine local-level democratic engagement: "Local governance (subsidiarity being the underpinning principle) would implicitly and explicitly address issues of the relative distribution of powers, balancing of functions, services, activities and such between the center and local levels, and/or between the public sector and civil society/private sectors" (UNDP, 1999, pp. 26-27). Similarly, in a study of local governance initiatives in six countries, Blair (2000) argued that democracy, not just decentralization, should be central to local governance models. From this perspective, local governance can be defined as "meaningful authority devolved to local units of governance that are accessible and accountable to the local citizenry, who enjoy full political rights and liberties" (p. 21). This differs from earlier concepts of decentralization dating back to the 1950s, "which were largely initiatives in public administration without any serious democratic component" (p. 21). From this stance, Blair concludes that participation and accountability must be considered key themes of local governance efforts:

> The central idea of participation is to give citizens a meaningful role in local government decisions that affect them, while accountability means that people will be able to hold local government responsible for how it is affecting them. Together these two processes are what constitute the heart of the 'democratic' component of democratic local governance. (p. 22)

It can thus be argued that the inclusion of such a democratic component changes the game entirely, demanding new forms of organization and participation. Indeed, this has been the thrust of grassroots efforts to develop local governance from the ground up. Some of the most innovative experiments can be found in Latin America, where neo-liberalism's effects were felt early and dramatically through Structural Adjustment Programs. Here, rapid devolution and privatization of public services have also included attempts to insert local voices into decision-making through citizens' organizations and experiments in local participatory politics, spearheaded by progressive municipal governments (Estava, 2010). Through labour-sponsored solidarity tours, activists such as Rebick (2000; 2009) picked up on these themes in the Canadian context, calling on citizens to imagine democracy differently. Looking at the politics of Canadian communities, McAllister (2004) imagined self-government at a local, more personalized level. These concepts gradually become more institutionalized through the establishment of institutes such as the Vancouver-based Centre for Civic Governance (Centre for Civic Governance, n.d.), and the acceptance of local governance discourse as part of toolkit for urban planners and developers (Moulaert, Swyngedouw, & Rodriguez, 2001). Meanwhile, critiques of the concept of 'community' as a potential site of complicity with power structures emerged among feminist social theorists such as Frazer and Lacey (1993) and Joseph (2002), leading to the deconstruction of community as a contested and at times exclusionary space (Barrett, 2014). This debate was echoed within third sector media organizations, and expressed in practitioner-authored documents such as the *African Community Radio Handbook* (Perkins, 2000), which stated that multiple voices, interests, and intentions make up the 'communities' within community radio (Perkins, 2000). Meanwhile, FemLINK Pacific, a women's radio organization, advocated the importance of moving beyond mere recognition of diversity within communities, arguing that safe spaces must be created for marginalized voices to take part in

decision-making. "FemLINK believes that once people are able to share their opinions safely and freely, then only can we say democracy is at work," states Bhagwan Rolls (2008).

Yet within the body of local governance discourse, very little, if any, attention has been paid to the role media might play in a re-imagined democracy, despite the efforts of Rebick and other activists to establish alternative third sector media models, such as rabble.ca. At a global level, UNESCO's *Media Development Indicators* (2008) is one source that recognizes a distinct role for third sector media in the democratic process. The Framework recognizes media as "a watchdog of government in all its forms, promoting transparency in public life and public scrutiny of those in power through exposing corruption, maladministration and corporate wrongdoing" (p. 3). Among the Framework's indicators of a healthy media ecology is a benchmark that "community media are equipped with appropriate technical facilities to reach marginalised communities" (UNESCO, 2008, p. 86).

Wangusen and Klinken (2009) were among the first local governance researchers to explicitly connect third sector media to good governance practices. A project they helped lead and evaluate in Tanzania, titled "Capacity Building of Local Governance Actors," initially did not consider local media as having a role, despite the presence of community radio and a number of active grassroots press clubs in rural areas. However, further investigation found that media groups such as the Shyyanga Press Club had independently undertaken action research in the community. The club used the interview approach to identify reasons for girls dropping out of school; finding pregnancy to be the major factor, they then presented their findings to the district council, which in turn launched an in-depth exploration of possible interventions. Recognizing the value of such activities, Wangusa and Klinken (2009) recommended adding media into their local governance capacity-building work: "The professional capacity of the majority of rural journalists to meaningfully engage in governance process is still low" (p. 4). They further

observed that while their exploration of media activities had examined privately-owned radio, volunteer-run community radio remained out of the loop. Their final recommendations to their Dutch project funder stated:

> There is need to follow-up the community radio establishment in Bukoba town. This is because unlike Radio Sibuka which is privately owned and whose governance programming is based on the goodwill of the owner, the community radio in Bukoba is own[ed] by the community…. Kagera Press Club will need to be supported on how to manage a community radio. (Wangusa & Klinken, 2009, p. 4)

Their brief report may not seem much on the grand scale of governance discussions. However, it presents the seed of an idea: media—in particular, non-commercial media—exist, are making a difference, and need to be included and supported in the context of good governance and citizen participation.

Another of the few detailed studies to factor media development into local governance is *Communication and Community: Citizens, Media and Local Governance in Bosnia and Herzogovinia* (2010). In the introduction, editor Jusic (2010) writes:

> Local media are a primary source of information on the work of local governments, as well as on the political, cultural and other relevant events within the local community. If they perform their function well, they constitute an important mechanism through which citizens can participate in the public life of their community, articulating their interests and deliberating on government performance. (p. 10)

Contributor Gosselin (2010) expressly links media influence to quality of local governance, noting that a lively media sector yields informed citizens who "feel they can have a say" in ensuring cities are well run and services are delivered in an effective, corruption-free manner (p. 41). Most of the papers within the collection focus on commercial media. However, the potential role of third sector media is glimpsed in a single example: Vesta Radio in the city of Tuzla. As a community radio station, as opposed to a for-profit station, Vesta is explicit in its mission: "Our aim is to help citizens be more involved and take part in decision-making

processes, and to encourage social responsibility on the part of government to involve citizens in the process" (as cited by Coyer & van Beek, 2010, p. 156). This aligns closely with the statement of third sector radio practitioners globally, such as the Philippines-based Tambuli Communications Project, which describes community radio as "stations dedicated to development, education and people empowerment. Stations which adhere to the principles of democracy and participation" (AMARC, n.d.).

This stance relates to Harvey's (2011) study of community radio's impact on climate justice in Ghana, an action research project involving three radio stations on the Volta River. The project found that rural dwellers had much to contribute toward tracking and understanding climate change impacts, when given access to a medium of communications that provided both a voice and a locus of community organizing. This idea challenged the approach of prior media development projects that, instead of listening and discussing, focused on dissemination of 'expert advice' on how to adapt to anticipated new cycles of floods and droughts. The Volta community radio project involved holding durbars to provide guidance on the content of locally produced broadcasts on climate change. This approach revealed that, in addition to sporadic large-scale disasters, there were many multi-faceted, daily-life climate change impacts, much of them borne by women, for example the loss of local fishing spots. Participants also critiqued development programs and policies, such as dam building, which disturbed the river's ecology and displaced villages. From this, Harvey concluded that understanding media only as a form of dissemination "fails to capitalize on the much greater potential of community radio to strengthen citizen's voices, and even to fundamentally challenge existing socio-political power structures" (p. 2039).

2.1.4 Local Accountability Journalism

Among North American professional journalists, this same impetus to question and challenge power structures is represented as 'accountability journalism.' In recent decades, as media chains have disengaged from distinctly local content, increased attention has shifted specifically to what is called 'local accountability journalism.' A fall-off in local accountability journalism was quantified as early as 1983 by Trim (1983), who discovered links between declining competition in local newspaper markets and declining coverage of local government activities in Winnipeg and Ottawa. The change was most dramatic at the *Winnipeg Free Press*, where an average of five City Hall stories per day in 1979 fell to less than two per day in 1981, one year after the closure of the Free Press's competitor, the *Winnipeg Tribune* (Trim, 1983). But the true loss was in attention brought to civic boards and commissions, where most decisions are hammered out. For example, Trim's research team found that between July 1 and Dec. 31, 1979, the Winnipeg Works and Operations Committee was the subject of 30 newspaper stories. In 1981, that number plummeted to zero. Meanwhile, in a six-month period in 1979, the *Ottawa Citizen* referred to civic boards 29 times, but only 6 times in 1981, one year after the competing *Ottawa Journal* closed (Trim, 1983). These findings confirmed general public unease about monopolization, which led to the 1980 establishment of the Kent Commission, the first in an ongoing series of largely ineffectual attempts by the Canadian state to address media ownership concentration.

The accelerated rise of North American media conglomerates over the next three decades came to a screeching halt with the 2008 global economic crisis, leaving what remained of local coverage in even greater peril. North American newsrooms were already stretched to the limit by cost-cutting corporate 'synergy' strategies and by competition from the Internet, to which they were poorly prepared to respond. Post-meltdown, some communities found themselves

entirely bereft of local newspapers and broadcasters who could hold civic leaders to account. In a survey of community information needs launched in 2007 and concluded in 2009, the U.S.-based Knight Commission on Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy observed:

> Even before the 2008 recession, many news organizations faced shrinking audiences and declining advertising revenue. With the recession, they are struggling even more. There is plainly reason to be anxious about the consequences for local journalism, and therefore for local democratic governance. (Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities, 2009, p. xii)

The alarm bell raised by the privately sponsored Knight Commission gave rise to a second inquiry led by the Federal Communications Commission, the body officially charged with managing media and communications in the United States. The Commission's final report, published in 2011 under the authorship of Steven Waldman, tracked a precipitous decline of local news outlets, finding, for example, that the number of cities served by all-news radio stations had dropped from 50 in the 1980s to 30 in 2010 (Waldman & WGINC, 2011). But of even greater concern to the Commission were staff cutbacks at newspapers, the medium that typically set the bar for broadcast and digital media.

> There are strong signs that these cutbacks have weakened coverage of schools, health care issues, city government, state legislatures, religion and other important topics…. [Reporters] have less time for enterprise journalism of the sort that anticipates problems and uncovers information that those in power want to conceal. (Waldman & WGINC, 2011, p. 231)

The Commission elaborated: "To be clear, the shortage is not in 'news' or 'information,' *per se*, but in a very specific kind of journalism: labour-intensive reporting on civically important topics" (p. 233). Regarding the consequences of this trend, the Commission referenced several studies that have documented a relationship between local media presence and key indicators of civic engagement, such as voter turnout and the number of candidates in elections. The Commission found that most social science research agrees better-informed communities experience higher levels of government responsiveness and higher rates of political participation.

While standing back from any direct intervention in the media marketplace, the Commission came up with a series of recommendations intended to make the operation of media corporations more transparent, and to support local media through government advertising. Significantly, the Commission recognized nonprofit media as an emerging sector with potential to fill the news hole left by corporate media. In a chapter titled "The Evolving Nonprofit Media," the Commission noted a rapid rise in foundation-supported journalism and various forms of media co-operatives post-2008. These new initiatives joined established nonprofit media organizations, such as Associated Press, *National Geographic*, C-SPAN and the *St. Petersburg Times*, to form a revitalized third sector of media activity. However, the Commission noted that several obstacles were slowing the sector's growth, including a donor structure that favoured short-term seed grants over long-term sustainability, along with government regulations and policies ill-suited to nonprofit corporate structures. The report's authors concluded:

> the nonprofit sector has the ingenuity and spirit to fill many of the gaps left by the contraction of traditional media. If some of these obstacles can be removed, these organizations will likely play a crucial, and growing, role. (p. 199)

To this end, the Commission recommended that charitable foundations prioritize support of local journalism. Additionally, the Commission recommended allowing third sector media to fulfill their watchdog role without jeopardizing charitable tax status, a recurring constraint on freedom of expression. My research revealed that the obstacles recognized in the Commission's report are also present in the Saskatchewan mediascape, for example in the revocation of *Briarpatch* magazine's charitable status, described in Chapter 5. Whether the subject is a radio station in Ghana, a public service broadcaster in the U.S., or a scrappy alternative magazine in Canada, problems of unsustainable partnerships and constraints on free expression are common themes that lead me to my research questions.

2.2 Research Questions

As stated, third sector media have a well-formed theoretical foundation in anti-oppressive literature and movements; however, until recently, this has been drowned out by the dominant paradigm presented by mainstream western media theory. In earlier research I have discovered this development has concrete implications for grassroots media volunteers, as it leads to a lack of research and policy support, from the local level to international development agencies. This in turn limits the sector's ability to be included in national communications planning, to attract needed development funds, to gain a seat at policy forums, and to carry out its watchdog and social change catalyst role in local governance over a sustained period and in relative security (Elliott, 2007). In 2006, AMARC took a major step toward addressing these deficits by launching a multi-country participatory social impact assessment of their members' media activities. Published in 2007, the 128-page study found that quantitative indicators demanded by donors—such as audience size, programming hours on specific topics, and the number of organizations represented in interviews—were not adequate tools to measure the social impact of community radio. Highlighted among the key findings was a very clear statement of the research approach and indicators required to understand the role of community radio:

> Community radio practitioners and stakeholders agree that the measurement of community radio social impact should be people-centred and based on a multi-dimensional understanding of poverty. In this perspective the key indicators of community radio social impact are related to voice, empowerment and local ownership of the communication processes. (AMARC, 2007, p. 8)

AMARC's study further found that third sector media impacts unfold very slowly over time, and are best measured in years rather than the scope of a single media project.

AMARC's call to address the disconnect between donor agencies and media recipients remains largely unrealized today. In the aforementioned 2011 Ghanaian community radio study, for example, Harvey (2001) made similar observations about the uneasy fit and competing

priorities of donor agencies and third sector media practitioners. His conclusion echoed the need for more sustainable partnerships capable of balancing the short-term, project-oriented nature of development assistance with the long-term, diffuse goals of media activity, in an effort to "avoid situations where donor demands are in tension with the aims of those who the project activities are intended to serve" (p. 2054). Drawing on this significant conundrum, and applying it to Saskatchewan, this dissertation therefore poses the following questions:

1. How do Saskatchewan's third sector media enterprises currently sustain their activities, and what are the barriers and challenges?
2. How have Saskatchewan third sector media organizations historically experienced media development programs and partnerships?
3. How might civil society organizations and their allies create effective, sustainable partnerships to better support third sector media development in Saskatchewan?

2.3 Epistemological Assumptions and Considerations

"The world is there, whether or not human beings are conscious of it," writes Crotty (1998, p. 10). I am drawn to this statement with the familiar realism of a lifelong Prairie dweller who has endured her share of natural phenomena, from blizzards to mosquitoes. When a sudden hailstorm bursts, there's little sense debating its existence, even as the hailstone melts in your hand. The meanings we make of hail, however, are variable, constructed, and ever-changing. A hunter-gatherer takes shelter and moves on, largely unaffected. An agrarian settler surveys a shattered crop and contemplates a season of deprivation. Generations later, the hunter-gatherer becomes an urban dweller who experiences hail as a threat to a new car. Meanwhile, the modern-day farmer contemplates a long road of paperwork and negotiations with insurance companies and relief programs. Switch the location to rural India, where hail brings death (Reilly, 2013), and the meaning changes again. From this life-understanding, I agree with

Crotty's (1998) assertion that a realist ontology does not necessitate an objectivist epistemology. To say, 'Real phenomena exist, yet our knowledge-making of them is constructivist,' is not a contradictory statement.

Neither does a constructivist epistemology assume a completely relativist ontology. In the study of grassroots media alternatives, I find it untenable to view social constructions as value-free and equal, in the context of dominant social orders. The hailstorm becomes deadly through inadequate shelter, lack of emergency services, and unchecked environmental degradation. Indeed, the majority of the world's people do not themselves construct the systems that enslave and degrade their lives. Blaming oneself for social inequalities and poor political leadership is a privilege of the elite. For most people, instruments of oppression—the corrupt cop, the greedy landowner— are externally imposed realities to be faced on a daily basis, along with the hail and drought. To imagine the world otherwise would be to obscure the harsh impacts of unequal power structures, and to overlook the unending project of social change through struggle—two central concepts framing the lived experiences of media activists.

Jason Toynbee (2008) would identify this as a critical realist stance, because it is grounded in the understanding that to study the experiences of media audiences and producers, one must look to the pre-conditions and super-structures that frame such experiences. This speaks to my own theoretical leanings; in particular, Toynbee's observation that critical realism inserts a political dimension that is often lacking in the milieu of cultural studies (Toynbee, 2008). However, my theorizing departs from—or, more hopefully, adds to—Toynbee's critical realism, in that my inquiries are situated within a more multi-dimensional media paradigm. While Toynbee's (2008) exploration of media-making and social reality concerns itself with professional journalists working within a capitalist system, framing media as a one-to-many monologue, my theoretical viewpoint encompasses myriad alternative forms of dialogic media

that seek to close the distance between audiences and producers; that conceptualize social movements and their means of communication as one and the same; and, moreover, that contain the ability to radically alter the trajectory of historical and political events.

This stance accordingly guides my critical realist epistemology in the direction of Haverkamp and Young's (2007) description of a critical/ideological research paradigm. This paradigm not only recognizes over-arching power relations, but is further defined by "its goals of challenging dominant social structures or meaning systems and facilitating empowerment for it participants" (p. 268). Haverkamp and Young (2007) observe that a critical/ideological paradigm shapes the researcher's relationship with participants, as well as his or her methods of research design, data collection, and analysis. To begin with, challenging dominant social structures typically begins with the research process itself, a concept well articulated in feminist methodologies that "emphasize non-hierarchical interactions, understanding, and mutual learning" (Sultana, 2007, p. 374). This in turn leads to research attuned to the needs of community actors, manifested in methods that look beyond data collection to the task of collective problem-solving in the service of social justice and social change (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donahue, 2003). The idea of a collective undertaking that reduces distance between the researcher and the researched and tackles real-world problems is well suited for entering the terrain of third sector media. It is based in an epistemological position that knowledge is meant to be used, not just created.

The idea of knowledge as problem-solving enters into my decision to conduct my research within an interdisciplinary paradigm. The study of third sector/alternative media praxis does not have an identified 'home base' in the academy, which is perhaps one reason it has been under-studied. Communications, political studies, economics, literature, cultural studies, anthropology, history, ethnic studies, information technology, public policy, and journalism are

just a few of the many fields involved in understanding the world of grassroots media production. The relationality of interdisciplinary studies provides room for a fulsome exploration of this environment, while the paradigm's problem-solving aspect speaks to my intent. I have also situated my work within a co-operative studies research concentration in the hope of connecting media praxis to social economy discourse, fomenting new linkages in thought and action that may lead to a democratic, people-centred mediascape.

2.4 Theoretical Considerations

My research is built on the foundational notion that human beings are able to affect change through collective action. My thinking in this regard is influenced by the liberationist theoretical discourse of the civil rights movement, anti-colonial struggles, Freirian-inspired radical pedagogy, and a long line of front-line feminist activists, from Nellie McClung to Wangari Maathai. It stands in contrast to Comte's (1877) "natural and unavoidable course" of human history (p. 555). It also contrasts with Spencer's (1973) visualization of society as an embryo that grows and divides beyond the control of human hands, and Ogburn's (1964) theory of social change as a reactive response to external stimulae, be it a flood or a new tool.

In "Education and the Practice of Freedom," Freire (1993) argued that social change theories that are premised on mere adaptation and response fail to capture humanity's gift for creatively transcending and transforming social conditions:

> Adaptation is behaviour characteristic of the animal sphere; exhibited by man, it is symptomatic of his dehumanization. Throughout history men have attempted to overcome the factors which make them accommodate or adjust, in a struggle—constantly threatened by oppression—to attain their full humanity. As men relate to the world, they begin to dynamize, to master, to humanize reality. (pp. 4-5)

Like Freire, Martin Luther King, Jr. understood that change is first born in the consciousness of the individual. In *Stride Toward Freedom* (1958) he noted that the oppressed are just as likely to "resign themselves to their doom" as face the exhausting prospect of

resistance (p. 212), and argued that to awaken the consciousness of the oppressor, one's own conscience must first be awakened, stating, "To accept injustice or segregation passively is to say to the oppressor that his actions are morally right. It is a way of allowing his conscience to fall asleep" (p. 212).

Similarly, feminists of the 1960s adopted a discourse of liberating change that began with self-realization and renewed pride in the female body and psyche. Polk (1976) describes the steps to change thus: resocialization of the self; changing personal interactions; resocialization of others; changing male dominance of institutions; and building alternative institutions. This stance was reflected in feminist methodology, which prescribed situating oneself as the starting point to research. There is an inevitable logic that recognition of the symbolic and political power of women's individual experiences should necessarily lead to a questioning of universal solutions. By the mid-1970s, feminists such as Polk (1976) argued that strategies for social change must be "many and diverse," as no single tactic can accomplish liberation for all women (p. 407). In particular, over the next 20 years, the critiques of women of colour led feminism toward a post-structuralist and post-colonial breaking down of unified narratives, led by scholars such as bell hooks (2000), who charged that American feminism's emphasis on equality rights was a position reflecting the experience of liberal white women.

This realization, along with the feminist concept of 'voice,' dovetailed with New Social Movement theory and a growing communications democratization movement, which found its focus in plurality of voice, diversity of cultural expression, and the building of networks as opposed to totalizing institutions. Viewing the communications landscape from these foundational theoretical perspectives allows one to recognize and study alternative media praxis as an arena involving diverse agents of social change, as has been articulated by members of the Communication for Social Change Consortium. This perspective has been written into important

statements such as AMARC's 2003 Kathmandu Declaration, which recognizes that community-based media "have directly contributed to progressive social change and social justice by providing access to those marginalized and disadvantaged by the mainstream media" (AMARC, 2003). It is also supported by my own research into migrant workers' radio in Thailand (Elliott, 2007). I am therefore confident starting from the base assumption that grassroots media are precipitators of social change, and from there moving forward into the territory of how to support that change.

2.5 Positionality

Research in support of social change presumes a certain mutuality of purpose between researcher and researched, often "defined through social relationships and connections with collaborators" (Bickham Mendez, 2006, p. 11). My own professional journalism practice was primarily in the mainstream commercial press; however, I got my start contributing to third sector magazines such as *The Carillon*, *Briarpatch*, and *The New Internationalist*. My first paid freelance article was a report from Pakistan that I submitted to *Canadian Forum*, a magazine that bounced back and forth between private and co-operative ownership during its 80-year history (Elliott, 1984; Granatstein, 2006). Today I continue to contribute intermittent articles to *Prairie Dog* and *Briarpatch*, and I am a *Briarpatch* sustaining donor. I also work to engage my students at the University of Regina School of Journalism in volunteer and community service learning opportunities with community radio, community access cable, and nonprofit/co-operative print publications. I have never held formal ties to these media organizations in terms of staff or board membership, although I consider myself a friend and supporter of their work. To a large degree, those connections were built not from direct involvement, but through my work with feminist, internationalist, and labour organizations. For example, while doing communications consulting for the Saskatchewan Council for International Co-operation (SCIC) in 2002, I organized a

CIDA-funded media project that involved *Making The Links Radio* and Regina's community radio station, CJTR 91.3 (Canada, CIDA, 2001). As another example, I undertook research for the Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union (SGEU) that resulted in an article for *Briarpatch* (Elliott, 1988), which subsequently became the basis for a related article in the commercial press (Elliott, 1989). Such life experiences helped me understand the symbiotic relationships between media and civil society organizations in Saskatchewan, and to recognize the ripple effects of funding cuts to civil society groups in the 1990s. On a more practical level for conducting my research, my overlapping organizational connections proved useful for deciphering the acronyms of defunct political action groups and community-based organizations in old *Briarpatch* advertising ledgers and meeting notes.

Further, through my personal involvements with SCIC, the Saskatchewan International Labour Program (SILP), and the Saskatchewan Action Committee, Status of Women (SAC), I became attuned to popular education and participatory research techniques. In 1993 I helped organize a participatory research project among women in the sex trade, which resulted in the establishment of a community-run street-front service agency. More recently, I helped facilitate the production of a participatory video project with injection drug users (Stevenson, Elliott & Lawless, 2012). Such experiences have very much influenced my understanding of research as a collaborative process tied to the furtherance of social justice. This process is described by Strand, et.al. (2003):

> simply the fact of coming together to identify collective needs and talk about potential solutions may help revitalize democracy in the community and set into motion structures and processes for social change that extend beyond any research project—an outcome that is suggested by Freire's popular education model. (7)

Another influence that shapes my positionality *vis a vis* the research topic is my international experience. While working as a news reporter for the *Bangkok Post* in 1990, I became keenly aware of the importance of journalism in a developing democracy, and of the

struggles faced by journalists. Much of my subsequent international work has involved covering political dissent in Burma, including a documentary film on the work of underground and exiled journalists (Elliott & Risk, 2012). The primary case study for my M.A. thesis revolved around Karen and Shan refugees from Burma who had become involved in Thai community radio (Elliott, 2007). Thus, I have witnessed grassroots journalism as a profoundly political act, for which people regularly risk their lives. I have encountered similar stories at AMARC's international gatherings, and while interviewing journalists in the former East Bloc. Although struggles for freedom of the press are more muted in Canada, conversations with journalists outside Canada make it impossible for me to view 'the media' as a singular, purely hegemonic instrument of oppression. Hearing the stories of journalists from Latin America, Asia, Asia Pacific, Eastern Europe, and Africa allowed me to see diversity in Canada's mediascape, and the potentiality of third sector media involvement in local governance and social change.

Bickham Mendez (2006) states that collaborative research practice "is constructed out of active political engagement with struggles on the ground" (p. 10). This would overstate my value to third sector media practitioners, who are far more directly engaged in the daily work of maintaining their organizations than I. However, it does open the door to co-operative inquiry (Reason, 1994) and a sense of shared purpose with community collaborators (Bickham Mendez, 2006; Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker, & Donahue, 2003): "This position of being both an insider and outsider in collaborations with community or social change organizations can mean that the scholar-activist puts his or her social and cultural capital to the service of the endeavours of the group," notes Bickham Mendez (2006, p. 11). Indeed, the genesis of this project was a request from an informal group of third sector magazine publishers, to investigate changes to the Canada Periodical Fund. It was through this investigation that I first became aware that the landscape of developmental support for third sector media had eroded considerably, presenting a

perplexing community problem of how to adjust and respond to the resulting financial challenges. From here, I began to investigate Canadian media development in general. While my research led me down multiple paths using multiple methods, both quantitative and qualitative, its beginnings can be described as classic co-operative inquiry, where "co-researchers agree on an area for inquiry and identify some initial research propositions" (Reason, 1994, p. 326).

2.6 Methodology

As noted by Haverkamp and Young (2007), researchers working within constructivist/critical paradigms "are pursuing a different type of knowledge altogether" (p. 270). The type of knowledge sought may be described as in-depth, exploratory, situated, and reflexive, in contrast to the more generalized, universal finality of a positivist paradigm. Explorations tend to follow lines of deep multi-dimensional understanding, arrived at through a combination of critical analysis and active, subjective experience and dialogue. Researchers build and test theory through multiple methods; such knowledge construction lends itself well to qualitative inquiry, with its "multiple entry points into the circle of direct experience and theorizing about that experience" (p. 272). To this end, I undertook a qualitative examination of the research questions, employing a range of complementary methodologies and methods, including focus groups, active interviews, critical analysis of documents, and case studies. To this I added some quantitative approaches, including collection and analysis of financial data. Such an approach is well suited to the specific purpose of my inquiry into third sector media, which is to gain critical understandings for the purpose of action.

To a large degree, the overall methodology employed relates to my former experiences conducting investigative journalism. As Anderson (2008) notes, there is much critique of journalistic practice, offered equally by the political left and the right, not to mention from within

the ranks of journalists themselves. However, very few critics seek a more complete understanding of how journalists actually do the work of gathering and presenting knowledge (Anderson, 2008). Although often obscured by the heat and noise of North American-style capitalist media, there are established methods of journalistic research that draw on and lend themselves well to other research disciplines. Aucoin (2005) identifies investigative journalism as a social practice, one that Rosner (2012) connects to Enlightenment thinkers and the republican ideals of John Locke. The practice is grounded in the act of "analyzing and revealing the breakdown of social or justice systems and documenting the consequences" (Houston, 2009), with the desired (although not always realized) outcome being "a real opportunity to foster change" (Cribb, Jobb, McKie, & Vallance-Jones, 2006). This is entirely in concert with my epistemological stance that knowledge should be used, not merely produced.

Characteristic of critical realism, journalistic research follows the current of a social/political project aimed at righting power imbalances and achieving social justice (Cribb, Jobb, McKie, & Vallance-Jones, 2006). Also characteristic of critical realism, investigative journalism calls for a high degree of empirical observation and documentation that is ideally carried out with the understanding that both perception and documentation are ultimately human constructs. Wahl-Jorgenson (2013) notes that journalism textbooks typically speak to the importance story-telling, including its implied departure from objective reality. She adds that, similar to movements in humanities and social sciences research, "there is a growing awareness of the central role of a more partial, emotional and embodied journalism" (p. 307).

To this end, investigative journalists begin with the assumption that a public document exists for nearly any topic, but that human sources are crucial for understanding the meaning and impact of the written record (Houston, 2009). To address the former, it is helpful to have a working knowledge of Canada's labyrinth of public records, including government documents,

corporate records, mandatory stock exchange reporting, along with an ability to manage Access To Information requests, all tools employed in this study. As for the latter, a journalist's quest for human sources generally begins with the reporter's research files, a box of crumpled business cards and old notebooks, as well as seeking tips from other interview subjects and people knowledgeable in the field, and grasping opportunities as they present themselves. For one of the cases examined in this dissertation, for example, my 'lead' was a pick-up truck at a rural horse racetrack with a Creek FM sticker pasted on the rear window.

The journalistic interview is a delicate balance between being directed but not highly structured, leaving room for the topic to take new paths leading to new knowledge (Cribb, Jobb, McKie, & Vallance-Jones, 2006). That new knowledge may change the direction of a document search, introduce new study participants to the picture, or reveal 'dead ends' not worth further pursuit. For example, when I sat down to speak with Ked Odland about his radio project in rural Saskatchewan, I had no idea that he had also been involved in community access cable in British Columbia. Being free to reflect and adjust on what was said allowed our interview to take an unforeseen and fruitful path, which led me to undertake further research into the corporate takeover of community cable. Such flexible interchange is recognized in standard qualitative methodology as the active interview (Holstein & Grubman, 2004). Indeed, journalistic approaches to research readily mirror the toolkit of qualitative research, including purposeful and opportunist participant selection, active and semi-structured interviews, and constant reflexivity and adjustments. Finally, journalistic research method rolls out data in a clear narrative structure that recognizes there is no purpose to a story that cannot be readily followed and understood by the reader—who ultimately is the one through whom social change is realized.

2.7 Methods

As stated, the methods by which I examined my research questions included several specific methods consistent with aspects of qualitative social science and investigative journalism, combining qualitative inquiry with quantitative analysis of financial records and government reports.

- **Document analysis**

To understand the current landscape for media development initiatives in Canada and Saskatchewan, I undertook critical analysis of relevant documents. This included an archival newspaper search of early Saskatchewan media development projects, through the Provincial Legislative Library and Google News Archive (The Google News Archive is no longer an active archive but is still present in the deep Web, although without the selective search options once available to researchers). I also turned to corporate financial records held by Information Services of Saskatchewan (ISC), consulted the Receiver General's annual list of transfer payments, and followed details of cable industry sales through stock exchange and Industry Canada registries. Public notices of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) were essential to following broadcast decision-making, on topics such as the sale of the Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN), and the establishment of community radio stations. The 'Way Back Machine' at www.internetarchive.org provided a means to follow the changing mission of SCN over a period of years, through content analysis of the home page and online program guides. As well, I conducted research in the archives of Huston House, the home base of numerous alternative media and social change projects and organizations since the mid-1970s.

To help understand trends in publishing support, I undertook a detailed search of the Department of Canadian Heritage's grant lists, extracting data into spreadsheets to help gain a

global budgetary picture of the panoply of programs that came and went over the years. This process revealed dramatic drops in support that were not otherwise readily discernible. What was missing from the public record was the decision-making process behind magazine funding. To this end, I undertook two Access To Information requests that generated more than 1,400 pages of memos, email exchanges, and handwritten notes. This information, while difficult to sift through, was central to establishing the role of the Minister in *Briarpatch*'s failed funding applications, as well as decision-making behind three other magazine applications. A third request to broaden the search to all recipients was refused in its entirety, and now lies with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner's appeals process (See Appendix D: Sample Access to Information request).

- **Interviews**

While journalism includes professional codes of ethics that encourage transparent disclosure of purpose and end use, university research ethics boards add to this process formal letters of invitation to collaborate (Appendix A). Letters were augmented with phone calls to answer the contact's questions about the project, to confirm participation, and to discuss the nature and timing of the proposed interviews, and who exactly would be asked to participate. This was also an opportunity for participants to update me on recent developments and make suggestions for further inquiry. During the course of the research, active interviews were conducted with 21 media practitioners. This was augmented by group and individual discussions with 10 members of supporting organizations. As well, three non-Saskatchewan publishers whose magazine had lost federal funding were interviewed. These contacts were guided by my own prior knowledge of various media initiatives and who had been involved. The contact persons were given opportunity to suggest who else among their staff and volunteers would be appropriate interview participants. Each initial meeting began with discussion of the risks and

benefits of participating, and the interviewees' rights as research participants, as part of the process of obtaining their formal written consent (Appendix B). There were no consent refusals. All were given an option of anonymity, which two participants requested. The list of guiding questions differed between media practitioners and civil society supporters (see Appendix C), but both lines of questioning were grouped under the same three broad themes:

1. Personal and organizational history.
2. Perceived social role of media activity.
3. Issues of sustainability and development.

Question lists were deployed in a flexible, open-ended manner, to allow additional topics and concerns to be raised by the interview participants. Interview participants were also asked to share any relevant files, including annual reports, financial records, meeting minutes, copies of grant applications, and correspondence relevant to the topic. Some additional interviews were carried out in relation to the historical overview of media development, including former recipients of Canada Periodical Fund support, labour movement representatives, and the station manager of a community access cable station in British Columbia. I then combined information gained from interviews with document analysis to identify themes related to media sustainability.

- **Group discussions**

Small group discussions were held with non-practitioners, through a combination of opportunistic sampling and directed selection. One involved a group of three Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) activists, who were invited to join the discussion by the SFL president, as persons who had a connection to media issues and labour. Two professional union communicators were approached by the researcher after media practitioners identified them as people who had assisted attempts to secure support for their enterprises. A third group included two members of the Okanese First Nation band council, who emerged from a meeting room for a

lunch break and were invited to join discussions by myself and the station manager of Creek FM. A joint discussion was also held with the mayor of Wolseley and a local high school student, who had been identified by the manager of CISE FM as townspeople who had participated in community programming. Participants in these group discussions were asked to identify how their goals intersected with third sector media, and what barriers and challenges they had encountered in terms of supporting or engaging in third sector media activities

Additionally, a focused group discussion was held with members of a study circle connected to the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry (RAPM). Every month, clients and staff gather together to learn about and discuss a social issue over coffee. For November 1, 2012, the group had chosen 'Media' as the topic, and invited me, as a university journalism instructor, to attend as guest presenter. Instead of presenting, however, I decided to turn the tables and ask the participants to inform me about their own thoughts and experiences regarding media. As an instance of opportunistic (as well as convenience and strategic) sampling that emerged from the author's engagement with the community, one cannot claim these focus group participants were broadly representative (Suzuki, Ahluwalia, Aroroa, & Mattis, 2007). As members of a study circle on social issues, and as colleagues who knew one another, they were obviously more likely to draw connections between journalism and local governance, and to share consensus, than would members of the public who were randomly selected. However, as persons who were well attuned to the experiences and needs of low-income persons, their comments offered valuable insight into how a changing media landscape is recognized and understood from the standpoint of grassroots citizen engagement and public awareness. The group included three women and three men who had varying degrees of firsthand experience with poverty and anti-poverty advocacy. One was a practicum student who was primarily present to observe, but who was drawn into the conversation toward the end of the discussion. Likewise, RAPM staff member

Peter Gilmer, who acted as host, reserved comment until the end. The remainder took charge of a free-flowing conversation, with my own involvement limited to interventions to clarify someone's point or to invite others into the conversation. A broad question was put forward—how have you experienced media in your lives?—which tipped off a wide-ranging group conversation that was recorded by the researcher. These data, along with the comments of Wolseley and Okanese community participants, provided a reflection and reality check on how and to what degree the literature readings and practitioner interviews presented in this dissertation bore a relationship to how media are experienced on the ground by community actors who have an interest in local governance and social change. Their comments, combined with comments from media practitioners and the literature, helped form the themes at the conclusion of Chapter 6.

- **Case studies**

My research touches on several examples of Saskatchewan third sector media, both historical and contemporary, including the *Living Newspaper*, *Natotawan*, *Saskatchewan Indian*, *New Breed*, SCN, the *Prairie Messenger*, Missinipi Broadcasting, Access 7, *Moccasin Telegraph*, *The Fifth Generation*, *Prairie Dog*, *Making The Links Radio*, *Briarpatch*, CISE FM, Creek FM, the Clean Green video project, and Cowesses Community Radio. This is by no means an exhaustive list; examples were chosen to represent historical trends in media development, as well as third sector media diversity. Another criterion was independence. I was interested in media that, while perhaps having some institutional ties, were constituted as stand-alone operations dedicated solely to journalistic praxis. Therefore I did not examine organizational newsletters, such as those produced by churches and co-operatives, although I recognize they are also a very rich communicative field. Neither did I look at co-operative cable and satellite providers as a form of third sector media praxis in and of themselves, as they are

primarily engaged in the marketing of technological infrastructure. I did, however, include the community access channels that some cable companies operate to fulfill their social and/or regulatory commitments to local broadcasting. Finally, by use of the terms 'enterprises' and 'organizations' I take my research boundaries to include the products of collective action, as opposed to individual social media feeds and blogs, although, again, I do not mean to say these forms of media are unimportant to social change, or unworthy of their own study.

From among my examples of independent, collective, third sector media, I selected specific cases for more in depth research and interviews. Case selection was based on my research questions; namely, I chose contemporary media enterprises that had successfully sustained their operations over time, and that had a diversity of experience with external supports, with a view to gaining insight into how community allies can best sustain and support third sector media. To illustrate how my overarching research goals guided case selection, I researched background documents on Cowesses Community Radio as an example of Indigenous radio, and met with a band staff member, but ultimately chose instead to focus on Creek FM at Okanese Fist Nation, a station with an established track record of continuous broadcasting since 2001. This does not mean Cowesses Community Radio would not provide a fascinating study into the struggles of brand-new media enterprises to survive, only that its particular circumstances were not appropriate to my research questions.

Additionally, case studies were selected based on purposeful sampling that was intended to present a well-rounded picture of third sector media activity in Saskatchewan. In particular, I set out to find examples of:

- Nonprofit media
- Co-operative media
- Ad hoc media projects

- Indigenous media
- Volunteer media collectives
- A mix of primarily donor-supported, advertising-supported, and organization-supported enterprises.
- A mix of primary mediums, including print, radio, video, and online media

Once these general areas were established, I drew on my knowledge of various media undertakings in the province, as well as suggestions from people in the field, to develop a list of appropriate contacts. Some of the interview participants were previously known to me through my own media practice; others I met for the first time during the course of this study.

Among the examples presented in this dissertation, I chose *Briarpatch* magazine as the focus of a detailed case study. This choice was informed by the fact that *Briarpatch* had experienced a full gamut of media development supports, beginning with a grant from the provincial Department of Social Services. The magazine also had experiences with the Canada Magazine/Periodicals Fund, Revenue Canada's charitable status mechanism, and Canada Post's publications mail subsidy, three important federal media development supports. As well, *Briarpatch* maintains an extensive document archive, useful for a detailed study. Its sources of income are varied and have changed over time, allowing for a review of a range of financial supports, including donations, advertising, subscriptions, grants and a for-profit side business. Finally, the case provided an opportunity also to look at a failed enterprise, the magazine's brief-lived sister publication, *The Sasquatch*. *The Sasquatch* attempted to create a business model based on sustaining civil society organization support, similar to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives model, augmented by advertising and subscription sales. However, it folded within one year, offering lessons for future initiatives.

I explored five additional 'mini-cases' for Chapter 6: Creek FM, a nonprofit community radio station situated on a First Nation reserve; *Prairie Dog*, an urban news and entertainment tabloid run by a worker co-operative; and three examples that together represented small-scale media production in three common incarnations: an ad hoc volunteer temporary media project; a non-structured volunteer collective; and an individually-driven enterprise structured to involve community.

- **Collaboration for action**

My research draws on principles of action research, a philosophical approach described by researchers such as Cornwall and Jewkes (1995), Park (1993), and Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker and Donohue (2003) as collaborative and action-oriented. Initially, community members enlisted my support and drew me to the research questions. They continued to provide much helpful advice and direction along the inquiry route. Interview participants received copies of my written interpretations for review and further input. None challenged the basic premise of what they read, although some did provide useful feedback for honing and updating the details. I also posted information on Wikipedia, and called on the wider community to make comments and corrections. The final presentation is reflective of these collaborations, but it is not the end. Nearly every interview and group session inevitably led to information exchange and brainstorming, generating new ideas, contacts, and potential resources, some of which have since been followed up on by participants. Thus, my research has become part of a process of change that is still unfolding, even as I write these words.

Ultimately, I consider this dissertation an unfinished project, in keeping with action research methodology. I am reminded by Suzuki, Muninder, Arora and Mattis (2007) that a collaborative process is not enough to presume my interpretations are sanctioned by all concerned. Fals Borda (1993) speaks of the necessity of returning the knowledge to the

community, where it becomes transformed again. In my concluding chapter, I suggest this as the next logical step. It could take the form of a gathering where community collaborators review the information and recommendations, and discuss their potential implementation. Such a discussion would ideally generate an action plan and identify areas for further research to support the action. With this in mind, my methodology also includes that-which-is-to-come.

CHAPTER 3
NATIONAL DREAMS AND NEOLIBERAL NIGHTMARES: CANADA'S OFFICIAL MEDIA DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

3.1 Introduction

The story of government-supported media development in Canada began as a simple one—a postal subsidy for publishers—which became increasingly complex and conflicted as decades passed. At one point, Canada was a pioneer of community media, known internationally for unique experiments in participatory filmmaking, adult education radio, community access cable, northern broadcasting, and distribution support for small publishers. The advent of neo-liberalism and globalizing trade agreements transformed this picture considerably. To understand the case studies presented in this dissertation, it is important to first understand the patchwork of media development programs practitioners relied on, the contradictions inherent in such programs, and how and why the programs changed over time to their present meagre state.

3.2 Historical Context

One of Canada's first forays into media development originated in what is now the United States. In 1775, French printer Fleury Mesplet convinced the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia that the establishment of a French-language printing press was crucial to solidifying the revolution in Montreal, then under the occupation of American troops. The Congress provided a grant of $200 to Mesplet, who spent the next year gathering additional funds and equipment for the trip north. By the time he arrived, however, the American troops had withdrawn, leaving him at the mercy of the Governor of Lower Canada. After a brief time in jail, he emerged to found *La Gazette du commerce et littéraire*, forerunner of *The Montréal Gazette*, with a promise not to criticize Church and state (Gaularneu, 2003). Despite this promise, the *Gazette* and subsequent Quebec newspapers maintained a collective editorial stance

that was oppositional to the colonial government, "from which it expected no favours and accepted no interference" (Raboy, 2010, p. 92).

Although Canadian newspaper editors and publishers were often closely allied with political movements, such as the Upper Canada rebellion, and many early newspapers were founded as party organs, the idea of direct government involvement remained an affront to supporters of a free press (Bone, Clark, Colquhoum & Makay, 1908). The debate came to the fore during the First World War, when the Western Associated Press, representing Prairie publishers, proposed approaching Ottawa to finance a 24-hour leased telegraph wire service from Ottawa to Winnipeg. In the past, Prairie newspapers managed to obtain international news via late-night access to the CPR telegraph line. Now, with readers demanding casualty lists in both the evening and morning editions, newspapers were paying premium rates for daytime access to the wire. Yet approaching the government for help was not an easy pill to swallow, according to former Canadian Press president M.E. Nichols (1948): "The word 'subsidy' was repugnant to the newspaper fraternity, but here was a situation created by the insistent demands of a nation at war" (p. 126). In a joint meeting with Ottawa-based Canadian Press, Ltd., the petition became national in scope, weathering strong protests from Toronto and Quebec publishers who opposed taking the hand of government. Prime Minister Robert Borden responded with a $50,000 grant to extend subsidized wire service not only to Winnipeg, but to the Maritimes and British Columbia as well, on the agreement that there would be no government interference in the reports transmitted (Nichols, 1948). Despite this assurance, fears of being 'tainted' were realized: Liberal politicians began to publicly attack the "subsidized" Canadian Press (CP) as the stalking horse of a Conservative government (p. 171). In 1924, a Liberal government ended the subsidy with the mutual agreement of the founding publishers, "who did not want to risk the appearance of compromise by accepting government money" (Canadian Press, *Timeline*, para.

3). Dornan (1996) observed that since that day, Canadian newspapers do not seek government grants because "it is unlikely that Canadian newspapers would ever knowingly contribute to Crown involvement in their affairs" (p. 62). It should be noted, however, that newspaper publishers have historically received federal assistance in various forms to mitigate mailing costs, as well as benefiting from favourable taxation and policy environments (Vipond, 2011).

Additionally, there are many examples of federal and provincial involvement in media development, including publishing grants, film industry subsidies, industry-based tax incentives, and the establishment of public entities such as the National Film Board (NFB), the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), and provincial educational cable channels. The following section will describe the support programs that have been commonly accessed by third sector media organizations. Reviewing the history of these programs, it is clear they were developed not with citizen-empowered local governance in mind, but rather as an aid to Canadian nation-building. This was carried out under the rubric of cultural policy, with the twin goals of asserting Canadian sovereignty over content and ownership, and increasing Canadian cultural production. It appears equally evident that, as Dowler (1996) notes, policy discourse has shifted in recent decades from 'culture' to 'the cultural industries.' From this standpoint, culture primarily becomes a means to employ Canadians and generate economic benefit, rather than a means of communication. As the following summaries note, none of these federal initiatives have fared well under globalized trade regimes and liberalized markets, and all are in retreat.

3.3 Periodicals Support

3.3.1 Postal Subsidization

Similar to the U.S., Canada's founders included a reduced rate for reading materials in the Post Office Act of 1849, and the inclusion of newspapers and magazines was expressly re-affirmed in the 1875 Postal Act (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch,

2005). As the country grew and developed a national identity, this price advantage was accepted as the cost of serving the information needs of far-flung communities, as noted in a 1948 *Encyclopedia of Canada* entry: "newspapers are now delivered by post at a fraction of their cost of delivery, since they are deemed to have an educational influence" (Wallace, 1948, pp. 149-150). Little more was requested by publishers, as observed by the 1951 Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, commonly referred to as the Massey Commission: "We were impressed by the fact that the Canadian periodicals neither desired nor requested any protective measures apart from an adjustment of tariff rates on paper imported from the United States for publishing purposes" (Canada. Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1951, p. 64). The reduced postal rate was financed via a federal grant to Canada Post, with the intention of ensuring the subscription price of Canadian publications would be competitive with mass-market U.S. publications, which dominated newsstand sales (Canada. Task Force on the Canadian Magazine Industry, 1994). In addition to paid subscription magazines, until 1968 the discount covered association member newsletters, consistent with a public service framework (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2005).

With the emergence of neoliberalism in the 1980s, the ideological framing of Canada Post shifted from arm of government policy to independent corporation, with all the implied requirements of competitiveness and independence. Within this frame, the government grant supporting cheaper rates, which was administered through the Department of Canadian Heritage, became a visible target for reduction. In 1989 the grant received a dramatic 50% cut, from $220 million to $110 million, an amount further reduced to $72 million with the phase-out of discounted rates for free magazines, booksellers, daily newspapers and larger local weeklies (Dubinsky, 1996; Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 1999). Hand in hand with these changes,

Canada Post sought to increase its profit margins by restricting the number of magazines eligible for subsidized rates (Keachie & Pittaway, 1994). Meanwhile, in 1993 a federal task force had been struck to provide recommendations for support of Canadian magazines. The Task Force on the Canadian Magazine Industry concluded that the postal subsidy significantly benefited Canadians by providing Canadian magazines at the same price across the country, no matter how far from the publishing centres. The final report stated:

> The replacement program was to have been $110 million…. However, the government has since announced cuts to all grants and contributions programs, including the postal subsidy. The Task Force recognizes that this is a time of fiscal concern for the government, and is not proposing that these announced cuts be revoked. It strongly urges the government, however, to recognize the importance of this program to the industry and preserve it for future years. (Canada. Parliament. Task Force on the Canadian Magazine Industry, 1994, p. 72)

By now, however, there was no stopping the forward momentum toward defunding the postal subsidy. The Task Force's yearlong deliberation was already a moot point. In 1996, Canadian Heritage signed a memorandum of agreement further reducing its grant to $47.3 million by 1999, with Canadian Heritage taking over the responsibility of determining which publications were eligible (World Trade Organization [WTO], 1997).

By the late 1990s, neo-liberal discourse was widely evident in program planning documents. A 1998 Canadian Heritage priority review document, for example, borrowed from the language of economics to describe Canadian culture as a component of a "new knowledge-based economy;" the planning document noted that cultural "industries" represented 3% of Canada's GDP and sustained 700,000 jobs in 1994 (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 1998, p. 6). Framing culture as an industry is a double-edged sword, however, as noted in the same report:

> Globalization and trade liberalization…put pressure on Canada to harmonize its economic, social and cultural policies with those of its major trading partners. These factors affect the projection of "Canadian voices." The United States, particularly the influential U.S. entertainment industry, and some parts of Europe

> perceive that Canada's cultural policies are not motivated by the cause of culture, identity and diversity but by the protection of domestic industry in a manner inconsistent with international trade agreements. (p. 6)

Indeed, after operating relatively unquestioned for some 130 years, new global trade agreements of the late 20th Century clouded the chances of domestic magazine postage discounts surviving into the new millennium. Typically, American publishers exported their magazines to Canada via land, paying a tariff along the way, and conducted home delivery via Canada Post, rather than the U.S. Postal Service's international service. In addition to the tariff, so-called 'split run' editions—containing primarily foreign content wrapped around advertising directed at Canadian readers—were prohibited since 1965 (Canada. Canada Border Services Agency, 1995). In 1990, Time Warner was able to circumvent the tariffs and restrictions by electronically transferring a split-run edition of *Sports Illustrated Canada* to a Canadian printer, thereby claiming non-import status. Five years later, Canada responded with a new excise tax equal to 80% of the advertising revenue in split-run editions. While initially successful in bringing an end to *Sports Illustrated Canada's* loophole, the tax was swiftly challenged and defeated by a U.S. appeal to the World Trade Organization (WTO), on the argument that it violated Article XI of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) of 1994, prohibiting qualitative import restrictions. In the same appeal memo, the U.S. challenged "the application of favourable postal rates to certain Canadian periodicals, including through actions of the Canada Post Corporation and the Department of Canadian Heritage" (WTO, 1996, p. 1). The U.S. considered the Canadian-only rates to be a violation of GATT Article III, specifically the statement that "the products of the territory of any [Member] imported into the territory of any other [Member] shall be accorded treatment no less favourable than that accorded to like products of national origin" (WTO, 1997, p. 75).

At the time, eligible Canadian periodicals paid a base rate (less than 100 grams) of between 10 cents and 38 cents per item, depending on distance, while international periodicals paid a flat 44 cents for delivery anywhere in Canada (WTO, 1997). Canada Post offered further discounts to Canadian magazines that arrived at postal outlets pre-sorted and on pallets, but did not offer the same discount to international publishers (WTO, 1997). The discounts were supported by quarterly payments from Heritage Canada's Publications Distribution Assistance Program (PDAP). The crux of the matter was whether Canada Post was a commercial enterprise free to offer discounts to its customers as it so chose, as argued by Canada, or whether it was an arm of the government enacting discriminatory trade policy, as argued by the U.S. In March 1997, a WTO to panel ruled in favour of the U.S. position, and ordered Canada to end the practice of discounted postage for domestic periodicals (WTO, 1997).

In response, Canada Post ended the made-in-Canada discounts. In 1999, Heritage Canada re-directed the PDAP into the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), dropping the word 'distribution' and instead offering grants to publishers to indirectly offset higher mailing costs, beginning in 2000-2001. This administrative transfer had already been underway with the aforementioned 1996 MOU, although the end of differential postal rates hadn't been anticipated at the time. Under the new system, Canada Post was now expected to contribute to—rather than receive from—Heritage Canada's grant pool, based on the assumption that Canada Post would realize increased revenues from its newly harmonized postal rates.

Table 3-1. Postal subsidy programs, 1978 to 2014

Program	Year launched
Publications Distribution Assistance Program (PDAP)	1978

Publications Assistance Program (PAP)	2000
Aid to Publishers (ATP)	2010

3.3.2 Periodicals Assistance Program / Aid to Publishers

The decline of distribution assistance was dramatic under the grant programs that replaced the direct postal subsidy. In 1989-1990, 8,000 publications received discounted mail rates (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 1999). In 1998-1999, the final year of PDAP, a total of 1,338 publications received assistance, a decline that can be partly attributed to the exclusion of booksellers (p. 7).[1] In 2014-2015, 804 publications received approval for funds under Aid to Publishers (ATP) (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 2015). This marked a decline of 39.9% over 15 years, and a total decline of 89.95% since the end of the 1980s. Further, federal funds did not keep pace with the cost of mailing. While U.S. publications experienced a price cut under harmonization, Canadian publications faced steep increases.

Table 3-2. Harmonized Postal Rates for a 300-gram magazine

Origin	1996	2006
Foreign	$0.85	$0.68
Canadian, no subsidy	$0.37	$0.68
Canadian, paid circulation with PAP	$0.13	$0.25 to $0.36
Canadian request circulation (complementary copies) with PAP	$0.37	$0.48

Source: Magazines Canada (2008)

Between 1999 and 2005, postal rates rose 27%, while PDAP/PAP grants rose just 4.4%, from $47.3 million to $49.4 million; the following year rates postal rates increased 2.9% while the PAP fund *decreased* 0.8%, to $45.5 million (Sison, 2005; Canada, Dept. of Canadian Heritage,

[1] Regarding the excluded booksellers, 237 publishers accessed the Canada Book Fund Support for Publishers Program in 2012-2013, which includes packaging and shipping as an eligible expense. However, the number of publishers receiving funds for this specific line item, and the amount received, is not publicly available, leaving the fate of book publishers *vis-à-vis* postal support unclear.

1999; Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2005). Depending on the size and weight of the magazine, in some cases mailing costs increased more than 70% after rates were harmonized (Magazines Canada, 2008).

With a rapidly depleting funding pool, the department undertook a revamp of PAP in 2003, tightening Canadian content eligibility requirements with the stated intention of targeted funding in four priority areas: rural, ethnocultural, Aboriginal, and minority official-language communities (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2005). However, a review conducted in 2005 found the Aboriginal and minority official-language streams had not been implemented two years after their announcement. Nonetheless, the number of Aboriginal, official-language and ethnocultural magazine recipients rose by 17 titles, from 70 before the program announcements to 87 titles in 2003-2004. This amounted to a 24% increase, although absolute numbers remained small, and just one Aboriginal title was listed, *Mi'kmaq-Maliseet Nations News* (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2005; Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 2004). Meanwhile, rural weekly newspaper recipients, already well represented, increased 39%, from 350 titles pre-announcement to 488 titles in 2004-2005 (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2005).

The fact that rural weeklies enjoyed the greater benefit from program changes warrants mention. While Aboriginal and ethnocultural periodicals are primarily nonprofit community endeavours, the landscape for rural weeklies is quite different. Of 1,031 rural weeklies operating in 2013, 610 were owned by the country's largest media companies: Quebecor/Sun Media, with 165 rural papers; Torstar/Metroland Media Group, 112; Transcontinental Media, 101; Black Press, 84; Glacier Media Group, 76; Brunswick News, 20; Great West Newspapers, 18; Department of National Defence, 12; and Multimedia Nova, 12 (Canadian Newspaper Assoc. & Canadian Community Newspapers Assoc., 2013). While the changes were announced as a

measure to increase the diversity of recipients, the program review revealed that, for the most part, the PAP recipient list broke down into society's 'have' and have-nots,' with 18 magazines and rural newspapers receiving 48% of PAP funds in 2003-04 while, at the low end, 258 publications received grants of less than $1,000, accounting for 0.2% of funds (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2005, p. iv). However, it was not the wealthier titles that were questioned; instead, program reviewers pointed to 31 titles that received less than $100, stating "this raises the issue of whether it is cost-effective to support titles whose subsidies fall below a certain threshold" (p. v). The under-$100 club primarily consisted of labour and professional newsletters, such as *Labour Alert, Collective Agreement Reporter, Firefighters Employment Law News,* and *Dunhill Business & Employment Law News,* as well as academic periodocals such as *Inuit Studies* and the *National Journal of Constitutional Law,* and one small local newspaper, the *Elk Valley Miner* (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 2004). The review recommended flexibility for those publications that served the priority communities (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2005). However, by 2010-2011, all were gone from the list of distribution assistance recipients (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 2011).

The squeeze on small-market and niche-market magazines tightened further with the loss of Canada Post's contribution to PAP. In 2008, a Canada Post strategic review effectively ended Canada's centuries-old tie to cultural dissemination for the public good, by stating Canada Post "does not have the mandate to support Canadian culture by subsidizing Canadian postal rates for Canadian publications" (Canada Post, 2008). The committee recommended ending the corporation's PAP contribution by March 2009, eliminating one-quarter of the program's total budget. Canadian Heritage responded by further tightening grant eligibility, adding extra vigilance to its requirement that 80% of content be authored by Canadian citizens or permanent

residents as recognized under the Immigration Act. International news stories condensed or adapted by Canadians would be counted as Canadian only if the author of the original reports was also Canadian. This directly impacted magazines connected to international social movements and organizations.

One publication to feel the bite was *Prairie Messenger*, a progressive Saskatchewan-based Catholic newspaper that learned in 2009 that its $99,000 subsidy would be eliminated in 2010. The Department ruled that a review of the paper's last issue of 2008 found less than 80% of the content could be declared 'Canadian,' making the *Messenger* ineligible for future support (Gyapong, 2009). Editor Peter Novesky claimed Heritage Canada had previously recognized the internationalist perpsective of *Prairie Messenger*, stating in a *Canadian Catholic News* interview:

> What disturbs me is the breach of trust from Heritage Canada. For years they have been telling us verbally that the 80 per cent Canadian content regulation doesn't apply to us because of the nature of our papers. Now, suddenly, they are applying the rule full force and its seems we have no recourse. (as cited by Gyapong, 2009)

Magazines Canada (2008), representing Canadian publishers, questioned the premise behind increased Canadian content policing, arguing that "having information and perspectives from other parts of the world can and does enhance Canadian perspectives" (p. 21). These sentiments were echoed by *Western Catholic Reporter* editor Glen Argan, who argued that international news coverage was essential to the Catholic mission:

> We live in a globalized world today, a global village. Now we are being told our coverage has to be cut to a bare minimum. I believe Catholics need to be more informed, not less informed. (as cited by Gyapong, 2009)

The next major program revamp occurred with the establishment of Aid To Publishers in 2011. PAP was retired and a replacement pool of $15 million was announced, to be split among recipients according to circulation categories. Individual grants of between $434,000 and $1.5

million were available to magazines with more than 1 million paid subscribers; at the low end of the scale, $3,000 to $30,000 was available for magazines in the 2,500 to 25,000 subscriber category (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, Oct. 29, 2012). Magazines under 2,500 were excluded entirely from eligibility, and all recipients were required to charge at least $12 for an annual subscription (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, Oct. 1, 2012).

In summary, between 1988-1989 and 2012-2013, postal subsidization plunged from $220 million to $15 million, while the number of supported publications dropped from 8,000 to 864, and 804 in 2014-2015, with entire swaths of the media ecology excised from the picture. It took little more than two decades to dismantle a program that had been a pillar of the Canadian mediascape for more than 100 years, and had been described by Magazines Canada as "the most successful cultural industry policy of the Government of Canada" (Magazines Canada, 2008, p. 10). In a submission to a Canadian Heritage program review, Magazines Canada (2008) raised an alarm about the future of publishing diversity:

> Canadian Heritage officials, unable to control the two major variables contributing to the costs of PAP—postal rates and circulation growth of eligible magazines—are increasingly turning to outright elimination of whole categories of magazines to save program funds. Rather than developing new approaches to support Canadian-content magazines, officials' time is increasingly being spent on plans to eliminate magazine eligibility…(p. 12)

For those magazines deemed eligible, grant amounts were becoming unpredictable with the imposition of new sliding scales. When *Prairie Messenger* fulfilled the eligibility requirements in 2012-2013, for example, its allocation of $80,068 was $18,932 less than it had been in 2009, an amount that further dropped to $63,478 in 2013-2014 (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 2013; Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritge, 2014). With rising distribution costs and decreased federal support, the remaining option for Canadian publishers was to increase newsstand and subscription costs to consumers. This was tempered by the need to compete on a level playing field with mass-produced U.S. publications. Canadian magazines

raised their prices by 4% annually between 1998 and 2004, but this lagged behind average annual postal increases of 6% (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2006).

3.3.3 Canada Magazine Fund

The Canada Magazine Fund was launched in 2000 specifically in response to the signing of the Canada-US Agreement on Magazines, with a mandate "to safeguard Canadian voices in a rapidly evolving marketplace" (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2006, p. i). To accomplish this, the fund aimed to encourage increased circulation and market-friendly business practices. The premise was that this would help magazines adjust to the new market reality, a reality aptly described by Magazines Canada (2008):

> Our industry competes directly with US publishers in Canada who enjoy tremendous economic advantages in our marketplaces. The US publishers invest virtually nothing in Canadian content; they buy newsstand dominance, suck up finite Canadian advertising, and then flow the revenues south of the border. (p. 6)

Table 3-3. Programs and timelines

Program	Fund	Years
Canada Magazine Fund	Support for Editorial Content	2000-2010
	Support for Business Development for Small Magazine Publishers (SBDSMP)	2000-2010
	Support for Arts and Literary Magazines (SALM)	2004-2010
	Support for Infrastructure Development	2000-2003

Canada Periodical Fund	Business Innovations	2010-present
	Collective Initiatives	2010-present

Source: Canada. Department of Canadian Heritage recipient lists, 2000-2010

As outlined in Table 3-3, the Canada Magazine Fund was comprised of various funding envelopes designed to enhance the marketability of Canadian magazines, totalling $45 million in its inaugeral year (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2006). Three years later, the CMF went through a series of budget reductions, on the stated premise that U.S. competition had been successfully mitigated by the Foreign Publishers Advertising Services Act, 1999, prohibiting advertising directed at Canadians in foreign publications (Canada. Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2006; Canada. Foreign Publishers Advertising Services Act, 1999, Section 3.1). The orginal budget of $45 million was reduced to $35 million in 2001-2002, and to $16 million in 2003-2004 (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2006). The cuts were accompanied by program changes, which the department said were intended to shift resources to smaller magazines and priority communities. However, as detailed in the following sections, evidence indicates the opposite occurred. Large-circulation magazines such as *Maclean's* cornered the lion's share of the CMF's depleted funds, while third sector magazines were pushed to the margins.

3.3.3.1 CMF Funding Envelopes

- **Support for Editorial Content (SEC)**

Support for Editorial Content was created to enhance Canadian content in both paid and free circulation magazines. From the outset, large circulation commercial magazines were the main beneficiaries, with the largest grants going to titles such as *Chatelaine, Toronto Life, l'actualitie,* and *7 jours*. In 2003, changes were made "to expand access for small publications" (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2006, p. 5). However, the new

rules clearly discouraged low-budget, volunteer-assisted operations by requiring minimum editorial expenses of $9,000 per year or $1,000 per issue, and annual advertising revenues of at least $20,000. Magazines were split into Category A (2,500 to 10,000 copies per year) and Category B (more than 10,000 copies), but beyond somewhat higher editorial expense and ad sales thresholds for Category B ($30,000 and $60,000 per annum respectively), it is difficult to discern any significant measure that favoured small magazines. In 2004, free magazines were eliminated from the program, reducing the budget from $25 million to $10 million (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2006). Not surprisingly, a 2006 program review found the main SEC beneficiaries were ultimately large-market commercial magazines, with circulations between 150,000 and 1 million, as well as special interest magazines like *Canadian Yachting* and *Canadian Dog* (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2006). In total, by 2008, approximately 10% of grant recipients, representing the 20 largest publishing companies, were in receipt of 65% of SEC funds (Magazines Canada, 2008). In reviewing the success of the program for promoting Canadian content, page counts were applied as the sole key performance indicator. Applying this measure, the reviewers found "only moderate success," with the number of editorial pages rising 8% in SEC's first three years (Canada, Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2006, p. 4). This cast a pall on a program that in fact did appear to generate greater *quality* of coverage, if not quantity. In a survey of recipients, 68.3% of respondents stated SEC funding had increased the number of feature stories, a sign the fund had encouraged more in depth coverage of topics. Meanwhile, 60% of unsuccessful SEC applicants reported that the number of features in their magazines decreased (Canada, Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2006, p. 4).

- **Support for Arts and Literary Magazines (SALM)**

Support for Arts and Literary Magazines (SALM) was added to the CMF in 2003, providing a total of $1 million to top up the roster of magazines receiving Canada Council support. This amount did not change during the life of the program, and was budgeted to cover approximately 100 titles supported by the Council. However, because their content did not meet Canadian Heritage's Canadian content guidelines, only 62 were able to access the new fund when it was launched, a situation that did not improve in subsequent years (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2006; Canada Council and CMF fund recipient lists, 2004-2010). (See Table 3-4)

Table 3-4. Number of Canada Council versus SALM-approved titles

Year	Canada Council	SALM
2004-2005	103	62
2005-2006	103	57
2006-2007	106	62
2007-2008	106	57
2008-2009	102	56
2009-2010	104	60

Source: Canada Council & CMF recipient lists, 2004-2010

Based on recipient complaints about the level of bureaucracy and restrictions associated with the program, the review committee recommended the fund be transferred to the Canada Council. However, SALM continued to operate under Canadian Heritage until 2009-2010. In 2010-2011, full responsibility was transferred back to the Canada Council, but without the $1 million attached (Adams, 2010).

- **Support for Business Development for Small Magazine Publishers (SBDSMP)**

In 2003-04, 73% of Canadian magazines could be classed as small, with circulations of fewer than 20,000 copies and operating, on average, with two full-time employees, one part-time employee, and three volunteers. Small magazines were a growing sector, increasing 11% between 1998 and 2004 (Statistics Canada, 2005). However, the number of small magazines funded by Canadian Heritage fell by 10% in the same time period (Statistics Canada, 2005). Thus a robust and important part of the Canadian media ecology was marginalized in official development circles. The funding envelope Support for Business Development for Small Magazine Publishers (SBDSMP) may be regarded as an effort to bring small magazines back into the fold of official development assistance, although they continued to be viewed as marginal, rather than as a robust and growing part of the media ecology. The structure of Canadian Heritage funding suggests small, nonprofit magazines were seen within a deficiency framework, to be corrected through increased circulation, profits and marketability, akin to commercial magazines. To this end, program funding was created to support items such as market surveys and direct mail ad campaigns with an aim to "increase circulation, advertising revenue, operational efficiencies, and/or support for professional development" (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2006, p. 5). 'Small' was defined as revenues of less than $500,000 and circulation between 250 and 20,000 copies. Applicants were required to have a business plan, detailed proof of circulation numbers, such as Canada Post receipts, and professionally reviewed financial statements. These requirements became an uncertain gamble of scarce money and staff time. Rigorous documentation was demanded to demonstrate a magazine was a viable investment with an established record of profitability, an expectation that reduced funding opportunities for nonprofit third sector magazines, although such magazines comprised 30 to 35% of the Canadian market in 2008 (Magazines Canada, 2008).

The majority of successful applicants did report circulation increases as a result of the fund. Magazines that received at least two years of funding in the program's early years, representing 73% of total recipients, shared a combined circulation increase of approximately 5,000 copies. While these numbers were modest, 79% of participating publishers agreed the program increased their circulation (Canada. Canadian Heritage. Corporate Review Branch, 2006). However, the emphasis on circulation was questioned by some, such as John Parsons of *The Malahat Review:*

> Circulation is the only criterion…It's not about cultural policy any more, it seems. Canadian Heritage is not functioning like a cultural body. The policy is bums in seats. How do you grow a culture that way? (as cited by Adams, 2010)

The emphasis on circulation can be seen in *Canadian Dimension*'s 2009-2010 application for $32,025 to support a marketing plan that included a direct mail appeal. Using similar campaigns in the past, the nonprofit current affairs magazine had steadily increased its subscriptions from 10,920 in 2000-2001 to 13,269 in 2009-2010; however, documentary evidence suggests this was deemed insufficient by Canadian Heritage. Pencilled-in notes in the department's funding history file for *Canadian Dimension* indicate that departmental staff added up the subscription increase as "+2,000", then placed the figure beside the amount of funding received over 10 years (Canadian Heritage internal file, Client funding history: Dimension Publications Inc., 2009). These rough notes were encapsulated in the letter of rejection sent to associate publisher James Patterson:

> Since 2003/04, Dimensions Publications, Inc. has received a total of $135,259 in funding contributions. Considering the results achieved for previous projects, and the results anticipated for the current proposal, the CMF has determined this would not constitute best use of public funds. (S. Shortcliffe, letter from Canadian Heritage to James Patterson, Dimensions Publications Inc., Oct. 29, 2009)

Patterson surmised another issue of concern may have related to neoliberal fears of a 'culture of dependency':

> We applied for a direct mail three times in a row…so maybe they thought we were using it as a subsidy instead of using it to innovate. But direct mail is, like, even though it may be waning, is extremely important to sell magazines, to reach an audience. They want efficiencies on these sort of things, and it's extremely efficient to reach an audience. (J. Patterson, personal communication, Aug. 7, 2012)

Indeed, the department's list of project descriptions since 2003-2004 shows the words "direct mail" circled in pen marks among *Canadian Dimension*'s various other project activities, in what appears to be a scan for repeated use of the same tactics (Canadian Heritage internal file, Client funding history, 2009). The upshot was that one more Canadian magazine was excluded from project-based funding. *Canadian Dimension* continued to receive its PAP postal subsidy, however, which was determined by an objective formula based on subscription numbers.

The labour news bimonthly *Our Times* was another 'square peg' in the new funding environment. In 2007-2008, the inclusion of volunteer board members in its submitted work plan was questioned by the program director; when a departmental project officer pointed out volunteer involvement was considered an integral component of the magazine's function, and was listed as inkind revenue, the project was approved (Canadian Heritage internal files, handwritten staff notes with reference to emails of Feb. 12 and Feb. 19, 2007). The following year, *Our Times* was informed that its SBDSMP application, which sought funding for circulation outreach, and other marketing activities, was unlikely to succeed due to the lack of an out-sourced business plan. Rather than allowing *Our Times* to resubmit its business plan, program staff advised the magazine to instead apply for SEC funding as a more suitable fit (Canadian Heritage internal file, L. Marleau, communication record re. *Our Times*, July 17, 2008). To apply, the magazine had to invest $3,000 to obtain a review engagement report, one step above the magazine's annual 'notice to reader' financial statement, for which they paid $1,000 (Ukranetz, personal communication, Aug. 14, 2012). Once the more expensive review engagement report was submitted, a checklist filled out by departmental staff shows *Our Times*

met all the criteria for project funding (C. Parson, SEC analysis tool: Our Times application, Canadian Heritage internal file, 2008). Nonetheless, in April 2009 *Our Times* received a rejection letter stating the project proposal did not "best meet the needs of Canadians" with no further explanation offered (S. Shortcliffe, letter from Canadian Heritage to Liz Ukranetz, Our Times Labour Publishing, April 22, 2009). In retrospect, publisher Liz Ukraintez said she regreted spending time and money pursuing CMF funding, because it took resources away from the magazine's ongoing operations (personal communication, Aug. 14, 2012). "With no creditable guidelines within which to apply, the investment was too large a gamble," Ukrainetz explained, stating the magazine abandoned all efforts until 2013-2014 when, following a change in federal ministers, *Our Times* successfully obtained a multi-year Business Innovation grant of $28,000 (L. Ukrainetz, personal communication, Oct. 17, 2014; Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, Business Innovation recipient list).

- **Support for Infrastructure/Industry Development (SID)**

SID provided grants to professional and industry associations related to magazine publishing, for projects such as market research, training and promotion. Third sector magazines generally did not access this program, which amounted to $2.07 million in its last year of operation, but staff and volunteers had access to SID-sponsored professional development workshops put on by organizations such as Magazines Canada (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 2010; S. Stock, personal communication, March 17, 2012; V. Zink, personal communication, March 17, 2012).

3.3.4 Canada Periodical Fund

The Canada Periodical Fund was launched in 2010 as a replacement for the CMF, sending shock waves through the magazine world. The funding envelopes for small magazine business development, literary magazines and editorial content were eliminated, replaced by a

Business Innovation for Print Publications (BIPP) fund for publishers and a Collectives Initiatives fund for industry associations, similar to SID. Grants which had once stood at $32 million were cut to $790,000 (Camada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 2013). Further, new rules gave absolute discrection to the Minister of Canadian Heritage to approve or reject projects (Adams, 2010).

A higher, hidden hand in decision-making is discernable in *This Magazine's* failed 2012 application. *This Magazine* had been one of the periodicals on the SALM roster. One year after SALM's dissolution, *This* submitted an application to the new Business Innovation program for $24,835 to assist online upgrades, a marketing campaign, and contracting a subscription list consultant (Canadian Heritage internal file, Business Innovation application: Print and online circulation enhancement, *This Magazine*, Nov. 29, 2011). According to minutes of a Business Innovation Team Meeting on January 18, 2012, the project 'This Magazine Print and Online Enhancement Initiative' was recommended by the review committee, with instructions to enter the recommendation in the department log (Canadian Heritage internal file, Minutes: BIP team meeting, Jan. 18, 2012). However, after more than two month's silence, a March 28 letter to publisher Lisa Whittington-Hill stated:

> The Government of Canada's ongoing objectives are to fund projects designed to deliver measurable and tangible results, to optimize available funds, and to meet the needs of Canadians. It is within this context that, on behalf of the Honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, I regret to inform you that your application has not been approved. (R. Saad, letter from Canadian Heritage to Lisa Whittington-Hill, Red Maple Foundation, March 28, 2012).

Whittington-Hill noted the letter contained no further information or advice, no avenue of appeal and no phone number for a return call (personal communication, Aug. 16, 2012). At this point, several left-of-centre magazine publishers and editors had begun exchanging emails about similar experiences since the Conservative Party of Canada had come to power in 2006. Lack of

solid information or feedback about how to improve funding applications, along with a noticeble cooling of conversations with program officers, had raised suspicions in Canada's small magazine community.

> If you see a list of magazines that aren't getting funding and you see that it's all magazines with the same sort of editorial viewpoint, then you can draw your own conclusions…. So I have to wonder, is it because of our editorial content, which is progressive, you know, not sort of [Prime Minister] Stephen Harper friendly? I think the problem is, when you work with other granting agencies, they are very open and transparent: okay, here's why your project didn't get funded, here's where you can improve, and you sense that you're working together in this process. And I think when there's no appeal process, no reason beyond, you know, 'project doesn't meet program objectives,' then it's very open to interpretation. (L. Whittington-Hill, personal communication, Aug. 16, 2012)

Clarification was not forthcoming from the Ministry, then or later. The Heritage Minister of the day, James Moore, and staff declined to participate in interviews for this research. Text referring to the reason for the final adjudication was redacted from Canadian Heritage documents obtained under the Access To Information Act. For small third sector magazines, this scenario meant the rigours of the application process, which Whittington-Hill estimated at 30 hours of staff time, now contained the possibility of unexplained disapproval hanging over the end result, a strong disincentive for future applications. Meanwhile, a global look at the program reveals that magazines of any stripe faced longer odds under the CPF. Tables 3-5 and 3-6 illustrate a dramatic decline, from a high of 558 magazines and projects supported in 2000-2001 to 34 in the first year of CPF, rising again to a total of 53 magazines in 2014-2015. The dollar amount dispersed has risen annually since the program's 2010 revamp, but in 2013-2014 still stood at 94% less than what it had been in 2000.

Table 3-5. Number of supported magazines, 2000 to 2014

Year	SEC	SBDSMP	SALM	BI	Total
2000-2001	403	15			418
2001-2002	456	97			553

2002-2003	488	55			543
2003-2004	172	66			238
2004-2005	174	62	62		298
2005-2006	187	75	57		319
2007-2008	201	107	57		365
2008-2009	196	64	57		327
2009-2010	208	35	60		303
2010-2011				34	34
2011-2012				41	41
2012-2013				48	48
2013-2014				53	53

Source: Dept. of Canadian Heritage recipient lists

Table 3-6. Value of support for magazines ($ millions)

Year	SEC	SBDSMP	SALM	BI	Total
2000-2001	25.00	0.33			25.33
2001-2002	25.00	2.00			27.00
2002-2003	25.00	2.20			27.20
2003-2004	10.00	2.00			12.00
2004-2005	10.00	2.00	1.00		13.00
2005-2006	10.00	2.50	1.00		13.50
2006-2007	10.02	2.30	1.00		13.32
2007-2008	9.64	2.01	1.00		12.65
2008-2009	9.48	1.73	1.00		12.21
2009-2010	9.52	1.06	1.00		11.58
2010-2011				0.86	0.86
2011-2012				0.90	0.90
2012-2013				0.96	0.96
2013-2014				1.40	1.40

Source: Dept. of Canadian Heritage recipient lists

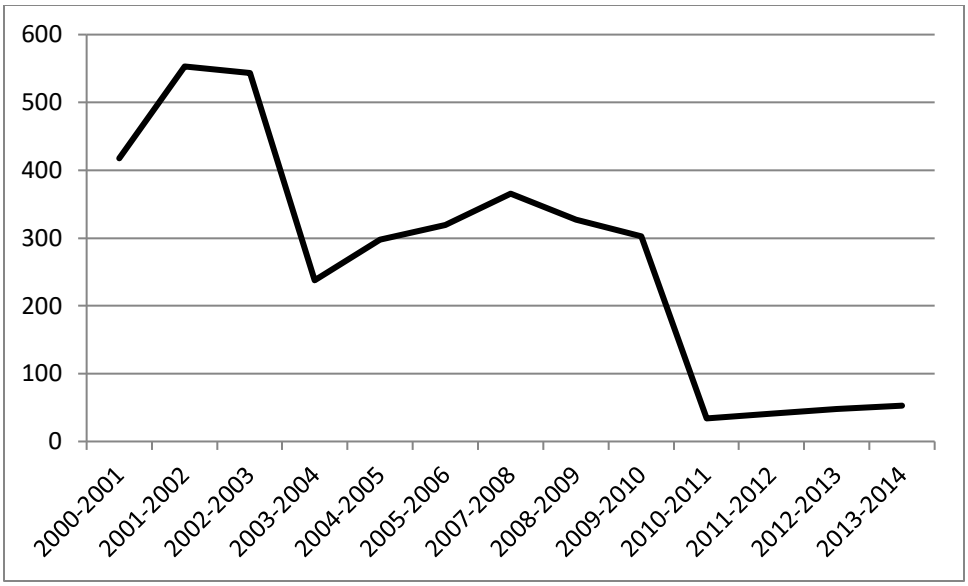


Figure 3-1. Decline in number of magazines supported, 2000 to 2014

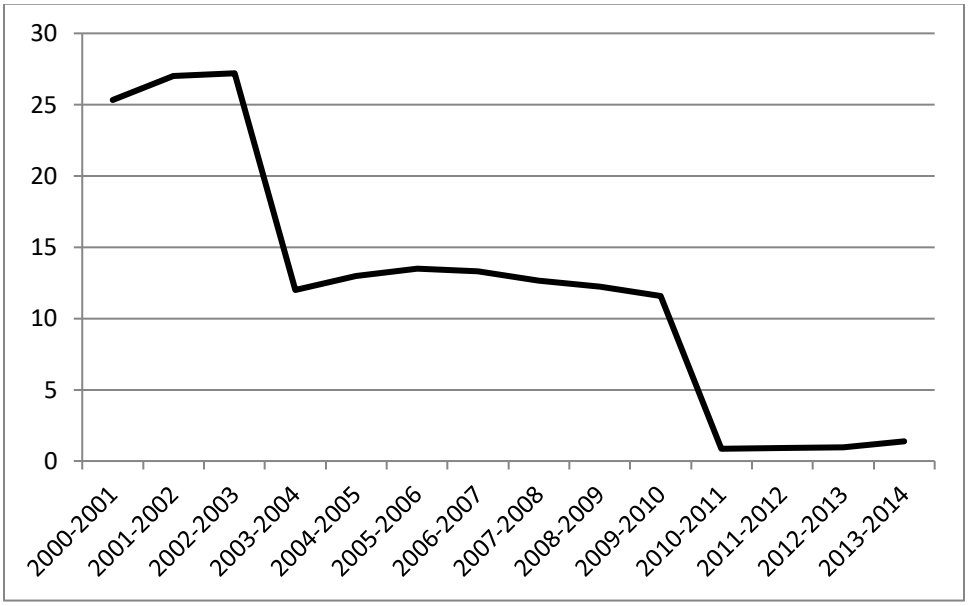


Figure 3-2. Decline in value of support to magazines, 2000 to 2014 ($ millions)

With the arrival of the CPF, large magazines were hit equally hard; program grants that previously had been in excess of $500,000 were reduced to a maximum $25,000 annually, while

a cap of $1.5 million was placed on PAP/ATP and CMF funds combined, with the exception of farm magazines. Based on previous year's funding, the anticipated losses to the top grant recipients totalled:

- *Maclean's:* $1.45 million less
- *Canadian Living:* $1.36 million less
- *Chatelaine* (English only): $1.2 million less
- *Reader's Digest* (English edition): $728,558 less
- *Canadian House & Home:* $123,492 less

(Canadian Periodical Fund: Winners and losers, 2010)

Offsetting this, the ATP added newsstand sales to its grant calculations for the first time, a move that would ultimately concentrate resouces in the hands of bigger mainstream magazines and Quebec's French-language magazines, which typically have higher newstand sales (Canada. Canadian Heritage, 2013). The change was part of a larger move to divorce the distribution subsidy from Canada Post, which Minister James Moore said would increase freedom of choice:

> They [magazine publishers] will be able to use the services of Canada Post or of any other provider. I think of alternative distribution methods, of small businesses who serve rural areas, and even of such businesses as FedEx or Purolator. (Moore, 2009)

New methods for calculating the subsidy did benefit a handful of small and mid-range publications; for example, *Canadian Dimension* received $17,064 under ATP in 2011-2012, compared to $5,101 in the last year of PAP funding, 2009-2010. Such increases came at a cost, however. Professional association publications, such as *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, and all magazines with annual circulations under 5,000, excepting GBLT magazines, were excluded entirely from all funding programs. The impact was immediate and dramatic. Of the 60 literary titles supported by CMF, for example, only six qualified for support under the CPF

(Woods, 2010). *Masthead Magazine* observed, "The amounts these titles receive are small compared to large commercial titles—typically a few thousand dollars—but huge for the magazines involved, which rely on small mastheads and scant resources" ("Canadian Periodical Fund," 2010). The *New Quarterly*'s situation was emblematic:

> For *The New Quarterly*, that means an increase in mailing costs of about 67%. An increase like that gives literary magazines two choices: download the exploding cost onto subscribers (which will certainly not help our circulation numbers), or absorb the cost, so that a large chunk of our subscription revenue (1/3 of the cost of some of our discounted subscriptions) is lost in mailing the issues. Either way, access to Canadian arts and literary periodicals is threatened by the CPF's circulation cap. (Krone, 2009)

Krone (2009) noted that advertising-heavy magazines focused on U.S. celebrities and fashion would continue to receive funds, due to their size and newsstand sales. Such observations called into question the underlying premise of magazine funding as a means to promote culture; the balance had clearly tilted in favour of an industrial undertaking meant to generate economic activity. In summary, the changes and cutbacks could only be read as the end of support for magazines as a significant cultural policy in Canada, in particular for smaller nonprofit magazines.

3.4 Community Access Television

Canada has a history of progressive support for film and television development, including the establishment of a public broadcaster, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), in 1936, followed by the National Film Board (NFB) in 1939. As well, Canada is recognized as the birthplace of community access television (King & Mele, 1999, p. 608). To this day, the Broadcasting Act, 1991 recognizes "community," along with "public" and "private" as one of three elements of Canada's broadcasting system (Section 3.1.b). The philosophy of community television was founded in the making of the film *Nanook of the North* (Flaherty, 1922), which followed the daily life of Inuit hunter Allakariallak. The film, considered the

world's first ethnographic feature-length documentary, was the acknowledged inspiration of the NFB's Challenge for Change project, launched in the 1960s as part of Canada's War on Poverty (Higgins, 1999). The idea of a social mission behind filmmaking was described by interdepartmental committee chair David Gee, who stated the project's purpose was:

> to create in Canadians an awareness of the need for change in order that [people] may achieve a better quality of life. The film medium permits people not only to become aware of problems facing them in their society, but of government programs that can offer real solutions to these problems. (as cited by Olson, 2000)

However, the first documentary in the series, Hubert Aquin's *Á Saint-Henri, le 15 septembre* (1964) merely served to shame and anger its subjects; thereafter, tactics were modified to allow community editorial control (MacKenzie, 2010). Community control became the hallmark of the 1967 Fogo Island series, which moved the concept one step further by integrating the filmmaking process into the islanders' fight to establish a co-operative fishery (Ferreira, Ramirez & Walmark, 2004). The Fogo Process, as it is called today, dovetailed with Espinosa's Imperfect Cinema concept, setting a global model for citizen-directed media. Mitchell (1974) described its impact:

> Fogo Island has become a touchstone, a focal point for all people involved in community communications—especially for those who believe it is necessary for individuals to stop being passive, those who believe citizens must not only control the circumstances of their lives, but also the media which interpret and make public these circumstances. (p. 3)

When Sony introduced portable video equipment in 1968, filmmakers Bonny Klein and Dorothy Hénaut convinced the Challenge for Change project to support a video training program for residents of St. Jacques, a low-income neighbourhood in Montreal. Although the NFB was initially reluctant to accept the new technology, video's ease of use and immediate playback capability proved to be strong assets for community-based media. In 1970, Challenge for Change experimented with training citizens to produce video for broadcast on Thunder Bay's

cable television system, under the title *Town Talk.* The arrival of video cameras at city meetings in 1971 caused a small uproar, however, leading to an agreement that *Town Talk* video be submitted to the cable company for review three weeks prior to broadcast, and an abolition of live phone-ins. The conditions were unacceptable to *Town Talk* volunteers, who folded the program "because programming of this type is valuable only if it is topical and only if it has immediacy" (Olsen, 2000; Low, 1974).

Despite the challenges, in July 1971 the Canadian Radio-Television Commission (CRTC, today called the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission) took note, and announced its intention to encourage cable TV operators to leave one channel open for community access; at the same time, CBC undertook community radio programming in the north, utilizing its Low Power Relay Transmitters (Mitchell, 1974). The CRTC further signaled its support for community programming with the publishing of *A Resource for the Active Community* (1974). The book's contributors not only included technical information, but also described the core philosophy of community-based media and provided advice on setting up nonprofit societies, co-operatives, and citizens' committees to produce local television. By 1973, approximately 139 of 388 cable channels were engaged in some form of community programming (Pither, 1974). In 1975, the CRTC introduced regulations requiring all cable licensees to provide an advertising-free, locally produced community channel, supported by a minimum 10% of the cable operator's gross revenues (Canada. Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission [CRTC], June 5, 1991). The levy was not placed directly in community hands, however, but remained the purview of cable operators to manage and spend. This became a central tension in the history of community access cable. When cable distribution was owned by local co-operatives, nonprofits or small local businesses, the concept of community access generally remained a priority *raison d'être*. In contrast, a report

commissioned by Rogers Cablevision in 1982 revealed larger for-profit companies preferred to air company-produced programs, and were less interested in the bother of coordinating volunteer-run programming, especially if the resulting content was controversial (Lithgow, 2012).

Throughout the 1980s, the participation of for-profit corporations increased with the expansion of cable technology and its integration with telephone and satellite signal distribution. For the most part, though, corporate influence over locally-produced and distributed cable was tempered by regulations that favoured local monopolies and prohibited cross-platform distribution in a single market. In 1996 the CRTC announced its intention to re-examine market restrictions, including the question: "How should the community channel policy, with its emphasis on providing opportunities and funding for local self-expression, be applied in the context of a regional licence?" (Canada. CRTC, 1996, II.1.c). The Commission proposed reducing the 10% community channel levy to a 1.5% levy directed toward loosely defined 'local expression.' In the subsequent public hearing, the Community Cable Television Association (CCTA) argued that community channels required at least 2.5% of net cable revenues to maintain operations. In opposition, the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB), representing commercial media, argued that "directing 1.5% to the community channel would divert scarce resources away from meeting the most urgent need of the broadcasting system, that being to strengthen the presence of popular Canadian programming on television screens" (Canada. CRTC, 1997, Section IV.A.a.137-139). Corporate cable providers shared this view. As had been the case with magazine funding, 1997 was a watershed year for deregulation. In its final report, the CRTC sided with the commercial sector, ruling providers should be cut free to address "local expression and access within the regional service territory on a market-by-market basis" (CRTC, 1997, I. A.20; IV.A.a.120). The ruling elaborated:

> This policy reflects the Commission's belief that opportunities for local expression would continue to be provided in the absence of a regulatory requirement. In the Commission's view, after more than twenty-five years of operation, the community channel has achieved a level of maturity and success such that it no longer needs to be mandated. (IV.A.b.131)

The former 10% levy for community access was reduced to 5% of gross revenues, to be put toward an independently operated Canadian content production pool, today known as the Canada Media Fund. As for community programming, the CRTC added a voluntary option for Class 1 providers (60,000+ customers) to set aside up to 2% of net, and Class 2 (<60,000) providers up to 3%, for undefined "local expression," with no set requirement that either community access principles or the operation of a community channel be retained under the fee structure (IV.A.b.131). At the same time, cable companies were given freedom to combine their various distribution services within a new class of regional licenses (II.c).

Cable providers became known as Broadcasting Distribution Units (BDUs) in recognition of their multi-platform interests. In a deregulated environment, the decline of community channels was as swift as the rise of the so-called 'Big Four' BDUs: Rogers, Shaw, Quebecor and BCE. The history of Kootenay Cable TV illustrates the impact of deregulation on the ground. The community channel was one of Canada's first, setting up shop in 1954 via a confluence of local invention and need in the isolated mining town of Kimberly, B.C.; because there was no CBC signal available in Kimberly at the time, a group of mining engineers helped townspeople capture U.S. hockey broadcasts via a satellite dish on top of the local ski hill, then devised a signal-boosting system to deliver the programs via cable to the Legion Hall in town and, later, to people's homes. This eventually evolved into a licensed cable television operation (K. Odland, personal communication, April 3, 2012). Although operated as a small business, the channel was founded according to the community access model, with early offerings such as *Patty's Platter Party* and bingo fundraisers. The station did not shy away from controversy, and played

a key role in facilitating public debate over the town's future after the Sullivan Mine closed in 2001, through open-line and debate format programs, as well as coverage of community meetings. "We were public access. It was part of our job," explains Ken Odland, the station's program manager at the time (personal communication, April 3, 2012). A key influence for Odland was the aforementioned CRTC publication *A Resource for the Active Community* (1974), which he ordered and read in 1975. At the time, he was employed as a director of community services for the Canadian Mental Health Association in Lethbridge, Alberta, and was seeking ways to utilize local media for public awareness and discussion of mental health issues. He was motivated by a positive experience with Lethbridge Cablenet, which offered community access. While working as a rehabilitation counselor with the Lethbridge Rehabilitation Society in 1973-74, he produced some on-air interviews on Cablenet that he felt sparked an initiative to integrate disabled workers into the production line at an irrigation systems plant, rather than having work brought to a segregated 'disabled workshop.' He recalls:

> How do you get people who aren't disabled to work with people who are disabled, just because of the stigmas? Well, it worked. Community media helped those people get to know each other and to understand each other and not be afraid of working with each other. (personal communication, April 3, 2012)

Another early influence for Odland was a CRTC-assisted publication about community engagement, *The New Communicators: A Guide to Community Programming* by Forbes & Lyang (1977). Odland read the book in 1978 while he was a volunteer community programmer at Taber Cablevision and doing contract work for the education channel Access TV and its radio arm, Alberta School Broadcasts. From his readings and his experiences as a public access utilizer, he arrived in Kimberly in 1982 with the idea that community cable had the potential to facilitate important social conversations and generate "street-speak" on overlooked issues, eventually filtering up to gain mainstream attention and action (personal communication, April 3, 2012).

According to Odland, the core philosophy of community television was understood by the station owner, Kootenay Broadcasting Systems/Kootenay Cable, Ltd., a two-person company that willingly gave Odland a free hand to develop programs with the residents of Kimberly (personal communication, April 3, 2012). In 1995 the owners transferred the majority of shares to a regional radio operator, Okanagan Skeena Group (OKS), but they retained oversight and the friendly approach to community programming continued (Canada. CRTC, 1995; K. Odland, (personal communication, April 3, 2012).

The 1997 deregulation, however, tipped off a dizzying sequence of acquisitions and mergers that overshadowed Kooteney Cable's community access mission. On March 3, 1999, KBS fully folded its operations into Okanagan Skeena (Canada. Industry Canada, 2013). On May 26, 1999, the national multi-media conglomerate Telemedia acquired OKS at $9 per share (Okanagan Skeena Group, 1999, May 26; Canada. CRTC, 1999). In 2001, the CRTC authorized transfer of all OKS shares to Monarch Cablesystems West, based in Medicine Hat (Canada. CRTC, 2001). Then, in 2003, Shaw acquired Monarch at $17.39 per share (Shaw buys Monarch operations in Alberta, BC, 2003). According to Odland, the escalating scale of media ownership impacted community programming on the ground:

> They wanted to go to what they have now, the news clip-style format and mostly interviews. They didn't want to allow access, they didn't want to give people cameras to go out and make their own programming anymore. You could be a producer if you wanted to do that, and they would send the cameraperson and edit it down to a little three-minute clip. (personal communication, April 3, 2012)

In defense of local access, Odland and other community members formed media societies in the towns of Kimberly and Fernie. Their intention was to take advantage of a new 2002 policy that approved nonprofit licenses in markets where cable companies did not provide community channels (Odland, personal communication, April 3, 2012; Canada. CRTC, 2002). However the voluntary, unfunded nature of this effort was not sustainable in the long run.

Anticipating his contract would not be renewed by Shaw, Odland left the province in 2004 and the media societies fizzled (Odland, personal communication, April 3, 2012). Today there is no community TV channel in Kimberly.

Similar scenarios played out across Canada, outside Québec, which offered provincial subsidization. In Vancouver, six of nine neighbourhood production offices were closed, and three hours of weekly programming produced by the Independent Community Television Co-op (ICTV) were reduced to two minutes (Lithgow, 2012). New Brunswick's 30 distinct community access stations were collapsed into a single provincial service under Rogers (Canada. CRTC, 2010, April 26). To stave off the complete annihilation of community access, in 2002 the CRTC decreed the largest BDUs must set aside at least 30% of their community channel airtime for independent community producers. However, without oversight and financial support, public participation remained low, definitions of 'community involvement' were elastic, and station closures continued unabated (Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations [CACTUS], 2010). While the CRTC began granting low-power FM community radio licenses to nonprofits in 2001, new low-power TV licenses were available to nonprofits only if their location was completely un-serviced by any other operator (Canada. CRTC, 2002). This left community television largely under corporate control, in contrast to the community radio sector, where radio is directly licensed and operated under the control of independent third sector community organizations.

A 2003 Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage investigation found cuts to public and nonprofit broadcasting had left local programming outside Canada's main urban centres largely in the hands of corporate telecoms, which made only "half-hearted" attempts at filling the gap (Canada. Parliament, 2003, Section I.E). This was a much different outcome than the CRTC's

confident 1997 assertion that community channels would thrive in the absence of regulation. The 2003 review stated:

> The Committee is concerned that community, local and regional broadcasting services have become endangered species, and that many parts of Canada are being underserved. In its travels across the country, the Committee heard from a surprising number of citizens who felt that they had been neglected and even abandoned by the broadcasting system. (Canada. Parliament, 2003, Section I.E)

Despite concerns voiced at the parliamentary level, the basic trajectory remained on course. A 2010 presentation to the CRTC by the Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations (CACTUS) corroborated Odland's description of the loss of community access:

> Shaw has abused the spirit of community TV policy since 1997 by classifying magazine programming in which members of the public are interviewed but have no editorial control as "access programming." Its systems in Western Canada produce almost exclusively staff-controlled news magazines, as was validated by the CRTC's audits for the years 2002 through 2005. Members of the public in Campbell River, Courtenay BC, Calgary, Winnipeg and Nanaimo say they have approached Shaw with ideas that do not fit this news magazine format and have been turned away… Smaller communities see a "community channel" programmed largely from provincial hubs where the bulk of the levy money collected from subscribers for "local expression" is spent. (Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations [CACTUS], 2010, Sept. 20, pp. 2-3)

Shaw was not alone in this trend; all of the Big Four in their various incarnations moved to close and consolidate local operations after deregulation. In a review of services in 2010, CACTUS noted that between 1982 and 2010, the number of distinct community channels in English Canada fell from 294 to 19 (CACTUS, 2010, January). Québec, which had set aside provincial funds for community TV and radio, retained 45 stations (Canada. CRTC, 2010). In contrast, U.S. public access stations, modeled after Canada's example of the 1970s, numbered 3,000 by 2012 (Ali, 2012). This included highly innovative initiatives, such as the Manhattan Neighborhood Network Youth Channel, broadcasting from MNN's El Barrio Firehouse Community Media Cente (Manhattan Neighborhood Network).

In 2010, the CRTC held hearings into the comparatively tattered state of community broadcasting in Canada. Appearing before the commission on April 26, 2010, CACTUS argued that the BDUs had been unable to reliably meet community access quotas. As a remedy, CACTUS proposed putting 2% of the levy on cable profits toward a Community-Access Media Fund (CAMF). The fund would support the creation of community media centres throughout Canada, modeled after U.S. media centres such as the Grand Rapids Community Center, a multi-platform facility hosting a community radio station, two public access television stations, a nonprofit ISP provider, and an online journalism group (CACTUS, 2010, April 26; Skinner, 2012). CACTUS proposed the fund be phased in over four years, starting at 0.5%, or $29 million, to upgrade 82 existing community media outlets, and rising to 2% in year four, or $116 million, to support 56 large and 66 small media centres. Under the proposal, the CAMF would be governed nationally by a board of directors reporting directly to the CRTC, and locally by boards that would include representation from the municipal government, local educational institutions, cultural groups, and community service organizations (CACTUS, 2010, April 26). The proposal, brought into the room on a tide of enthusiasm, prompted this exchange:

> 93 [CHAIRPERSON] Now, going on to your submission this morning, I can't help feeling a huge whiff of nostalgia. You were saying the heyday of community was in the 1960s. You were referring to Winnipeg as an example of how things worked, et cetera. Essentially, correct me if I'm wrong, but I have the feeling you are somehow trying to recreate that world.
>
> 94 That was close to 50 years ago or 40 depending whatever starting point you take and the world has very much changed since then, and to some extent you have to explain to me, if we had this heyday situation in the 60s and 70s, which you point out here, why did it disappear and why should we go back to it? Because, after all, I mean the world changes, we have huge technological improvements, we have a completely differently structured industry, et cetera. Why is it important to go back there?
>
> 95 MS EDWARDS: I will answer that question.
>
> 96 It disappeared because cable operators' businesses changed, their goals changed. Our understanding is it was no longer—they no longer saw it in their interest to promote access to their channels.

> 97 Most Canadians, since they never really understood clearly the person on the street, that that wasn't just something nice the cable company did but it is actually meant to be a right to access our broadcasting system, other than particularly well-informed activists like ourselves, didn't know who to complain to or if they did complain to the CRTC over the years, honestly they didn't get the backup they needed that would make it worth them getting back on air except in little pockets. So firstly, that is why it has gone away here in Canada.
>
> 98 Secondly, it hasn't gone away anywhere else in the world. This model has been spreading. As new technologies are coming online, as other people, societies and conditions are changing, people are finding, in a hyperconcentrated media universe with globalization, more than ever, as we see here in Canada too, people need local programming. They need to see their own stories on the air. They need to have a way to cope with and debate all the changes that are happening around them.
>
> 99 So the environment of media consolidation makes it, as we heard at the [2007] Diversity of Voices hearing, more important than ever that there is broad-based access to the broadcasting system and some way for those minority voices to be heard.
>
> 100 THE CHAIRPERSON: Well, I don't get it, I'm sorry. (Canada. CRTC, 2010, April 26)

This exchange marked a stunning departure from the CRTC's early pioneering understanding of participatory, citizen-directed media. As a result of the hearings, however, the CRTC did place additional demands on BDUs, namely that beginning in 2014, 50% of community channel airtime and expenditures must be directed to programs under community creative control, defined as a program based on an idea originating from a community member, and involving a community member either as an on-air host or a member of the production team. This definition spoke little to the concept of democratic participation in the actual operation of community channels. It also appears to have done little to curtail the trend of local disengagement, illustrated by a motion passed by the City of Cranbrook in 2012:

> Therefore be it resolved, that the City of Cranbrook provide to the CRTC (Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission) a history of the inability of Shaw Cable to provide the service to the community and, noting in this presentation that Shaw Cable itself is identified corporately as a community

> organization but in the provision of this much relied upon feature they are either not able, or choose to not act in that capacity. (as cited by Cobb, 2012)

3.5 Local Initiatives Program and Opportunities for Youth

The type of access centre envisioned by CACTUS had a precedent in Canada. Beginning in 1968, the federal government lent support to the development of media access groups across Canada. Funding was provided through a grant program called the Local Initiatives Program (LIP), augmented by staffing support through Opportunities for Youth (OFY). The purpose of the media access groups was to help local community organizations make use of media opportunities. The access centres served as training, production, and distribution centres, primarily for television and print media. An example is Teled Media Project in Halifax, which created a community media resource library (Dubinsky, 1974). The centres allowed groups to explore and experiment with a variety of media options. A 1976 report states:

> The media access groups have…been able to assist groups and organizations to evaluate their media needs more realistically, in terms of their own objectives and the resources available to them to work toward those objectives. The early love affair with cablevision has cooled as groups and organizations found that too much of their time was being spent in programming activities, and the complete control over production remained with the cable stations…. Some of these local groups and organizations, having experimented unsuccessfully with radio and television, returned to print. (Chapin & Stirling, 1977, pp. 32-33)

While the media access centres served the purpose of enabling and energizing community media activities, they were unable to find funding alternatives to federal grants, and existed entirely at the largesse of government. This proved to be a major weakness when the grants ended in 1972, leaving some access centres to turn to a fee-for-service structure to survive, while others unsuccessfully lobbied the Canada Council to create a fund for media development (Chapin & Stirling, 1977).

3.6 The Local Programming Improvement Fund

The Local Programming Improvement Fund (LPIF) was created in response to consumer complaints about reduced local programming, raised during broadcast policy review hearings in

2003 and 2008. The CRTC's own research confirmed that spending on local programming had been flat since 1998 and that, in markets with a population of less than one million, local program spending had in fact declined by 15.6% since 1998 (Canada. CRTC, 2008). In its final report, the Commission observed, "One of the consequences of consolidation appears to have been that the larger ownership groups have achieved operating synergies through concentrating production resources in major centres, at the expense of smaller local markets" (Canada. CRTC, 2008, para. 345). An unfolding 2008 global economic crisis, coinciding with the cost of digital conversion, threatened to further reduce local programming. In March 2009, for example, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation announced plans to scale back local programming and eliminate 800 jobs ("CBC to cut," 2009). Consequently, in October the CRTC ordered BDUs to contribute 1% of gross revenues to a Local Programming Improvement Fund (LPIF), estimated to amount to $60 million in its first year of operation (Canada. CRTC, 2008). In 2009 the economic downturn continued; citing declining profits, CTV and Canwest Global announced the closure or consolidation of eight small-market stations, and reductions in local news programs (Canada. Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, 2009). It has been well documented by Winsek (2010) that media conglomerates operating in Canada routinely cry 'crisis' as a means to justify reduced service to the public, and to gain relaxed government restrictions and levies. In this case, however, hoping to curtail the loss of local broadcasting, the CRTC raised the LPIF contribution to 1.5% (Canada. CRTC, 2009). The BDUs merely passed on the LPIF cost to individual subscribers via higher fees. Amid consumer complaints over rising prices and pressure from three of the Big Four, the CRTC announced the LPIF would be phased out by 2014 (Canada. CRTC, 2012, July 18). Smaller providers and CBC argued retaining the fund was essential to local programming; however, the Commission concluded the economic crisis had passed, making the fund a superfluous intrusion. No mention was made of the decades-long

history of local disengagement and pre-2008 consumer complaints that had in fact sparked the fund's creation (Canada. CRTC, 2012, July 18). Through all of this, the fund was inaccessible to community organizations, despite the recommendation of a 2009 parliamentary review that they be included (Canada. Parliament. 2009). Therefore its rise and fall had little direct impact on third sector media groups.

3.7 CBC Northern Broadcasting Service

Support for Indigenous media development got its first foothold in Canada's north. As had occurred in the south, early support was tied to the extension of Canadian sovereignty over long distances. Radio stations were established across northern Canada in the 1940s as part of the war effort. Post-war, CBC was given leave to use the stations to air pre-recorded radio broadcasts, and in 1958 CBC received government funding to expand the stations into a Northern Broadcasting Service. Operated by Indigenous staff trained by CBC, the stations carried news of local weather, road and flying conditions, and the health of friends and relatives in southern hospitals (Roth, 1996). This radio presence was augmented in 1970 when the CRTC licensed independent community radios in Tuktoyaktuk, Rankin Inlet, Longlac, and Baker Lake. The community-run radio stations were a hit, with 250 licensed stations in 22 northern communities on air by 1985 (Canada. CRTC, Dec. 1985). Radio was easily and readily adopted by northern residents. Ross (1996) observes: "Accustomed to listening to relevant messages that conformed to their information needs, Northern residents expected a television service would do the same" (p. 176). However, the relationship with TV broadcasting turned out to be much more complex and contentious.

3.8 Northern Native Broadcasting Assistance Program and the Northern Distribution Program

In 1967, CBC introduced television to the North with a Frontier Coverage Package that included pre-recorded videotapes of a selection of southern programs to be played over local

transmitters. While northern programming was approved in principle, there was no funding attached to its development, and southern-produced programs about the north did not have a priority spot in the video packs (Roth, 1996).

In November 1972 Telesat Canada's ANIK A-1 satellite was launched, sparking a global communications revolution. With ANIK A-1, CBC began delivering live TV to its 17 Frontier Coverage locations in February 1973, then expanded to all northern communities of over 500 people in 1974 (Canada. CRTC, 1985, March 27; Roth, 1996). In the greatly expanded broadcast universe, lack of locally produced programs remained a common complaint (Canada. Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, 2003). As with the former pre-recorded service, there was no funding to support locally produced programs, along with a total lack of northern-located training and production facilities. In 1974 the Northern Quebec Inuit Association protested that television could only be of value to the north if there were an Inuit-language service to stave off cultural and linguistic erosion (Ross, 1996). Eastern Inuit organizations took a proactive role in forging ahead with their own media development, under the leadership of the Northern Quebec Inuit Association and the Fédération des coopératives du Nouveau Québec. In 1975, a volunteer nonprofit society of James Bay Cree and Quebec Inuit created Taqramiut Nipingat Inc. (TNI) or "Voice of the North", a network of low-budget volunteer-run community radio stations. In 1978, TNI took its first foray into television, participating in an experimental satellite TV project with the federal Department of Communications. The project utilized a second ANIK B satellite to launch two Inuit-run pilot television projects, one under the auspices of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and one under TNI. Two years later, TNI opened Quebec's first northern TV studio (Ross, 1996).

Once the experimental phase was done, however, satellite programming was not reserved for northern broadcasters. In 1981 the CRTC gave license to Shaw Broadcasting Services, then

known as Canadian Satellite Communications, Inc. (Cancom), to distribute southern radio and TV via satellite. The Commission also issued licenses to the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation (IBC) and to the Council of Yukon Indians and Dene Nation; however these operations lacked satellite distribution capacity, and were forced to rely on limited access to the CBC Northern Services signal. In compensation for opening the North to an onslaught southern programming, Cancom was ordered to include 10 hours of northern programming a week (Canada. CRTC, 1985, March 27). To ensure an available content base, Ottawa established the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program (NNBAP) in 1983, under the Department of Canadian Heritage. The funding program was launched hand-in-hand with a Northern Broadcasting Policy, the outcome of years of lobbying by Inuit and First Nations organizations. While the policy stopped short of establishing expressly stated media rights, it acknowledged that northern residents "should" be offered opportunity to participate in determining, and producing, what appeared on their TV sets (Canada. CRTC, 1985, March 27).

From the outset, the NNBAP funding focus was program production, similar to the Canada Media Fund, rather than support for community-based media operations themselves. A total of $40.3 million over four years was announced, to be distributed to 13 northern regions (actual spending fell short by $7.1 million) (Canada. CRTC, 1985, March 27; Whiteduck Resources Inc. and Consilium [Whiteduck], 2003). Distribution took place through specially created local media societies, which were directed to undertake research projects to determine their linguistic needs before applying. NNBAP offered the media societies production assistance grants for up to five hours of TV and 20 hours of radio a week, no more and no less, a standard chosen because "the 5 and 20 benchmark is based on a model developed in Europe as the minimum requirement for maintaining language and culture" (Canada. CRTC, 1985, Dec. 19; Canada. CRTC, 1985, March 27). The NNBAP was made permanent in 1987, with a funding

cap of $13.3 million annually (Whiteduck, 2003). Added to this was the Northern Distribution Program (NDP), created to support radio relay infrastructure; the grants amounted to $900,000 annually, an amount frozen from 1983 to 1993 (Whiteduck, 2003). As for getting TV programs on the air, the media societies were left in a hat-in-hand relationship with southern satellite providers. An agreement with a signal provider was a requirement to receive NNBAP funding, but the agreements tended to ghettoize northern programming in off-peak hours.

The top-down community-organizing model and uncertain funding environment did not go unchallenged. In meetings with the CRTC, the northern media societies argued that satellite access should be a right, not a sparingly provided gift, and that northern communities should have greater say in deciding for themselves the appropriate content and length of northern broadcasts (Canada. CRTC, 1985, Dec. 19). In response, in 1988 Ottawa pledged $10 million toward establishing an independent satellite transponder (Canada. CRTC, 1989, May 26). It took three years before a grant was awarded to Television Northern Canada (TVNC), described by Canadian Heritage as a pan-northern network established by northerners for northerners, to operate a transponder serving 94 northern communities (Whiteduck, 2003; Valaskakis, 2000). Although initially a distributor, not creator, of content, TVNC obtained a broadcast license in 1999 to launch the nonprofit Aboriginal People's Television Network (APTN), the world's first Aboriginal national network. The birth of APTN highlighted a gradual spread of Aboriginal media to other regions of Canada, which was accompanied by a shift at the federal level from a Northern Broadcasting Policy to a Native Broadcasting Policy (Valaskakis, 2000).

During this period of growth, the southern private broadcast interests, including Cancom and private radio stations, began to express concerns about subsidized competition. Private interests were particularly alarmed after NNBAP funding was frozen at $13.2 million annually in 1987, prompting media societies to request the right to seek revenue through advertising. The

media societies also wanted the right to broadcast some programs in English, the *lingua franca* in multi-lingual areas, and to broadcast country music, challenging the definition of what constitutes 'native' music and directly competing with private broadcasters (Canada. CRTC, 1990). Although it may not have been the original intention, the NNBAP-mandated media societies coalesced into a base for discussing community aspirations beyond producing 'eligible' content for southern-directed services. Funding for basic infrastructure remained a problem throughout the country, as described by Paul Quassa, senior producer for the Inuit Broadcasting Corporation:

> We deal with equipment that is old and that breaks down. It often must be sent to southern cities to be fixed, and sometimes it takes months until we see it again. A lot of our equipment cannot even be fixed anymore; parts no longer exist. We deal with equipment that is subjected to the harshest of weather conditions. We work in buildings that were never intended to be television facilities of any fashion. Although we are creative, there is only so much you can do to turn an old pinball hall into a television studio. (as cited by Canada. Parliament, 2003, Section 10.B)

The NNBAP funding, pegged at $13.3 million when it was made permanent in 1987, was gradually whittled to $7.9 million by 2003, despite rising production and distribution costs (Whiteduck, 2003). The Northern Development Program-funded sites also experienced difficulty as a result of declining funding, with 11 of 96 sites off air due to equipment failure in 2003 (p. 6). A departmental review of 2003 stated:

> Three major studies of the program have noted the inadequacy of the original funding formula used to determine program funding levels, the impact of subsequent cuts and freezes, and the challenges inherent in trying to generate alternative revenue in regions characterized by low levels of economic activity, high unemployment, and remoteness. (Whiteduck, 2003, pp. 7-8)

Participants in the 2003 Standing Committee's hearing called for stable funding and more broad-based assistance, including support for non-broadcast media, such as newspapers, and greater opportunities for coordination with the community radio sector. In response the committee recommended that federal support be stepped up to cover capital cost deficits, and to support

journalism training in the north, in addition to maintaining NNBAP and the Northern Distribution Program (Canada. Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, 2003).

APTN became the sole recipient of Northern Development Program funding, as the permit holder for satellite service via 96 northern sites. The network eventually broke from its impoverished relationship with Canadian Heritage, however, turning to cable subscriber fees, charitable donations, and advertising for revenue. The transition was described by chief executive officer Jean Larose:

> A lot of people approach me and say how lucky I am to receive funding. We used to get some from Heritage, but I wanted out from under that. I told them, "I don't think you want to invest $120-million north so what I'd like to do is allow us to use some of that money for transition program—provide satellite dishes to those who want APTN." They agreed and that's it for that. (as cited by Ladurantaye, 2013)

Meanwhile, NNBAP has been renamed Northern Aboriginal Broadcasting (NAB), and has been brought under the envelope of Canadian's Heritage Aboriginal People's Program (APP). In 2011-2012, APP distributed $50.3 million toward a wide variety of activities, such as youth projects, women's initiatives, language preservation, and National Aboriginal Day celebrations; the amount then dropped precipitously to $15.9 million in 2012-2013 (Canada. Receiver General, 2012; Canada. Receiver General, 2013). Of this amount, $7.4 million went toward substantive grants (over $100,000) for Indigenous media societies and broadcasters in 2012-2013, a 44.4% decrease from the amount awarded in 1987, set against a compounded CPI inflation rate of 82% since 1987 (Canada. Receiver General, 2013; Bank of Canada inflation calculator).

Table 3-7. Canadian Heritage transfers to Indigenous media, 2012-2013 (grants over $100,000)

Recipient	Amount
Aboriginal Multi-Media Society of Alberta	347,700
Inuit Broadcasting Corp.	1,477,426

Inuvialuit Communications Society	302,513
James Bay Cree Communications Society	435,708
Missinipi Broadcasting Corp.	318,355
Native Communications Inc.	291,557
Native Communications Society of NWT	746,777
Northern Native Broadcasting BC	310,655
Northern Native Broadcasting Yukon	498,127
Société de communication Atikamekw-Montagnaise-Wendake	624,323
Taqraniut Nipingat Inc.	1,058.690
Wawatay Native Communications Society	996,795
Total	$7,408,626

Source: Canada. Receiver General. Public Accounts 2013

3.9 The Native Communications Program

The Native Communications Program (NCP), established in 1973 with a budget of $600,000 under the Secretary of State, provided funds to some broadcast undertakings, including the Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) in La Ronge, Saskatchewan. The fund was most notable, however, for its support of newspapers and magazines. Avison and Meadows (2000) observe that aboriginal councils and political organizations had a long history of publishing in Canada, reaching back to the founding of *The Native Voice* by the Native Brotherhood of British Columbia in 1946. However, the NCP disallowed funding for publications linked to representative organizations; they demanded instead that new apolitical nonprofit societies be established to run NCP-funded periodicals, similar to the broadcasting funding program requirement. A further stipulation was that publications equally address Status, Non-Status, and Métis readers; this limited the scope of who could apply and the choice of editorial focus (Background on the media corporation, 1987). Thus many existing Aboriginal publications, which struggled daily to keep the presses rolling, could not access funding under their own self-determined structures.

By 1983-84 the grant pool reached $3 million; a 1986 program review found the grants had greatly contributed to increased periodical circulation, from 27,000 in 1982-83 to 46,000 in

1985-86 (Avison & Meadows, 2000). As with other government grant programs, however, the coming decade brought a funding shift from community and culture-oriented media to consumer-oriented media. Avison and Meadows (2000) write:

> The program…represented a consolidation of efforts to control and manipulate Aboriginal newspapers through program criteria, funding formulae, and systems of accountability developed and implemented with little or no input from publishing societies. The subsequent shift to a commercial model—with the conception of readership shifting from citizen to consumer—marked the "feudalisation" of the Aboriginal public sphere by the marketplace. (para. 28)

Then in 1990 the federal government abruptly cancelled a $3.45 million budgetary commitment, a deep shock to recipients and government program officers alike (Demay, 1993). Funding to the National Aboriginal Communications Society also ended, and Aboriginal media societies south of the 55th parallel were "cut adrift" (Valaskakis, 2000, p. 83). This was accompanied by a 16% reduction in NNDAP funding, which contributed to a feeling that Aboriginal media were under attack. Although not proposing a direct correlation, Roth (1996) notes that that the cuts were carried out in the context of the Oka uprising and Elijah Harper's refusal to ratify the Meech Lake Accord; the sudden funding loss made it nearly impossible for Aboriginal journalists to report from the scene of these historic confrontations (p. 181). Several publications ceased operating altogether, including the Yukon's only Aboriginal magazine, *Dan Sha*. Today, of 12 publications formerly funded by NCP, three remain: *Windspeaker* (Alberta), *Wawatay News* (Ontario), and *Tusaayaksat* (Nunavet). One of the 12, *Saskatchewan Indian* was suspended as a regular publication for a third time in 2011, with plans for sporadic issues to be published as needed (personal communication, FSIN Office of the Chief, Sept. 26, 2014). The publishers of *Windspeaker* (the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society) and *Wawatay* (Wawatay Native Communications Society) have received alternate funding via the Aboriginal Peoples Program, as noted in Table 3-7. Within the Canada Periodical Fund, *Windspeaker* received $2,418 in 2013-2014 via the Aid To Publishers program, down from $30,961 the previous year, while the

others were unfunded (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 2013; Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 2014, Aid To Publisher recipient list). The Aboriginal Multi-Media Society created two provincial *Windspeaker* spin-offs in the 1990s, *Saskatchewan Sage* and *Alberta Sweetgrass*, neither of which received ATP assistance in 2013-2014 (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 2014, Aid To Publishers). No Aboriginal-run publications received Canada Periodical Fund Business Innovation grants in 2013-2014 (Canada. Dept. of Canadian Heritage, 2014, Business Innovation). The previous year, 2012-13, the online youth magazine *Redwire* was the lone Business Innovation recipient, receiving a $13,245 Business Innovation grant for online transition (Canada. Canadian Heritage, 2013). This could rightly be regarded as little more than a desperate salvage operation for the project fund's sole Aboriginal-focused project. *Redwire* had stopped printing in 2009 after losing its $115,000 annual grant via a Canadian Heritage youth program. The magazine continued in online format, supported by activities such as an artist-carved pumpkin auction (Abeita, 2009) but had disappeared from the web by July 2013. To place the situation in context, in contrast to $115,000 annually, *Redwire* would now receive $13,245 to be spread over multiple years (Canada. Canadian Heritage, 2013).

3.10 Canada Council

The Canada Council for the Arts (CC) provides grants to literary and art magazines for general operations, with no set funding ceiling, as well as one-time grants for start-ups and strategic market access projects, to a maximum of $5,000 per magazine (Canada Council, 2014). In 1988, the inaugural year of the Grants to Literary and Arts Magazine program, grants were awarded to 89 arts-focused publications. Third sector organizations such as artists' associations and nonprofit publishing collectives figured highly among the recipients (Canada Council, 1998). The project remained well supported through the years; 100 magazines received Canada Council funding in 2011 (Canada Council, 2011). However, as previously discussed, the

Council did not have financial resources to cover the fall-off from the Canada Magazine Fund. In any case, many CMF-funded publications could not meet the CC's requirement that arts coverage be a primary focus. *This Magazine* is an example of a magazine that was able to gain a home under the Canada Council umbrella, after demonstrating an acceptable level of arts coverage.

Outside the world of print, the Council provides time-limited funding for media arts and filmmaking projects, including workshops, residencies and screenings. There has been at least one attempt to expand the Council's media-making grants into operational support for community media. In 1976, members of 11 community radio and television groups lobbied the Council to launch a fund "to assist the growth of artistic and community services in a systematic way" that would "favor collective ownership of artistic and community media" (Chapin & Stirling, 1977, p. 104). Although the Council responded favourably in a written report, its funding programs remained largely project-based and directed toward individual artists. Today's media arts grants are not intended to support long-term community media production, and therefore are not generally accessed by third sector media organizations outside of occasional special events and artistic collaborations.

3.11 Community Radio Fund of Canada

Canada has not historically supported community radio broadcasting, beyond occasional one-time funds for projects in Indigenous and isolated communities (Cavanagh, 2009). To address the deficit, in 2007 Canada's three community radio associations, the National Campus and Community Radio Association/Association nationale des radios etudiantes et communautaires (NCRA/ANREC), the Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada (ARC du Canada), and the Association des radiodiffuseurs communautaires du Québec (ARCQ) devised the novel approach of tapping required commercial radio sector contributions to Canadian

content development. Together they formed the Community Radio Fund of Canada (CRFC), which received a seed grant of $1.4 million over seven years from Astral Media as part of the mandated benefits package association with Astral's purchase of Standard Broadcasting (Light, 2012). While this represented a success for the sector, the lack of federal media development assistance to community radio remained a concern for media advocates. In 2009, community radio supporters made their case for federal media development assistance before the Standing Committee on Finance, seeking "assistance for all eligible community radio stations in order to support their continued presence" (Canada. House of Commons, 2009, p. 81). The same year, the CRTC commissioned a review of federal community radio funding among 12 countries. The reviewers found that, in contrast to Canadian policy, all offered some level of support for community radio broadcasting, noting:

> community and campus radio usually plays an important role within the national broadcasting systems of the countries analyzed, because these are the very elements of those systems that both encourage and enable citizen access to the airwaves that has often come with considerable struggle. The magnitude of this role will vary from country to country, but the fact that a number of countries have developed a structural approach to the funding of community and campus radio identifies the stature that community-based broadcasting has achieved. (Cavanagh, 2009, p.2)

The study concluded that while donations, student fees, and the Community Radio Fund provided needed assistance, no program of annual operational funding had ever evolved in Canada, leading to "a lack of core funding that can create structural weakness and challenge community radio's goal of sustainability" (Cavanagh, 2009, p. 34). The CRTC's response was to rule in 2010 that all commercial radio operators earning in excess of $1.25 million annually must direct 15% of their federally mandated contribution to Canadian content development toward the Community Radio Fund (CRTC, 2010). This resulted in an additional $775,000 contribution to the fund (Light, 2012). With this ongoing annual contribution, the Fund was able to provide $2.2 million in available assistance in 2014 (Community Radio Fund of Canada, 2014). Meanwhile,

direct federal programming, which Cavanagh (2009) recommended should be housed in Canadian Heritage, never materialized.

3.12 Conclusion

Since before Confederation, the Canadian state viewed media development as an important tool for public education and, especially, for the promotion of national unity and sovereignty. An early example is postal subsidization for magazines and newspapers, which by all accounts assisted greatly in linking Canada's rural, northern, and coastal communities to the centre. The next significant media development initiative was the World War I-era grant to Canadian Press, driven by the need to relay war reports from east to west. Northern radio was established during World War II as a means to extend Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic. Beginning in the 1970s, cultural sovereignty became the watchword, with media development tied to Canadian content and citizen engagement. Canada's media development framework was echoed at the global level by member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement and UNESCO, which sought to re-order global communications channels in service of cultural autonomy. Entering the 1980s, such ideas and policy initiatives were unable to survive an onslaught of globalizing neoliberal trade agreements and policy dictates. The particular party in power in Ottawa was not central to this historical development. The original postal subsidy was affirmed under a Conservative government and media development programs grew through successive Liberal and Conservative governments, enjoying their strongest support under 1970s Trudeau-era Liberals. The first round of cuts were enacted by Chrétien-era Liberals, and carried on through a changing roster of Liberal and Progressive Conservative governments. Under the Conservative Party of Canada, program cuts were greatly accelerated; however, the trend was already well entrenched by previous governments.

Attempts to engage in Indigenous media development were marred by blatant colonialism. Inuit and northern First Nations organizations were able to push their way through the unequal relationship to establish a national nonprofit TV network, APTN, and the Missinipi Broadcasting radio network in Saskatchewan. These are rare and fragile successes in an otherwise bleak landscape. Recent decades have witnessed the large scale dismantling of Canadian media development assistance programs, with a handful of surviving programs realigned to serve the marketplace instead of freedom of expression, cultural development, and citizen engagement. This brings us to a state of impasse that is central to this dissertation:

> Today, Canadian society remains in the grip of an increasingly centralized state and privately-owned broadcasting industry. Most of the community media prototypes of the Seventies lie abandoned, their utility eclipsed by the harsh realities of recession economics, political backlash and dominant macro-economic planning policy. (Hurly, 1982, p. 52)

For decades, third sector media organizations and their allies relied comfortably on separate but relatively compatible interests with the state. Government grants were a 'normal' part of the sustainability toolkit for third sector media. With these grants now largely withdrawn, media enterprises are faced with the prospect of charting new paths to survival.

CHAPTER 4
OUT OF THE FRYING PAN:
THE SASKATCHEWAN CONTEXT

4.1 Introduction

Federal media development assistance arose as a tool of nationalism and cultural sovereignty. In contrast, Saskatchewan's official media development assistance was rooted in adult education, with lofty goals of promoting literacy, equality, and citizen participation. This did not necessarily advantage third sector media operators in Saskatchewan, however. The funding structures brought media practitioners into closer orbit with government agencies, often as co-partners in policy delivery, opening the gates to censorship in a far more controlling, punitive manner than was found at the federal level. In the latter 1990s, a more arms-length government-funded model emerged with the creation of the Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN); however, provincial support for SCN eventually succumbed to the same neoliberal pressures that dissolved federal assistance.

4.2 The Living Newspaper

An early Saskatchewan government foray into media support, carried out under Tommy Douglas's Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) government, very quickly led to conflict and the scuttling of the program, as described by Chartier (2009) and Welton (1986). In 1944 the newly minted Douglas government established an Adult Education Division within the Department of Education, and hired Manitoba's director of adult education, Watson Thomson, to launch a program of grassroots action-oriented education. Thomson immediately set about encouraging local study-action groups to form throughout the province. Each group was to choose its study focus based on local needs and aspirations, assisted by a district field officer who was a conduit to helpful organizations, such as the Wheat Pool and the University of Saskatchewan Extension Division. As co-operative farm enterprises began to emerge from various study-action groups, the movement came under fire from the national media and the

provincial opposition benches, which accused the CCF of harbouring "subversive communist cells" (Chapman, 2012, p. 47). Oblivious to a growing political storm, Thomson seconded Eddie Parker from the Department of Physical Fitness and Recreation, and tasked him with devising ways to use media to assist study-action (Welton, 1986). Parker proposed a system that, while familiar to anyone acquainted with African and Asian radio listening clubs, was quite groundbreaking and revolutionary in 1940s Saskatchewan. Parker devised a 'living newspaper' comprised of a radio broadcast and a newspaper. Each radio broadcast included a discussion of world events and critique of mainstream media coverage by program staff, guests and listeners, and concluded with comments from Thomson. Two days after each broadcast, the Division distributed a print publication, *The Front Page,* to the program's 4,000 registered listeners. The newspaper included a front page of news stories, followed by written versions of the radio discussion (Welton, 1986). The idea was that listeners would meet to compare and critique the newspaper and the radio broadcasts, as part of an ongoing process of dialogue among citizens (Chartier, 2009).

What Parker and Thomson failed to understand was a concept known to media activists around the world: ideas expressed in the confines of discussion groups take on a whole new perceived level of threat when put into print and on the air. Although the living newspaper was but a small part of the Division's undertakings, it became a "hotbed of controversy" among opposition groups and within the CCF, creating a situation the Douglas government could not long tolerate (Chartier, 2009 p. 12). By the third issue of *The Front Page*, Parker had received his first official complaint from Education Minister Woodrow Lloyd, who felt the headline "Race Hatred Sweeps Dominion" was overly sensationalist (Welton, 1986). National CCF leader M.J. Coldwell complained about the newspaper's favourable coverage of the Tito Plan and what he felt was too much international coverage. Thus a central tension of media

development came to the fore: it is one thing to financially support a newspaper, and quite another to stand back and let editors freely choose content. In defense of the project, Parker argued the living newspaper was a "journalistic exercise serving the people's interests" (Welton, 1986, p. 130). The broadcasts and newspaper were demonstrably popular with its grassroots audience—some 1,500 people wrote letters of praise—but Parker's defense gained little traction in the halls of power. In December 1946, Parker's supervisor, Watson Thomson, was dismissed, the study-action groups were abandoned, and Parker was transferred out of the Division (Welton, 1986). If anyone doubted the power of alternative media, for better or worse, here was an example of one media project drawing an entire government Division into conflict and dissolution.

4.3 Regional Communication Centre

If any lessons were learned from the Living Newspaper experience, they seem to have been forgotten by 1975, when a New Democratic Party (NDP)-led government contracted Frontier College to develop community media in northern Saskatchewan through the creation of a Regional Communication Centre (RCC). The impetus came from an acknowledged lack of northern media infrastructure, making it difficult for the province to keep the public informed of government services. As well, jurisdictions across Canada had become interested in developing more participatory forms of citizen engagement (Hurly, 1982). The federal government agreed to cost-share the project through the Interim Saskatchewan Northlands Agreement, a federal-provincial northern development agreement. As with the NFB's first Challenge for Change experiment, community control was lacking at the outset. However, unlike Challenge for Change, the issue remained unaddressed by the program's instigators:

> The notion of a community media project did not originate from the communities that became the site of the project. They were "consulted" approximately one and a half years after it officially had started. Nor did the push to initiate the project come from any Native association or Northern Municipal Council. Rather, the

> RCC project was conceived, planned and initiated by civil servants in DNS's Extension Services Branch. (Hurly, 1982, p. 54)

Frontier College, a Toronto-based organization that delivered northern adult education, was brought in to the agreement in the hope its participation would generate a sense of local autonomy and separation from government. The issue of top-down planning versus more robust community consultation did not go unnoticed by the Frontier College staff members, several of whom raised questions about the commitment to participation. In a prescient memo, one staff member asked: "How many ideas and opinions will come out before the lid is put back on?" (as cited by Hurly, 1982, p. 56). Nonetheless, Frontier College's president accepted the agreement and recruited a community advisory board to oversee the RCC. The board was comprised of 13 members, all northern Aboriginal people with the exception of one provincial and one federal representative (Bouey, 1977). The College staked out some independence for the project by refusing to sign its contract with the Department of Northern Services (DNS) until the board members gave their permission; College president Jack Pearpoint also indicated that the College's ultimate goal was to one day transfer full oversight to the board (Bouey, 1977).

While the province had envisioned a broadcasting project, the advisory board found there was little local interest in working with video equipment and, in any case, CBC, which operated the only transmitter in northern Saskatchewan, did not want to preempt its own programming to carry RCC programs. Instead, the RCC's modest budget went toward establishing a newspaper in English with some Cree and Dene sections. They named it *Natotawan*, a Cree word meaning 'listen to me,' which could be taken as a symbolic statement of the paper's purpose from the board's point of view, if not the government's. (Today Natotawin Broadcasting, Inc. is the name of the license-holding arm of Missinipi Broadcasting; it is not the same operation as the former newspaper *Natotawin*.)

A young Dene editor, Simon Paul (today known as Simon Paul Dene), was hired as editor and sole staff member in July 1976, and the newspaper set up shop in Beauval, a town of 650 some 300 km north of Prince Albert (Hurly, 1982; Bouey, 1977). As DNS had envisioned, the paper contained notice of government meetings and programs, and practical topics such as how to install sewage lines. However, it also contained Aboriginal cultural content, critique of northern conditions, and relevant international news.

After one year of operation, an *Ottawa Citizen* report noted that community acceptance was not immediate: "Since almost everything from installing a bathroom to obtaining a driver's license requires some action from the Department of Northern Services, it took several issues to convince local people the newspaper had some independence" (Bouey, 1977, p. 3). The convincing factor was that the paper's advisory board and editor took the idea of civic engagement through media seriously. The board chair published in the *Natotawan* an open letter to the DNS minister about problems a northern post-cutting co-operative was experiencing, and advisory board members also spoke up about unfair hiring practices at Dore Lake (Hurly, 1982). Meanwhile, Paul penned editorials about the treatment of Aboriginal inmates, confiscation of fishing nets by DNS officers, and lack of Aboriginal curriculum in northern schools (Johnsrude, 1978). As well, the paper published a lively letters to the editor section. With the launch of a provincial inquiry into uranium mining at Cluff Lake, uranium development became a hot button issue in the pages of *Natotawan*. The opening of the North to uranium mining would become a lifelong concern for Paul, who lost two siblings to cancer (Chernos, 2012). In an October, 1977 *Natotawan* editorial, Paul wrote:

> Someone once said, "If we don't teach the white man our ways, he will kill us all." And I believe it holds true for this 'space age' of our time, especially when uranium will be dug out of the ground to haunt us. (as cited by Bouey, 1977, p. 3)

According to Hurly (1982), however, it was the voicing of local complaints about DNS that truly frayed the relationship between the project and its governmental sponsors. A 1978 memo to Frontier College stated tersely:

> Regrettably the project has become an item of public controversy…. Unfortunately the problem which we have experienced in Area 3 will likely inhibit our future efforts to support the development of independent communications services. (as cited by Hurly, 1982, p. 63)

The province had envisioned northern communications as a conduit for local event notices and information about government programs, not independent journalism complete with editorial opinion and reader comments. As Frontier College's Pearpoint noted, "The people are speaking out now, and that's new" (as cited by Bouey, 1977, p. 3). In March 1978, the RCC's approximately $90,000 annual budget was reduced by $26,000. At the same time DNS terminated the contract with Frontier College, creating a more direct line of control over the advisory board, which was placed under pressure to reform the paper's news and editorial content (Hurly, 1982). Tim Meyers, DNS director of extension services, publicly complained about a *Natotawin* story on uranium mining in Australia, a topic he argued strayed from local news and was irrelevant to northern readers (Johnsrude, 1978). In an interview with a Saskatchewan daily newspaper, the *StarPhoenix*, Meyers' message was unsubtle:

> I know that if Mr. Paul worked for me, I would fire him. But that's not for me to even hint to the board. That's their action. (as cited by Johnsrude, 1978, p. 28)

Paul responded:

> I believe they want to take control of communication in the north. We can't have that. We would like to have our own independent paper. (as cited by Johnsrude, 1978, p. 28)

While stopping short of a direct firing, the DNS unleashed program evaluators on the operation. The evaluators found *Natotawin*'s readership largely satisfied with the content but the paper's financial records insufficient, contributing to a breakdown in the relationship between

Paul and the advisory board. Before the year was out, Paul left *Natotawin* for *New Breed*, a Métis magazine ("Masthead," 1978). To summarize, the need to control editorial content "became an impulse which DNS civil servants could not resist" (Hurly, 1982, p. 57).

4.4 Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations Communications Program

Aside from the ill-fated RCC, beginning in 1971 the Blakeney NDP government contributed to Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) Communications Program, initially under the province's Human Resources Development Program, and later under the First Nations and Métis Program. This filled an important gap in an area that would normally be considered a federal responsibility. The aforementioned eligibility restrictions of the federal Native Communications Program had left FSIN in the cold, despite the organization's history of sponsoring First Nations publications ("Background," 1987).

The provincial grant was substantial, rising approximately 10% annually to a peak of $450,000 in 1982 ("Introducing," 1987). The funds supported *Moccasin Telegraph*, a radio program that was first launched at CKBI in Prince Albert, and then expanded into a regular half-hour series airing on CKRM Regina, CJNB North Battleford, CJGX Yorkton, CKSW Swift Current, and CFAR Flin Flon. The radio show included news and information tailored for each listening community, and was produced by volunteers and FSIN staff. The communications grant also allowed *Saskatchewan Indian* to get off the ground, with a paid editor and a staff of field reporters, first as a tabloid newspaper and later in magazine format ("Introducing," 1987). The third major activity was a TV program, *The Fifth Generation* ("Background," 1987).

Once again, there was no shelter from Saskatchewan's political storms. In 1982, funding expired and was not renewed by Grant Devine's incoming Conservative government, which disbanded DNS. The abrupt funding loss resulted in the cancellation of the broadcast undertakings and a reduction in the number of issues of *Saskatchewan Indian*. In the hopes of

reviving the magazine and broadcasts, the FSIN formed a Communications Commission and applied to the Secretary of State for grants to keep the magazine and broadcasts alive. When these efforts were unsuccessful, the Saskatchewan Indian Media Corporation, comprised of private sector volunteers, was formed in 1987 to take over publication of *Saskatchewan Indian*. Funding recognition was not immediate; the corporation's relationship with FSIN and the magazine's Treaty Indian focus remained sticking points. According to an article in the Winter issue of *Saskatchewan Indian*, "There was intensive lobbying on the part of the Board to have the media corporation recognized by the Secretary of State as a separate entity, delivering media services to Indian people" ("Background," 1987). They argued that *New Breed*, published by the Saskatchewan Native Communications Society and affiliated to the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (AMNSIS), received federal funding, as did Missinipi Broadcasting. In the end, the funding application was accepted and *Saskatchewan Indian* announced the grant to its readers:

> The budget for the new media corporation is very small. During the current year, only $100,000 is available for publication of the *Saskatchewan Indian* and it is doubtful that it will increase. However, we do have status as an on-going program with the Secretary of State, and we are allocated to $100,000 for the foreseeable future. ("Background," 1987, p. 4)

This move was partially successful; the radio and television programs did not stay on the air, but *Saskatchewan Indian* survived, albeit as a quarterly, not a monthly, and under new financial conditions:

> …it will be necessary to produce revenue like any other communications corporation. Readers will notice a change in the magazine as more advertising space is sold to meet costs, and the magazine will not be distributed free of charge, but instead will be available by subscription or special bulk rates to bands and Indian institutions. ("Introducing," Fall 1987, p. 21)

As with aforementioned international media development programs, an assumption was made that a market economy capable of supporting the magazine existed. The obvious flaw of

this assumption is noted by Demay (1993), describing an Inuvik publication impacted by the cuts: “In a very difficult economic zone of the country, *Tusaayaksat* is supposed to make it as a profit-making venture but can the market support the growth of a paper? There is no possible growth in advertising in the area as it is not very populated” (para. 17). *Tusaayaksat* was able to re-establish federal support by applying for language translation funding. For *Saskatchewan Indian*, the road was more difficult; in 1992, publication was suspended for two months while unpaid debts were collected. The magazine returned at half its size, going from 30 to 16 pages. While the regrouping stabilized the magazine for some years, it could not stave off the inevitable; in 2003 *Saskatchewan Indian* ceased operations as an independent press. Following a three-year hiatus, it was revived in 2006 as “the official messenger for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN)” rather than as an independent, stand-alone magazine (“Sask. native magazine,” 2006; Government of Saskatchewan, 2013; Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre [SICC], n.d.). Ironically, the federal government’s insistence that publications should be separated from Aboriginal organizations ultimately resulted in *Saskatchewan Indian* becoming a public relations product of the FSIN. In any case, within five years, the magazine suspended regular publishing once again (personal communication, FSIN Office of the Chief, Sept. 26, 2014).

4.5 New Breed

Running through the above history was a current of FSIN discontent against the federal funding received by *New Breed*, the voice of Saskatchewan Métis and non-status Indians. *New Breed* was founded in 1970 as a publication of the Métis Society of Saskatchewan and its antecedent organization, the Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan (AMNSIS). However, it moved much earlier to create an arms-length entity, beginning publishing under the Saskatchewan Native Communications (Wehtamatowan) Corporation

(SNCC) in January 1982. While this satisfied federal officials, media staff still defended the right of Aboriginal organizations to create their own media while remaining politically active. Darcy MacKenzie, employed by SNCC's radio and video wing, argued:

> AMNSIS is a political organization and Wehtamatowan is in effect under the sponsorship of AMNSIS. If it wasn't for that close relationship Wehtamatowan would not exist and [n]either would the opportunity that has been offered to me through Wehtamatowan. (cited by Claude, 1985)

In any case, the Native Communications Program funding pool was parsimonious at best during its brief presence on the scene. A 1987 note to readers from the SNCC board of directors stated, "Even though it is many years since the first publication of *New Breed,* the problems remain the same. There is still a need for an efficient communications system for Aboriginal people, and never enough funds to achieve the goal" (Saskatchewan Native Communications Corporation [SNCC], 1987, p.3). After the Native Communications Program's abrupt end in 1993, *New Breed* took shelter with the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research (GDI), but eventually ceased publication in 2009 (GDI Virtual Museum archive, n.d.).

4.6 Missinipi Broadcasting

In 1963, DNS began a radio program, *Northern News*, which featured helpful information for fishers and trappers. Reception was poor, and the program ended when DNS was disbanded in 1982. Seven years later, Missinipi Broadcasting (MBC) stepped into the void as an independent co-operative undertaking, with the help of a federal NNBAP grant. At the time, the CRTC flagged MBC's vulnerability to government message control:

> In view of the fact that this nonprofit corporation will be supported in part by government loans or grants, the applicant is reminded that it should ensure that it retains at all times full control over all management and programming decisions. (Canada. CRTC, April 27, 1989)

The approval also received criticism from the FSIN, which felt NNBAP funding should be shared more equally among Saskatchewan Aboriginal media undertakings (Demay, 1991). As it turned out, these issues were moot; NNBAP funding melted away, leaving few government

funding alternatives in its wake. Despite an unstable funding environment, in 1998 MBC launched a TV wing, which received Telefilm support and benefited from broadcasting partnerships with the Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN) and APTN. As APTN had done, the network transitioned to advertising, donations, and digital service delivery as revenue sources (Missinipi Broadcasting Corp., n.d.). MBC has steadily branched out across Saskatchewan, including southern Saskatchewan. In the granting arena, it appears to have been rewarded to some extent for following a model that seeks larger audiences and increased reliance on the free market. In 2013, MBC was a mid-level funding recipient of Canadian Heritage's Aboriginal People's Program, receiving $318,355, slightly less that its 2012 allocation of $326,088 (Canada. Receiver General, 2012; Canada. Receiver General, 2013). At the provincial level, MBC receives charitable grants from the Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming Authority (SLGA) (Government of Saskatchewan, 2009). The SLGA donations remain the last remnant of provincial dollars for media development in Saskatchewan.

4.7 The Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN)

The creation of an educational TV network was doubtless the Province of Saskatchewan's most significant media development investment. As a mix of education and broadcasting, it was a natural fit for the province's founding conception of media as a tool of adult education. Nationally, 'educasting,' as it is known, began with a twin mandate to produce educational programs and operate the technology for distance education. Over time, this role evolved into becoming the de facto broadcaster for local independent film and video producers. CRTC licenses were made available in 1972, which were taken up by five provincial educasters, the Knowledge Network (BC), ACCESS (Alberta), SCN, TVOntario and Télé-Québec. In 1990, Saskatchewan offered the highest level of government funding among the five, at 99.8% of revenue (Kozolanka, 2012). At the time, SCN operated primarily as a closed-circuit broadcaster

for the University of Regina, having evolved from the provincial Department of Education's SaskMedia library service, later called the Saskatchewan Communications Access Network (SCAN) (Canadian Communications Foundation, n.d.). In 1991, SCAN obtained a CRTC license as a non-commercial broadcaster and launched as SCN, a provincial education channel available via cable. The station would operate as a provincial agency supported by provincial and federal funding, with a provincial commitment to replace federal funds scheduled to end in 1994 (Canada. CRTC, Feb. 14, 1991).

Appearing before the CRTC, SCN's chairperson assured the Commission that "SCN has its own authority through its Board of Directors…and that helps to protect our independence" (as cited by Canada. CRTC, Feb. 14, 1991). Indeed, there is no evidence of government interference in on-air content throughout the station's history. SCN's stated mandate was to serve as "a regional public broadcaster, contributor to economic development through the film and video industry, and facilitator of access to information and education services in remote and rural areas of Saskatchewan" (Saskatchewan Communications Network, 2006, p. 1). The network was divided into three main services: distance learning; a provider of public satellite access; and regional public television. The broadcast arm was to be dedicated to reflecting Saskatchewan culture, being "the only network mandated to focus specifically on stories that address the issues and concerns of the province's population" (p. 3).

But while SCN was finding its feet in the province of Saskatchewan, the currents of neo-liberalism were sweeping across the rest of the country. Between 1994 and 1999, the other four provincial governments directly threatened privatization, sending the educasters into a tailspin of survivalist mandate-adjusting. As provincial grants shrank, the networks began to beef up their schedules with purchased mass-market programs and on-air sponsorship announcements (advertising was forbidden under the educasting license). This merely led to accusations of

unfairly subsidized competition with private broadcasters, increasing the pressure on provinces to divest. In 1995, Alberta's Klein government sold ACCESS for $1 to a private consortium whose majority shareholder was the Ontario-based CHUM broadcasting group, which was later taken over by CTVglobemedia (Kozolanka, 2012). The remaining stations coped with reduced budgets mainly by turning to outsourced productions, saving costs on local program development.

By 2007, SCN was the only remaining educaster producing its own local and regional programs (Kozolanka, 2012). Sheltered from national cost-cutting trends, the station continued to build a place in the public consciousness as a made-in-Saskatchewan alternative (see Table 4-1). A Saskatchewan viewer survey conducted in 2009 revealed a healthy level of public support for educational broadcasting: 53% of respondents felt their tax contribution level to support educational broadcasting was satisfactory, and 28% said it was too little, for a combined 81% in favour of tax-supported educational broadcasting (Arcas Checkmate, 2009 p. 3).

Table 4-1. SCN viewership, 2004 to 2009

Year	Total population	Those aware of SCN
2004	29%	51%
2005	38%	63%
2006	38%	55%
2007	47%	61%
2009Q1	59%	77%
2009Q4	51%	71%

Source: Arcas Checkmate, 2009

After a Saskatchewan Party government was elected in 2007, there were no immediate changes made to SCN's mandate and budget. Between 2006 and 2010, SCN's annual government grant held steady, ranging between $5.6 million and $6.2 million (Table 4-2).

Table 4-2. Saskatchewan government grants to SCN, 2006-2011

Year	Amount
2006	$5,687,000
2007	$6,435,000
2008	$5,997,000
2009	$5,997,000
2010	$6,267,000
2011	$1,431,095

Source: SCN annual reports, 2007-2012

Then, in the March 2010 provincial budget, the government unexpectedly announced its intention to sell SCN's broadcast arm to the private sector, stating, "SCN's viewership is quite low and we feel there is no longer a role for government in the broadcast business" (Government of Saskatchewan, 2010). In the midst of vocal public protests, Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) president Larry Hubich wrote an open letter to Premier Brad Wall requesting time to prepare a community-sponsored bid for the broadcaster. "We are serious—but we need time to examine our options and possible partnerships…perhaps a co-operative?" Hubich wrote. The letter sought 60 days for the SFL to contact its 37 affiliates, labour's venture capital funds, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (a major pension investment holder), the credit union system, and SCN employees for the purposes of preparing a bid. "Please don't wipe SCN off the map until we can develop a plan to retain vital cultural human resources in Canada," Hubich's letter concluded (L. Hubich, correspondence to B. Wall, April 30, 2010). The plea was to no effect*;* the station was sold to Bluepoint, an Ontario-based private company wholly owned by Bruce G. Claassen, for $350,000. A condition of sale was Bluepoint's commitment to spend $1.75 million per year on local program production, and that the period between 6 a.m. and 3 p.m. remain dedicated to commercial-free children's and educational programming (Rogers Broadcasting, Ltd., 2012; Saskatchewan News Network, 2010).

In December, the CRTC approved the sale and authorized on-air advertising, previously prohibited, during non-educational programs (Canada. CRTC, 2010). Just two years later, citing financial duress, Claassen sold the station to Rogers Broadcasting for $3 million, approximately 8.5 times what he had paid for the channel (Rogers Broadcasting, Ltd., 2012). In its application to the CRTC, Rogers asked to be relieved of the $1.75 million commitment to local programming, and to use the SCN signal to broadcast its Toronto-based CityTV station ("SCN proposal," 2012; Rogers Broadcasting Corporation, 2012). In June 2012, the CRTC approved the sale; instead of $1.75 million annually, Rogers was ordered to spend 23% of gross revenues purchasing from local TV producers, and to commit to an additional $1 million toward local productions by 2018. As well, the station was ordered to retain commercial-free educational broadcasting between 6 a.m. and 3 p.m. (Canada. CRTC, June 21, 2012). With these commitments, the company received permission to transform SCN into CityTV.

While these conditions helped retain morning children's programs, the station's overall intent was clearly changed under private ownership. To track this change, I used the Internet Archives (www.archive.org) Way Back Machine for the web address http://www.scn.ca on selected dates, and viewed the the City TV website on July 31, 2013 (see Appendix E). Content analysis illustrates a shift in public service, viewer participation, and station vision, as evidenced by featured homepage items and links:

2001. On October 7, 2001 (the earliest available web capture), SCN's website home page featured links to information about the station's programs, distance learning, and satellite services. Documents related to the public nature of SCN, including links to the Annual Report, were the most prominently featured items, occupying the page's upper left corner, the natural starting point for reading a page. Healthy recipes from a cooking show and a school telecasting

guide further suggest a public service mandate. A feedback form, available in print and online, offered public participation.

2005. On February 5, 2005, the home page visual emphasis was on a featured program, rather than corporate information and telecasting, an apt illustration of the station's historical arc from close-circuit satellite provider to TV broadcaster. The featured program was a biography of Father Athol Murray of Saskatchewan's Notre Dame Collegiate. The biography was an episode of *A People's Century*, a Saskatchewan history series produced by SCN for the province's 100th anniversary homecoming year. Public participation was invited through a prominently displayed invitation to viewers to show their Saskatchewan Homecoming videos on SCN, as well as a viewer feedback form and a link to information for independent producers.

2009. The July 7, 2009, home page featured *A Few Good Men and Women*, a reality-style documentary about Saskatchewan Police College recruits. A centre news panel included a report on awards won by two independent productions supported by SCN, *Wapos Bay*, an Aboriginal children's series, and *Out in the Cold*, a short film about the freezing deaths of Aboriginal men abandoned by police on the outskirts of Saskatoon. A second news story told of five awards won by in-house SCN productions. Also prominently featured was a link to Requests for Proposals for original content.

2013. The July 31, 2013, home page illustrated the station's transformation into CityTV. Menu links to information at the top of the page were replaced by a rotating paid advertising banner. Featured programs were *Wipeout*, a U.S. game show, *America's Got Talent*, a U.S. reality/variety show, *Hell's Kitchen*, a U.S. reality show, and *The Bachelorette*, a U.S. reality show, interspersed with an ad for the Android mobile app. Menu links to annual reports, mission statements and educasting information were replaced by three links, 'Watch Shows Online,' 'Schedule,' and 'Shows.' Rotating galleries of ads throughout the page included advertising for

Target department stories, the Government of Canada Action Plan, a car dealership, and the release of a report on violence against women by the Canadian Federation of Women. Viewer participation was invited through a web poll question, "What show are you most excited about in the fall?" followed by a choice of U.S. network programs. Significantly missing was reference to Aboriginal and educational content, prominently featured in the past (Appendix E).

Finally, a comparison of prime-time program schedules further reveals the changing mandate and content of SCN. A 2001 schedule frames SCN primarily as a broadcaster of Canadian documentaries produced out-of-province; this is followed by a rise in Saskatchewan-based productions in subsequent years. In 2013, the program schedule revealed a complete absence of Saskatchewan productions, with U.S. network programming taking up the prime time slots and Canadian documentaries shifted from prime time to late evening (Table 4-2).

Table 4-2. Prime time and evening programs and descriptions – SCN and City TV

	Oct. 24, 2001	**March 10, 2005**	**July 27, 2009**	**July 31, 2013**
6:00 pm	*Get a Life* Youth lifestyle education. Canadian independent partnership with SCN and other Cdn educasters.	*Great Canadian Rivers* Travel. Cdn. independent.	*15 Minutes of Fame* Short films about Sask. made by SCN viewers.	*Two and a Half Men* Situation comedy, U.S. network TV
6:30	*Word Chronicle* World news produced by the United Nations	*Ghost Towns of Canada* Travel /history. BC independent.	*Wild at Heart* Drama series. UK, ITV.	*Two and a Half Men* Sit-com, U.S. network
7:00	*Great Canadian Parks* Travel show. Cdn independent production	*Blanch* Historical drama set in Quebec, CBC	*Time and Place* Episode on Whooping Cranes in Sask. Sask.	*America's Got Talent* Reality, U.S. Network
7:30	↓		*Undersea Explorer Science series*. Cdn. independent	
8:00	*Sex Spelled out for Parents* Sex education; BC	*Entertainment* West Prairie music scene. Sask. independent.	*Closer to Home* Aboriginal issues, Canada APTN	

	Oct. 24, 2001	March 10, 2005	July 27, 2009	July 31, 2013
	independent/BC Ministry of Families and Health Canada			
8:30	↓	*The Corporation* Doc. on rise of corporations. Cdn. independent.	*Drug Class* Reality documentary on youth addiction recovery. Sask. independent.	
9:00	*Frocks, Woks and Gossip* Doc. about a Singapore women's magazine launch. Australia independent.		*The Devil Plays Hardball* Documentary on homeless people in Vancouver. BC, CBC.	*Modern Family* Sit-com, U.S. network
9:30	↓	*Reinventing the World* . Urban sustainability. Cdn., Vision TV series	↓	*Cougar Town* Sit-com, US network
10:00	*The Killing Screens* Interviews with media theorist George Gerbner. US, Media Education Foundation.	↓	*Redemption, SK* Sask. drama SK, independent	*Battlefield Mysteries* History, Canada, History Channel
10:30	↓	*Moccasin Flats: The Making of Moccasin Flats* Documentary. Sask independent	↓	↓
11:00	*The Myth of the Liberal Media* Doc. US, Media Ed. Foundation	*CBC Regional News* Sask. news. CBC	*CBC Regional News Sask*. News. CBC.	*1999* Doc. on Canadian assistance to Kosovo refugees. Cdn. independent

Sources: scn.ca Internet Archive web captures and citytv.com/saskatchewan/ on July 31, 2013

4.8 Conclusion

Saskatchewan's early official media development efforts were closely tied to adult education and northern development, and were put in place primarily by CCF/NDP governments. While the framework was somewhat different than the federal emphasis on nation-building, the end results were no happier for media practitioners. In setting up government-directed

partnerships as opposed to arms-length grants, the provincial government was unprepared for the true meaning of 'independent voices.' The fate of *The Living Newspaper* set the stage for struggles to come. Meanwhile, federal contributions helped stir existing tensions between First Nations and Métis organizations. As with federal funding programs, early provincial attempts to engage in Aboriginal media assistance were top-down and heavy-handed. Later support to FSIN's communications program was less controlling; however, this undertaking could not escape partisan ideology, after a right-leaning political party gained control and cut all ties to the program. SCN represented a more arms-length arrangement that seemed able to survive changing leadership—only to succumb to 21st Century capitalism. At one time, the Government of Saskatchewan was willing to step in, however clumsily, where the federal government and free market would not. Today the province is entirely disengaged from media development in any form. This has left third sector media with no local alternative to depleted federal support.

CHAPTER 5
PAYING THE PRICE OF LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY JOURNALISM: BRIARPATCH AND THE SASQUATCH

5.1 Introduction

On September 7, 2013, editors, writers, staff and supporters of *Briarpatch Magazine* gathered at the Artesian, a Regina concert hall, to celebrate 40 continuous years of publishing. Forty years is a major milestone even for large-scale commercial magazines. The fact that a donor-supported, nonprofit, Saskatchewan-based publication had not only survived, but had developed a national audience, was a source of wonder even to those who helped make it happen. Gary Robbins, a staff member during the 1970s, offered an explanation, pointing to years of volunteer-run bottle drives and garage sales. He added:

> There is a good, strong base, and I think that's really critical and really important, and why so many of the other publications that we knew of back then weren't able to continue, why those organizations morphed and changed and came and went. That's part of the lives we live in these perilous times. So it's good to see the stability of a magazine like *Briarpatch*. (Robbins, speech, Sept. 7, 2013)

It wasn't only bottle drives that kept the presses rolling, however. In addition to advertising and newsstand sales, the magazine ran the course of media development funds described in Chapters 3 and 4. Therefore *Briarpatch* presents an enlightening case study of the supportive value of various media development initiatives over the years, as well as the pressures magazines have faced in this environment, from conflict over editorial content to unexpected funding cuts. Additionally, the case of *Briarpatch* illustrates the struggle to retain local voice and local accountability journalism during a time when both funding agencies and readers pulled the magazine toward the national stage. Aware of the social and political implications of the magazine's declining focus on Saskatchewan news, in 2009 the magazine's publishers launched an adjunct publication, *The Sasquatch*, which was intended to fill the gap and restore local

accountability journalism. By now, however, media development funds that might have supported the launch of a new publication had almost completely dried up. Saskatchewan's civil society organizations were unprepared to step into the breach, leaving *The Sasquatch* without a financial base to publish beyond eight issues. This chapter will examine the details of these events, with a view to understanding the promises and perils of future Saskatchewan media development.

5.2 Briarpatch Magazine

5.2.1 Gaining an Independent Voice

Briarpatch Magazine began as *Notes from the Briar Patch*, a newsletter established by the Unemployed Citizens Welfare Improvement Council (UCWIC). UWIC was one of several grassroots organizations grappling with issues of urban poverty in Saskatoon during the 1970s, a time of high unemployment and increased rural and northern migration to the city. It was formed in 1970 under the leadership of Helen Kudryk, who, through her own experiences on social assistance, became concerned about the rights of all welfare recipients. One year later, UWIC successfully leveraged an Opportunities For Youth grant to establish a co-operative buying club and a co-operative childcare centre. By 1973 the organization was actively engaged in the lives of some 500 welfare recipients (Younger, 1976). This expanding base gave rise to discussions about establishing a regular communications network for people on welfare, however financing remained an unresolved issue. UWIC member Maria Fischer decided to push the matter to a head:

> In August 1973, Vivian Fisher, David Hoskings and I concluded that if we waited for funding we would never get our newsletter so we just decided to do it. We presented our proposal to a UCWIC meeting to publish a monthly provincial newsletter with the first issue ready for distribution in September. (Fischer, 1993, p. 10)

The trio set about contacting Saskatoon anti-poverty organizations to gather articles and story ideas. They explained it would be "a magazine for and by poor people so we could tell our own

story, since we found it next to impossible to get our side represented in the mainstream media" (Fisher, 1993, p. 10). Ahead of schedule, the group produced the first issue of *Notes from the Briar Patch* in August 1973. The 10-page corner-stapled newsletter proved to be a popular item at Saskatoon's annual Poor People's March. Recalls Fischer (1993):

> Donations of dollars and fivers came in, a unionist came with a handful of stamps, letters with some quarters taped to them arrived, while other people donated packages of Gestetner paper. People from all over the province encouraged our project. (Fischer 1993, p. 10)

The group continued to produce issues throughout the fall, distributing 500 copies monthly via the city's service agencies. The first four editions, produced on an early photocopier owned by the Saskatoon Family Service Bureau, were expensive to produce and the thermofax paper quality was poor (as a result, no issues survive today). But Fischer's gamble paid off: with an established readership and a publishing track record, UWIC successfully obtained a $2,500 federal grant for the newsletter from the federal Human Resources Development Agency (HRDA) in November 1973. Thereafter, *Notes from the Briar Patch* was printed on a Gestetner at the Saskatoon Community Clinic at a cost of $300 per month. The improved printing techniques allowed circulation to expand to 2,000 copies by 1974.

From the beginning, it was clear the publication intended to be more than an information sheet. Its very name represented a critical stance, being a playful pun on the last name of an unpopular local welfare officer named Brierly (Collier, 1993). The idea of media-empowered citizen engagement was explained in this 1977 description of the newsletter's founding ethos:

> The purpose of the newsletter was to organize low income people in order that they might change a dehumanizing life situation. They felt that there was no vehicle through which they could be informed of decisions made on their behalf, in terms which they could understand. They also recognized the need for a communication system which would express their feelings about those decisions, and their general situation, something which the established media did not seem to be doing. (Briarpatch submission to F. Bogdasavich, May 3, 1977, p. 1)

While the HRDA grant helped launch the publication, it was not enough to cover ongoing expenses. "We were often in a panic over whether we would be able to scrounge together enough money to prevent our phone from being cut off," Kudryk recalled (as cited by Karst, 1977, p. 6). Despite the challenges, within a year *Notes from the Briar Patch* had an impressive distribution network and a desire to become its own independent entity. At the same time, UWIC was winding down. In 1974 the Briar Patch Society was incorporated, with a membership fee set at $1 (Briarpatch submission to F. Bogdasavich, May 3, 1977). At the society's first general meeting, held February 21-22, 1974, the members agreed to produce an independent newsletter that would: act as a communications link for low income people; provide educational workshops and media access; and "evaluate, analyze, and provide constructive criticism of government programs and dealings with low income people known to the public" (Karst, 1977, p. 2). A seven-member board was chosen to oversee operations of the magazine, named *The Briar Patch*, in honour of the original newsletter (Fischer, 1993). The society created a distribution system by which organizations could buy bundles of magazines at bulk rates and sell individual copies for 25 cents each, gaining some income while spreading the magazine. However, the board faced challenges coordinating the number of magazine bundles delivered to organizations, with some groups receiving more magazines than they paid for (Potruff, 1975). For core funding, *The Briar Patch* turned to the Saskatchewan Coalition of Anti-Poverty Organizations (SCAPO), which provided $2,500 from its pool of federal funds. Added to this was $3,800 from the Protestant, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Anglican Aid Committee (PLRA, later known as PLURA, with the addition of the United Church). Although the grants were small, it was enough to carry the *The Briar Patch* through to April 1975, when the organization received its first substantive government funding of $36,000 from the Department of Social Services (DSS). This was supplemented by $12,700 from the province's Employment

Support Program (Karst, 1977). Thus government grants became central to the magazine's revenues.

Table 5-1. Early Grants to *The Briar Patch*

Year	Agency	Type	Amount
1973	HRDA	Federal	$2,500
1974	SCAPO	CBO	$2,500
	PLRA	CBO	$3,800
1975	PLRA	CBO	$3,800
	Employment Support Program	Provincial	$12,700
	DSS	Provincial	$36,000
1976	DSS	Provincial	$36,142
1977	DSS	Provincial	$51,376
	Canada Manpower	Federal	$1,236
1978	DSS	Provincial	$54,431

Sources: Karst, 1977; *Briarpatch* annual financial statements, 1976-1978

However, even after the receipt of DSS funding, the continuing need and desire for donor involvement was evident in a May 1975 appeal to readers:

> The *Briar Patch* typewriter has broken down and we are in desperate need of a replacement. Any offers and suggestions from our readers is much appreciated. (Pottruff, 1975, p. 1)

Thus, while provincial funding was a boon to operating expenses, the idea of pitching in remained central in the magazine's communications with its readers and supporters. The Briar Patch Society successfully pursued federal charitable status in 1975, allowing the society to issue tax receipts in exchange for donations (Pottruff, 1975). Additionally, the Society increased its membership dues to $5, retaining the $1 rate for social assistance recipients, and began selling advertising at $75 for a full page, $45 for a half page, and $25 for a quarter page (Potruff, 1975).

The group opened an office at 136 Ave. F South, in the heart of Saskatoon's low-income west end and next door to a CIDA-funded development education agency called One Sky. Through One Sky, the *Briar Patch* forged links to the global movement for communications

democracy. The new relationship was evident in a May 1975 *Briar Patch* article about a One Sky-led project called One Media:

> One of the hopes of *The Briar Patch* has been to get together some media workshops, to give people direct access to, and experience with, the various forms of communications…. Access to the tools of communication when people need them is a basic right. (Curry, 1975, p. 10)

This understanding was reflected in the positioning line below the banner: "The voice for all low income people—let us know what you want printed" (*The Briar Patch*, 1975, May). The issue for May 1975 opened with a poem that underscored *The Briar Patch*'s connection to movements for social change:

> We are all getting wise
>
> We have to organize
>
> We all just must pitch in
>
> A better world to win
>
> A few have a ball
>
> Many nothing at all
>
> The welfare of one
>
> Must be the welfare of all.

The edition's 22 stories conveyed a mixture of information, advocacy, and straight-up news reporting. Published in advance of a federal election, it included profiles of two independent Métis candidates in northern Saskatchewan and an interview with an independent socialist candidate, on the grounds that their perspectives were unlikely to be covered by the mainstream media. Ties to the co-operative movement were evident in coverage of the establishment of a farmer's market co-operative in Saskatoon, an information article about the Churchill Park Co-op Greenhouse, and news of a Saskatoon Housing Co-op workshop. A letter from a prison

inmate advocated the establishment of a Fine Options restorative justice program in Saskatoon, and readers contributed prose on the subject of 'joy.' Another article described discriminatory comments made by a Saskatoon judge. Less controversial, several community-based service agencies announced office openings, staff changes, and new services. As well, information about government programs was printed, for example the allowable babysitting rates for Social Assistance recipients. Meanwhile, the provincial government's Vocational Training Program submitted a letter disputing a previously published editorial, revealing some early tensions between the information needs of government and the independent spirit of the magazine. For the moment, though, *Briar Patch* staff remained confident in the support they were receiving from a socially-minded NDP government. A 1975 letter from a DSS supervisor noted, "Certainly in the province of Saskatchewan, where the number of communication avenues are few and generally polarized, this paper has been of immense value to many people in the province" (R. J. Reiter correspondence, funding support letter for *The Briar Patch*, Sept. 26, 1975).

In 1976, *The Briar Patch*'s main office shifted to Regina, to be closer to the province's political centre. Here the magazine maintained its shoestring lifestyle, operating out of a 10th Avenue basement with a dirt floor (Gilmour, 1993; see also Karst, 1977). However, with DSS funding renewed for 1976, improved financial stability had a noticeable impact on the publication's quality. The magazine soon moved from its dirt-floor quarters to a larger office down the street, where there was room to set up a darkroom and store back issues. The enterprise began to take on the feel of a newsroom rather than an anti-poverty service organization.

> At that time we were working much more proficiently both in terms of our writing and our production values. And we were really starting to come into our own as part of the community of alternative press. (G. Robbins speech, Sept. 7, 2013)

Gradually the Regina office took over from Saskatoon as the main locus of activity, moving for a final time into Huston House, a two-and-a-half-storey converted house operated by a charitable foundation, and occupied by a number of environmental and development education organizations. Physical proximity to a rich mix of civil society organizations helped feed *Briar Patch*'s roots in social change movements. At its second annual meeting in April 1976, members significantly added workers and Indigenous people to its stated mandate of supporting low-income people. This reflected the beginning of a longstanding association with the labour movement. Staff members voluntarily paid dues to RWDSU, though they were not been legally certified as a union local until 1979 (D. Ching, letter to Saskatchewan Joint Board of RWDSU, April 10, 1979; L. Wallace, letter to local presidents and chief shop stewards, RWDSU, June 5, 1979). As well, beginning in 1976 the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) agreed to mail 500 copies to its affiliates, a significant contribution to the cost of distribution (*Briar Patch* staff meeting minutes, July 20, 1976). The expanded mandate statement also signaled increased interest in coverage of northern and Aboriginal issues. At the meeting, members restated that, in addition to producing a newsletter, the society aimed for a more just society (Karst, 1977).

Under the editorship of Maria Fischer, the magazine expanded its reach across the province in 1976 by tightening and improving distribution methods. The method she proposed offered independent distributors the opportunity to purchase 1,000 copies of each issue at a 40 to 50% discount off the cover price, which staff members proposed setting at 50 cents, with an increase to 75 cents "when the magazine becomes better known and when our costs rise" (staff report to board members, July 29, 1976). Individual subscriptions by mail were also introduced, allowing the magazine to reach readers outside Saskatchewan and Canada (see Table 5-2). To ensure a more attractive product, staff members continued to work on the magazine's design, informing the board they would "continue juggling with styles until we find a style that is

distinctive to *Briar Patch* and not merely a copy of *Time* or *Newsweek*" (staff report, July 29, 1976).

Table 5-2. Subscription destinations, 1976-1977

Year	Saskatchewan	Out of Province	International	Total
April 1976	251	41	5	297
Feb 1977	494	84	23	601

Source: Karst, 1977

At this point, the province appeared satisfied with the magazine's direction and growing audience. A grant of $36,053 for 1976-1977 was accompanied by a letter from Social Services minister Herman Rolfes, in which he wished the Briar Patch Society "every success in the continued publication of the monthly newspaper, providing a valuable service to the economically disadvantaged people in our community" (H. Rolfes letter to M. Fischer, April 26, 1976).

The government's expectations of the magazine were clarified in its 1977 funding agreement, which outlined the parameters of a $39,000 grant for the coming year. According to the terms of reference, "the population to be served under this agreement will be those of low income and recipients of public assistance residing in the province of Saskatchewan" (Administrative terms of reference between the Minister of Social Services and Briar Patch Society, 1977, p. 1). The role of *The Briar Patch* was to "report events by and of interest to disadvantaged people around the Province of Saskatchewan" as well as to "publish letters, articles and reports that will foster the expression of concerns and communication about disadvantaged people" (p. 1). Added to this was a mandate to transfer publishing skills to disadvantaged people and to bring people together through workshops and seminars to discuss social issues. Clearly, the government's sense of the magazine's purpose was narrower than the

mandate set out by the *Briar Patch* membership. The magazine's 1974 founding aims and objectives were listed as:

- Communication link between low-income organizations and individuals.
- Provide individuals and organizations with access to the media.
- Make the views and problems of welfare recipients, unemployed and low-income people known to the public.
- Evaluate, analyze and provide constructive criticism of government programs and dealings with low-income people.
- Provide factual and relevant information to the public.
- Content of the newsletter should be such that it is valuable to low income people.
- Briar Patch Society shall carry on educational workshops and partake in other media workshops.
- Identify common problems between and among various groups and build coalitions around these issues.
- Briar Patch Society [will] educate regular media to present the problems of the poor fairly.
- Break down hostilities and barriers between people. (Briar Patch Society, minutes of the first annual meeting, Feb. 21-22, 1974)

Notably, while the magazine's stated aims identified its role as a link for low-income people, the intended audience was described in much broader terms as "the public" as well as "various groups." The document also highlighted critiquing and organizing around social issues, and reporting on "factual and relevant information to the public," without specifying or limiting the topic areas to anti-poverty issues (Briar Patch Society, minutes of the first annual meeting, 1974). The disparity of aims was observed by Karst (1977):

> The department is financially supporting an organization whose mandate includes critically analysing service delivery and exposing inadequacies and abuses within that department. *The Briar Patch* is accountable to its target population. (p. 10)

With secure funding, the magazine continued to improve its production values and scope of coverage (Robertson, 1993). During the period 1976 to 1979, each issue looked less like an agency-directed newsletter and more like an independent news magazine, complete with saddle stitch and glossy cover (Manz, 1993). As well, coverage expanded to include topics such as the Québec separatist movement, alternatives to nuclear power, labour issues and human rights. Observes Robertson (1993):

> Of course, we maintained a welfare rights focus, our coverage of SCAPO, legal aid and rent control legislation, and federal and provincial programs was aimed at the poor and unemployed. But we had set a process in motion and *Briarpatch* increasingly looked and acted like an alternate news magazine. (p. 12)

This was not a simple evolution, however. For one thing, the changes led to serious budget overruns, prompting the board to resign *en masse*. The transition also cut to the core issue of the magazine's purpose. In a resignation letter dated April 9, 1976, founding editor Maria Fischer expressed support for the magazine's new direction but cautioned that *The Briar Patch* should not get "too technically advanced for people to participate in its production" (M. Fischer letter to the Briar Patch Society, April 9, 1976). As might be expected, the transition period was accompanied by tension over editorial control.

> Staff were frustrated with the board's agreement to give editorial space over to the control of anti-poverty organizations, a conflict that was resolved with an election of new board members who were more closely tied to an alternative news tradition, and *Briarpatch* became 'Saskatchewan's independent news magazine.' (Robertson, 1993, p. 12)

At a meeting of Sept. 19, 1976, the board's editorial committee recommended expanding the scope of reader input while reducing the hands-on work of an editorial committee, arguing that "the scrutinizing of each and every article that would be published in the paper" led to petty arguments and slowed down production. (Minutes of the editorial committee, Sept. 19, 1976). A restructuring initiative established local editorial collectives around the province, which forwarded their priority topics to guide the provincial board in choosing stories to follow. As

well, the local collectives were expected to help with ad sales and distribution in their areas. The new structure was meant to aid "truly becoming a paper with a provincial scope" (Minutes of the editorial committee, Sept. 19, 1976). Accordingly, a written proposal went forward to expand the Briar Patch Society board to include local representatives from around the province; the document noted, "our present membership stretches from Regina to North Battleford" (N. Pottruff, M. Patterson, S. Boychuk & B. Fink letter to V. Fisher, Oct. 4, 1976). Indeed, staff meeting minutes show regular contact with supporters and contributors in Swift Current, Kindersley, Lloydminister, North Battleford, Saskatoon, and Davidson, and a press run of 5,000 copies (staff meeting minutes, Sept. 16, 1977). As well, the magazine was engaged in outreach activities at farmers' markets around the province and at events such as Moose Jaw's Sidewalk Days (Briar Patch staff meeting minutes, June 22, 1977). An eight-person board included members from Moose Jaw, Saskatoon, Prince Albert, and Regina (Briar Patch Society, 1977).

The movement toward decentralization of the magazine's mandate doubtless contributed to what became a split with SCAPO (G. Kowalenko, letter to *Briar Patch* board, Aug. 5, 1977), as well as internal debates about the mix of staff versus community involvement in directing the magazine (L. Robertson internal discussion paper: The role of the *Briar Patch* board, 1978). In particular, a proposal to re-establish the magazine as a worker co-operative was aborted amid concerns that such a structure would reduce opportunities for community input (Robertson discussion paper, 1978; Gilmour, 1979).

Despite these tensions and debates, a content analysis of 27 support letters written between 1975 and 1978 reveals the bent toward independent news coverage was largely appreciated by community organizations. The letters, written in support of various funding applications, presented views as to why *The Briar Patch* was important to the community (see Appendix F for a full list of correspondents and characteristics cited). While the magazine's

original conception as a vehicle for agency-related public communications received five mentions, the most frequently cited worthy characteristic was relevant news coverage (19 incidents), followed by support for social change (nine incidents). For example, a letter submitted by the Saskatchewan Association for Human Rights reveals the type of news considered relevant went well beyond information about service agencies and government programs:

> We have found this magazine's coverage relevant to community groups such as ourselves. We have been particularly pleased by the series of articles on [imprisoned AIM leader] Leonard Peltier and the Cable T.V. Cooperatives as well as coverage of direct Saskatchewan human rights issues on wage discrimination, tenant and housing problems, and the problems facing welfare recipients. (Robertson, Patterson & Rafter, correspondence, Jan. 17, 1977)

Also noteworthy, while some direct-service agencies such as the Employment Outreach Service and the Community Switchboard were among the letter-writers, the greatest level of support was found among groups which could be classified as equality-seeking organizations, such as Saskatchewan Native Women and The Voice of the Handicapped, suggesting an activist, social change-oriented base (Table 5-3).

Table 5-3. Letter content categorization

By characteristic mentioned	By agency profile
Relevant news coverage – 19	Equality-seeking – 7
Support of social change – 9	Anti-poverty – 3
Voice of the voiceless – 8	Community associations – 3
Support for organization's public education and outreach – 5	Government – 3
Networking and community-building – 4	Labour – 2
General public education (not specifically related to organization's work) – 2	Individual – 2
Analysis and critique – 2	Service – 1
Global linkages – 1	Professional association – 1
	Church – 1
	Development education – 1
	Environmental – 1
	Academic – 1
	Adult education – 1

Source*: Briarpatch* office archives

An undated *Briar Patch* editorial policy memo from the period describes the magazine's ongoing coverage as "articles on welfare, native people, worker's disputes and government as well as other policies and practices as they affect low income and working class people in Saskatchewan" (editorial policy, p. 1). In January 1978, the nonprofit society reincorporated as Briarpatch, Inc., and changed the publication's title to a single word, *Briarpatch*. Board and staff sharpened the focus on independent journalism, joining the Canadian Periodical Publishers Association and attending the founding conference of the Canadian Investigative Journalism Association (Gilmour, 1993). In essence, *Briarpatch*'s primary *raison d'être* was by now well grounded within common definitions of accountability journalism, i.e. carrying out investigations and holding establishment structures to account for policy decisions. As well, *Briarpatch*'s alliances had expanded to other third sector media practitioners. In 1978 the magazine helped create a network of Regina journalists working for *New Breed*, *Briarpatch*, *The North Central News,* and the University of Regina's student newspaper, *The Carillon,* for a combined circulation of 17,000 (L. Robertson, staff report, 1979). Called the Regina News Agency, the project lasted long enough to provide lively shared coverage of events during Trudeau's 1978 visit to Saskatchewan (Gilmour, 1993). Another example of third sector media co-operation was an agreement *Briarpatch* staff negotiated to share *New Breed's* typesetting machine (L. Robertson, staff report, 1979). In contrast, an advertisement for *The Commonwealth* was accepted only "with reservations" (*Briarpatch* staff meeting minutes, July 20, 1976, p.1), indicating a less cordial relationship with a newspaper that had become closely allied with the New Democratic Party. Indeed, *Briarpatch* printed critical coverage of the expansion of uranium mining in the north under the NDP, as well as provincial cutbacks to daycare and legal aid. It perhaps should come as no surprise, then, that *Briarpatch*'s funding relationship with the

province should suffer the same fate as *Natotawan*, the northern newspaper that is discussed in Chapter 4.

There were few hints of what was to come, however. When applying for various federal funds, the magazine received generously worded letters of support from DSS staff, who praised the magazine for its contribution to the fight against poverty. Unaware that there might be some departmental self-interest in supporting federal applications, society members assumed the relationship with Saskatchewan's provincial government remained harmonious. In its 1977 submission, *Briarpatch* asked for and received additional funding to hire a fifth staff person (Briarpatch budget submission, May 3, 1977). Dependency on provincial funding had by now grown to a very high level. The DSS grant for 1977-78 amounted to $51,376, almost the entirety of the magazine's $58,628 in revenues (See Figure 5-1). Donations, in comparison, were $142, or less than 1% of revenues.

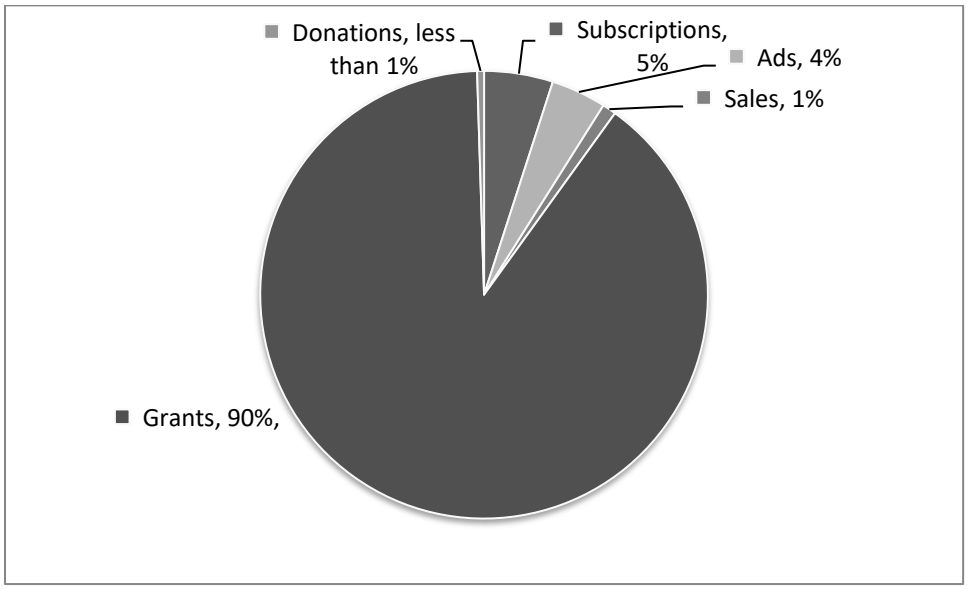


Figure 5-1. *Briarpatch* Revenues, 1977-78
Data source: Briar Patch Society annual financial statement, April 1, 1977 to March 31, 1978.

Clearly, this was a balance that left the magazine vulnerable and, indeed, the society worked to diversify its revenue the following year. One proposal considered was to create a worker co-operative to run a typesetting business, print shop and bookstore, with profits going toward the magazine. A discussion paper reveals that staff and board members thought deeply about the co-operative model's promises and pitfalls. It states, "We need a structure that does not exploit its workers, nor one that takes up an inordinate amount of time" (Briarpatch preliminary discussion paper on typesetting, print shop and bookstore, 1979, p. 2). The paper went on to raise numerous questions pertinent to co-operative development, including:

> What mechanism can we build in that will help generate a clear, cohesive and happy working collective? How do we accommodate new people and volunteers into the group? Who is responsible for training? Could we have the long-term goal of becoming co-operative educators? (p. 3)

In the end, the group decided to establish a typesetting business called First Impressions, with one staff person and an equipment loan provided via Briarpatch, Inc. First Impressions was almost immediately successful, grossing $9,514 in its first year of operation. Union collective agreements were a major revenue source, along with flyers for CIDA-supported development education groups, such as the Latin America Working Group (First Impressions invoice files, 1978-1984). Additionally, donations were modestly boosted in 1978-79 to $1,505 (*Briarpatch* annual financial statement, 1978-79). Although the contributions of First Impressions and donors were relatively small, the seeds planted would prove to be crucial to the magazine's survival in the coming year.

In December 1978, Briarpatch, Inc. submitted a $60,000 budget for 1979-80. A few days later, staff received a tip from a CBC source that funding was about to be refused (*Briarpatch* president's report on funding, 1979). A follow-up call to DSS in early January 1979 resulted in reassurances that the magazine was doing a good job and there was no reason to worry about

future funding. Shortly after, staff member Marian Gilmour wrote to Minister Herman Rolfes requesting feedback and a meeting with DSS officials to discuss any areas that might be improved. A reply, received five weeks later, was noncommittal and vague. Alarmed, the board launched a letter-writing campaign and contacted MLAs. Meanwhile, rumours shifted from a complete cut to a partial reduction. Indeed this appeared to be the reality: at an April 12, 1979, meeting, Dani Boyd, the DSS's new head of Community Services, informed the nonprofit that they would be given six months of funding, during which time they should seek a new revenue source. A report to the board from its president stated, "The reasons for this decision were basically that the department had changed its priorities and that *Briarpatch* was not providing direct accountable services" (*Briarpatch* president's report on funding, 1979, p. 2). Indeed, in the wider economic picture, the DSS faced a potential loss of $6.5 million in anticipated federal transfers, after a new federal-provincial financing agreement had died on the order paper. In preparation for the coming budget year, officials sought 3% cuts throughout the department (Brettle, "Province," 1979, March 7). In this atmosphere, *Briarpatch*'s move toward editorial independence made it a target for specific attention. A *Leader-Post* article noted that although *Briarpatch* had chosen autonomy in 1974, senior social services staff wanted the magazine to be associated with an umbrella organization for poverty groups; ironically, the same article noted that SCAPO, the only existing umbrella group, was also likely to lose its grant, which it in fact did in March, effectively ending the organization (Brettle, "Users," 1979, March 7; Brettle, April 19, 1979). Finally aware of the lay of the land, the magazine's board met to discuss measures to have in place within six months, including increased ad sales, applying for a loan, and approaching civil society organizations for support. Then, on April 19, 1979, *The Leader-Post* and *The StarPhoenix* reported *Briarpatch*'s funding had been entirely cut as of April 1 (Brettle, 1979, April 19, p. 18). In the article, Minister Rolfes stated the magazine no longer addressed

poverty issues and therefore was not a candidate for DSS funds. Staff member Rici Liknaisky responded, "When they say we are not covering poor people's issues they mean we are covering poor people's issues that are embarrassing to them" (as cited by Brettle, 1979, April 19, p. 18). It was not until April 26 that the magazine received official notice of a cut retroactive to the beginning of the month, in the form of a letter from the minister:

> With required economies, the government's priorities for funding social services organizations are to provide grants to organizations providing direct and complementary social services and this has led to our decision regarding the discontinued funding to Briar Patch Society. (Rolfes as cited by Briarpatch president's report on funding, 1979, p. 2)

Although the cut was framed as a purely economic measure, "many suspected the real reason was the magazine's vigourous anti-nuclear stance" (Powell, 1993, p. 15). Staff members conducted an inventory of stories and found anti-poverty coverage remained a substantial portion of the magazine's coverage; they concluded articles critical of uranium mining and social service cutbacks were the likely red flags (Gilmour, 1993). This sentiment appeared to be backed up by an anonymous DSS official, who stated in *The Leader-Post*, "How can I go to cabinet and ask them to approve funding for a magazine that is critical of uranium development?" (Brettle, "Users," 1979, March 7, p. 53). A commentary in the *The Commonwealth* leant further credence to the theory that funding had fallen victim to political concerns:

> There is a need in this province for an independent, politically left-wing, alternate news magazine. But the department of social services would be ill advised to fund such a magazine even if their budget is not cut. Think of what the opposition could do with it in the legislature. (Robertson, 1979)

The author, a former *Briarpatch* advertising director who had taken a position with government, argued that because *The Briarpatch* had chosen to "go the way of a standard alternative magazine," the department had no reason to continue funding what was now an independent magazine untied to government program objectives (Robertson, 1979).

Without the promised six-month grace period, the magazine was thrown into immediate crisis. The May edition on the theme of disabled people's issues was already on its way to the press, budgeted for on the premise of a six-month transitional grant (Brettle, 1979, April 19, p. 18). Half the staff members were laid off and the June 1979 issue was cancelled (Powell, 1993). Attempts to find replacement grants, including applications to the Donner Foundation and the Sask Sport Trust, were unsuccessful; neither agency included media undertakings among eligible projects (C. MacKinnon correspondence with C. V. Powell, April 25, 1980; D. Fry correspondence to N.L. Burton, July 3, 1979). Nonetheless, "we're not going to pack up and go home," board member Gary Robbins vowed (as cited by Brettle, 1979, April 19, p.18). The magazine turned to revenue seeds it had fortuitously planted the previous year. The typesetting business First Impressions provided a lifeline, grossing $17,892.81 in 1979-80. The board launched a successful emergency fundraising campaign that raised nearly $10,000 in one-time and sustaining monthly donations before the year was out (*Briarpatch* annual financial statement, 1979-80). The magazine also held its first $20-a-plate dinner—no small sum at the time—raising $3,400 in a single evening (Manz, 1993). These activities set the basic template for *Briarpatch*'s future sustainability; by the end of fiscal year 1980-81, the revenue picture was substantially transformed (see Figure 5-2).

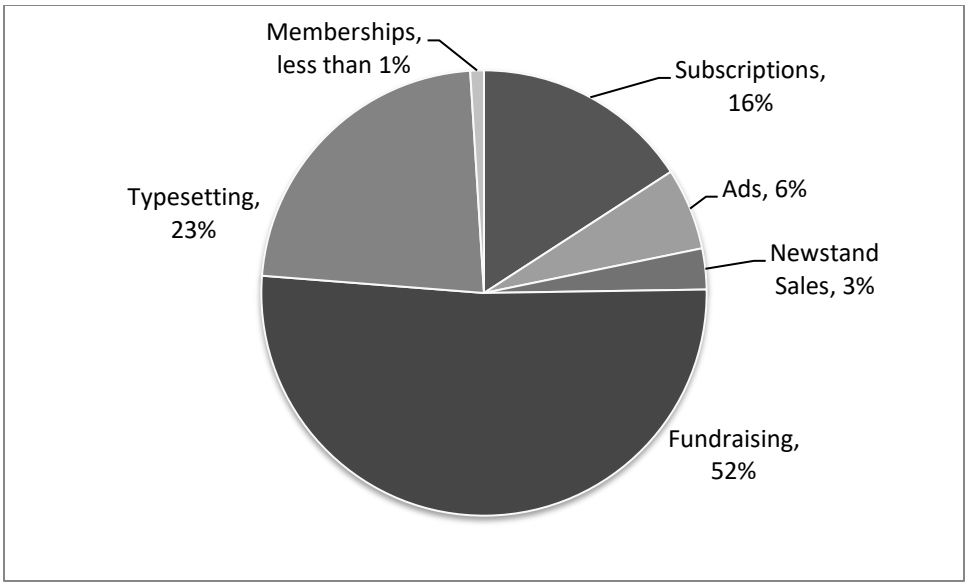


Figure 5-2. *Briarpatch* Revenues, 1980-81
Data source: Briar Patch Society annual financial statement, April 1, 1980 to March 31, 1981.

That year, the society raised $50,535 to operate the magazine, just $3,896 shy of the final DSS grant. The largest revenue share came from one-time donations ($11,243), followed by subscriptions ($8,975) and monthly sustaining donations ($8,225). As well, First Impressions had sales of $12,974.93, netting $5,438.49 for the magazine. Thus *Briarpatch* managed to pay its bills (primarily salaries and printing) and realize a modest surplus of $1,696.56 (annual financial statement, 1980-81), prompting *The Leader-Post* to declare "a major victory" for the magazine ("Typsetting," 1981, p. A4). How a magazine could increase donations from a few hundred dollars to nearly $20,000 within two years may be attributable to this observation by Smillie (1993): "*Briarpatch* developed into something much more than a low-budget magazine. It became a social movement of its own" (p. 17).

5.2.2 Accountability Journalism: Rewards and Risks

As a primarily reader-supported magazine, *Briarpatch* continued to sharpen its journalistic teeth in the 1980s, providing critical analysis of environmental and labour policies

during the NDP government's last years of power (Powell, 1993). Following the 1982 election of Grant Devine's Conservative Party, *Briarpatch* became a locus of critique and investigation in the realm of provincial politics, digging deep into business links between Conservative Party supporters and the spoils of privatization (Paavo, 1993). In 1987 Briarpatch began carrying as an insert the newsletter of the Social Justice Coalition, a grassroots organization formed in opposition to Devine government policies. During this time period the magazine received several awards and honourable mentions from journalism organizations, and its investigative articles regularly made the U.S.-based Project Censored's annual Top Censored Stories list (*Briarpatch* grant proposal to CMF, 2004). However, it also attracted less favourable attention. Right-wing commentators unfamiliar with *Briarpatch*'s thorny NDP relationship assumed the coverage was partisan, and voiced complaints about the magazine's charitable status:

> Out of power, socialists must find ways to rally the troops…. Brierpatch [sic] plays a vital role in their survival strategy…. Somehow Brierpatch [sic] contrived to get it registered as a charitable foundation so left-wingers across the country can get tax write-offs on their donations, leaving taxpayers to subsidize its proselytizing work. (Baron and Jackson, 1991, p. 18)

In 1987 Revenue Canada launched an investigation into Briarpatch's status, and issued the following ruling:

> A review of the magazine indicates that it is not only concerned with the issues affecting low income individuals and organizations but also deals with many topics (e.g. international events, native education, strikes at industrial plants, shopping for home mortgages, the health care system and apartheid) in a manner that is not considered to be charitable at common law. (as cited by Paavo, 1993, p. 20)

Noting that overtly ideological organizations such as the Canadian Anti-Communism Crusade held charitable status, the board launched an energy-sucking and ultimately fruitless challenge to the ruling. In the end, however, it appeared tax receipts mattered little to *Briarpatch* donors; their generosity remained a steady source of income, fuelled by endless bottle drives, swim-a-thons, socials and garage sales. Donations and fundraising climbed to $29,356.51 in 1987-88,

outstripping subscription and advertising sales, and reached $31,693.33 by 1990-91, the last year of the Devine government (*Briarpatch* annual financial statements, 1988 and 1991). The magazine also regained a foothold in the grant world, primarily in the form of job creation subsidies, as well as international-themed project funding via Partnership Africa Canada (PAC) and the development education centres based in Regina and Saskatoon. However, these grants never amounted to more than 25% of total revenues and disappeared entirely for nine years after 1995-96, a year that saw massive federal cuts to social spending, including a 100% cut to development education centres across Canada (Canadian Council for International Co-operation, 1995) (see Figure 5-3).

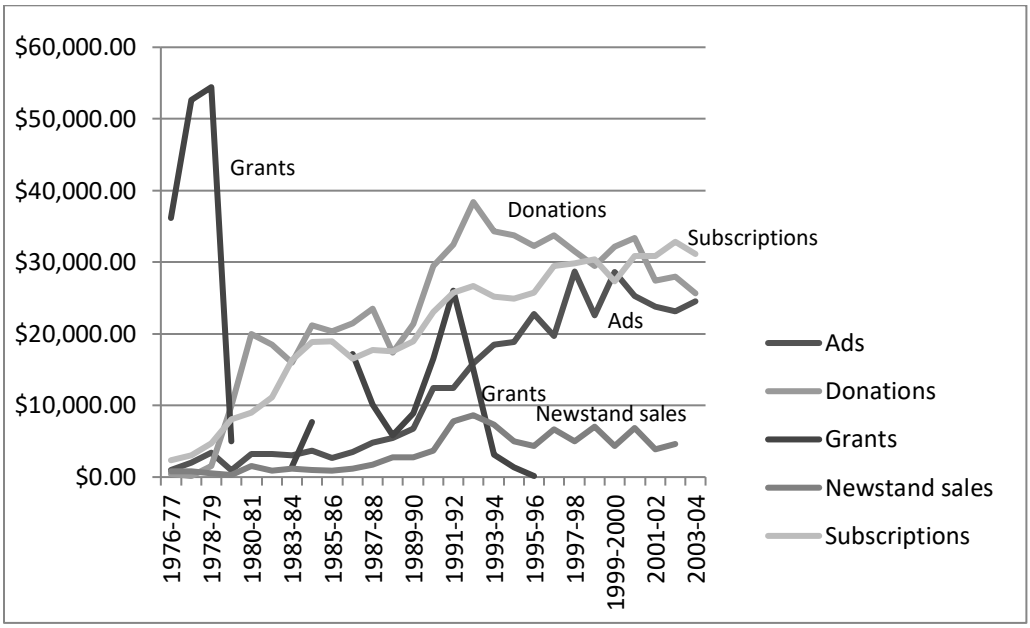


Figure 5-3. *Briarpatch* major revenue streams, 1976 to 2009
Data source: *Briarpatch* annual financial statements, 1979 to 2010

After a period of steady growth, donations and subscription sales flatlined following the election of an NDP government in 1991, perhaps reflecting a lessening sense of urgency and solidarity among left-leaning readers (Warnock, 1993). As well, the diversity of supportive Saskatchewan-based social movement organizations declined in the 1990s, a decade when arts, women's, and international development organizations saw funding dwindle under the same austerity measures that affected federal magazine subsidies. While there is no quantifiable data connecting organizational loss to stagnating revenues, it stands to reason that each group that closed its Saskatchewan office represented one less platform for reaching new subscribers and donors—although perhaps also one less competitor for charitable giving by socially conscious donors. One area where the phenomenon of organizational loss can be quantified is in the diversity of *Briarpatch*'s advertising revenues (see Figures 5-4 and 5-5 for comparison):

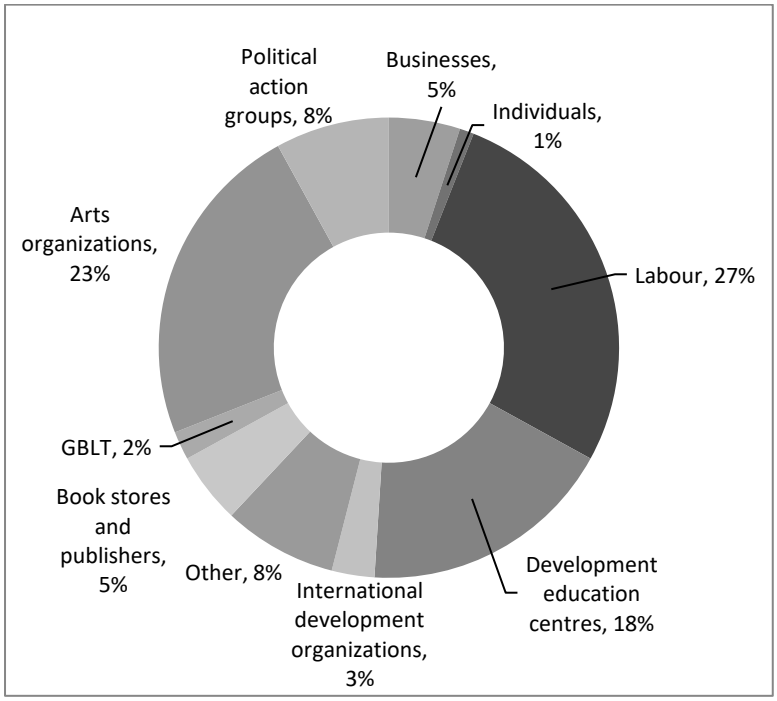


Figure 5-4. *Briarpatch* advertising revenue sources, 1986

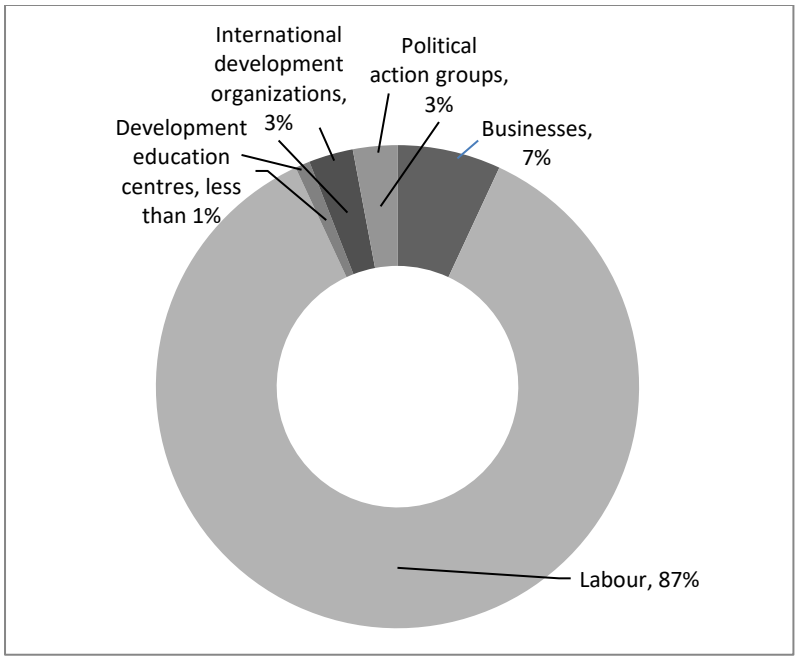


Figure 5-5. *Briarpatch* advertising revenues, 2000
Data sources, Figs. 5-4 & 5-5: *Briarpatch* advertising invoice logs, 1986 and 2000 calendar years

The decade ended with the financial uncertainty of the 1999 loss of the direct postal subsidy. Meanwhile, the work of raising funds and selling ads had not lessened. By 2002-03, in addition to putting out the magazine, two staff members were left to coordinate more than $23,000 in fundraising, along with managing $37,508 in magazine sales and $23,108 in ad sales (annual financial statement, 2002-03). In contrast, in 1977 four staff members were responsible for selling some $2,000 in advertising and managing approximately $3,700 in magazine sales, with little responsibility for additional fundraising (annual financial statement, 1977-78). Further, stagnating revenues thwarted the board's desire to pay its writers, considered key to expanding the magazine's investigative content. As observed by then editor-publisher Valerie Zink, "It's quite evident that the investigative stories we do publish are the ones that are most widely read and most well received, and there's a real hunger for that"(personal communication, March 27, 2012). These pressures pushed *Briarpatch* to look beyond Saskatchewan's borders

for assistance and new social networks, which ultimately impacted the magazine's editorial scope (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2012).

5.2.3 National Incentivization

Until 2003, *Briarpatch*'s main experience with federal funding had been the postal subsidy, along with occasional CIDA-funded partnership projects. The postal subsidy's cancellation represented a budgetary inconvenience, as the benefit no longer registered immediately at the postage meter. However, funding continued under the Periodicals Assistance Program (PAP). Although helpful, CIDA and PAP assistance did not develop the magazine's core operations. The creation of the Canada Magazine Fund was perceived as a new opportunity to build up *Briarpatch* to the next level.

In 2003, editor Debra Brin drafted a three-year $121,581 proposal to the Canada Magazine Fund's (CMF) Support for Business Development for Small Magazine Publishers (SBDSMP) program. The proposal included a full-on marketing campaign, including billboards, radio ads, bus ads, media kits, a portable display, logo design, staff car decals, and new building signage. The stated goal was to increase circulation by 10% annually, reaching a 30% increase by the end of Year 3. If Canadian Heritage's revamp of the Magazine Fund was indeed intended to introduce a market-oriented, professonalized, mass-circulation model, as argued in Chapter 3, it appears *Briarpatch*'s proposal accepted the paradigm, if not the politics. The market paradigm was presented as ultimately supporting the magazine's content:

> The intention is to increase revenues from sales and advertising to provide us with the resources we need to pay professional freelance journalists and photographers. In turn, the upgraded quality of the magazine will attract more advertisers and subscribers. (Briarpatch, Inc., project proposal draft outline, 2003, p. 2)

In discussions with CMF program officers over the next several months, the plan was honed down to a single-year $28,805 request, primarily for staff training and market consultations; in early 2004, the magazine received word that $26,295 was approved (J.A. Larocque letter to D.

Brin, Jan. 26, 2004). Staff training was not an unneeded investment. In an application to attend a Canadian Magazine Publishers Association training course, Brin wrote, "I had no training or background in journalism before I took this job so I am basically learning by surviving one disaster or close call after another" (PPP application, Feb. 10, 2004). Arriving at the CMPA's publishing school at a Niagara-on-the-Lake resort must have been a culture shock for third sector practitioners like Brin. A pre-conference letter to registrants described wine and cheese receptions and available spa facilities, and recommended business attire for dinner (G. Dunant letter to registrants, Feb. 9, 2004). This and other national training programs, covering topics such as circulation management, marketing, and other aspects of the business of publishing, were appreciated and put into practice by staff (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2012). Of perhaps greater impact, however, was the manner in which the project led *Briarpatch*'s staff and board to reconsider their understanding of the publication's core audience and, therefore, its editorial focus.

In a business plan drafted in preparation for the 2003 funding application, *Briarpatch* positioned itself as a provincial magazine that offered "a view of social justice issues from a perspective unique to Saskatchewan," featuring a majority of articles written by Saskatchewan writers (*Briarpatch* business plan, 2003). Once the project was funded and underway, however, a different picture emerged. Within the context of a market study, *Briarpatch*'s board and staff undertook a structured review of its 1,100-member subscription base. The review revealed that the majority of *Briarpatch* subscribers lived outside Saskatchewan, with more than half in B.C. and Ontario (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2012; *Briarpatch* summary data report, n.d.). Board members subsequently brainstormed a new positioning line, the defining statement that appears below a magazine's banner. They settled on 'Fighting the war on error,' a phrase that reflected the magazine's journalistic purpose rather than geographical reach (board

meeting minutes, Sept. 13, 2004). However, several of the ideas generated during the process suggested a more national and global focus:

- Canadian.
- The little Canadian magazine that refuses to shut up.
- Canada's most unpopular magazine.
- Changing the world one page at a time.

(*Briarpatch* email to board and staff, "All positioning ideas so far," June 14, 2004)

The first four months of the 2004 fiscal year witnessed a modest $750 uptick in magazine sales; however, the project did little to alleviate staff workload. Although the project provided funds to hire marketing consultants and designers, it did not provide money to hire staff to actually produce the magazine. The only alternative to alleviate staff overload was to reduce the number of issues, from 10 to eight annually (*Briarpatch* SBDSMP project proposal, Dec. 2004). If there was value in the project funding, it was in staff training, data collection, and the development of a business plan to aid future marketing campaigns. From this base, *Briarpatch* successfully applied for business development funding in subsequent years, receiving a total of $116,983 between 2005 and 2008 (Canada. Department of Canadian Heritage, Canada Magazine Fund recipient lists, 2005 to 2009). Direct mail ad campaigns carried out with project funding assistance realized a 31% increase in paid circulation by March 2006, meeting and slightly exceeding the campaign's original stated goal of a 30% increase within three years (Staff report, grant history, 2006). This was followed by a 29% increase in a single year, 2007-08 (Final report to CMF, June 23, 2008). Increased revenues and secure funding agreements provided the magazine with capacity to pursue provincial jobs grants, which came in the form of partial subsidies paid in small installments, with 29% held back until completion, a proposition that might have been considered too risky in prior years. Thus the magazine was able to finally

address its staff workload issue in 2007, receiving a $5,944 Community Works Grant for a part-time administrative assistant. Other CMF-supported accomplishments included launching a revamped website in 2005 and updated subscription management and publishing software. As well, the magazine fulfilled its longstanding goal of paying writers, starting with $491 paid out in freelance fees in 2006, followed by $2,107 in 2007 and $5,040 in 2008 (*Briarpatch* financial statements, 2006 to 2009).

In summary, the support of federal media development funds helped lift *Briarpatch* from a stagnating provincial publication to a national magazine with paid writers, trained staff, and an ever-widening base of subscribers. However, this movement came at a cost. First, the grant application and reporting processes consumed increasing amounts of staff time to meet the government's need for detailed information, as illustrated by this query:

> Who will be responsible for converting new data to new fulfillment software? (if other than regular staff, please provide c.v.)…. What is the content of the brochure? Format? Is there a detachable subscription portion? (N. Jordan email to D. Brin, Nov. 25, 2004)

These information needs did not begin and end with the annual application but continued throughout the year. For example, a decision to send the editor to an Independent Press Association (IPA) conference rather than to a labour convention generated five email exchanges with Ottawa, and required recalculation of the in-kind budget line, along with a detailed written description of what knowledge would be obtained at the IPA conference and how it would be disseminated (Interim report email correspondence, N. Jordon to C. Looysen, Feb. 9-23, 2006).

Second, the CMF grants once again increased the magazine's dependence on external government funds that were beyond the magazine's control, echoing a picture that had led to crisis three decades earlier (see Figure 5-6). From this perspective, the magazine's situation could be considered more precarious, not less precarious.

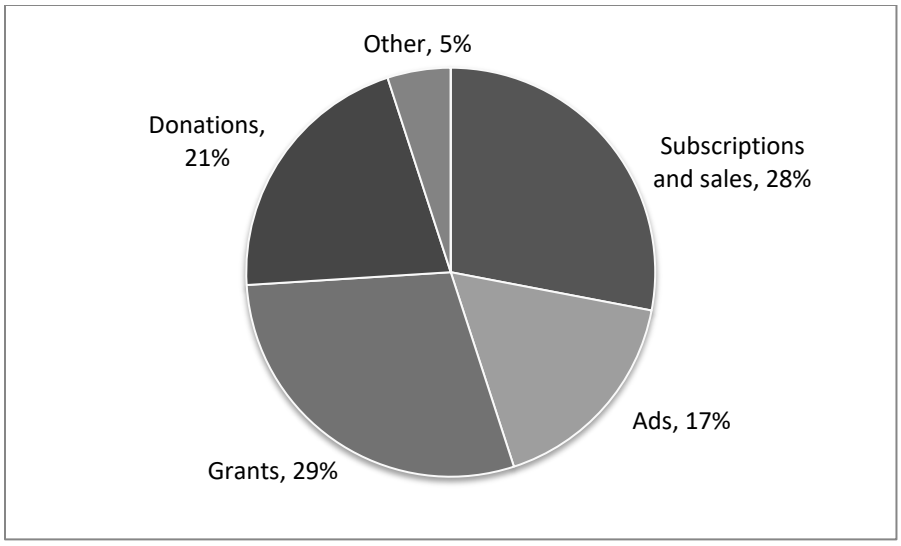


Figure 5-6. *Briarpatch* revenues, 2008-09
Data source: Annual financial statement, 2008-09

This vulnerability was made clear following the election of a Conservative-led federal government in 2007. The following summer, *Briarpatch* staff developed a relatively modest project plan for 2008-09, requesting $25,000 for a direct mail subscription campaign and funds to hire an advertising consultant to negotiate long-term advertising agreements (Project funding application, 2008). For the first time, the application generated hard questions from CMF staff about the magazine's evolution since its first grant, noting, for example, a lack of growth in profits. The publisher responded that:

> … given we are a nonprofit magazine that is currently comfortably in the black, this is not a major concern for us at this time; nor, I would argue, should it be used as an argument that we have failed to evolve. As a nonprofit our goal is not to run a large surplus each year, but to reinvest the revenue increases we've enjoyed in recent years into the operations of the magazine—and this we have done. (S. Stock email to N. Jordan, August 14, 2008)

The publisher's response went on to point out that although the annual bottom line had not shifted, there had been an increase in content quality as a result of the CMF funding, evidenced by positive reader satisfaction surveys and rising subscriptions. In late September, CMF staff responded that the magazine's "justification in support of the project was well received by the

committee" and a recommendation was going forward to approve the full amount of the project, scheduled to begin December 1, 2008 (N. Jordan email to S. Stock and D. Mitchell, Sept. 26, 2008). This was followed by a long period of silence. In February 2009, serious concerns began to develop in the *Briarpatch* office about how to manage proposed activities that were still un-funded. Email inquiries to CMF staff shed little light on the situation (email correspondence, February 2-24, 2009). However, internal CMF correspondence reveals staff was aware the project application was caught on the Minister's desk [MINO]:

> Just a reminder. We still have an SBDMP project in MINO: Briarpatch. It was sent Dec. 5, we still don't have a decision, and it shows 'holding MINO.' We have followed up constantly with G&C Secretariat (Chantal Paré) who basically confirms it's still there. We're not sure how to proceed and what we can say to the client. (J. Lahaie-Torres email to S. Shortliffe, March 3, 2009)

A response from the Fund's program director stated no progress had been made and suggested taking the issue to higher levels. A series of subsequent emails, presumably taking up this suggestion, are too heavily redacted to discern the nature of discussions. However, the frequency and tone of email inquiries from staff suggests that difficulty gaining a ministerial signature for an approved project was unusual. On May 6, an email informed program staff, "fyi—we can consider briarpatch rejected," adding that the client should be informed of the "ministerial decision" via standard rejection letter (S. Shortliffe to J. Lahaie-Torres, May 6, 2009). A staff member's request for clarification on why the recommendation was rejected was answered with "come and see me if you wish to discuss" (S. Shortliffe to M. Renic, May 6, 2009). Whatever may have been discussed, the reason conveyed to *Briarpatch* employed a rejection letter template developed in April 2009:

> Your proposal was reviewed in light of the government's ongoing objective to fund projects that provide measurable, tangible results which contribute to Program objectives and meet the needs of Canadians. It is within this context that I regret to inform you, on behalf of the Honourable James Moore, Minister of the Department of Canadian Heritage, that your application has not been approved. (S. Shortliffe letter to S. Stock, May 6, 2009)

The internal departmental rejection report added, "File rejected by Minister Moore. Instructions given by the Chief of Staff at the May 4 Look Ahead Meeting of May 4, 2009 to inform client of the decision" (Canadian Heritage Grants and Contributions rejection report, July 31, 2009). On May 21, CMF program staff filed a 'Request for change of fund commitment' from $25,000 to zero, indicating the project had already been in the budget pipeline before failing to gain the Minister's signature. In a telephone conversation with a staff member, editor Dave Mitchell asked if the rejection was related to the magazine's political content; the response indicates staff members themselves had few solid answers about the new funding environment:

> I indicated that as far as I know there was no [political] issue—we weren't aware of any. [He] wanted tips concerning reapplying to [the] program. It told him I didn't really have any—but that applicants showing significant gains in their financial results were more likely to be approved. (unknown author, CMF hand notes of telephone conversation with D. Mitchell, May 7, 2009)

The latter sentence indicated that larger commercial magazines were likely to fare better than nonprofit and small circulation magazines. Nonetheless, the conversation was reassuring enough for *Briarpatch* staff to undertake work on a new funding application for 2009-10, a $33,545 request for online marketing and advertising development, in addition to a direct mail campaign and further staff training in publications management (*Briarpatch*, Inc., SBDSMP funding application, August 18, 2009). The application included a detailed business plan and market analysis. However, applying for a more ambitious project in 2009-10 turned out to be a barrier within a changing program environment. The project, first submitted on July 29, 2009, was refined during the summer months in the back-and-forth process of providing program staff with revisions and more detailed information. This was not unusual; however, in September CMF program staff sent out a reminder to magazines that the SBDSMP fund was winding down, and therefore all grant proposals must be reasonably completed by March 31, 2010. In November, a second letter warned that, "all project proposals are being carefully assessed to establish their

feasibility within this time constraint, in order to ensure that all activities can be completed on or prior to March 31, 2010" (S. Shortliffe letter to L. Soop, Nov. 3, 2009). With *Briarpatch*'s application signed off at the end of September but still working its way through the approval process, project completion on this schedule was appearing less likely every day. Indeed, this was the reason given for the project's eventual rejection: "The Program has determined that there is significant risk that the project will not be completed by the March 31, 2010 deadline" (Canadian Heritage grants and contributions rejection report, Dec. 3, 2009).

Undeterred, *Briarpatch* submitted an application to the new Business Innovations for Print Periodicals (BIPP) program in September 2010, again focusing on web development and marketing (*Briarpatch* Business Innovations application, Sept. 27, 2010). This time there appeared to be nothing standing in the way of approval. Correspondence between submitting and finalizing the application shows a period of minor tinkering over how expenses were expressed in various budget lines of the $22,453 request, while the overall project concept itself appeared to have the support of the new Canada Periodical Fund (CPF). An internal funding commitment request was formatted and finalized on Dec. 3, 2010, and submitted to the Grants and Contributions Management Information System (S. Belisle email to M. Legros, Dec. 3, 2010). A standard response notification acknowledged the amount was entered in the system, and that any communication of approval to the client must await the Minister's signature (GCMIS notification, Dec. 22, 2012). Then, in a replay of *Briarpatch*'s earlier experience, a long silence followed. Finally, on Feb. 9, 2011, program staff received an internal notice of rejection arrived from the Minister's office, signed by Minister James Moore, with the rationale recorded simply as, "I do not approve this grant" (Ministerial decision document, Feb. 9, 2011). This was followed by a standard rejection letter to *Briarpatch* stating the fund was seeking measurable results for program objectives. Once again, *Briarpatch* followed up with a phone

inquiry seeking future guidance, this time from publisher Shayna Stock. The program director noted:

> Talked to her. Very disappointed, asked if there was an appeal process, asked what more they could do in terms of measurable results (as this is their third rejection). I had to say that there is no appeal process, and that as these are judgement calls, there is no specific threshold for measurable results. (S. Shortliffe email to J. Lahaie-Torres, Feb. 22, 2011

Dissatisfied with the response, Stock emailed the project officer assigned to *Briarpatch* for further insight. Noting that the officer had indicated the project was "a solid one" and seemed confident in its approval, Stock asked, "Do you have any insights whatsoever what happened to our application after it left your hands, and why it might have been denied?" (S. Stock email to J. Lahaie-Torres, Feb. 22). This prompted an internal request from the project officer seeking clarification of the response already given, to which the director replied:

> …since this was not an eligibility question, but a judgement call, there is no guidance we can provide on future projects at this time…. I realize this is frustrating for the applicant, but there is no more information we can offer on the decision. (S. Shortliffe email to J. Lahaie-Torres, Feb. 24, 2011)

Thus, after three years of intensive, time-consuming work on project applications, *Briarpatch* walked away empty-handed, with a nagging suspicion that politics had come to bear on the final decision. Editor Dave Mitchell mourned the loss of what he felt had been a helpful program for small magazines, stating, "Before…it was not politicized. [The magazine fund] was really invaluable, really important stuff" (personal communication, June 12, 2012). An email exchange among the editors of *This Magazine*, *Our Times*, and *Canadian Dimension*, indicated similar experiences among left-leaning publications during this time. Although none could prove direct political interference, it was clear that participation in the periodical fund was no longer helpful:

> As you can imagine for a small magazine like *Briarpatch*, the implications of being denied access to this funding are significant. With an annual budget of just $135,000, this project funding would have represented about 17 per cent of our annual revenue—not to mention all the time and energy that our two-person staff

> has invested in the application process and project planning, which is now lost. (S. Stock email to S. Belisle, Feb. 22, 2011)

Once again, *Briarpatch* turned to its readers to help fill the gap. "Part of the response to the denial of funding was to really push the monthly donations and make up the shortfall," recalls former editor Mitchell (personal communication, June 12, 2012). This was not easy in a new political landscape where "everybody's having to jump back at the same time, from institutional funding to individual support" (personal communication, June 12, 2012). And although readers responded generously, there would be no cost recovery for lost staff time and three years of budget instability.

Another cost was local accountability journalism. The 'federal funding years' had pulled *Briarpatch* into a paradigm that required continual market expansion, drawing the magazine toward national and international audiences. Previously, *Briarpatch* had a strong record of covering rural and northern Saskatchewan policy issues, and policies affecting low-income urban dwellers. These stories no longer had space in the magazine, unless filtered through a national lens (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2013). This is not to assume stories written for a national audience did not have a local dimension or local impact. Local actions, for example a First Nations blockade or a new food co-operative, were frequently featured and linked to larger national or international movements. As well, there was a strong sense among the editors that national and international stories were ultimately aimed at inspiring and informing civic participation at the local level (V. Zink, personal communication, March 27, 2012). In December 2008, an entire issue was dedicated to Saskatchewan, in the context of explaining and critiquing its changing economy to the rest of the country. However, this did not assuage a desire among Saskatchewan readers for articles specifically examining the provincial scene.

"We were often responding to requests for coverage of local events or provincial issues, often from people who had been long-time supporters of *Briarpatch*, or had been involved with it at different points, and I think were just a bit uncomfortable with the divide we were straddling," Mitchell recalls (personal communication, June 12, 2013). Much of the push was around northern and environmental issues, such as tar sands development, as well as the policies of the Saskatchewan Party, established in 1997 and elected to power in 2007. *Briarpatch*'s board recognized that failure to respond to the local base could affect the magazine's future sustainability. While the magazine's market was national, its core supporters, the people who collected swim-a-thon pledges and volunteered for bottle drives, were Saskatchewan residents:

> [People were] just sort of recognizing the lack of Briarpatch's analysis, or an indy media lens, on provincial events…which is what Briarpatch used to do. And so thinking we were not [doing that], and yet our most loyal supporter base was in the province, and we weren't serving them as well as we could. (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2013)

In response, the *Briarpatch* board began discussing the idea of establishing a new provincial publication that would share resources with the magazine. Its goal would be to re-introduce the style of independent investigative journalism that defined the *Briarpatch*'s Devine-era heyday.

> It felt like things were shifting and that it could be a potential galvanizing moment for the left, to be able to offer up the space and play the same role that *Briarpatch* did previously, because we knew we wouldn't be able to do it in the same capacity within the magazine itself. (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2012)

A *Briarpatch* reader survey confirmed a desire for investigative work; 70% of respondents stated they wanted to read more investigative journalism, compared to 38% requesting more theory and analysis (Survey summary report to Briarpatch AGM, 2007). On the surface, it seemed conditions were ripe: a right-wing party was in power provincially, and topics like privatization and uranium development, which had been popular with readers in the 1980s, were back in the

limelight. The launch of *The Sasquatch* would soon reveal, however, that the landscape had shifted in other ways, leaving less space for a third sector publication to grow roots and thrive.

5.3 The Sasquatch

The Sasquatch was, at its heart, an attempt to recover third-sector local accountability journalism in Saskatchewan and, in so doing, inspire local governance engagement. This sentiment was clearly expressed in its editorial vision statement: "Our coverage is intended to enhance citizen engagement, increase political participation and strengthen democracy" (Sasquatch business plan, August 15, 2008, p. 2). Its founders argued *The Sasquatch* was needed to fill a provincial news hole left not only by *Briarpatch*, but also by the two major commercial Saskatchewan dailies, *The StarPhoenix*, publishing out of Saskatoon and *The Leader-Post*, publishing out of Regina, which had lost 89 staff positions three months after being purchased by Hollinger in 1996 (Sasquatch business plan, August 15, 2008, p. 3; see also "Our past," 2013). Convinced that there was an open field with few competitors, and that *Briarpatch* magazine was in a stable growth period, the board felt confident moving forward with a new project. The project got underway in May 2008, after Briarpatch, Inc. obtained a 10-month Career Focus grant from Service Canada to hire a recent university graduate (Briarpatch, Inc. 2008, Career Focus grant application). The subsidy allowed the board to recruit and top up the salary of a journalism degree-holding former *Commonwealth* editor who had just completed a mid-career political science M.A. With some experience at the helm, along with a pre-existing office, subscriber list, donor list and advertising base, the board and staff felt the launch of a new publication—christened the *The Sasquatch*—would be challenging but feasible (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2012).

The plan envisioned a 16-page newsprint tabloid published eight times annually in Year 1 and Year 2, and 10 times in Year 3. The revenue stream envisioned looked very much like

Briarpatch in the 1980s: about one-quarter advertising and one-quarter subscription sales, with the majority of support coming from donors, sustainers, and organizational sponsors. What was different was a proposed print run of 40,000 by Year 3, double *Briarpatch*'s annual print run (SQ financial analysis, 2008). The main distinction from *Briarpatch*, however, was content, with *The Sasquatch* being focused on Saskatchewan-centred investigative journalism (E. Ruddy, personal communication, April 18, 2012).

In autumn 2008, an appeal was distributed to 285 *Briarpatch* sustainers, requesting one-time 'pioneer donations' of $100 to $500, and a sustaining monthly donation, with the goal of securing $10,000 in advance of the first issue (SQ mailing list and fall appeal form, August 27, 2008). More significantly, the publishers planned to raise $42,400 from labour unions and other organizations, gradually tapering to $27,425 in Year 3 as subscribers grew (SQ financial analysis, 2008). One of the first unions approached, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), was receptive to the idea. In an informal meeting with the editor, a CUPE staff member raised concerns that there was no longer a print publication positioned to cover Saskatchewan's political scene. He noted the Regina bi-weekly magazine *Prairie Dog* had at one time filled this role, but was now focused on urban-oriented reportage with a heavy arts and entertainment focus; this left large swaths of rural and northern Saskatchewan, as well as the provincial legislature, out of the news frame:

> I told her I always thought *Briarpatch* should refocus on provincial politics, and she said the board of *Briarpatch* was committed to their national-international focus, and so *The Sasquatch* was, in a lot of ways, the purpose was to fill that void, maybe she didn't use those exact words, but with a focus on Saskatchewan politics. We talked a bit about that, the editorial focus, the dollars and cents of launching the publication, and how CUPE and the labour movement could support it. (G. Marsden, personal communication, July 26, 2012)

Several options were suggested for union support, including donations, regular advertising and organizational subscriptions. At a meeting, CUPE Saskatchewan's table officers opted for all

three proposals, as well as a one-time bulk purchase of copies to mail to all its Saskatchewan locals with a subscriber-donor appeal. "It wasn't a tough sell," recalls CUPE staff member Guy Marsden (personal communication, July 26, 2012). A presentation to the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) convention garnered some initial funds transferred from a long-inactive labour media account. (This fund is further discussed in Chapter 7.) As well, the SFL president provided a written endorsement for the campaign: "A bold new initiative like *The Sasquatch* is needed now more than ever…. We need media that helps us understand and respond to the serious challenges we face, not media that bashes the labour movement at every opportunity" (L. Hubich, SQ labour appeal letter, July 3, 2009). The letter went out to all SFL affiliates with a pledge from the SFL to match any donation up to $5,000 (SQ report to Briarpatch board, Jan. 16, 2009).

In total pre-launch fundraising was expected to secure just over $20,000, but by January, the intended launch date, the campaign was behind on all its targets (SQ target progress report & report to board, Jan. 16, 2009). The effort had consumed what was a single-staff operation, leaving little time for the work of producing a newspaper. The launch debut was pushed from January 2009 to March 2009. Once the work of preparing the first issue was underway, it became apparent that producing quality content would be a major challenge. A word rate of 10 cents per word attracted many who wanted to write opinion pieces, but attracted few experienced, reliable journalists prepared to do original research and interviews (E. Ruddy, personal communication, April 18, 2012; SLF draft investigative fund proposal, August 22, 2009). Nonetheless, the content of the first March/April issue appeared to more than successfully meet the publication's goals. A lead article on housing shortages by broadcast journalist Brett Bradshaw exposed an emerging issue that hadn't yet gained traction in mainstream media. Joe Kuchta, a well-known freedom of information blogger, contributed a

deeply researched feature piece on uranium development. Economist Erin Weir contributed an analysis of how industry lay-offs are used to manipulate potash prices, while freelance journalist Carle Steele offered a backgrounder on media industry lay-offs. The pages also contained a mix of advertising from unions, businesses and NDP politicians, although the presence of NDP ads caused some internal tensions and generated a letter of complaint from a long-time *Briarpatch* volunteer (E. Ruddy, personal communication, April 18, 2012; Olynuk, 2009). An advertising policy published in the first and subsequent issues made clear the publication's intent to place the interests of the reader foremost:

> The Sasquatch is a non-partisan publication with one major objective: to provide our readers with quality, public-interest journalism. As such, we reserve the right to critically report on any and all issues, including those that may directly affect or involve our advertisers. By advertising in The Sasquatch, individuals, organizations and businesses gain exposure to some of Saskatchewan's most progressive thinkers; they do not gain influence over editorial content. (Sasquatch advertising policy, 2009)

The June/July issue offered evidence that *The Sasquatch's* coverage was inclusive of *Briarpatch*'s former reach to rural and northern communities, including a feature article on Saskatchewan grasslands and coverage of a National Farmers' Union campaign against the closure of prison farms. As well, there were interviews with ranchers and rural representatives in northwest Saskatchewan, who had successfully passed a nuclear power-free zone motion in the Rural Municipality of Britannia after being approached by Bruce Power to sell their land. A special section on youth suicide in northern Saskatchewan included interviews with youth and teachers, and information about suicide prevention programs in northern Manitoba. Another feature article introduced public-private-partnerships, an infrastructure strategy under discussion in political back rooms but not yet in the public eye. Once again there was coverage of journalism itself, namely a story on the cancellation of *The Leader-Post's* only column dedicated to Aboriginal issues. The editor's column provided further details on staff cuts at Saskatchewan

media outlets owned by Canwest and CTVglobemedia and declared "local news coverage in Saskatchewan is indeed at risk" (Ruddy, 2009, June/July, p. 4). The column pointed to a difficult conundrum: while commercial media outlets had fewer staff attending press conferences and requesting interviews, media gatekeepers had not adjusted to the alternatives:

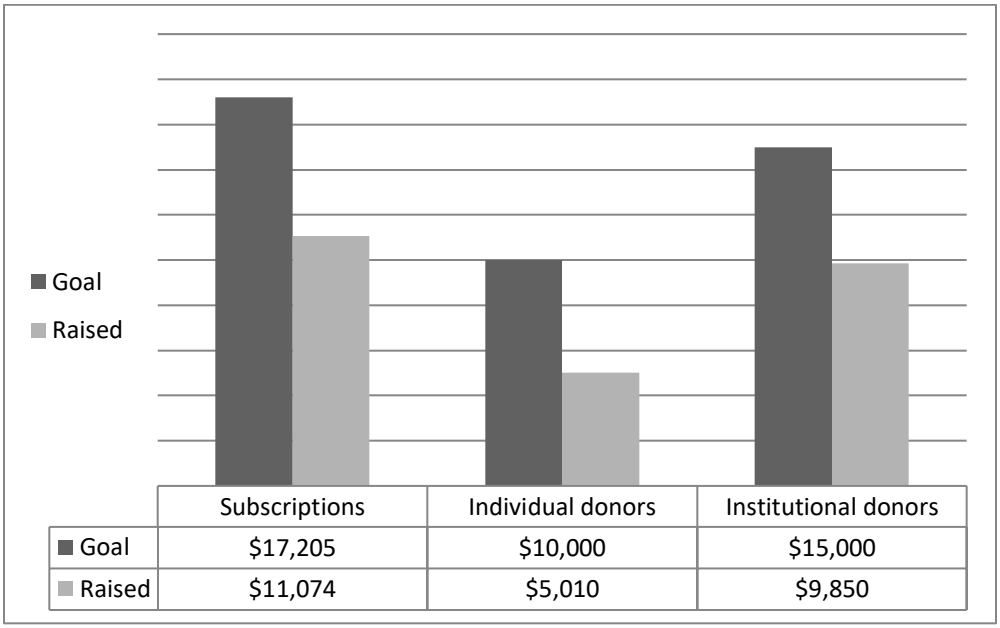
> As the saying goes, democracy is only as healthy as its press is free. If the government refuses to talk to smaller, local, independent newspapers, the public is left to rely on the diligence of understaffed, near bankrupt, ad-driven media conglomerates that give more prominence to [the mayor's] haircuts than broken election promises. (Ruddy, 2009, June/July, p. 4)

Thus *The Sasquatch* rallied through the first two issues with its local accountability journalism mission intact and comprehensively delivered. However, the reality of how difficult it is to produce accountability journalism was sinking in. Long days of fundraising followed by late nights of editing choppy copy, chasing down poorly paid freelancers, and laying out the pages were too much for a single staff person. After the first issue, the editor tendered her resignation, but was convinced to accept three weeks' paid leave instead (E. Ruddy, personal communication, April 18, 2012). A letter went out to the paper's 1,300 subscribers explaining Issue 2, due in mid-April, was postponed to June 1, for "a short breather to recharge our batteries" (SQ letter to subscribers, March 27, 2009). In response to the staffing crisis, a staff reporter supported by an employment grant was brought in on June 15, and a production assistant was contracted to help with layout (SQ report to Briarpatch AGM, June 22, 2009). Production resumed; however, after two more issues the editor resigned and *Briarpatch*'s publisher stepped into the position (Ruddy, Sept/Oct. 2009). At this point it was clear *Sasquatch*'s financial model was in trouble as well. By June, the publication remained behind on all its fundraising targets (see Figure 5-7). In particular, the labour appeal—considered a key fundraising strategy—had fallen flat after some initial uptake. The provincial council of the Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union (SGEU), the province's largest labour union, voted against a bulk subscription plan, and

The Sasquatch had been unable to gain substantive commitments via the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour. In October 2009, *Briarpatch*'s editor met with the SFL executive to pitch union list subscriptions.

> There was sort of polite tolerance…. There were questions raised like, well, we've got *Prairie Dog* and we've got *Planet S*, do we really need something else? I got the sense that was fairly widespread, that it wasn't really a priority. (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 22, 2012)

In the midst of these difficulties, *Briarpatch* magazine itself was under renewed pressure, forced to spend unexpected hours jumping through the previously described federal funding hoops. The distractions away from producing the magazine were intense, with both the publisher and the editor drawn into *The Sasquatch's* funding crisis. That year, *Briarpatch* narrowly escaped losing its postal grant due to a late application that erroneously counted newsstand sales in with mailed copies (ironically, this distinction would disappear in the 2010 Aid to Publishers revamp). As well, the 2009-10 SBDSMP funding application ran behind schedule in a 'hurry up' year, contributing to the time crunch that ultimately led to the application's rejection.



	Subscriptions	Individual donors	Institutional donors
Goal	$17,205	$10,000	$15,000
Raised	$11,074	$5,010	$9,850

Figure 5-7. *The Sasquatch* 2009 fundraising, targets versus actual
Data source: Report to *Briarpatch* AGM, June 22, 2009.

Briarpatch had a strong subscription renewal rate of 70%; however, this meant 30% of the list could be lost annually without constant attention to marketing. With all three staff members concentrating almost entirely on getting *The Sasquatch* off the ground, and no supplemental CMF funding to bring in marketing consultants, the magazine began losing ground on its subscriber list (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 22, 2012). Although *The Sasquatch* continued publishing relevant Saskatchewan news throughout the fall of 2009, a look at the bottom line was sobering:

> We couldn't go into the red for a couple of years while we built our readership, because it was the same pool of money as *Briarpatch*. So really, it was risking bringing *Briarpatch* down, too. (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2012)

In February 2010 the *Briarpatch* board made the difficult decision to pull the plug on *The Sasquatch* after just eight issues. A letter to subscribers explained the impact of unmet fundraising targets coupled with the loss of federal funding for *Briarpatch*. The letter concluded:

> The more unbalanced and divided our world becomes, the stronger the need for democratic, public-interest journalism that holds power to account and presents practical alternatives to the status quo. It is painful, then, to close down a new publication that directly addresses that need. (S. Stock letter to SQ subscribers, Feb. 16, 2010)

5.4 Themes

Reviewing *Briarpatch*'s four-decade history, five major themes emerge regarding media development supports and the struggle for sustainability.

- **Theme 1: Media development support is effective.**

First, government-sponsored media funds significantly contributed to the magazine's development. Both periods of major grant funding coincided with major periods of expansion

and professionalization of the magazine. In the 1970s, provincial DSS grants allowed the small grassroots newsletter to hire staff, establish an office, and improve its format. In the 2000s, federal magazine funding allowed the magazine to undertake readership surveys, to advance its subscription management practices, and to develop marketing strategies. The federally funded projects gave *Briarpatch* sufficient financial confidence and business planning skills to launch a second publication aimed at local readers. As well, the federal Career Focus grant was cited by staff as the major factor that allowed planning for *The Sasquatch* to proceed from talk to action (S. Stock, personal communication, March 27, 2012; D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2012; E. Ruddy, personal communication April 18, 2012). From this, one may conclude targeted government support successfully enhanced the development of two third sector media enterprises in Saskatchewan.

- **Theme 2: Media development support generates change.**

Second, the ensuing development activities spurred changes in *Briarpatch*'s understanding of its function in the world, and in its relationship with readers. At an elemental level, a more professional format reduced opportunities for hands-on community participation in the magazine's physical production, as noted by the founding editor. Meanwhile, increased capacity to hire staff and step up production values was accompanied by a desire among staff to join the ranks of independent journalism. This raised questions about who was responsible for editorial content—anti-poverty agencies or *Briarpatch*'s board and staff—a tension that doubtless contributed to the magazine's split with SCAPO. Thereafter, *Briarpatch* chose the path of an independent magazine. However, magazine staff and volunteers remained mindful of their community-based roots. For example, a worker co-operative structure was not pursued after a staff member argued it would reduce community leadership. Ultimately, a restructuring plan was developed that sought community input through local volunteer committees. Via this

effort, the magazine spread its social networks from the streets of Saskatoon to locations throughout the province. The magazine's distribution also spread, though the introduction of mail-based subscriptions. In essence, provincial funds helped create a provincial magazine.

This change process was mirrored nearly 30 years later with the acquisition of federal funds. The arrival of business development grants on the media development scene drew greater attention to the business side of publishing. Indeed, the very act of applying required the creation of a formal business plan. Through this process, *Briarpatch* undertook reader surveys that revealed the breadth of its audience beyond Saskatchewan. In response, *Briarpatch* began to tailor its content to national and international readers. Once again, change sparked tension over the magazine's relationship to community. Long-time supporters raised concerns about the magazine's declining value as a local watchdog. In response, *Briarpatch* attempted to create a second publication to fulfill that role. This attempt was ultimately unsuccessful. Meanwhile, *Briarpatch* remained committed to its national audience and now described itself as a Canadian magazine. In essence, just as provincial funding helped create a provincial magazine, federal funding helped create a national magazine.

More recently, government funding through the Business Innovations program seeks to change how magazines raise their core finances, switching from what today remains "the backbone" of subscriber recruitment, direct mail campaigns, to digital outreach; thus *Briarpatch* plans to submit a grant proposal in 2015 to pilot an online subscription campaign that offers a free trial issue of the print publication, aimed at enticing online readers to become subscribers (A. Loewen, personal communication, Dec. 8, 2014).

- **Theme 3: Government support is attached to competing interests and ideologies.**

Third, the *Briarpatch* case suggests that successful media development strengthens the very things governments seek to avoid—namely, the creation of public platforms for the scrutiny

and critique of government policies. Here it is important to note the role funding agreements play in defining the scope of a media enterprise. As observed earlier in this chapter, *Briarpatch*'s self-defined mandate was broader than the mandate stated in their funding agreement with the province. This contradiction was noted by Karst (1977), who argued that a clause stating *Briarpatch* employees "shall not be or hold themselves out to be an employee or agent of the Government of Saskatchewan" amounted to recognition that the magazine was accountable to its readers, not the government (p. 10). Events did not bear this out. After three years of funding, DSS officials were openly disenchanted with the growth their grants had wrought. A departmental official stated the department was unhappy *Briarpatch* had chosen to become an independent magazine. But the department's discomfort clearly went beyond structure and into the realm of editorial content, embodied by the previously quoted statement, "How can I go to cabinet and ask them to approve funding for a magazine that is critical of uranium development?" (Brettle, "Users," March 7, 1979). Regarding Saskatchewan government funding, the cases of *Briarpatch*, *Natotawan*, *The Living Newspaper*, and SCN suggest that provincial funds for media projects were overly tied to the political and ideological currents of the day.

Federal funding was fuelled by ideologies of nationalism and free market capitalism but, until recent years, grant programs were sheltered from the type of direct political interference manifested in Saskatchewan. This appears to have changed following the 2006 election of Stephen Harper's Conservative government, which hastened program cuts and tightened ministerial oversight of grant recommendations. While a much smaller funding pool reduced access to federal funding, no matter what the content of the magazine might be, staff and board members suspect it was the magazine's editorial stance that sealed its fate, along with other left-leaning third sector magazines. From the documentary evidence gathered for this research, this

cannot be conclusively established, due to redaction of key paragraphs and pages under the Access To Information Act exemption 21.1(a), "advice or recommendations developed by or for a government institution or a minister of the crown" (Access to Information Act, R.S.C., c. A-1, 1985). In two instances where CMF/CPF staff emailed the Minister's office for clarification, they received invitations to discuss the reasons in person or by telephone, with no available public record of such conversations. The ministry's official response to the researcher states only, "The eligibility criteria and guidelines of the Canada Periodical Fund specify that the Minister of Canadian Heritage always has discretion in the awarding of funding" (L. Westerberg email to P. Elliott, July 22, 2013). What is verifiable, through documents obtained through Access to Information, is that two of three *Briarpatch* requests between 2008 and 2011 were recommended for approval, and that funding commitments were entered into the government's records. These requests became stalled on the Minister's desk and were ultimately rejected by the Minister's hand.

From the examples of *Briarpatch*'s experiences with provincial and federal funding, one may conclude at the very least that government funding for media development is capricious. The cut-offs were complete and, in two cases, retroactive, with no bridging assistance to other income sources. Both cuts were preceded by periods of uncertainty and back-and-forth discussions that absorbed much time and energy among *Briarpatch* staff, volunteers, and supporters. In this sense, government grants garnered more instability than stability in the long run.

- **Theme 4: The landscape of non-governmental support has changed.**

When provincial funding was withdrawn, *Briarpatch* was able to survive on the strength of its institutional and social networks. In particular, the labour movement backed the magazine with bulk subscriptions and advertising. By all reports, this support was offered without

subsequent pressure on editorial content, and indeed *Briarpatch* occasionally published articles that critiqued 'old guard' unionism and labour's ties to the NDP (Wagner, 1993). During his time as editor, Dave Mitchell recalls receiving just one union complaint about an article, which the magazine addressed in its monthly editorial without naming the union (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 22, 2012). The union continued to support the magazine through advertising.

An instructive comparative illustration of past labour support for third sector media is the launching the alternative urban tabloid *Prairie Dog* in 1993. An early *Prairie Dog* volunteer/staff member recalls fundraising dances and baseball tournaments that were well attended by union activists:

> They'd had a lot of support from the labour movement….There was more camaraderie back then. I think it would be very difficult now for a publication like the *Prairie Dog* the way it was then to get off the ground. That kind of social unionism has waned, working in coalitions with activist groups, that part of the labour movement, I'm not exactly sure how it happened or why, but that's eroded. (G. Marsden, personal communication, July 26, 2012)

The above observation proved to be correct in the case of *The Sasquatch*. By 2008, the labour movement had undergone a cultural shift not fully recognized or anticipated by the publication's volunteers and staff. This is not a surprising oversight; unions remained *Briarpatch*'s most loyal advertisers throughout the magazine's various transformations, and annually supported the production of a special labour edition through bulk purchases, all without demanding control over the content. In hindsight, Mitchell feels this was because the relationship parameters had been set in the 1970s. Starting a new publication meant establishing a new relationship in a new era, an era that featured the rise of union communications departments and increased emphasis on controlled messaging through slick in-house publications and paid advertising in the mainstream media.

> I think we were fairly uncompromising in terms of editorial independence. I wonder if that short of shot us in the foot…. Maybe they saw us as loose cannons and they couldn't control the message. (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 22, 2012)

Indeed, disappointment over editorial content was mentioned in interviews with two staff members of a union that opted out of a bulk subscription proposal; the staff members said they encouraged *The Sasquatch*'s editor to create articles more expressly related to the daily concerns of union members, in a format of small information bites rather than lengthy investigative pieces (anonymous 1 & anonymous 2, personal communication, May 22, 2012). Amid increasing professionalization of union communications and declining social unionism, *The Sasquatch*'s core labour fundraising strategy fell short of expectations. Meanwhile, a landscape of government funding cuts to non-labour groups, including arts groups, environmental NGOs, and development education organizations, left fewer organizations capable of augmenting the gap left by labour.

- **Theme 5: The landscape of reader support is changing.**

When *Briarpatch* lost its provincial funding, individual subscribers stepped into the breach, donating $20,000 within the first two years of funding loss, and steadily increasing their contributions in the years to come. When *Briarpatch* lost is charitable status, subscribers were willing to forego a tax break and continue donating; this occurred even though Saskatchewan donors are more likely to seek tax breaks for donations than are other Canadians (Turcotte, 2012). After *Briarpatch* lost its federal funding, a Deeper Roots campaign was launched in 2010 to expand the sustaining donor base; the campaign brought in $16,000 in its first year and $45,000 by Year 3 *(Briarpatch,* 2014). Such volunteer financial contributions constitute 'the miracle of *Briarpatch*' that has kept the publication operating for four decades. Today, individual donors form the bedrock of the magazine's sustainability, outperforming both magazine sales and advertising revenues:

> Our readers are very, very loyal, and I can't overlook the people who provide the five-dollar bill in the mail and say this is the best I can do, and there's still doing something. And that does amount to a significant amount of money for us. (V. Zink, personal communication, March 27, 2012)

However, the donor culture may be shifting as well. Although the magazine has been gaining younger readers and volunteers, donors tend to be older:

> One thing that we've noticed is our donors are not our age by any means, and mostly very old, like plus-80. Certainly they are of all age categories, but it's a bit concerning when we look through our donor appeals and it's in this impeccable penmanship that you could have only gotten if you went to school in the '30s. (V. Zink, personal communication, March 27, 2012)

Indeed, recent census data indicate persons over 75 are far more likely to donate than persons under 35, which Turcotte (2012) postulates could be due to religious influences, greater awareness of the needs beyond family once children gain independence, and, for some, not all, increased income stability. However, Zink postulates there is also a more fundamental cultural shift at play, led by a new generation unaccustomed to passing the plate, paying for written content, or contributing monthly dues to an organization:

> My impression just talking to people is there used to be a much stronger culture in the '60s and '70s, and even '80s, that we [young people] don't part with our money as easily. And certainly, I don't think the institutions of the left also have that same structure of seeking that financial support out, like the dues system where people are just expected to contribute a portion of their wages according to what they can pay. I just don't think younger people are that easy to convince. (V. Zink, personal communication, March 27, 2012)

This observation, yet unproven by the passage of time, may well turn out to be prescient, particularly in that it is offered by a member of the generation so described.

Current editor Andrew Loewen has also noticed a shift in donor culture, as local activist groups of the 1970s and 1980s, which used to participate in bike-a-thons, bonspiels, and other event-based fundraising drives, have declined in numbers: "As funding becomes more scarce, you end up with two people hunkered down in an office, and it becomes hard to maintain those community connections," he observes (A. Loewen, personal communication, Dec. 8, 2014). As

an alternative fundraising model, in July 2014 Briarpatch launched its first online fundraising campaign through the website Indiegogo, grossing $4,055 in a four-week period, with the net amount still to be determined after free gift subscriptions for donating are fulfilled (*Briarpatch*, 2014). This is comparable to direct mail campaigns; the fall 2014 mail-out raised approximately $5,000 in donations before mailing costs (A. Loewen, personal communication, Dec. 8, 2014). Loewen recognizes that online fundraising tools are important to expanding *Briarpatch*'s donor drives to its national and international online readers, who view content for free on the web rather than via paid subscription. At the same time, there are limitations. For example, like the grant world, web campaigns tend to work only when they focus on short-term projects, instead of core operations. Thus, while online donation drives may offer short-term injections of cash, monthly sustainers and subscribers remain key to budget stability and long-range planning: "For us, it's going to be one more tool in the box…it's never going to be game-changing," concludes Loewen (personal communication, Dec. 8, 2014).

In conclusion, *Briarpatch*'s fundraising record is an important example of a community-generated solution to the problem of third sector media sustainability. Sustaining donor campaigns and subscription sales supported the magazine where official media development assistance failed. A fully reader-supported model allowed the magazine to maintain editorial independence by limiting the influence of funding agencies and advertisers. However, the model has not delivered resources for in-depth accountability journalism to the extent that its publishers would like.

> Whether it's *The Globe and Mail* or CBC or *Briarpatch*, it's a big problem….Looking at models for alternative media, that's a question we have to address, where is that funding going to come from? People want investigative journalism. Do they want to pay for it, how might they pay for it, where will those resources come from? (V. Zink, personal communication, March 27, 2012)

The question of resources and sustainability will be further examined in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6
TUNING IN: PRACTITIONER AND COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES

6.1 Introduction

At a dusty crossroads on Okanese First Nation, a gas station and band offices sit side-by-side under a rising summer sun. As a steady parade of trucks pulls in for a fill, people greet each other on a wooden porch outside a busy meeting hall. Surrounded by the come-and-go of community life, the scene is little different from what you might see at any one of Saskatchewan's 74 First Nations reserves. Look closer, though, and there's something you don't see every day: a radio transmission tower poking up behind the low roofs. In a tiny studio behind the band office, deejays spin music requests and banter about happenings near and far. The first time I phoned the station to book a research interview, I found myself live on the air, explaining who I was and what I wanted to the entire listening audience of five File Hills First Nations and beyond, followed by a skill-testing question about the lead singer of The Eagles, which, thankfully, I was able to answer. The experience was frightening, funny, and an apt introduction to the immediacy of community radio.

The idea for 95.3 Creek FM was sparked by William Yuzicapi, a well-known deejay who broadcasted under the name William Alexander at one of Saskatchewan's main commercial stations, 620 CKCK AM in Regina. In 1995, after 12 years of broadcasting and looking for a change, he took a break to help develop a marketing and communications plan for the Lebret Eagles, the province's first Aboriginal junior-A hockey team (personal communication, July 22, 2014). Set in a town nestled on the shores of Katepwa Lake in the Qu'Appelle Valley, the Lebret hockey rink was more than a sheet of ice: it was also the meeting hall for everything from funerals to tribal council meetings. On one fateful day in 1995, Yuzicapi bumped into Chief Marie Anne Daywalker-Pelletier of Okanese First Nation, his home reserve. On the spur of the

moment he voiced an idea that had been brewing in his mind: “We should start our own radio station” (personal communication, July 22, 2014). This chance encounter was the start of a long journey through regulatory bodies, fundraising efforts, engineering challenges, political navigations, and volunteer wrangling, ultimately leading to the Sisyphean task of filling the airwaves all day every day, 365 days a year, on the budget of a church mouse. Yet here Creek FM sits 20 years later, accomplishing not everything its founders hoped for, but far more than one might expect, and never missing a beat from sunup to sundown since the day it went on air.

To our south, the resiliency of third sector media has caught the attention of two U.S. commissions of inquiry—the previously cited Knight and FCC commissions—as well as organizations such as the Pew Research Center, which published *Nonprofit Journalism: A Growing but Fragile Part of the U.S. News System* (Mitchell & Jurkowitz, 2013). The examples presented in this chapter indicate third sector media undertakings are not quite as fragile as one might assume. There are many factors that sustain third sector media, including a level of organizational diversity, community support, and flexibility that is unmatched in the commercial and state spheres. This is not to say, however, that there are not major—and growing—challenges facing the sector. Whether it is lack of access to appropriate training, or shrinking budgets, or equipment wearing out, the core challenges are understood and experienced on a daily basis by grassroots practitioners. Accordingly, anyone who wishes to write prescriptions for third sector media development would be wise to first seek out from practitioners how these enterprises already sustain themselves, to what ends, and against what key obstacles. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to discover and learn from the grounded experience of a variety of Saskatchewan third sector media projects, and, from there, to draw out themes related to the question of effective media development initiatives.

6.2 Creek FM: "Your All Nation Super-Station"

6.2.1 Development and Structure

Operating under the tag "Your All Nation Super Station," 95.3 Creek FM broadcasts from Okanese First Nation to several First Nation reserves, towns, and villages in east central Saskatchewan, and streams live on the Internet at www.creekfm.com. The station offers a mix of popular and traditional music, weather, community event notices, and talk radio (see Appendix G). Although the tone is light-hearted, Creek FM was founded to address more serious issues of representation in the media. In particular, news coverage of the 1995 death of Pamela George spurred discussion about the need for media from an Indigenous perspective, according to former station manager Randy Stonechild (personal communication, July 9, 2014). When George, a 28-year-old Saulteaux mother of two, was beaten to death on the outskirts of Regina by two young white men, subsequent coverage of the trial was framed within a longstanding Canadian media narrative of Indigenous female crime victims as self-endangering prostitutes (Razack, 2000). Stonechild recalls:

> The perception the media gave was one of a prostitute and a drug user. This individual had a life. She was somebody's daughter; she was a child's mother. … And a lot of this [radio planning] came out of stuff like that, that was being negatively portrayed. (personal communication, July 9, 2014)

As described in the introduction, the idea of creating a radio station was first floated in 1995, during a chance encounter between Chief Marie-Anne Daywalker-Pelletier and William Yuzicapi. Recalls Yuzicapi:

> I saw Chief Daywalker in passing and I said, 'You know, we should start our own radio station,' and she said, 'Yeah, we should.' So about six months to a year later she came back and said, 'If you're serious about this, get me some numbers and get some ideas together.' (personal communication, July 22, 2014)

Yuzicapi contacted the CRTC and developed a range of potential options for Chief and Council to consider, with the main classification choices being a commercial, community, or Native undertaking. The group chose to pursue a community license; they felt Saskatchewan's

commercial sector was too heavily saturated and competitive, while an exclusively Native station would have difficulty gaining listener support from surrounding rural communities. As well, the intriguing possibility of making media for the community instead of for private profit appealed to Yuzicapi (personal communication, July 22, 2014).

The other option to consider was broadcast radius, which would determine both the size of the transmitting equipment and the number of communities reached. A factor in this decision was the chosen organizational model, which was a station designed to generate revenues for a nonprofit society that would invest excess revenues into community activities, such as youth field trips (W.Yuzicapi, personal communication, July 22, 2014). This is an established model, prominent examples being the *St. Petersburg Times* of Florida, a for-profit newspaper operated to support the nonprofit Poynter Institute (Pickard & Stearns, 2011) and *National Geographic* magazine, which contributes its revenues to the scientific and educational work of the National Geographic Society (National Geographic Society, 2014).

To fully reach its potential, this model assumes excess revenues as opposed to a break-even budget. Coming from the commercial radio sector, Yuzicapi was well aware of the value of audience size to advertising revenues. Okanese First Nation is a small community, with 286 residents at the last Census and just over 60 square kilometres of territory (Statistics Canada, 2012). A medium-sized transmitter would extend to some 2,700 residents of the File Hills First Nations group, consisting of Okanese, Little Black Bear, Peepeekisis, Starblanket, and Carry The Kettle, as well as to some 600 residents in the town of Balcarres, and approximately 4,500 in the small city of Melville (Statistics Canada, 2012). However, on investigating equipment costs, Yuzicapi found there was little price difference between a medium-sized transmitter and the cost of a larger transmitter that could include several additional First Nations, as well the towns of Ituna and Indian Head, boosting the total potential audience to 20,000 (Creek FM).

In context of geographically vast rural Saskatchewan, the goal of reaching several far-flung communities, intersected by the topography of the Qu'Appelle Valley, required a 50,000-watt transmitter and microwave relay system, a level of technology far beyond what an urban community radio station is typically required to mount. For comparison, 91.3 CJTR FM community radio in Regina is licensed to operate a 480-watt transmitter that reaches over 180,000 people, gaining a listenership nine times greater than Creek FM's on a fraction of the power (CRTC, 2001, Feb. 8; Statistics Canada, 2012). While a system of government relay stations allowed community broadcasting to develop in Canada's north (Roth, 1996), no such infrastructure was available for use in the south, leaving Okanese First Nation with the challenge of raising a 120-foot transmission tower, and a smaller microwave tower to relay the signal from the studio to the main tower location.

The process of applying for a broadcast license begins with requesting a frequency assignment from Industry Canada, a highly detailed exercise that requires hiring a certified broadcast engineer to prepare a technical briefing on aspects such as proposed antennae height, elevation angles, type of modulation, radiation patterns, and potential impact on surrounding frequencies (Industry Canada, 2007). The cost of preparing this report amounted to approximately $12,000; in total, start-up expenses amounted to approximately $100,000 for the towers, studio equipment and renovations (W. Yuzicapi, personal communication, July 22, 2014). Although this doubtless presented a budgetary challenge for a small First Nation, the Okanese council committed funds from its economic development budget, with additional resources for capital costs leveraged through the Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) board, and from the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council (FHQTC) (M. Day Walker-Pelletier, personal communication, July 9, 2014; W. Yuzicapi, personal communication, July 22, 2014).

The other major task was to apply for a broadcast license from the CRTC, a process that requires a breakdown of planned programming by percentage of broadcast hours, as well as an explanation of how the station will fulfill a mandate with these goals:

> Permits and facilitates communication among members of the community by fostering diversity in the broadcasting of opinions, spoken word content and musical programming; participates in the stimulation of socio-economic endeavours and in the cultural enrichment of communities; and reflects the diversity of the communities served. Local programming is produced, in part, by volunteers. (Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission [CRTC], Form 118)

In addition to consulting with First Nations, Yuzicapi held community meetings in Balcarres, Ituna, and Melville. At the meetings, participants expressed interest in music they did not normally hear on the radio, such as old time fiddle, powwow music, hip hop, and traditional blues. Although tastes were varied, "the underlying factor was the local spin to everything, whether it be news, whether it be the music" (W. Yuzicapi, personal communication, July 22, 2014).

The resulting proposal, submitted to the CRTC in November 2001, was to broadcast 126 hours per week, with a news component comprised of 75% local news and 25% regional news, and at least 20% of its music selections from outside the category of rock, pop and dance, with 5% devoted to 'special interest music' (CRTC, 2001, Nov. 8; CRTC, 2002, April 17). However, when the application was publicly heard in January, 2002, the CRTC panelists' concerns were not about content, but about the relationship of the Okanese First Nations Council members to the nonprofit society, OK Creek FM Radio. It is worth noting that Canada's policy accommodation of state-sponsored media extends to CBC, but not to First Nations governments. As described in Chapter 3, there is an expectation that First Nations media receiving federal recognition should be operated by third party organizations. Although the application included a proposed nonprofit structure, this was considered insufficient because of overlap in board

membership with band council members. The CRTC decision statement requested membership be recruited beyond Okanese First Nation, including "broad representation of the community served by the station" (CRTC, 2002, April 17). Further, noting the station would have a wide broadcast radius, the ruling stated, "The Commission expects the new station to broadcast programming that responds to the needs and interests of the non-native population as well as of the First Nations people within the extensive coverage area" (CRTC, 2002, April 17). The decision also required Creek FM to offer volunteer training and participation opportunities to non-Aboriginal people, and stated that because of the concerns listed by the panelists, the license was approved for just five years, instead of the maximum seven years (CRTC, 2002, April 17).

These requirements echo the federal Native Communications Program requirements discussed in Chapter 3, which demanded that First Nations set up media societies, creating a cumbersome layer of organizational responsibilities that did not fit well in a First Nations context. Yuzicapi responded by recruiting a volunteer board of Elders and community members, and posted community notices when positions became vacant. However, he found maintaining an active, consistent board to be a challenge, and he was unable to expand membership beyond Okanese during his eight years with the station (personal communication, July 22, 2014). Ability to recruit members to attend board meetings does not in this case appear to be a reliable measure of community involvement and support, which Yuzicapi found evident in other ways. For example, when Creek FM finally went on air, it generated an immediate and positive audience reaction; even the signal test, an hour of looped prerecorded music, resulted in appreciative phone calls from listeners, recalls Yuzicapi. People regularly phoned and dropped by the studio, resulting in many interchanges and a growing sense of community around the station (personal communication, July 22, 2014).

Creek FM's format was focused on "unique, original programming" delivered in a light-hearted, uplifting style (W. Yuzicapi, personal communication, July 22, 2014). Flagship programs included a morning deejay show, a talk program called *Moccasin Road,* and a phone-in music request show, with evening hours devoted to music programs. With a lively mix of music, chat, and phone-in contests, the programs were meant to create an on-air meeting ground for people from surrounding First Nations and non-Aboriginal communities. Although the station did not have funds to take part in formal listenership audits, Yuzicapi pointed to audience participation as an informal measuring stick for potential advertisers:

> I said … if you want to know how many people listen to the station, listen to *Moccasin Road*, because the phone lines would always be hot, all throughout the two hour show. In fact, any time you said, 'Give us a call,' the phone lines would light up, whether it be the morning show, *Moccasin Road*, the phone-in show, even the evening shows were well listened to. It's just because it was home grown. It was something people could call their own. (personal communication, July 22, 2014)

Another measuring stick was increased attendance at community events, which gained new exposure through the radio. For example, Yuzicapi observed that the annual Okanese Winter Fest drew significantly more people from a wider area after the station went on air. In general, events sponsored by Creek FM drew people from a variety of reserves, building a renewed sense of community among the Nations. More significantly, Yuzicapi felt Creek FM generated increased pride and involvement in community life:

> It gave them something to call their own… . Every First Nation has the store, has the band office. You go hang out at the store, you go hang out at the band office. The station was another place. It was used as a meeting place—not only physically coming in and having a coffee in the lobby—but also a meeting place on the air. People could call in and just talk about stuff. Like we'd have polls, or just talk. It gave the people something to be proud of, to call their own. I think that in itself was the best thing about it. And we could also foster that into caring more about the community, being role models, and taking that first step and making the community 'yours,' and making it better. (personal communication, July 22, 2014)

At one point, Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) approached Creek FM with an offer of affiliate status, airing MBC content in the afternoons and evenings. This would have provided the clout of a larger organization with a well-developed advertising sales infrastructure, and would have greatly alleviated the burden on Okanese volunteers to create content. The trade-off was loss of local control and, with it, the sense of community ownership of something special, something the band was not willing to give up (W. Yuzicapi, personal communication, July 22, 2014; M. Daywalker-Pelletier, personal communication, July 9, 2014).

After eight years with the station, Yuzicapi returned to commercial radio, taking a job with an FM station in Yorkton. On his departure, Randy Stonechild, an Okanese member and a graduate of the Western Academy of Broadcasting in Saskatoon, was approached to take over as station manager. When I visited the station in July 2014, he was still station manager, a position he left in the autumn. Stonechild began his involvement with Creek FM a few months before the station's inaugural broadcast, by volunteering to help download and code a library of 6,000 songs. Later he took a paid staff position with the station and became an on-air host. Creek FM currently employs two staff members and a pool of trained volunteers who occasionally fill in on a paid basis. One of the volunteers, Murray Bellegarde, also attended Western Academy; others received training from Stonechild. Volunteers tend to migrate to and from the community, as they follow education and employment opportunities; however, at any given time there are generally about four trained people available to go on air (R. Stonechild, personal communication, July 9, 2014).

This is a small staff complement for the hours of live programming provided. Beyond a one-hour replay of *Moccasin Road* in the evening, deejays are on the air from 6 a.m. to midnight daily. Added to this are the tasks of soliciting sponsorships, keeping equipment in repair, fundraising, finding contest prizes, delivering prizes, and organizing community events, to name

a few staff responsibilities. The band obtains youth employment grants through Service Canada programs such as Skills Link, and generally assigns one or two summer student positions to the station (D. Walker, personal communication, July 9, 2014). Volunteer and employment opportunities at Creek FM are important to the community, according to band councilor Daniel Walker, who oversees the radio portfolio. Walker noted that some radio volunteers have gone on to study in the Indian Communications Arts (INCA) program at the First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv) in Regina: "It's a valuable tool, if people want to get into media," he observed. "They can dabble with it [and] see if it's something they want to do" (personal communication, July 9, 2014).

In addition to talk and music, Creek FM provides a much-needed platform for public service announcements from FHQTC Nation councils, such as boil water alerts, road closures, and announcements of employment openings. This role is particularly important during flood emergencies. As well, visiting politicians and community event organizers are invited into the studio for interviews. "If people have business with the community, we have an open mic, they can come on in," Stonechild explained (personal communication, July 9, 2014). Phone-in contests and music request shows provide space for community chatter and cross-cultural exchange. Stonechild said he felt the station's success was best measured by his personal encounters with listeners:

> Some days when I go out there in the community, when I'm doing things like … just picking up mail, people will approach me and say, 'What you said this morning was pretty fun,' stuff like that. Or I'll have non-native people come up and say, 'You know what you said this morning, I did not know that about Native people,' whether it was something specific pertaining to our culture that they didn't know about, or an opinion that I gave. People come up and say, 'I never thought of it that way.' (personal communication, July 9, 2014)

6.2.2 Sustainability challenges and strategies

Creek FM 95.3 has been broadcasting continuously for 12 years "with great difficulty and no [external] funding" (M. Daywalker-Pelletier, personal communication, July 9, 2013). Asked what single thing has been the most important for keeping Creek FM operating, Chief Day Walker-Pelletier responded, "I think it's the community support from our own people, from Okanese" (personal communication, July 9, 2014). From the beginning, the radio station has stuck with its original strategy of being tightly integrated with the band council and its overall community development goals. This sometimes presented problems at election time, with various candidates vying for control of the radio station portfolio, according to Yuzicapi. Yuzicapi said he had to work at keeping local politics out of station operations. Carefully avoiding political entanglements contributed to Creek FM's survival:

> It was all right. It's something you learn to deal with on a First Nations Reserve. If you want to do something, you not only have to go through your band council, but also the tribal council as well. It was a daunting task to keep everybody happy, but we got it done. (personal communication, July 22, 2014)

Indeed, without the involvement of Chief and Council, there would likely not be a radio station, as the approximately $100,000 annual operating budget comes almost entirely from the band council budget (M. Daywalker-Pelletier, personal communication, July 9, 2014). Further, the council sets aside some of its summer student positions for the station. Finally, the band council provides additional organizational clout when needed:

> A lot of times I'm thankful that our Chief and Council and our band are there for us. A lot of times I'll get flack from individuals and organizations. Like, CRTC, when they come down on you, they come down on you hard. It's stressful, and I have to kind of say, "Help me Chief, help me, they're beating me up." (R. Stonechild, personal communication, July 9, 2014)

Band councilor Daniel Walker says Okanese First Nation feels a sense of ownership of the station, but its leaders are not interested in directing editorial content beyond providing public service announcements to be aired (D. Walker, personal communication, July 9, 2014).

This situation concurs with Gumucio Dagron's (2003) observation that ties to a supporting organization should not always be assumed to be negative. While the initial CRTC review panel placed a high premium on organizational autonomy, it appears that close organizational relationships and cross-membership are in fact vital components in Creek FM's ongoing survival, similar to the situation described by *New Breed* staff regarding their publication's relationship with AMNSIS (Claude, 1985). Nonetheless, the station strives to pay its own way where possible. Creek FM's founders intended the station to become self-financing and to eventually expand its operations through nurturing small affiliated stations, a model successfully developed by Missinipi Broadcasting (W. Yuzicapi, personal communication, July 22, 2014). Although ad sales and sponsorship were relatively healthy in the early years, they never achieved full cost recovery. Chief Daywalker-Pelletier observes that when a radio station first takes to the air, businesses are initially excited, but interest fades without ongoing market outreach. She adds that the arrival of competition from the Internet compounded this problem: "It's ever changing, and we have to compete with everybody else. And that's our job, finding ways to have our listeners continue to support us," she notes (personal communication, July 9, 2014). At the time of the interview, the station had just two sponsorship contracts with local businesses, which was not enough to significantly offset expenses (D. Walker, personal communication, July 9, 2014). Stonechild found many off-reserve businesses remained reluctant to engage with a First Nations-operated enterprise, despite the business they receive from First Nations customers.

> It's one of those things where, all right, I will bite my tongue and walk out of there. It's okay; there's other businesses around. For the most part, it's a pretty hard thing; we're still breaking down that barrier. (R. Stonechild, personal communication, July 9, 2014)

These sentiments were echoed by Marylynn Dumont, who started out as a volunteer in 2010, which led to a staff position in office support and marketing, in addition to hosting radio programs. She took on the new position of Director of Radio Operations in 2014, following a re-

organization intended to improve the radio's financial position. Dumont observed: "On many of my intersections with potential sponsors in my forays of marketing for the station our non-native listeners would whisper their support of our station, how they enjoyed the shows and the music and the mix of music. I often got the impression they were concerned that others may hear and somewhat judge them for listening to the station" (M. Dumont email to P. Elliott, Jan. 16, 2015). Dumont said she perceived some local business operators suspected First Nations had rich sources of funding that weren't spent locally, and therefore the businesses did not feel a reciprocal desire to buy ads on a First Nations radio station. "It was interesting to note that we provide a far better range for what they sought at a lower cost and were local. So it would have been local supporting local, [but] they felt it should only go one way, from us to them," she noted (M. Dumont email to P. Elliott, Jan. 16, 2015). Stonechild said, ideally, he would have liked the station to gain sponsorship contracts with provincial Crown corporations and the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Association (SIGA) (personal communication, July 9, 2014). Chief Day Walker-Pelletier notes that advice from a marketing specialist would be helpful for preparing a plan to increase advertising and sponsorship revenues (personal communication, July 9, 2014).

Funding outside of First Nations organizations has not played a role in Creek FM's survival. Yuzicapi said he occasionally applied to various government funding pools recommended by band council members, but none was a natural fit for community media needs, and his applications were invariably unsuccessful. He nonetheless felt that grants should play a part in community media, as advertising sales "can only go so far" in a smaller nonprofit environment (personal communication, July 22, 2014). He stated a dedicated staff position is required to manage the heavy time commitment associated with seeking out, applying for, managing, and reporting on grant funds. Yuzicapi said his broadcast experience prepared him for

developing advertising sales packages, but he lacked experience fundraising for a nonprofit (personal communication, July 22, 2014). Stonechild also cited lack of familiarity with grant programs, and said it would be helpful to receive advice in this area and to have a centralized information source about available opportunities (personal communication, July 9, 2014).

As for other revenue sources, on-air bingo fundraisers have proven to be a successful and popular strategy to help finance equipment purchases. However the dollars raised are "a drop in the bucket" for meeting the station's technical needs (R. Stonechild, personal communication, July 9, 2014). Maintaining the transmitter and relay system has remained a major financial and engineering challenge throughout the station's history. At one point the transmitter was hit by lightning, damaging relay switches and two transmitter tubes valued at $4,500 and $2,500 (R. Stonechild, personal communication, July 9, 2014). Owing to the complexity of the system, a hired engineer is required to make major repairs, which adds greatly to operations costs. Chief Daywalker-Pelletier cites upgrading the transmitter to its full capacity as an immediate future goal, at an estimated cost of $61,000 to $62,000 (personal communication, July 9, 2014). The main source of development funding for community radio, the Community Radio Fund of Canada, does not include support for capital equipment purchases and upgrades, a situation common among granting agencies (Community Radio Fund of Canada, 2014).

Similar to other media enterprises encountered in this study, Creek FM has been affected by declining funding among partner organizations. For example, Chief Daywalker-Pelletier said the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College (SICC) is prepared to assist with Cree language programming; however, this potential partnership has been cast into doubt by a major funding cut to the College's parent organization, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) (M. Daywalker-Pelletier, personal communication, July 9, 2014). In 2012, the federal government announced a $2 million cut to FSIN's budget over two years (Federation of

Saskatchewan Indian Nations [FSIN], 2012); the reduction led to a number of austerity measures, including a 25% cut to FSIN staff positions in 2014 (FSIN cuts staff, 2014). During the same period, federal funding to the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council was reduced by 35%, from $774,972 in 2011-2012 to $500,000 in 2014-2015 (Canada. Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, 2012). For Creek FM, the cuts translated into a loss of program sponsorship dollars and potential partnerships (R. Stonechild, personal communication, July 9, 2014).

As a result of these revenue challenges, the station has not been able to expand staffing, leaving a great deal of responsibility on the desks of a staff complement that seldom numbers more than two people. One major task is maintaining the station's broadcast license. Stonechild admits his broadcast training did not prepare him to meet CRTC reporting and compliance procedures. When the license came up for renewal in 2013, Stonechild struggled to meet the review requirements, particularly because the regulatory body had developed a new music classification system since the station's last renewal in 2006. Under the new system, Aboriginal music was no longer its own separate classification. This meant re-sorting Aboriginal artists into other genre categories, such as Canadian rock, country music and, for Cree-language songs, world music, then providing a percentage breakdown of anticipated airtime. Stonechild estimates he spent three months on the project. Although the CRTC did not offer training workshops, he found the Commission's staff members to be very helpful during the application process, which was ultimately successful (personal communication, July 9, 2014).

Stonechild was aware that his formal radio education was now some years in the past. He felt it would be beneficial to have professional broadcasters visit the station to conduct training workshops for the volunteers. Obtaining volunteer or lower-cost services of a radio

engineer would also significantly aid the station's budget, he said (personal communication, July 9, 2014).

Regarding sustainability of the station's mission, the far-reaching broadcast signal, while expensive and technically demanding, is key to Creek FM's original mission of improving media portrayals of Indigenous people to a wider public. Furthermore, interview participants agreed that Creek FM 95.3 is fulfilling an important role in promoting social change through community participation and communication. Success is hampered by minimal staffing on a limited budget. The financial challenge has been exacerbated by funding cuts to allied organizations. Revenues are not sufficiently diverse, which leaves the station vulnerable to closure in the event that band council funding is curtailed. Helpful support would include training, affordable professional services, capital funding sources, information about grants, marketing support, and improved federal recognition of the important role radio plays in enhancing the cultural wellbeing of Indigenous people.

6.3 Prairie Dog Magazine: A Worker Co-operative

6.3.1 Development and Structure

Prairie Dog magazine is a free news and entertainment tabloid distributed every two weeks at 400 locations in Regina, Saskatchewan, reaching an estimated readership of 60,000 ("Masthead," 2014). The publication's positioning line—'Regina's only alternative'—reflects its roots as a direct response to creeping media monopolization in the early 1990s, "a time when downsizing and centralizing corporate media had left a gaping vacuum in the local mediascape" (Bourgeois, 2005, p. 13). It also references the fact that *Prairie Dog* has continued to publish while commercial news tabloids have come and gone, mostly recently TorStar Corp's Regina print edition of *Metro,* which ceased publication in July 2014 (Canadian Press, 2014). This is a considerable accomplishment for a publication founded by a "ragtag" group of young people

who knew little about the publishing industry when they first came together in the early 1990s and started dreaming about producing an independent tabloid news magazine (M. Diamantopoulos, personal communication, June 9, 2012). The founding members were primarily university-based activists who had been involved in the Social Justice Coalition that was formed in opposition to Grant Devine's Conservative 1982-1991 government. The Social Justice Coalition had been a "radical, catalyzing experience" for the youth, who understood a new NDP government, elected in November 1991, was unlikely to place progressive social policies ahead of the province's pressing economic concerns (M. Diamantopoulos, personal communication, June 6, 2012). Talk coalesced around creating an alternative bookstore or newspaper that would help maintain the momentum of 1980s activism, and would "stimulate more grassroots dialogue about what kind of Saskatchewan people wanted, to give some voice to people who aren't normally heard from in policy debates but also, more structurally, in the media" (M. Diamantopoulos, personal communication, June 6, 2012). Most of the early founders had some previous experience writing for *Briarpatch* and the student press, and were attracted to the idea of establishing a monthly alternative newspaper that would focus on local and provincial news coverage.

On September 29, 1992, The Prairie Dog Alternative News, Inc. was formed as a nonprofit corporation with five board members (ISC corporate profile, entity 210714). A loose collection of volunteers, mainly active in labour, Indigenous, and women's issues, set up a makeshift office in the attic of Huston House, directly above *Briarpatch* magazine's office. They set out a plan to develop a publication that would alternately feature political and arts coverage on the front cover, reflecting the two areas the volunteers felt were consistently underreported on in Regina. Early fundraising efforts included garage sales, door to door canvassing, benefit concerts, and "everything but begging with tin cups in the streets" (M.

Diamantopoulos, personal communication, June 6, 2012). The Retail Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU) offered to include the first issue with a leaflet drop the union had planned for Regina's North Central neighbourhood, where union members were locked out of the area's only grocery store. Sympathetic labour unions contributed to the cost of an extended print run for this purpose, and the first issue was laid out in the basement of the Regina Union Centre (M. Diamantopoulos, personal communication, June 6, 2012).

According to volunteer Guy Marsden, financial support from labour represented a time when social unionism remained strong in the province, and "a progressive union wasn't just about bread and butter but was also about promoting progressive social policies" (personal communication, July 26, 2014). Coverage of the RWDSU lockout was included in the first issue, but it did not have privileged placement amid myriad other local concerns. The premier issue, published in February 1993, came out as a small newsprint bi-fold tabloid with a half cover featuring an ARTernatives youth mural. Inside, the editors dedicated the issue to the memory of Marlon Pippin, an Aboriginal youth who died in a police confrontation, and "to the continuing struggle for justice among Regina's indigenous youth" ("Dedication," 1993). The lead story featured a sympathetic interview with a sex trade worker in reaction to a campaign to drive prostitutes out of an inner-city neighbourhood. Other articles covered Indigenous youth in the justice system; loopholes in the capital gains tax; Unemployment Insurance program cuts; free trade; a review of the film *Manufacturing Consent*; a profile of the newly formed National Party of Canada; an article on a controversial anti-family planning ad printed in *The Leader-Post*; an update on the RWDSU lockout; a stringing critique of the NDP establishment by a member of the Saskatchewan Young New Democrats; and, finally, an events listing on the back half-cover. This was surrounded by a mix of ads from MLAs, progressive city councilors, local

businesses, and unions. A commentary by Gerald Sperling, a University of Regina political science professor, described why *Prairie Dog* was needed:

> The problem is the media in Saskatchewan has been tame too long. It has not, as a matter of course, tested the limits of journalism. This makes politicians lazy and business people arrogant. (Sperling, 1993, p. 3)

Indeed *Prairie Dog* proved itself to be uncompromising even in the face of its own advertising base. The second issue featured prominent front page coverage of a demonstration against government cuts, including an uncensored quote from a worker who said elected NDP members had "just become another set of assholes with too much money and too much power" (J. Boehmer, as cited by Diamantopoulos & Kowalski, 1993, p. 1). Recalls Diamantopoulos, "So of course you instantly have a whole NDP apparatus that is at your throat and eager to discredit your work and second guess what you're doing (personal communication, June 6, 2012). However, advertising remained steady, and the group was able to continue putting out a monthly print run of 10,000 copies distributed at 200 outlets ("Masthead," 1993).

In addition to labour and University of Regina connections, a number of early volunteers were students and staff of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC), forerunner of the First Nations University of Canada (FNUniv). The second issue was laid out in the SIFC's office space at the University of Regina and featured a number of Aboriginal contributors, some of whom joined an expanded steering committee of 13 members and continued to contribute regularly to the magazine. By the end of June, the crew had managed to raise $12,637 in advertising sales, subscriptions, and fundraising (Prairie Dog Alternative Press statement of earnings, June 30, 1993). It was hardly smooth sailing, though. The group owed $1,850 to various friends (statement of earnings, June 30, 1993), and faced all the hurdles of setting up a media enterprise, from gaining liability insurance to coordinating distribution. As well, minutes

of a July 8, 1993, steering committee meeting illustrated the difficulty third sector media typically face trying to fit into funding envelopes created for anything but upstart magazines:

> Saskatchewan Council of Cultural Organizations say we are ineligible because we are not cultural by their definition. They also suggested the Saskatchewan government is not giving money to anybody because of tough economic times… . The F.K. Morrow Foundation said no to us because we [are] not charitable. PLURA president was called four times without contact. (*Prairie Dog* steering committee minutes, July 8, 2013).

However, it was reported the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) were "very excited" about the new magazine, and welcomed a research proposal for potential funding of up to $10,000. As well, the women members of the steering committee proposed setting up a for-profit women's publication layout business that would offer a 20% return to *Prairie Dog* in return for office space and use of computers. Another proposal brought forward at the meeting was to switch from a registered nonprofit to a registered co-operative. Unlike *Briarpatch*, where the discussion spurred lengthy debate and the drafting of a position paper, ultimately to be rejected and still argued over years later, the idea generated immediate interest at *Prairie Dog* and a unanimous vote in favour, with the steering committee agreeing "our articles [of incorporation] are good and likely won't need to be changed that much" (steering committee minutes, July 8, 2013).

Buoyed with hopeful enthusiasm, by August the group had settled into a permanent office near the city centre and had its first semblance of a staff, comprised of five positions supported via a provincial training program for Social Assistance recipients, called New Careers, and the Unemployment Insurance Act's Section 25, which recognized the venture as an eligible work training opportunity for UI recipients (M. Diamantopoulos, personal communication, June 6, 2012). With advertising sales leading the revenue stream at some $1,500 per month, the steering committee decided to increase the ad ratio from 35% to 45% (financial statement, June 30, 1993; steering committee minutes, July 8, 2013). In the absence of grant funding, the group

determined financial sustainability lay in the world of commercial advertising, along the lines of established alternative weeklies such as *The Village Voice* and *The Georgia Straight*. This led to a rethinking of format and focus. Local accountability journalism and political commentary remained primary content, but music reviews, event listings, restaurant reviews, and other hallmarks of urban 'alt weeklies' became regular features as well.

For the August 1993 issue, the half-cover bi-fold was replaced by a full-cover tabloid with an index that evenly defined content under the headings News, Culture, "Politix" and Reviews. As well, a new event listing was introduced as a centre spread. Guy Marsden, a *Prairie Dog* volunteer who was also a board member of *Briarpatch*, noted how the difference in sustainability strategies between the two magazines impacted editorial content:

> *Briarpatch* is a subscriber-reliant magazine…. *Prairie Dog* was mostly advertising, [with] the odd grant, but the grants dried up. So *Prairie Dog* couldn't be just all about politics. You had to talk about entertainment and culture. And you could put a progressive slant on that. (G. Marsden, personal communication, July 26, 2012)

Repositioned as an urban alt weekly, *Prairie Dog* began to attract national liquor companies and mainstream record labels among its primary advertising clientele, creating some internal board divisions and skepticism among the left community. Meanwhile, the magazine's founders sought new ways to maintain the initial mission of fomenting political debate. In the summer of 1994 a progressive bookstore, Prairie Dog Books, was opened as a means to provide the public with deeper background reading on issues raised in *Prairie Dog*'s pages. The bookstore was not intended as a revenue generator for the magazine, although it was hoped the service might realize sufficient sales to permanently employ a part-time manager (G. Marsden, personal communication, July 26, 2012). Through an employment grant, Marsden worked on the project over the summer and into the fall. A membership system was set up, with discounts provided in exchange for a $100 member fee, or $50 plus three to five hours of volunteer time in the store, or

10 hours volunteer time. *Briarpatch* loaned its subscriber list for a direct mail campaign, and Marsden and Diamantopoulos met with professors at the University of Regina in the hopes that they would order textbooks through the store. With no storefront beyond a corner of the *Prairie Dog* office, at one point the board explored the idea of setting up a combination bookstore and coffee shop modeled after the Mondragon Bookstore and Coffee House in Winnipeg. By this time, however, an alternative bookstore, Buzzword Books, had opened in Regina's Cathedral Area and was carrying a selection of books that filled the reading gap identified by Prairie Dog Books. Rather than compete with a viable storefront run by an experienced book retailer, Prairie Dog Books ceased operations (G. Marsden, personal communication, July 26, 2012).

However, *Prairie Dog*'s volunteers and staff were not interested in the Mondragon Bookstore model only because it sold books and coffee. The Winnipeg store was a registered co-operative, named after the Mondragon co-operative federation in the Basque region of Spain, and fully engaged in experiments in workplace democracy (Ria, 2010). Core *Prairie Dog* founders Mitch Diamantopoulos and April Bourgeois were intrigued by the possibilities of co-operativism, and in August 1994 they helped complete the restructuring effort that saw Prairie Dog Alternative News, Inc. transformed from a nonprofit corporation into a nonprofit community service co-operative, the Prairie Dog Alternative News Co-operative (ISC corporate profile, entity 405074).

Diamantopoulos had imagined that if the paper "muddled through" its first year, like-minded organizations would recognize its value and come forward with the necessary financial support. The group failed to foresee the impact of cutbacks to the NGO sector, which had progressive organizations internally focused on survival; they also failed to understand that a self-described 'upstart' organization would not receive automatic credence among long-

established leftist networks, which included an existing alternative press, *Briarpatch.* They now found themselves at a crossroads:

> We managed to use this 'grantrapreneurship' model to get us off the ground for the first year. We put out several issues back to back, but at a certain point the money ran out. That was a real crisis for the organization because people's jobs were at stake, right?... By definition, people who were on these [employment] programs needed jobs, and so that kind of brought out the worst in people. (M. Diamantopoulos, personal communication, June 6, 2012)

The newly constituted co-op retained a volunteer advisory board for the purpose of retaining community involvement and grant eligibility. However, as the grant environment tightened up, applying for unrealized grants became a "huge energy sink" (M. Diamantopoulos, personal communication, June 6, 2012). At the same time, sales director Terry Morash was discovering that fundraising events were no longer significant contributors to the magazine's revenues, which had grown significantly by the late 1990s. After a 1997 benefit concert, no further fundraising events were held. "I'm not sure if there was an actual meeting to decide this, but it was just clear that ad sales were a better place to put our time and effort," recalls Morash (personal communication, May 30, 2012).

Becoming a co-operative did not provide a windfall, but it did open the door to new ideas and networks beyond the familiar model of Regina's nonprofit scene. A grant from Co-operators Life Insurance helped carry Prairie Dog through its most critical moment. "It wasn't a lot of money but it was money that, I remember, I was able to put down the phone long enough from selling ads to actually put together a business plan that wasn't made from duct tape," Diamantopoulos recalls (personal communication, June 6, 2012). Having a business plan allowed *Prairie Dog* to approach a Manitoba-based co-operative venture fund, Grindstone, now known as the Canadian Alternative Investment Co-operative, for additional needed financing. With a chance to re-assess and re-group, it became clear that *Prairie Dog*'s future lay in "a market-based model, where we would … pay our bills and we wouldn't be getting in our allies'

way, we would be out of their pockets (M. Diamantopoulos, personal communication, June 6, 2012). It was a strategy that worked: annual advertising sales reached $163,975 in 1999, contributing to a break-even $210,000 budget that included $83,759 in staff salaries (annual financial return, March 31, 1999).

Without a fundraising role, the nonprofit co-operative structure became a liability for obtaining traditional business financing. This realization led to a third major restructuring into a for-profit worker co-operative, defined as "a cooperative whose prime objectives are to provide employment to its members and to operate an enterprise in which control rests with the members" (Canada Cooperatives Act, S.C. 1998, c.1). In 1999, the volunteer advisory board was disbanded and member shares were offered to employees at $5,000, a daunting amount for a group of young people with few tangible borrowing assets and little cash on hand. To ease the sting of investment, the group set up a labour-sponsored venture capital fund that would funnel personal investments into the magazine, providing RRSP eligibility and a tax savings. At the time there were one part-time and seven full-time staff members (ISC corporate registry, entity 405074). Under the new structure, an employee of one or more years had the option of buying a member share in exchange for one vote in the co-operative. Unlike a private corporation, a worker co-operative does not allow for more than one vote, no matter how many shares are held. Additionally, it was common practice to invite non-members on staff to share in decision-making (Bourgeois, 2005).

Former staff member and freelance contributor Guy Marsden was offered an opportunity to buy in, but declined because he lacked available cash, and had meanwhile been offered a steady job at CUPE Saskatchewan. Four employees did manage to pull together the funds to join in, and in March 2000 the new structure was officially registered as a for-profit worker co-operative named Hullabaloo Publishing Workers Co-operative Ltd. (ISC corporate registry,

entity 101006194). With for-profit status, for the first time *Prairie Dog* was able to approach lending agencies with a structure and business plan that made sense to bankers. The co-op accessed the Tenacity Works Worker Co-op Fund, managed by the Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation, to leverage a $100,000 financing package from commercial lenders. As well, the co-op submitted a successful application to the Canada Magazine Fund SBDSMP grant, procuring a multi-year $117,843 grant (Canada. Department of Canadian Heritage, 2002). With this financial boost, they increased production to two issues every month and expanded to Saskatoon, where they opened a sister publication, *Planet S*, in 2002 (Bourgeois, 2005; T. Morash, personal communication, May 30, 2012).

The early 2000s marked Hullabaloo's strongest years, with seven employees in each of the two cities. Then in 2008, shortly after the second-term election of a Conservative provincial government, all provincial government and Crown advertising was abruptly pulled from the magazine, a major financial blow. This event coincided with the 2008 economic downturn, which reduced national advertising. The co-op abruptly spun into a period of staff reductions and razor-thin budgets. Beginning in 2012, non-government advertising revenues began to rebound, although *Prairie Dog* remained at minimal staffing, with just three members on contract to manage the office and a stable of freelancers providing content (S. Whitworth, personal communication, July 18, 2012). Despite these setbacks, current editor Stephen Whitworth and sales manager Morash both describe *Prairie Dog* as stronger than in the past, citing a more mature editorial policy, deeper knowledge of the marketplace, an expanded readership of 120,000 in two cities, and annual revenues of approximately $700,000 (S. Whitworth, personal communication, July 18, 2012; T. Morash, personal communication, May 30, 2012). Revenues, while healthy, have not realized dividends beyond meager annual salaries for co-op members. However, Morash notes the value of less tangible benefits:

> You could be making more in the same role at *The Leader-Post* or a weekly. Obviously, for us, the member owners, it's having some control over your workplace. You're still at the mercy of the market, but you do have control over how revenues are spent. You aren't completely at the mercy of a Toronto head office. You can shape your own world. I think that's the number one biggest benefit for any of us who have a member stake. (personal communication, May 30, 2012)

For co-op members, being able to 'shape one's own world' involves being able to report freely on local and provincial issues, to undertake occasional investigative features on topics underreported in the mainstream, and to offer an alternative news package for readers. Editor Whitworth attributes *Prairie Dog*'s ongoing sustainability to the fact that "people like independent views," adding, "I think they like that we don't run editorials saying we should all vote for Stephen Harper, like every other paper in the country. We like to call it like it is, to get the facts and [to] be entertaining, and people like that" (personal communication, July 18, 2012).

6.3.2 Sustainability Challenges and Strategies

Historically, *Prairie Dog* has managed to survive and thrive through a strategy of proactive repositioning and restructuring. In this manner, *Prairie Dog* has considerably expanded its readership. It has not, however, managed to expand its staff levels accordingly, which presents a serious challenge for the future. In fact, *Prairie Dog's* 2014 Regina staff complement of three was fewer than during the magazine's first year of operations. While freelancers are capable of providing enough articles to fill the pages, having bodies in the office is important for sharing management of daily operations and planning for the future. The pressure of putting out a paper every two weeks in two cities leaves little time to undertake the type of strategic repositioning and creative marketing that successfully carried the paper through previous fiscal and organizational challenges (S. Whitworth, personal communication, July 31, 2014). One example is an advertising exchange deal with CBC, which allowed *Prairie Dog* to reach readers via television and radio. Although both sides were satisfied with the results, the

deal fell through the cracks following a staff change at CBC because *Prairie Dog* staff had no time to follow up on unanswered phone calls and "stay on top" of the arrangement during an important transition point (T. Morash, personal communication, May 30, 2012).

The ability to evolve has been crucial, as the magazine gradually changed from a grant-supported nonprofit to an advertising-supported for-profit worker co-operative (Bourgeois, 2005). While the publication made a strong commitment to becoming primarily advertiser-funded, its members have remained open to other forms of support. For example, in 1996, *Prairie Dog* obtained $5,000 from the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL) to purchase street distribution boxes, and later that year joined with *Briarpatch* and CBC union members to successfully lobby for the establishment of a labour-supported alternative media trust fund (T. Morash, personal communication, May 30, 2012; SFL, 1996). After 2002, the co-op was unable to obtain further Canada Magazine Fund grants, as the Fund tightened its eligibility, cutting out alt weeklies with a new requirement that publications be bound with a centre staple, rather than loose-folded paper. Morash determined the CMF/CPF grants weren't worth further pursuit:

> The cost benefit wasn't worth changing your identity or running certain pieces that you had to run in order to qualify. You can change everything you're doing and spend your whole time just trying to make it fit a very rigid standard of something that might not apply, and that you might not get. (personal communication, May 30, 2012)

The most recent grant application was submitted to the Co-operative Development Initiatives (CDI) for hiring a digital editor and building a new website. "I spent a fair amount of time preparing that proposal, and it was soundly rejected," reports Morash (personal communication, May 30, 2012). In any case, the federal government cancelled the CDI grant program in 2012 (Balkan, 2012). Morash has not wholly abandoned the idea of grants as a potential revenue source, but he says he has accepted it is an impossible option without a dedicated staff position to pursue and manage opportunities. Meanwhile, ad revenues remain

adequate to keep the co-op afloat, and Morash recommends advertising purchases as the most appropriate way for organizations to support *Prairie Dog* and *Planet S*, stating this provides direct, unfiltered revenue for the magazines, avoiding the appearance of major-donor bias (personal communication, May 30, 2012).

This does not mean donations are unwelcome. Since the 2008 downturn, co-op members have mused about establishing a foundation to fund full-time beat reporters. Staff members feel the concept is complicated by the current political climate, under which it is unlikely a foundation to support political journalism would gain federal charitable status, and also by the worry that donors may be reluctant to contribute to a for-profit enterprise (S. Whitworth, personal communication, July 31, 2014). Once again, the barrier has been lack of time to fully flesh out the concept and build a donor base (T. Morash, personal communication, May 30, 2012). In 2014, a 'donate' button was added to the *Prairie Dog* website, as a soft launch for what was hoped to be a more organized effort in 2015 (S. Whitworth, personal communication, July 31, 2014). The initial uptake was minimal, as one would expect in a campaign that has not been widely publicized. *Prairie Dog* faces the task of rebuilding a community support base, which has not been well sustained over the years. An example of social contraction can be seen in the replacement of a 13-member volunteer advisory board—which provided community input and social connections to allied organizations—with a five-member co-op board that formally meets just once a year.

The aforementioned SFL alternative media trust fund is an example of why network building is an important aspect of third sector media sustainability, as argued by Gumucio Dagron (2003). The fund, originally established with a proposed annual pool of $7,800, disappeared as an active budget line within three years (SFL, 1999). Diamantopoulos attributes the fund's demise to his own "dropping the ball" on community outreach to union donors, as his

mother was suddenly hospitalized and a long period of declining health of his parents followed (personal communication, June 6, 2012; Oct. 4, 2014). This situation was further fueled by the fact that *Prairie Dog* staffers were "too damn busy trying to keep publishing" (personal communication, June 6, 2012).

Among other available support networks, the co-operative movement has figured throughout *Prairie Dog*'s history, although the publication's founders often felt relegated to the margins of Saskatchewan's robust co-operative sector. The main barrier encountered while establishing a co-operative media enterprise was lack of co-operative consultants and encouragement on the ground in Saskatchewan. Diamantopoulos learned about worker co-operatives by visiting the Neechi Foods worker co-operative in Winnipeg, and by stumbling across a book on the social economy by Jack Quarter in the Prairie Dog Books collection. Later he received advice from British Columbia worker co-op pioneer Marty Frost, who was visiting Saskatchewan. These happenstance events formed the only co-operative education encountered in *Prairie Dog's* early days (M. Diamantopoulos, personal communication, June 6, 2012; Oct. 1, 2014). Over time, by becoming involved in the Canadian Worker Co-operative Federation, the founding members improved their knowledge of co-operative structures, including how to access financing through organizations such as Grindstone. Often the members simply learned by doing; for example, setting up the labour-sponsored venture capital fund involved "a lot of legal maneuvering that we had to figure out on our own" (M. Diamantopoulos, personal communication, June 6, 2012). While co-operative director training programs were offered in Saskatchewan from time to time, they were mainly aimed at the established co-operatives and did not relate well to *Prairie Dog's* circumstances. Diamantopoulos feels helpful training would have included more information about worker co-operatives, and assistance making linkages with media co-operatives in other parts of Canada (personal communication, June 6, 2012).

Likewise, Morash finds the Saskatchewan Co-operative Association (SCA) meetings he attends have low levels of relevance to a media worker co-op (personal communications, May 30, 2012). Further, Saskatchewan's major retail co-ops do have not had a strong record of placing ads in the *Prairie Dog* and *Planet S*, even in special co-op week sections. Credit unions declined to extend a line of credit to the Saskatoon expansion, unlike a commercial bank, Toronto Dominion (M. Diamantopoulos, personal communication, Oct. 1, 2014).

More recently, since 2012 the SCA has sponsored annual special inserts that draw advertising support from a variety of co-operative institutions and associations. The prospect of leveraging this demonstrated SCA support into stronger ties with Saskatchewan's co-operative establishment has been complicated by the phasing out of the tax break for the labour-sponsored venture capital programs by 2017 (Canada. Department of Finance, 2013). Editor Whitworth feels that given the difficulty convincing banks to provide financing to a worker co-operative, without the advantage of a tax savings for members, at a certain point it may make sense to simply become a privately held company (personal communication, July 18, 2012). If this is so, it would be one more significant step in *Prairie Dog*'s ongoing evolution.

Throughout *Prairie Dog*'s various incarnations, all interviewees felt the magazine and its sister publication, *Planet S*, had successfully widened Saskatchewan's mediated public discourse, indicating the newspaper's original mission has been retained. Controversial subjects are still reported on with gusto, with an emphasis on fact-based accountability journalism wrapped by cultural event coverage, columnists, and regular doses of humour and satire. Examples of journalism cited by interviewees as impacting local governance includes the magazine's 2005 coverage of threats to academic freedom at the First Nations University of Canada, as well as ongoing coverage of civic issues in Saskatoon and Regina during a time when the commercial press was spending less time at City Hall. But beyond specific journalistic

examples, Diamantopoulos feels *Prairie Dog* and *Planet S* helped foster a new pride in urban culture, in a province that had long been culturally identified as rural and agricultural (personal communication, June 6, 2014). As well, the presence of a thriving news tabloid encouraged others to enter the print journalism market, long thought to be the exclusive domain of daily newspaper monopolies (T. Morash, personal communication, May 30, 2104). By 2014 there was a second alt weekly in Saskatoon and Regina, *Verb*, as well as a handful of new free special interest magazines, such as *Pink* and *City Slicker*. While not all such publications may be long-lived or financially successful, their presence adds needed variety to Saskatchewan's media ecology. *Prairie Dog*'s successes doubtless opened space for this to occur. Such publications compete directly for youth-oriented advertising market by imitating an edgy, alternative flavour wrapped around relatively mainstream, non-controversial editorial content. Despite the competition from imitators, Morash said he felt the city was ultimately better served by having more media, not less (personal communication, May 30, 2014).

6.4 Small-scale media

Prairie Dog and 95.3 Creek FM represent relatively complex organizational forms, with significant infrastructure and paid staff. However, Saskatchewan's third sector media landscape also includes myriad smaller-scale media activities that have an impact on local governance. The Clean Green video project described in Chapter 1 is an example of a temporary project that successfully alerted the public to uranium development hearings and provided background research that helped people participate. An outpouring of public debate led the provincial government to back away from plans to introduce nuclear power. Filmmaker Marcel Petit, who knew little about uranium development when he started filming, found the project personally empowering. "We made a lot of friendships. We made a lot of partnerships. It touched me. All of us are now connected," he recalls. As a result of what he learned while working on the video,

for the first time he felt confident enough to speak up on the topic at a Métis conference, rather than sitting silent while others made decisions about the north (personal communication, April 16, 2012).

Making the videos was something Petit and Peter Garden managed on the side of otherwise busy work lives; Garden is owner-operator of a bookstore, while Petit was executive director of the Core Neighbourhood Youth Coop at the time. Petit continues to produce short documentaries on subjects such as missing Aboriginal women and human trafficking, and posts video of public talks and community events on his YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/pzest/videos). Garden said that the space to do media work has contracted considerably in recent years:

> When I first started, there was still funding around to help with this little project or that little project … and working with organizations that were sort of willing to allow you to have a little bit of latitude to do activist work, as long as you're getting the project work done, to use some of your time to work on other things. But now organizations have to be so careful about what they're doing. (personal communication, April 16, 2012)

With people scattered throughout the province who are in the same boat, Garden would like to see a coordinated alternative media hub, so that people in different locations can shoot footage for each other's projects. A core group of experienced practitioners able to provide technical training would also be helpful to small-scale media producers, along with co-operative access to equipment. Help planning social media campaigns would also be appreciated. Garden noted that the rise and fall of ad hoc community campaigns had left behind scattered unused bank accounts with small pots of money; a targeted effort to gather up the threads of these campaigns might help a media network get off the ground. The barrier, however, is the clock: even if there are resources in the community, free-agent media practitioners don't have free time to draw these resources together and come up with a coordinated strategy (personal communication, April 16, 2012).

Coordination is also on the mind of Don Kossick, who oversees *Making the Links*—'radio with a social conscience'—a one-hour weekly program airing on 90.3 CFCR FM community radio in Saskatoon. Among small-scale volunteer media projects, *Making the Links* is one of the most established and consistent, founded in 1996. A CUSO-sponsored radio project called *Borderlands*, produced out of Kingston, Ontario, gave Kossick the inspiration to use radio as a means to link local and global issues (Appendix H). The founding volunteers reflected a mix of Indigenous, internationalist, and media interests, including Ken Noskye, an Indigenous author and columnist; Brian Bobroff, a broadcasting school graduate; Michelle Beveridge of Oxfam; Saskatoon community activist Jacqui Barclay; and Kossick, who was primarily connected with CUSO (D. Kossick, personal communication, March 20, 2012). Later, volunteer Tyler McCreary was recruited to establish an online presence at www.makingthelinksradio.ca, a multi-media platform for podcasts, videos and articles.

With sporadic small grants from Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Canadian Labour Congress, *Making the Links* was able to hire project workers, including Peter Garden, occasionally to help produce shows. Project funding has not covered daily overhead, which includes web hosting fees and occasional out-of-pocket expenses; "It would be nice, but it doesn't," Kossick states (personal communication, March 20, 2012). For the most part, though, the volunteers eschewed formal organizational structure and the pursuit of revenues. Instead of seeking donations for its own operations, *Making the Links* solicits funds for CFCR FM, on the theory that sustaining a broadcast platform is the foremost priority. The program's founders deliberately chose an anti-structural approach as a method to retain editorial independence and to focus fully on content production, instead of the time-consuming work of tending to a formal organization and chasing grant money. "We're not incorporated. We just exist. And that's it, that's how we do it," explains Kossick (personal communication, March 20,

2012). With neither sales revenues nor significant tangible expenses, the operation essentially maintains a zero budget for core operations.

As noted by Jeppson, Kruzynski, Lakoff & Sarrasin (2014), however, practitioners should be cautious about idealizing small-scale production methods. In the absence of structure and resources, people drift away, leaving media production to the few who have free time and wherewithal. The *Making the Links* website, for example, has not been active since 2012 due to lack of volunteer support; it remains as an online archive, and Kossick posts new programs and videos to his personal YouTube channel. As with other media enterprises, *Making the Links* has experienced the decimation of supporting organizations, in particular the province's five former development education centres—One Sky, Common Ground, the Saskatchewan International Labour Program (SILP), the CUSO-Oxfam Labour Project (COLP), and the Rural Interchurch Development Education Program Co-operative (RICDEP)—along with the closure of the CUSO Saskatchewan office, once a locus for community organizing. CIDA, the federal agency that supported development education in Canada, was itself dismantled in 2013. While Kossick did not mention these organizations as a source of direct funds, they formed a tapestry of active citizenship that doubtless helped generate fresh project ideas and volunteers.

Meanwhile, Kossick worries that major developments affecting Saskatchewan, such as the dismantling of the Wheat Board's single desk, are not receiving the in-depth public interest coverage that they deserve. *Making the Links*' core mission is to tell the stories of grassroots citizens, he states; the program doesn't have the resources or mandate to delve into investigative work that requires significant time and resources (personal communication, March 20, 2012). Like Garden, Kossick advocates the creation of a central online hub for Saskatchewan independent media, and a coordinated strategy to pool resources for the coverage of key events and investigative topics. Another potential solution Kossick envisions is the creation of

scholarships or a fellowship that would allow graduating journalism students to participate in alternative media while still repaying their student loans. Dissemination assistance is an area that would help *Making the Links* increase its audience, by hiring a social media consultant to push stories into the public realm, rather than passively relying on people to visit the website or listen to the radio at the appointed times. Commercial media seeks to continually expand its audience to increase value to advertisers. Although pursuing the same end, *Making the Links* has a different motive, according to Kossick: a wider audience is a priority because the stories embolden citizens, legitimize their actions, and give them confidence to take part in public discourse (Kossick, personal communication, March 20, 2012).

Another example of small-scale media production is CISE FM in Wolseley, Saskatchewan, managed by Ken Odland, the former community programmer for Kootenay Cable. When Shaw Cable swallowed Kootenay Cable, Odland was 54 years old and had been involved in community media his entire working life. He observed that although large cable conglomerates put aside funds as required by law, they lacked a core understanding of local public access television. "You had to fight constantly to get that money … in a way that would benefit the community rather than in the way that it would benefit the cable company," he recalls (personal communication, April 3, 2012). Suddenly Odland felt he had no appropriate structure in which to carry out community media. Reluctant to continue working in the cable television system, he began exploring radio broadcasting as an option. He found that mountainous terrain and tight environmental regulations in the B.C. interior made setting up a transmission tower overly complex and costly. Existing towers were managed by cartels that charged high fees and restricted who could join. At that point, Odland looked to the wide-open terrain of Saskatchewan, where competition for frequencies was spread out and even a small operation could send an unobstructed signal several kilometres. Thus, in 2004 Odland and his wife sold

their B.C. assets and moved to Wolseley, a town of 864 situated on the TransCanada Highway between Regina and the Manitoba border. Odland considered the venture an experiment based on the question: "Can you have privately held community media? Is that possible?" (personal communication, April 3, 2012).

As a private undertaking, CISE FM does not follow all of Bouchard, Ferraton and Michaud's (2006) characteristics of social economy organizations; however, Odland's goal of facilitating community-generated media and investing profits into further radio production readily fits under the umbrella of Restakis' (2006) conception of a wide spectrum of structures and ideas working together for social benefit. Such homegrown rural enterprises are therefore worthy of inclusion in discussions of how to ensure a media ecology that facilitates adequate access and representation for all.

Odland's experiment, CISE FM, today broadcasts as an unlicensed low power (less than 50 watts) undertaking, with a radius that stretches approximately 57 kilometres along the TransCanada Highway between the towns of Grenfell and Indian Head, using the 91.3 frequency. A second tower in Caronport, Saskatchewan, carries the programming west of Regina from Parkbeg to Belle Plaine at 95.3 on the dial. CISE first took to the air in 2005 as a low power tourist information service operated by Highway One Travelers Information Radio Ltd., an entity incorporated by Odland (CRTC, 2005). The original broadcast classification—low power FM tourism information—fell under CRTC regulations that restricted content to reports on weather, traffic, and local information, prohibited live broadcasts, restricted music to 60 seconds of royalty-free music at a time, and restricted advertising.

To help support the station, Odland launched a free coffee shop newsletter, The *Highway One Connector*, distributed in towns and cities along Highway 1, for which he sold advertising packages that included mentions on the radio. His hope was that the radio station and newsletter

would become self-sustaining and provide enough income to cover time spent managing the tiny operation. More than just a fundraising vehicle, like the radio station, *The Highway One Connector* served a community-building function. The front page of the October, 2013 issue, for example, featured an article that discussed the role community organizations can play in rural development initiatives, including "helping citizens to voice their aspirations, concerns and alternatives for consideration by policy makers" and "helping to enhance the accountability and transparency of government programs and officials" ("Rural development," 2013, p. 1). A second article, presumably geared toward readers in Regina and Moose Jaw, addressed development in an urban context; under the title "Neighborhood Power," it asked: "How do we organize to realize our neighbourhoods as assets? What is possible through the harnessing of neighbourhood power?" ("Neighbourhood power," 2013, p. 4). As well, the issue provided affordable space for groups like the Red Lilies to advertise their hand-knit lacework, and larger organizations such as the Saskatchewan Economic Development Association to advertise its Grow Our Region community economic development web resources (*Highway One Connector*, 2013, October). (See Appendix I for full categorization of advertisements and stories.)

The estimated 25,000 drivers passing by daily were likely familiar with hearing computer-generated Environment Canada and Highway Hotline voices on the local information stations. Tuning the dial to CISE FM offered something completely different. Odland interviewed local residents about community happenings, and invited community members to create programs of their own. He also aired Government of Alberta agricultural reports, public domain National Public Radio programs, and pre-recorded programs from Saskatchewan. On a typical summer afternoon, August 28, 2012, content included public service announcements about diabetes testing, fireworks safety, and the dangers of children playing near railroad tracks. Pre-recorded programming included an interview with a representative of the Pork Producer

Board about swine health, 'green tips' from Regina Eco-Living, a segment on U.S. Civil War history, a discussion of Utopia from a Buddhist standpoint, and a consumer report about saving money at the supermarket. This was interspersed with news of an old-time threshing bee south of Moose Jaw, an encouragement to visit the Wolseley art gallery, information about blueberries, and a 'word of the day' from the *Merriam Webster Dictionary* ('adjure') (see Appendix I). While the diverse topics from near and far pushed the broadcast license envelope of information for tourists, the CRTC, hearing no complaints, maintained a light hand.

Then, in 2013, the low-power sector was deregulated and existing tourism information stations were invited to apply for CRTC exemptions, which Odland successfully received in March, 2014 (CRTC, 2013; CRTC, 2014). This change means the station is able to operate outside CRTC regulations, while still holding legal access to the broadcast spectrum under Industry Canada. The one codicil is that if a CRTC-approved broadcaster wants to use the 91.3 signal within CISE FM's radius, the station will have to seek a new home on the dial.

While licensing freedom will no doubt make it easier for 91.3 CISE FM to engage in active programming, creating on-air content remains a formidable challenge. A few local residents, including the mayor, initially came forward to create programs and do interviews, but uptake has been lower in recent years, mainly because of lack of time to actively pursue community involvement. Because advertising sales of approximately $12,000 cover only printing and equipment costs, Odland has been working as a satellite and Internet installer for a company in nearby Indian Head since 2008. In between this work and raising cattle and horses, he squeezes in just enough time to keep *The Connector* in production and CISE FM on air. The station's mission to produce local content has thus been curtailed. Having worked in community media programming, Odland is well aware of the many hours of outreach, encouragement and education it takes to generate community programming. In B.C., he worked fulltime at

connecting with community organizations and schools, and sometimes it took years to establish partnerships. Simply inviting people to take part is not enough:

> You have to encourage community involvement constantly because people just want to tweet, that's easy. Making a radio program is tough. Can you imagine the amount of work you'd have to do, to do a history of folk singing in Saskatchewan? (personal communication, April 3, 2012)

He explored a few grant programs but did not pursue them because they "weren't part of the philosophy and theory" (personal communication, April 3, 2012). His preference is for CISE FM and *The Connector* to be entirely advertiser-supported and self-sustaining. In that sense, the enterprise has been successful, as revenues are enough to cover the annual operating costs of $10,000, with a little to spare for extra expenses. What is not covered is staff time. "If ads paid my time, then I'd have more time to encourage community involvement," says Odland (personal communication, April 3, 2012). Odland does not feel well suited to advertising sales, particularly when it comes to collecting unpaid bills. Nonetheless, CISE FM has managed to undertake nearly a decade of continuous broadcasting and has expanded to a second location. Further, the station introduced a new possibility in rural low power FM broadcasting that had not been explored before, namely using a previously underutilized signal to generate a local rural presence in the mediascape.

6.5 Community Responses

Third sector media practitioners frame their praxis as serving a wider social good. Their media activity may provide them with a measure of income and personal satisfaction; however, the advancement of social change is invariably expressed as an overriding motivational factor. It's not surprising, then, that practitioners should view their media work as valuable to society and worth supporting. A larger question is whether the people they aim to serve make similar connections between media praxis and the quality of their daily lives.

That connection has clearly been made in the case of Creek FM. Since its inception, the station has been regarded as a vehicle to encourage local pride and combat racist attitudes across communities. Councilor Daniel Walker observes:

> It's a medium for non-First Nations and First Nations, anybody can listen to it. It bridges a gap in a lot of ways. We find out about each other. [Non-First Nations people] can tune in and listen to what's going on here, our sense of humour, our sense of who we are. It breaks down some barriers in that way. They can sit and laugh in their vehicles without having to sit beside us, I'll put it that way. They may understand us a lot better, our sense of values, our sense of who we are. (personal communication, July 9, 2014)

Chief Daywalker-Pelletier sees promotion of traditional culture and knowledge as another important community aspiration tied to the radio station. Cree-language programming has been a longtime goal that remains on the backburner. The Chief envisions using radio to link Elders to school classrooms, although this undertaking requires outside support and additional funding that has not been forthcoming. She feels the federal government bears responsibility for assisting media projects that promote linguistic and cultural retention, on the basis that such projects would significantly benefit the overall wellbeing of Indigenous people.

> We're losing our language and one way of getting out there is having it on our radio, having our Elders speak on the radio and do story-telling. That's available to us, but in the long term it needs to be ongoing. If we had programming that's been paid for and supported by government as an initiative, we can do that…. I think, to me, that's one of the important things that the federal government needs to recognize, the implementation of language and our culture. (personal communication, July 9, 2014)

Similar conversations emerge in the town of Wolseley. At the top of what passes for a hill in Saskatchewan, Mitchell Dureault pulls his vehicle over to the shoulder and stops to listen to CISE FM. He wants to catch the end of an interesting broadcast before the signal cuts out on the other side of the hill. Dureault is young enough to barely remember life in Wolseley before CISE FM. He does recall it was once difficult to get clear radio signals at his family's farm. Then one evening he turned the dial and heard something new: "I remember that there never

used to be [a station] there, and then I remember that suddenly there was one there, on this channel that was blank before," he says (personal communication, April 3, 2012). The tower was next to his family's farmland, so the signal was strong. He has clear childhood memories of his mother taking him out to the fields during harvest, and sitting in the truck listening to the station. He also remembers being fascinated by classic radio plays broadcast late at night. "People my age never heard that—it's something rare to hear a story on the radio," he explains (personal communication, April 3, 2012).

As a high school student, he asked Ken Odland what it was like to run a radio station. That's when he discovered that, unlike radio emanating from Regina or Saskatoon, CISE offers a short step from listener to broadcaster. It wasn't long before Dureault found himself on the air talking about a Wolseley High School drama production. At the time of our interview, he was planning a broadcast about an upcoming provincial drama festival being hosted in Wolseley. He speculated his classmates likely spent more time listening to their iPods and JackFM Regina than local radio, but that having the station was nonetheless important to the community. As an example, he noted CISE FM's accurate local weather and road conditions reports were highly useful to rural dwellers. However, he added that he felt radio had value beyond mere information. "It makes our community pretty unique and special, I feel, to have our own radio station" (personal communication, April 3, 2012).

Wolseley mayor Dennis Fjestad said he was skeptical when he heard someone had moved to town to start a radio station, but his opinion has changed. "When we talk about the community, we talk about CISE. It's a bonus for a town of this size," he said. He also finds the *Highway One Connector* to be an important connective platform for area towns and businesses, noting the newsletter's 2,000 copies disappear quickly from coffee shops along the highway. He added that having *The Connector* helped ease the sting of losing the town's newspaper, *The*

Wolseley News, which was amalgamated into a newspaper located 32 km west in Indian Head in 1973 (Conn, 1981). As for CISE FM, when Fjestad and Odland first met, Odland told the mayor he "had a good radio voice," and a partnership was born (D. Fjestad, personal communication, April 3, 2012). From there, the two began planning information spots about the town. From the beginning, the idea was to involve as many townspeople as possible in the programming. Like Odland, Fjestad found there was early interest, but that retaining volunteers on a steady basis is difficult. "We really need more input from the community, to talk a little bit about our heritage, to talk about interesting things such as the swinging bridge, and some of our events," he said. At the time of our interview, the mayor was planning to help produce 30-second radio spots related to Wolseley's Main Street Revitalization Project, which would involve recruiting townspeople to share information about local history and attractions. Fjestad was also thinking about the role of the radio and newsletter in the wider context of the town's development:

> It will be interesting when we start our cultural plan, because I feel the radio station could become an important part of this plan, for the community plan. And then we could maybe even help out, or expand community involvement in this particular radio station. (personal communication, April 3, 2012)

The idea of local media as a component of rural development has been well fleshed out on the international scene by theorists such as Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani, and Lewis (2002), Verma (2004), and Boafo (2000). Looking at the Canadian context, Emke (2005) describes local media's function as ranging from providing low-cost, accessible advertising for local businesses, to spreading information and ideas about community volunteer activities. Ross (2005) notes, however, that Canada's rural communications development focus has been on provision of high-speed Internet connections that facilitate extra-community communications, while vital intra-community communications have been neglected. A loss of local media makes it more difficult for people to identify with the geographic communities in which they live, she adds, leading to a weakening of local ties (Ross, 2005). CISE FM is one such vehicle that creates bonds between

diverse people—for example, a mayor, a highschool student, and a newcomer from B.C.—and with the locality.

Oregan (2013) writes, "Local radio knows its soil, blends in, supports life and allows for the flourishing of other cultural fruit-goods (sporting communities, local events, identity formation…etc.) as to grow on its branches" (para. 9). McLeod, et.al. (1996) find a conclusive link between local media use and community integration, manifested in three categories: psychological attachment, interpersonal discussion networks, and alternative identification. This dissertation takes the position, however, that when it comes to media activities, there is much more at play than local identity formation and localism-versus-cosmopolitism. Media have the potential to impact policy discourse, to spark global linkages, and to either include or exclude voices and perspectives. Indeed, when Kotane asks, "Of what use is a newspaper to a people?" the answer is not only to tell people what is happening, but also to engender social change (as cited by Jones, 1997, p. 352). As in the case of CISE FM, the content need not be overtly political. The simple fact of its existence moves voices from the periphery to the centre, sparking responses—be it change or counter-reaction, or both—and therein embodies what Kac (1999) identifies as the inherent politicism of dialogism. In scattered towns and villages across Canada, individuals and local councils have experimented with low-power tourist information FM signals. They may have started by providing static, automated messages but soon many of them began interviewing their neighbours, telling local stories, and talking about community happenings and initiatives. This trend generated demands to relax CRTC content restrictions and to be allowed to expand revenue sources at the local level, beginning in 2004 with an unsuccessful request for such changes put forward by the Yukon government and northern tourist information stations (CRTC, 2004). After a decade had passed, the CRTC opened up the question again, largely in response to an expansion of tourist information stations in B.C.'s

Okanagan valley (Ripley, 2013). This time, the Commission responded by announcing in November, 2013, that the stations could henceforth operate outside the regulatory system, allowing the sale of advertising to support local information programming, as a new class of 'exempted low power FM' (CRTC, 2013, Nov. 21). Thus a new broadcast classification evolved from grassroots undertakings that had independently expanded ahead of the state's existing regime, becoming deregulated and unlicensed, yet legally sanctioned. This has opened room for further exchanges that, while sparked by local participation in media production, may have national and even international impacts.

By contrast, when media enterprises become distant from their communities and spaces for peripheral voices are closed off, Kotane's 'useful newspaper' more closely resembles LaSalle's "true enemy of the people" (as cited by Theobold, 2006, p. 22). Indeed, this is the picture that emerges when people gather around the coffee table at the Regina Anti-Poverty Ministry (RAPM). RAPM staff member Peter Gilmer has tracked media coverage of the Ministry's activities since 2000. Between 2000 and 2012, the average number of media 'hits' was 35 per year, with over half coming from just three sources: *Prairie Dog*, *The Leader-Post*, and Global Television. CBC Saskatchewan (English) was last on the list, averaging just one story per year, while CBC Radio Canada (French) ranked slightly higher with an average three stories per year. The city's most-watched television news provider, CTV Regina, once a regular attendee at RAPM events, dropped out of the scene for several years, but resumed more regular coverage of poverty issues following the appointment of an Aboriginal assignment editor, Nelson Bird, in 2013 (P. Gilmer email to P. Elliott, Oct. 20, 2014). Gilmer stresses, however, that quantity is no indication of quality. RAPM's media log shows media coverage in its lowest year was 27 stories in 2001, but "some of it was really good, it was broad-based and it got the message out." In comparison, the highest level of coverage, 54 stories in 2011, was mainly

comprised of "quick clips…that I don't think had much resonance," he says (personal communication, Nov. 1, 2012).

Worse, superficial coverage has resulted in direct harm to RAPM clients, to the point where Gilmer no longer arranges interviews with people living in poverty. "Generally the whole focus is on turning it into a pity party, where the next day rather than people calling us about the issue, people are calling us to find out how they can give money to our client," he explains (personal communication, Nov. 1, 2012). Not only is this unhelpful for sparking systemic change, but people's social assistance payments are threatened by news reports of them receiving undeclared donations and gifts, in contravention of the rules—a common problem to which most news journalists seem oblivious. Other harmful outcomes have included a woman being disowned by her family after appearing in a news report, and an incident where a Salvation Army file folder that displayed the names of clients was shown on-camera, according to Gilmer (P. Gilmer, personal communication, Nov. 1, 2012). Although the story was not about the Anti-Poverty Ministry, Gilmer said he nonetheless received telephone complaints that evening from people whose names had been exposed.

At RAPM's monthly study circle meeting of November 1, 2012, it took very little effort—simply a statement that I was interested in how people experience media in their lives—to touch off 90 minutes of lively conversation and debate. There were five people in the room, as well as Gilmer and myself; all had experienced some form of encounter with local media. Participant 1 was approached for an interview at the food bank by two reporters who wanted to document how people were coping with rising food costs in the city. At first he refused, but they "begged" him to say something. After chatting with the journalists, he agreed to participate in an interview because he felt it was important to respond to an assumption that the journalists had made. On camera, he said that when the price of food goes up, people simply choose to eat less;

attending the food bank does not create 'savings' that can be put toward covering higher living costs, which is what the journalists understood the story to be. Later, he was disappointed to see the interview portion chosen for the supper hour newscast was just a clip of him saying he liked the food bank's meat pies. "The point was that (people) will buy less food…. The only reason I did the interview was to get that one fricking point across," Participant 1 said, adding that the other journalist's news report did not include any clip from the interview.

Participant 2, being a person with a disability who uses a motorized scooter to get around, had been asked to comment on the upkeep of Regina's sidewalks in winter. He felt the journalists who approached him seemed aware and sympathetic. He added, however, that journalists he encountered on the streets did not seem as approachable as in the past, and instead seemed "kind of snobby" and focused on a single mission when they visited the downtown area:

> Every so often on 12th Avenue, they have cameras there…. You go and ask them what it's about. They say, "You wait until it's broadcast, don't worry about it now, just keep going." And when you see some things on TV, they have kind of a bad slant to some of it.

The retreat of journalists from personal contact reflected a common sense expressed by all participants that the news media itself had retreated from their lives. In particular, they were keenly aware that CBC had gone missing from the frontlines of reporting on poverty. Participant 3 was a low-income person who became an outspoken social justice advocate and now worked part time for a community-based organization. "We used to be able to depend on CBC as the public communication network able to do justice to the public," she said. "We hold (events); they don't even show up anymore. It's like, anything dealing with poverty issues, they're not interested in it anymore unless somebody has actually died." Participant 4 surmised that CBC's journalists had "their hands tied behind their backs" and feared for their jobs, "so anybody who does have a conscience eventually quits or succumbs to the pressure." This was echoed by Participant 1, who described CBC as being the media outlet that at one time "represented us" and

"touched this country" because "they are at the ground level and everybody feels like they own a piece of them." He felt this had changed a great deal in recent years:

> The CBC crew used to go into the Empire (Hotel) and drink, and I used to talk to them all the time…. The CBC was powerful then. They could get away with a lot of stuff that they can't get away with now. It's like a rabbit that's frozen in front of a big German shepherd dog and then as soon as the rabbit moves, the big German shepherd comes and puts its teeth on its throat, and that inspires fear…. It's a simplification, but CBC is under attack and that, to me, is why they are not doing what they used to do.

He added that low-income citizens had also been abandoned technologically, with the withdrawal of the network's free analogue signal.

A concern among study circle participants was not so much a decline in quantity of coverage, but rather a decline in its quality. Participants mentioned a growing tendency to package and sensationalize stories, and that news reports were often cliché or formulaic. Participant 4, who has a disability, stated:

> What they're doing is telling the line, making like people with disabilities should be pitied. And, "Oh, what a rough life they have to lead," just to sell a newspaper or whatever, just to sell an ad. It's not really helping the person.

Central to this comment are two concepts: first, that journalism should play a "helping" role in society, and, second, that media organizations profit financially from stereotyped portrayals of marginalized people. Some participants further speculated that journalists play into stereotypes as a result of their workplace environment, which includes the deskilling of journalism to meet demands for increased—but less in-depth and controversial—content production. "They've got a fast-track piece of paper. They just fill in the blanks and wham it into their news race," said Participant 1. Participant 5 commented further, saying, "I don't think there's a script they have to write," but rather that journalists were compelled to write overly simplified stories to keep up with the news "assembly line."

Participants felt sensationalism contributed to harmful outcomes. Participant 4 mentioned the local CBC affiliate had been "snooping around" to find the church where two Nigerian students facing deportation had taken sanctuary, something that would lead to the students' apprehension by the authorities if revealed. She felt the only motivation for uncovering the students' location was sensationalism, and that generally all local media outlets had chosen only "sensational bits" of the story to report, rather than deeply investigating the case. Participant 3 added that a federal minister's comments on the case had not been scrutinized and held to standards of truth by journalists, nor had there been an effort to more fully examine the story within the context of racist profiling of Africans by immigration authorities.

As another example of harm to the objects of media coverage, Participant 3 recalled a 'feel good' Christmas hamper story that resulted in an interviewee being cut off social assistance after she was shown accepting an undeclared gift of food, in contravention of the rules. When Participant 3 phoned the media organization to report what had happened, the initial response was one of self-interest: "They said, 'What's the story here?' I said, 'It's not a story—it's a corporate responsibility. It was a struggle to get that media, that institution, to go and stand up for the individual who gave them that story." After some argument and a threat to tell other media outlets what had happened, the media organization involved contacted the Minister of Social Services, who promptly ordered the individual reinstated. Although the matter was resolved satisfactorily, "they were still a little ticked off because they didn't get a story out of it," Participant 3 said.

Such incidents likely contributed to a general sense of mistrust in the motives of journalists and their organizations that was voiced by RAPM participants. At the same time, there was recognition that journalism had value as a source of social change, with investigative journalism and television news magazines mentioned in a positive light, although it should be

noted they were mentioned only in the context of their growing absence from the scene. On the whole, Participant 3 felt journalism in recent years was failing to meaningfully impact society:

> Media is not making a difference in the lives of people, other than maybe when someone's been wrongly accused…. But as far as making a positive difference that can move people off the sofas and into the streets, it's not happening.

'Assembly line' reportage was cited by participants as a reason that media reports were not effective in engaging civic participation in recent years. "What actually gets put on air isn't actually the heart of the problem," Participant 5 observed. Three of the participants also stated citizens themselves were part of the problem, by adopting a path of complacency. Cited reasons for complacency included information overload, consumerism, increasingly unresponsive governments, and lack of motivation to seek out information beyond the corporate media stream. There was some disagreement and debate about the level to which individuals themselves were responsible for disengaging from their own governance, versus the impact of economic and political systems that discourage citizen participation. Echoing the media practitioners interviewed for this dissertation, Participant 1 noted loss of funding to civil society organizations as a factor.

> One of the things [governments] did that was very bright, was they realized that the public purse was supporting some of the people that were creating some of the justice, and they just tried to stop it. Because once you've got no money, once you've got no food…what you've got is welfare or fight. Not too many people are going to find too much time past welfare to fight very much, because it just takes up all your energy and your time.

Interestingly, participants did not point to social media as an alternative locus of information and social action, as one might expect. Indeed, in the four instances where social media did emerge in the conversation, it was ascribed largely negative characteristics. Rather than providing a sense of community, participants related social media to bullying and alienation, as illustrated by this exchange:

> **Participant 3.** We have other forms of media out there that have absolutely no controls on them, and it's social media…. There's no controls on them and we're seeing people killing themselves. When you think about that young girl in B.C., and there's really no controls on that kind of social media at all.
>
> **Participant 1.** What's different now, than what would have been in regards to that girl back then?
>
> **Participant 3.** What do you mean, back then?
>
> **Participant 1.** I mean, like, what's the difference in consciousness, now and then? I mean people felt cut off and committed suicide. But in such a huge collective thing we've got here, why was she able to be isolated like that? Why did she feel so alone, surrounded by millions of people, that she wanted to end her own life?

Online racism was also mentioned as a problem that contributed to marginalized people tuning out social media as an information source because "it might be racist, you don't want to hear it" (Participant 3). Further, Twitter was referenced as part of an information overload that was overwhelming and disempowering. While the majority of participants personally participated in social media, none raised it as an adequate replacement for what they discerned was a gradual loss of in-depth local journalism.

This is not to say all forms of local journalism were considered unhelpful for advancing the issues of people in poverty. Two participants stated that some coverage, however flawed, was considered better than none at all. A specific *Leader-Post* reporter was identified by Gilmer as someone who at least presented information and quotes accurately. The local Global TV affiliate attended most anti-poverty events and had become one of the main news organizations to contact about issues, according to Gilmer. He felt Global Regina's relatively younger corps of reporters carried fewer biases, but added "if you push the envelope at all, if it's too far outside the mainstream, Global won't pick up on that." There was also a lively debate within the circle about whether or not taking part in rightwing call-in radio shows was beneficial or not, with some participants arguing that it was a way to put out ideas to a new audience and others saying the quality of discussion was too debased to gain support for social justice.

Third sector media was specifically mentioned by participants as being better equipped to follow poverty-related issues than other types of media. Community radio received positive mention for broadening the definition of 'community' to include marginalized voices outside mainstream society. A community access cable program, *Talk of the Town*, was also mentioned as a source of quality coverage, particularly when it had been hosted by a former commercial radio broadcaster who did not shy away from controversial topics. Other third sector media organizations that received positive mention were *Briarpatch*, *Prairie Dog*, and publications of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives–Saskatchewan. "I think they ask broader questions. It's almost like they are trying to get to the root of it," said Participant 3. This idea found agreement among other study circle members:

> **Participant 3**. I just find alternative media does a much better job at research into stories.
>
> **Participant 1.** Not just a better job, they do a job.
>
> **Participant 4.** They tell the stories.

Referencing his media contact log, Gilmer agreed third sector media offered more sensitive, issues-based coverage, in particular *Prairie Dog*, which initiated the most contacts with RAPM. He observed that Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) had an increasing presence in coverage of local poverty issues, for example reporting on the provincial funding cut and subsequent closure of Regina's Welfare Rights Centre. He noticed reduced contact with *Briarpatch* magazine in the past decade, and said that, while he understood the magazine's reasons for moving to a national framework, the loss of investigation into provincial issues was a noticeable gap that had not been back-filled by *Prairie Dog*. Gilmer noted the trade-off of being covered by third sector media and CBC was that the audiences were more likely to be already sympathetic, so that one would be less likely to gain new 'converts' to social action. However, Participant 3 said that overall, third sector media coverage held the greater value because

"there's more involvement and it's not just down and dirty, quick, easy, let's do it." In her view, third sector media were more capable of relating community issues to social costs that impact all citizens, a perspective more likely to engender action and social change.

6.6 Themes

As illustrated by the examples in this chapter, third sector media praxis involves diverse communities, organizational structures, and audiences. However, a number of common themes emerged to serve as useful guidelines for the support of third sector media enterprises.

- **Theme 1: Third sector media matters to local governance.**

Regarding recent historical developments, comments from community members concurred with studies that have tracked a decline in local accountability journalism since the early 1980s (Trim, 1983) to the 2010s (Waldham & WGINC, 2011). Among community-based respondents, recent trends in media coverage and restructuring mattered greatly—both in their own lives and with respect to broader issues of local governance. The withdrawal of state and commercial media from local concerns coincided with descriptions of greater public apathy, social alienation, loss of local identity, and simply being overwhelmed by vast amounts of non-contextualized information from around the world.

At the same time, there was a shared sense that third sector media had played a role in backfilling the loss of local accountability journalism among state and commercial outlets, as observed by Waldham and the Working Group on the Information Needs of Communities (2011). Community actors used descriptors such as 'involved' and 'on the ground' to describe the third sector's approach to community issues. As well, third sector media were mentioned as providing alternatives to racialized media depictions. Along the lines of Gramsci (1916), participants made a clear distinction between media that were profit-driven and media that were not, and they seemed largely satisfied with the role played by local nonprofit and co-operative

media alternatives. In particular, community actors in Regina, Wolseley, and Okanese First Nation identified third sector media as vehicles uniquely capable of encouraging understanding and involvement at a local level. Rather than presenting externally manufactured news, third sector media were described as being embedded in community life, in alignment with Mainaili's observation that community media are not interested in manufacturing consent, but rather seek to engage citizens in their own governance (as cited by Deane, 2008).

- **Theme 2: The challenges are largely invisible to the public.**

Of note, participants in the RAPM study circle were highly aware of funding cuts to CBC, but did not mention other media development funding cuts studied in this dissertation, or the suspected targeting of nonprofit magazines that were politically outspoken. This is an outcome worth further study. A possible reason is the existence of a vocal CBC support campaign led by Friends of Canadian Broadcasting. There is no similar national campaign in protest of funding cuts to third sector media, perhaps explaining lower general public awareness of difficulties in that sector. As well, there may be limited public awareness that third sector media relied on public funding, a factor some practitioners may not have widely advertised for fear of right-wing backlash against their grants, or for fear of being perceived as beholden to government. Furthermore, the third sector is comprised of myriad small, disconnected media outlets operating under a highly changeable roster of media development supports, some quite obscure; this stands in contrast to the CBC-dominated state sector, where cuts have been more singular and dramatic, and far more likely to be covered by mainstream media. An alternative possibility is that the difficulties of third sector media went unmentioned due to the shared perception that third sector media outlets were successfully 'doing the job' of reporting on social issues, in contrast to noticeable failures in state and commercial media. In short, the wheel was not squeaking.

- **Theme 3: Support programs must avoid editorial interference.**

Media practitioners need support, but not at the cost of editorial freedom. This was most clearly stated by Will Yuzicapi, who described the balancing act of keeping politics out of the studio while maintaining a supportive relationship with the governing council of Okanese First Nations. While the tug and pull of advertisers and political bedmates is accepted as a normal state of affairs in commercial media—and professional journalists are given some benefit of the doubt that their work can remain above the fray—less leeway is given to the funding sources that surround third sector media. To some extent this suspicion about external content control is deserved: in the arena of official media development, for example, grants tend to come increasingly laden with content-shaping eligibility requirements. A case in point is the Canada Periodical Fund, which in 2014 states, "Priority will be given to projects that encourage magazine readers to explore historical moments that helped define Canada… please write "History" in capital letters next to the title of your project" (Canada. Department of Canadian Heritage, 2014).

While funding assistance from civil society supporters is appreciated by interviewees, assistance that duplicates government funding models with content requirements is less welcome. Ray (2009) raises the questions that arise in the public's mind when external funders are involved: "If nonprofit journalism promotes social reform, should the public worry about the agendas of these journalists and their funders? In nonprofit journalism, even the attempt to define one's journalism as 'non-partisan' can be contentious" (para. 15). Admittedly there is a double standard: professional commercial sector journalists also describe themselves as engaged in social reform, and their media outlets are also just as prey to influence. The difference, Ray (2009) argues, lies in trust and transparency.

Funders of third sector media must understand that, fair or not, they are under greater scrutiny than commercial media, and therefore "the nonprofit sector will have to be smarter in its ethics," ultimately becoming pioneers in setting ethical standards of financial transparency (paras. 5, 25). An example of Ray's suggestion would be the U.S.-based Center for Investigative Reporting, which publishes its tax statements online (Center for Investigative Reporting, 2014). However, this would not be an acceptable option for some First Nations-managed media at this point in time, given that First Nations are engaged in a political struggle over federal government-enforced financial disclosure. Indeed, in preparing to conduct interviews on Okanese First Nation, an agreed upon advance ground rule was that copies of financial documents and annual reports would not be provided for this very reason; during in-person interviews, however, it should be noted that band representatives provided financial information without hesitation.

- **Theme 4: Advertising purchases and some targetted support are welcome interventions.**

With the exception of *Making the Links* and the Clean Green project, practitioners interviewed for this research strongly stated that purchasing advertising is currently the most transparent, clean form of support available. As *Prairie Dog*'s Morash points out, any critic who argues that union advertisements in *Prairie Dog* identify the newspaper as a 'mouthpiece' can quickly be pointed toward the far greater amounts spent by unions in mainstream commercial media (personal communication, May 30, 2012); this point is backed up by a union communicator, who estimates that his/her union spends about 90% of its annual advertising budget on commercial and state media, compared to approximately 10% on third sector media (anonymous, personal communication, May 22, 2012). Further, practitioners indicated that advertising sales are easier to manage than grant support, which involves complicated

application forms and reporting requirements, and contributes to 'mission drift' as practitioners strive to satisfy the priorities of external funding authorities.

This perspective may come as a surprise to civil society activists who are typically well schooled in the failures of market capitalism, and skeptical of liberal efforts to link press freedom to free market ideology, as critiqued by Curran (2002) and Spring (2003). Rather than a wholesale endorsement of capitalism, however, it should be read as a sharp rebuke of debilitating donor-client relations that extract too high a price from recipients. Such comments highlight the need for support that avoids the temptation to exercise control. This is an important concept to grapple with, because although content-specific funding was generally viewed as problematic, several practitioners and community participants noted provincial-level investigative journalism is a journalistic gap that could benefit from specifically targeted support. Lack of provincial-level accountability journalism is an obvious concern in the case of poverty-related issues, given that the province has jurisdiction over important areas such as social assistance, health care, child and youth care, education, northern and rural development, and the provincial justice system. Practitioners connected to *Briarpatch*, *Making The Links*, and *Prairie Dog* reported that provincial investigations lie outside their primary editorial mandates and resource capability. Ideas for addressing this gap included crowd-funding (S. Whitworth, personal communication, July 31, 2014) or a labour-sponsored investigative fellowship (D. Kossick, personal communication, March 20, 2012).

- **Theme 5: Dependence / interdependence is not automatically negative.**

While editorial freedom is prized, and while this dissertation's title speaks of 'independent voices,' this does not mean third sector media should be expected to cut ties with community. It is, after all, media *of* the community, deeply embedded in the struggles and aspirations of citizens and their civil society organizations. Indeed, Gumucio Dagron (2003)

notes that most of the groundbreaking Latin American media projects he studied would be classified as failures, if self-sufficiency were the sole measure of success. In his view, funding from progressive churches, unions, and other civil society organizations—even from government—provides links to social networks, ideas and knowledge, and therefore should not always be assumed to be a negative or controlling dependency. Siemering and Fairbairn (2006) also question the 'holy grail' of independence versus interdependence, in the context of international assistance for media in developing countries, writing that it leads recipients to make promises of self-sustainability that are not grounded in reality.

Engaging in collaborations with likeminded organizations was mentioned by Garden and Kossick as ways to support media activities. For example, *Making the Links* has teamed up with the video production Wolf Sun Productions on several occasions to produce videos for the National Farmers' Union, the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, and also has obtained funding through CIDA to address international development issues. These productions are viewed as a way to piggy-back content for the radio program (D. Kossick, personal communication, March 20, 2012). Peter Garden describes how CIDA-backed *Making the Links* projects helped support other media productions: "Even though those weren't necessarily the radio shows that I wanted to be working on, it gave me money so I could be working on the other things that I did want to be working on" (personal communication, April 16, 2012).

Furthermore, it is important to note that discussion framed as 'freedom versus dependency' contains a patina of colonial attitudes that privilege the individual over the collective. Examples in this dissertation have shown this to be a particular problem in the approach taken by government agencies toward Indigenous media. The insistence that Indigenous media enterprises must be separated from their governing structures and political

organizations goes against the grain of alternative, more collectivist, worldviews. Bredin (2012) notes that the global rise of Indigenous media is embedded in struggles for cultural and political sovereignty. "Indigenous reporters and journalists working in Aboriginal media may view the tactics of Aboriginal politicians with a certain degree of healthy skepticism, but most share their dedication to the principles of self-determination and cultural rights," she observes, adding, "Professional ideologies of journalistic balance are consciously or unconsciously subsumed within strategies of cultural activism and are not seen as contradictory" (p. 195). This concept is reflected in examples encountered by the researcher. For example, in the case of AMNSIS's Native Communications Society, radio-video producer Darcy MacKenzie (as cited by Claude, 1985) admitted that sometimes it looked like politics comes to play in Métis media, yet he defended AMNSIS's right to engage in supporting Aboriginal media, and stated Métis-run media would not exist without the support of its representative organization. Nearly 20 years later, Randy Stonechild almost directly echoed these words, stating that Creek FM would not exist without Chief and Council support (personal communication, July 9, 2014). Meanwhile, Will Yuzicapi described attempts at political interference as the simple reality on First Nation reserves, which he felt able to handle effectively (personal communication, July 22, 2014). Funders should be reminded by these words that Indigenous people are not naïve when it comes to political relationships, and that Indigenous media producers are well aware of which approaches are most appropriate for their circumstances and goals.

- **Theme 6: Sustainability involves more than a financial bottom line.**

After studying Namibian community broadcasting, Lush and Urgoiti (2012) concluded, "sustainability has been seen to be a much broader and more complex concept" than has been presented in community media handbooks (p. 10). Among the factors to be considered are

community participation and the furtherance of shared goals. Gumucio Dagron (2004) proposes three areas of attention:

- Social sustainability: Community participation in governance and content production.
- Organizational sustainability: Governance structures, partnerships, staffing and policies.
- Financial sustainability: income-generating capacity.

It is also important to develop an appreciation of what exactly is being sustained. As Gumucio Dagron (2003) notes, a donor agency may applaud the community radio station that enlarges its audience and sells enough advertising to pay for staffing. But what if this is accomplished by replacing community programming with canned popular music? If the audience grows, but community participation declines, has the operation in fact become more sustainable? Indeed, this was a situation discovered by Lush and Urgoiti (2012) in their fieldwork:

> Over time, community broadcasters have become preoccupied with financial sustainability, and seem to have lost sight of key issues such as community ownership and participation, and the independence of their stations. Increasingly, community broadcasters act and sound like commercial stations, and seem to be competing with the public and commercial sector for advertising. This may have caused the stations' community members, as well as secondary stakeholders to lose faith in the community broadcasting sector. (p. 16)

In such cases, a radio station may balance its books but remain unstable because of lack of community involvement which could, among other things, result in its community broadcasting license being cancelled. The case study of *Briarpatch* illustrates the importance of sustaining a sense of mission and tending to community networks. Strong social sustainability allowed the magazine to weather abrupt revenue stream changes. While *Briarpatch*'s income sources are important to survival, ultimately it is the magazine's friends and supporters who have kept the presses rolling for more than 40 years. Clearly then, sustainability relies at least equally, if not more, on the maintenance of *Briarpatch*'s social networks.

Indeed, the importance of social networks, or lack thereof, was apparent throughout the interviews. For example, Kossick stated he relied primarily on long-standing relationships with people in the labour movement to find resources and support for media activities. In contrast, Garden stated:

> I think there's a separation between the labour movement and community activists, for my generation at least. There's not as many people who are my age who are labour movement activists and who are still involved in the milieu of community activism. For Don [Kossick]'s generation there was a closer connection between the labour movement, there was far more organizing and that kind of stuff, and there's still those connections, there's folks in the labour movement, but they're a different generation than me. (personal communication, April 16, 2012)

Kossick also used his substantial networks to develop partnerships with university departments and individual professors, as well as with the University of Saskatchewan's Community-University Institute on Social Research (CUISR). On the other hand, he was less confident approaching upper-level university administration, or the co-operative sector, where he had few personal ties and therefore could not see any natural 'fits' with *Making the Link*'s work. Personal social networks came to play as well in the case of securing bulk subscription sales for *The Sasquatch*; a staff person for a union that declined a bulk subscription purchase said it was likely a mistake to put a previously unknown proposal before a large, diverse union council. In retrospect, the staff member would have employed personal connections with key union leaders to gain support for the proposal (anonymous, May 22, 2012).

Beyond personal social networks, the research revealed wider organizational networks play an essential role in sustaining third sector media, and that attention to network building is as important as it is time consuming. The rewards appear in the worst of times, as revealed in *Briarpatch*'s history of replacing abrupt funding losses with community support. In contrast, when *Prairie Dog* faced a similar crisis, it had no such community safety net and was forced to cut staff. Although staff found having a volunteer board onerous to manage (M.

Diamantopoulos, personal communication, June 6, 2012), in retrospect, the volunteers might have been enlisted to carry out community outreach for which staff had no time. At roughly the same time the board was disbanded, withdrawal from fundraising as a revenue source brought an end to concerts and dances that brought people together and deepened social connections with the publication. For comparison, while *Briarpatch* holds frequent public events and house parties for its subscribers, *Prairie Dog* is relatively socially isolated from its readership; its editor states he feels stronger kinship with the city's professional journalists and employees at a local pub than he does with Regina's activist and arts communities (S. Whitworth, personal communication, July 18, 2012). One might reasonably observe that competing journalists and pub employees provide enjoyable company, but are unlikely to provide a solid donor base. A possible outcome is that, while *Prairie Dog*'s online donations achieved some $300 in the first half of 2014 (S. Whitworth, personal communication, July 18, 2012), *Briarpatch*'s first-ever online campaign, also launched in 2014, garnered over $5,000 in just four weeks (*Briarpatch*, 2014). It is therefore appropriate that *Prairie Dog* intends to fully launch its fundraising campaign with an anniversary party in 2015, recognizing that community building is an important aspect of the campaign. In its favour, *Prairie Dog* has demonstrated a long history of re-inventing itself as required, while remaining true to its social mission of providing accountability journalism in a local context. As Fairbairn (2009) observes:

> sustainability is not just about generating income and managing it efficiently. It is about mobilizing the right kinds of resources at the right time, to fit changing needs and contexts. It is about communities, institutions, and finance. It is about mission and ideology. It is not just about the money. (p. 14)

The use of the plural 'communities' must be noted in relation to third sector media. As stated in Chapter 2, practitioner handbooks note that communities must be considered dynamic, multi-faceted and ever-changing, and that they may be divided along contentious race, class or gender lines (Perkins, 2000; Fairbairn, 2009). This implies that a process of continuous outreach

and the maintenance of democratic structures and input opportunities are important components of successful third sector media activity. Fairbairn's Community Media Sustainability Guide (2009) further adds:

> In community media, something that is often overlooked is the cost of community participation, that is, the cost in time and money of mobilizing, organizing, and managing community participation; in training participants and volunteers; and in transport and subsistence of community members involved in content production. Community participation is mostly seen only in terms of income, as "sweat" equity, but—as with all human resources—there are also costs attached (p. 13)

This observation adds emphasis to the experience of CISE FM, in which a key lack cited was staff time to mobilize community volunteers, a factor that leads to the next theme, operational challenges.

- **Theme 7: The majority of challenges are on the operations side, more so than the editorial side.**

Asked how they became involved in third sector media, study participants invariably described prior interest and experience in community issues and/or media production. These interests led them to develop and manage organizational structures capable of facilitating their goals as media producers and community actors. This scenario is common to third sector media praxis. Recalling the origins of the Media Co-op—a cross-Canada network of online news sites with a national print publication—Paley (2011) states:

> We began as a group of people focused on producing content. Eight years later, the energy that went into figuring out what stories to cover has shifted toward discussions about our organizational forms and processes, our funding model, member outreach, and administrative tasks, as well as editorial guidance and training to budding grassroots journalists and editors. (p. 4)

On the whole, the media practitioners interviewed appeared quite adept at devising structures to fit their circumstances and missions, whether it be a worker co-operative, a nonprofit, or a volunteer collective. Moreover, their organizations remained structurally fluid. *Briarpatch* has been variously grant-supported and reader-supported, with several combinations in between.

Making the Links describes itself as primarily volunteer, but on occasion the group hires project workers. *Prairie Dog* magazine has been a nonprofit association, a nonprofit co-operative, and a worker co-operative; interviews revealed this status is open to further transformation, should conditions warrant. It is therefore difficult to categorize any third sector media enterprise as a single model operating on a single organizational model or economic formula—and therein lies no small portion of the sector's strength. A typical commercial newspaper is supported by a single model: private profit sustained by advertising revenue. If advertising revenue shrinks, the model is no longer sustainable and the newspaper closes. If one imagines monoculture versus biodiversity, then third sector media is better positioned for survival when confronted by new ecological factors, such as the rise of the Internet, or the 2008 market crash.

It would be foolish to conclude, however, that structural challenges don't exist or aren't lying in wait in the future. "I never thought of myself as management material," stressed Creek FM's station manager. "I'm just a deejay" (R. Stonechild, personal communication, July 9, 2014). This is not an uncommon sentiment in the world of third sector media. Nonetheless, few remain 'just a deejay' or 'just a writer' for long. Study participants noted that operational tasks such as maintaining volunteer boards, reporting to donors and funders, keeping up with filing and archiving, selling ads, managing subscription lists, and engaging in community outreach are immensely time consuming but all-important to their organizations. The pressure to produce media competes with these tasks on a daily basis, with organizational operations often on the losing end of the equation. These perspectives concur with findings of a 2013 survey of U.S. nonprofit media, in which 62% of respondents said they did not have enough time to meet their organization's business needs (Mitchell & Jurkowitz, 2013).

It is not surprising, then, that several media practitioners interviewed for this study mentioned the value of obtaining additional training and staff time to improve their business

practices, to develop marketing strategies, or to take on transformative organizing, such as developing a practitioner network. Among those enterprises that had received funding for organizational development—*Briarpatch* and *Prairie Dog*—the experience was described as positive and transformational. These perspectives concur with the aforementioned survey, in which 54% of respondents identified business, marketing and fundraising as the areas where they needed support, compared to 39% saying they needed help with news production (Mitchell & Jurkowitz, 2013). From the cases studied, an apt example is Chief Daywalker-Pelletier's identification of communications planning as an important need, and station manager Stonechild's desire for information about grants, along with additional staff time to pursue sponsorships. The Community Radio Fund's Radiometrics grant program includes support for planning and outreach (Community Radio Fund of Canada, 2014); however, Stonechild was unaware of the opportunity at the time of the interview (personal communication, July 9, 2014). In this instance, Stonechild's idea of a central grant information hub for media would have been a useful support.

Additionally, training specific to third sector organizational models was mentioned as a desired support. For example, Creek FM's Yuzicapi said he had knowledge in the area of radio advertising sales, but knew little about fundraising for nonprofits (personal communication, July 22, 2014). *Prairie Dog*'s Morash stated that mentorship from small worker co-ops and media co-ops would have been more relevant than retail-dominated workshops (personal communication, May 30, 2012). Moreover, Bredin (2012) recommends that in the case of Indigenous media, training must be culturally situated within the media's unique social context, preferably carried out by experienced Indigenous media practitioners.

Capital needs were also mentioned, ranging from access to video equipment, to the much more substantive equipment needs of a functioning radio station. Related costs, such as engineer

fees and technical repairs, were named as further barriers by Creek FM staff. Further, *Making the Links* and the Clean Green video volunteers mentioned technical assistance and training geared toward improved Internet and social media dissemination as needed assistance. Practitioners' daily struggles provide important guidance to supportive civil society organizations, which typically provide content support, for example sponsorship of a series of articles or a video on a selected topic (D. Kossick, personal communication, March 20, 2012; Briarpatch financial statements). Such support should be lent with the awareness that content sponsorship generally funds freelance writers and filmmakers rather than core staff, and indeed may add to staff workload.

The difficulty of less specifically tethered operational funding, of course, is convincing one's own organizational members that helping pay for a media enterprise's bookkeeper or advertising salesperson incidentally furthers the goals of the supporting organization. This raises the question of appropriate measurement of third sector media impact that captures the intangibles of community pride, greater involvement, and expanded relationships, some of the aspects cited by research participants. The problem of applying appropriate indicators of social impact is addressed in AMARC's (2006) research into tracking community impacts, the Catholic Media Council's work on tracking media and democratic development (Jannusch, 2007), and UNESCO's *Media Development Indicators* (UNESCO, 2008). Although impact measurement guidelines have been developed by internationally-engaged organizations, they do not appear to be widely known or in regular use in Saskatchewan. This suggests a need to tailor and disseminate this research among the province's third sector media practitioners and their supporters. A related question worthy of further research is how to introduce and utilize such measurements without fostering an onerous audit culture on understaffed enterprises.

CHAPTER 7
FROM RESEARCH TO ACTION:
A CALL FOR SOCIAL ECONOMY SOLUTIONS

7.1 From Agency to Governance

Fanon (1963) wrote of the "extraordinary fruitfulness of local meetings and groupments" (1963, p. 47). In the course of my research, conversations with community actors generated some powerful insights relevant to theoretical perspectives discussed in the literature. To some extent, perceptions of media related closely to Horkheimer and Adorno's (1986) conception of media as an industrial product. There was also a sense of Foucauldian co-complicity in oppressive structures; drawing on the game of curling as an analogy, a RAPM study circle participant remarked, "The media, all it's got to do, they just have to sweep the rock; it's got an unlimited momentum because our society is driving this selfishness and this indolence. Them is us. It is us, you know" (Participant 1, Nov. 1, 2012). Readers familiar with curling, however, would be aware that it takes but a small speck of debris on the ice to unexpectedly change the trajectory of events.

Even the most seamless systems of oppression contain pockets of human agency, those "lucid people" who "think and feel and exist in a world which they can change" (Espinosa, 1969/trans. 1979, para. 32). For example, a study of Toronto newspapers by Henry and Tator (2002) found dominant racist ideology so deeply embedded in the constructs of mainstream media that it was "largely invisible to most people" (p. 22). Yet racist ideology was clearly visible to members of Okanese First Nations, who responded by creating alternative media messages. It was likewise visible to RAPM's study circle members, who understood that when media outlets shy away from discussion of racial profiling and give white interviewees the benefit of the doubt, it is not mere oversight. Indeed, Henry and Tator (2002) found there can be

considerable push-back from community actors against discriminatory media coverage, covert or overt—lending credence to Nyamnjoh's theory that the people are seldom wholly duped (as cited by Ndlela, 2010, p. 91). Chãvez, Duran, Baker, Avila, and Wallerstein (2008) argue that even heavily institutionalized and internalized power structures are based in human relationships that are "inherently unstable and therefore susceptible to change," suggesting corporate-controlled media power is not as indelibly entrenched as it often appears (p. 86). Pop-up media activities such as the Clean Green videos, and the ongoing survival of alternative publications such as *Prairie Dog*, provide continual disturbances in the dominant transcript (Scott, 1990), and contain potential to upend the social order (Lim, 2003).

This highly active landscape of citizen engagement has implications for evolving concepts of citizen participation and cultural self-determination, which I have presented under the general rubric of local governance discourse. A diverse media ecology with strong roots in local communities is increasingly seen as an essential component of a functioning democracy (Knight Commission, 2009; Gosselin, 2010). In particular, local accountability journalism promotes institutional transparency, protects the public interest, and raises levels of citizen participation (Gosselin, 2010; McLeod, et al., 1996; Waldman & WGINC, 2011). Beyond participation in political structures, third sector media in particular empowers marginalized voices, bringing issues of gender, race, and class into public discourse (Baofo, 2000; Bredin, 2012; Chávez, 2008). When imagining more democratic, decentralized political systems, it is therefore germane to include discussion of alternate methods of financing, structuring and operationalizing journalism in the public interest.

While these methods may be novel to local governance discussions, various forms of co-operative and nonprofit media date back centuries globally and have strong roots in Canada, from the early days of Canadian Press (Nichols, 1948) to today's cross-country network of

Indigenous radio stations (Alia, 2006). However, their future is by no means secure. My research finds such media in a more precarious state than ever, coupled with increasing expectations to 'fill the gap' where the market has failed.

One of the most elemental barriers is the lack of visibility and cohesion of a unique segment of Canada's media ecology. I have used the term 'third sector' to describe what is, in essence, a loose collection of media organizations existing outside state and commercial spheres. I remain cognizant of the inherent pitfalls in employing sectoral boundaries in a broad field of social economy and social enterprise. As stated in Chapter 2, this is a terminology of utility, pressed into service by a real-world problem that demands specific, directed attention.

7.2 The Problem

If third sector media are to realistically fill the gap left by other media sectors, as suggested by Waldheim and the WGINC (2011), Lewis (2007), and Mitchell and Jurkowitz (2013), a conversation about 'what's to be done' is long overdue. To re-state McChesney's (2007) comment, "What we as citizens do—or don't do—in the coming decade will make all the difference" (p. xii). What became clear in the course of my research is that official media development assistance is no longer regarded as a reliable or viable option by third sector media practitioners, including those operating in Saskatchewan. Provincial government involvement, which had been problematic from the beginning, has all but disappeared. Federal media development assistance has become scarce, unpredictable, content-controlling, and increasingly partisan. Further, federal assistance is accompanied by an audit culture whose demands have grown beyond the institutional capacity of most third sector media organizations. This presents a very serious difficulty for a nation that has simultaneously undergone significant contractions in the state and commercial media sectors, and has moved to deregulate market access for competing U.S. media products. Fillmore (2010) observes:

> Even though politicians know that our news media are in a terrible mess and are not providing the information we need to move the country forward, government funding for media is not on the agenda of any of the federal parties at present…. If Canadians want their governments to support media ventures they will surely have to work long and hard to reach that important goal. (para. 34)

The complications and constraints of official media development assistance seem to invite practitioners and concerned scholars to throw in the towel. However, such a response would give political leaders *carte blanche* to ignore the responsibility to foster and protect Canadian culture. It would also allow them to turn their backs on a rich history of partnering in the promotion of participatory community-based media, as well as to renege on obligations to uphold the cultural rights of Indigenous people. Fundamental to gaining a space in the national political consciousness, the media undertakings herein described must first be publicly recognized and understood as something other than hundreds of disassociated publications, video projects, and small broadcasters of varying purpose, quality, and audience reach. As a prerequisite to establishing a place in national policy-making and civil society discourse, they must be recognized and named as an important sector—an indispensable third sector.

The recognition of a third sector of media activity is currently more advanced in the U.S., particularly since the publication of reports such as *The Information Needs of Communities* (Waldman & WGINC, 2011) and *Informing Communities: Sustaining Democracy in the Digital Age* (Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities, 2009). Furthermore, within these and related reports, there is apparently a broader understanding that third sector media enterprises, while imbued with many strengths, do not have the capacity to magically fill the void left by market rationalization and market failures. As Pickard, Stearns, and Aaron (2011) observe, tiny nonprofits such as *The New Haven Independent* and *Voices of San Diego* have not replaced all the laid-off journalists, making it "hard to imagine they can provide the in-

depth local news required to maintain an informed citizenry, let alone replace today's news institutions" (p 53).

It is further understood that outwardly visible relationships between media and government have historically been unwelcome within the U.S. political and cultural context, as noted by Baker (2002). U.S. conservatives who find free-market media 'immoral' nonetheless fear government interference in a free market; meanwhile, liberals who are unhappy with capital's ownership of media hesitate to support government interventions that may cloak the censorious hand of the state (Baker, 2002). This leaves few policy options beyond adjusting tax laws, protecting Internet freedom, and eking out some public space for low-power broadcasting (Pickard, Stearns, & Aaron, 2011). At the same time, a free press is enshrined in the U.S. Constitution and forms a core identifying national value, providing a lens through which the survival of third sector media is seen as part of the preservation of democratic traditions. Enveloping nonprofit media within this frame, Pickard, Stearns, and Aaron, (2011) argue: "Journalism is a critical infrastructure. It is too precious for a democratic society simply to sit back and pray that the market will magically sustain it" (p. 48).

With limited political solutions at hand, the U.S. has witnessed an acceleration of what has been coined "philanthrojournalism" (Russel & Cohn, 2013). A study released by the U.S.-based Foundation Center in 2013 found 1,012 foundations made 12,040 media-related grants totaling $1.86 billion from 2009 to 2011, and that annual support exceeded grants given to science and technology, religion and the social sciences. Primary recipients were public radio and public television, reflecting the U.S. model of donor- and viewer-supported public broadcasting, in contrast to the Canadian version of state-supported public broadcasting (Foundation Center, 2013). Philanthrojournalism is not, however, a new phenomenon. Seymour Hersh's 1969 investigation of the My Lai Massacre, for example, was supported by a grant from

the Fund for Investigative Journalism, created by philanthropist Philip M. Stern (Lewis, 2007). Friedland and Konieczna (2011) posit:

> Foundation funding of nonprofit journalism is partly a result of the unique structure of American civil society, its entrepreneurial and voluntaristic culture, and the structure of American philanthropy that concentrates relatively large amounts of social investment in independent actors who compete to realize differing visions of the social good. (p. 33)

Thus, while Canada's educasters were funded by provincial governments, the American version, National Educational Television (NET) was supported by the Ford Foundation as far back as 1952 (Friedland & Konieczna, 2011). The names of major U.S. media contributors have become familiar to Canadian PBS and NPR audiences over the years, including the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation, Open Society Institute, and Pew Charitable Trust. Additionally, charitable foundations fund nonprofit national and state-level investigative reporting organizations, for example the Center for Investigative Reporting and ProPublica (Friedland & Konieczna, 2011).

An effort to duplicate the model with a Canadian Centre for Investigative Reporting (CCIR) model ended in failure. Its founders were well aware that Canada lacked the array of major philanthropic foundations found in the U.S., but they believed donor-funded journalism was nonetheless the best route to follow. Director Bilbo Poynter (2009) wrote hopefully, "Even though there are considerably fewer foundation dollars to go around than in the U.S., and even fewer foundations that fund media projects in Canada, the CCIR is confident that we will speak to the philanthropic community and goodwill of Canadians who won't see our funding restraints as limitations, but as opportunities to do something truly innovative" (para. 23). Lowered expectations for foundation grants were not misplaced: the organization received $5,000 from the Douglas-Coldwell Foundation in 2010 (Douglas-Coldwell Foundation, 2010), which made

up nearly half of its entire revenue of $11,939 for that year (Canada. Canada Revenue Agency [CRA], 2010). The following year, reported grants from charitable foundations amounted to $26,500 (Canada. Canada Revenue Agency, 2011), with contributions coming from the U.S.-based Open Society Foundation, for pursuing a series of articles on the Afghan heroin trade, and from the Montreal-based Chawkers Foundation, which also helps fund *The Walrus* (McKeon, 2010). Meanwhile, the "goodwill of Canadians" expressed in individual donations amounted to just $2,835 (Canada. CRA, 2011). Total revenue in 2011, the last year for which a charitable return was filed with the Canadian Revenue Agency, was $29,335 (Canada. CRA, 2011), a pittance compared to the $4.6 million raised by the U.S.-based Center for Investigative Reporting (Center for Investigative Reporting, Inc., 2011) and Pro Publica's 2011 revenues of just over $11 million (Pro Publica, Inc., 2011). "The Canadian rich are bit more parsimonious, and they're a smaller group," observed CBC's Bill Livesay, adding CCIR failed to develop an effective branding strategy to gain attention in a tight philanthropic environment (cited by Tubb, 2013).

While there have been some exceptions—for example support from the Tula Foundation for *The Tyee*, a B.C.-based online newspaper (The Tyee, n.d.), and the aforementioned Chawker Foundation support for *The Walrus*—the potential to transfer philanthrojournalism on a large scale to the Canadian cultural and economic landscape appears minimal. There is a corporate-funded Canadian Journalism Foundation; however, it focuses on distributing excellence awards, sponsoring public talks and industry galas, and donating to a journalism news website, www.jsource.ca, rather than directly funding journalism work (Canadian Journalism Foundation, n.d.). In any case, Mitchell and Jurkowitz's 2013 study draws into question the value of such philanthropy for smaller third sector enterprises. Three-quarters of nonprofit news sites reviewed in late 2012 received foundation funding, and in more than half the cases, foundations made up more than 50% of their budgets. However, foundation grants typically came in the

form of start-up grants that do not offer long-term sustainability. Just 28% of media enterprises were able to renew their grants, and only 38% of those whose grants were not renewed were able to make up the funds from other sources (Mitchell & Jurkowitz, 2013).

Mitchell and Jurkowitz (2013) surmise that foundations are unreliable and driven by fads. Pickard and Stearns (2011) add that media organizations dependent on charities have "obvious vulnerabilities, especially during times such as the global recession that began in 2008, when philanthropies were struggling as well" (p. 48). This dissertation's research suggests another factor: the commonly held perception among funders of 'unhealthy' dependency. One might further argue, based on reports commissioned by philanthropic foundations themselves, that expecting third sector media to swim off into the free market after a single cash injection defies the logic that attracted the funding in the first place: namely, that the market is incapable of supporting certain kinds of quality journalism. More recent experiments, such as the online news site *Richochet*, which grew out of the Quebec student protests of 2012, have turned to individual donations through online-empowered crowd funding (Bradshaw, 2014). However the experience of CCIR would suggest individual philanthropy may be limited in its ability to sustain paid journalism beyond an initial boost of support. Indeed, while the aforementioned *Briarpatch* Indiegogo campaign generated a quick cash injection, such campaigns are ill suited to sustaining core operations over longer periods (A. Loewen, personal communication, Dec. 8, 2014).

7.3 The Needs

The cases presented in this dissertation represent a diverse array of media structures and sustainability strategies. What unites them is a desire to produce media that focus on community issues and concerns, and that encompass a broader range of voices than the commercial and state spheres offer. Conversations with third sector media practitioners revealed some surprising strengths in terms of long-term resiliency and adherence to a social mission. These strengths

were derived from social networking and attention to community-building. From ad hoc media collectives to highly structured nonprofits and co-operatives, each enterprise examined occupied its own niche within a common web of overlapping networks and reciprocal relationships. This allowed *Making The Links* to share content with *Briarpatch*, *Briarpatch* to share its subscriber list with *Prairie Dog*, and *Prairie Dog* to share content with CBC, practices unheard of in the commercial media sector, unless the outlets are owned by the same conglomerate. As well, being embedded in community allows third sector media to turn to the community for support in times of financial and political trouble. These are significant strengths but, as with any ecosystem, the balance is delicate and reliant on a healthy influx of nutrients to remain viable.

The current landscape is characterized by dramatically reduced funding opportunities and diminished civil society networks. Media practitioners interviewed for this study are keenly aware that their work has reached a critical crossroads, and cannot move forward without a structured replacement of the financial and organizational supports that have disappeared over the past two decades. Although their organizations are diverse, connective themes emerged from our conversations, and several core needs were identified. These include:

1. Sector recognition

   This involves recognizing third sector media as a unified whole, while at the same time embracing diversity, localization and specificity as core strengths, rather than deficiencies.

2. Operational support

   Media development typically leans toward special project funding. However, practitioners report their greatest struggles are related to daily operations and organizational management.

3. Advertising support

   Several practitioners identified advertising as a preferred means of financial support. Diversity and reliability of key civil society advertisers have dropped off considerably in

recent decades, leading to new vulnerabilities. Advertising by social allies that share common goals need not be equated with a market-based subversion of free expression, as one might observe in the corporate press.

4. Sector-specific training and information

   Media production involves unique needs and ethical considerations that are not addressed by more generalized training for community-based organizations and co-operatives.

5. Targeted support for investigative journalism

   Third sector media practitioners celebrate voluntarism, but also recognize the need for adequately financed professional journalism in the area of investigative journalism. Support for investigative work should be arms-length with built-in safeguards to protect journalistic integrity.

6. Access to capital funding

   Capital expenses are generally excluded from funding programs. This presents problems for capital-intensive enterprises such as community radio.

7. Support for research needs

   Investigative work requires intensive research support, ranging from access to university data bases to affordable legal assistance. Social impact measurement is another potential research area of benefit to third sector media.

8. An active lobby campaign

   Presently, there is scant public awareness and no sector-wide campaign to challenge the withdrawal of governmental support in areas such as community access cable, small magazines, and Indigenous media. Each battle is fought in isolation, little known outside its own community of practice.

9. Social solidarity

   Strong community and organizational networks were identified as key to sustainability. Simple strategies such as pooling resources, sharing membership lists, and co-hosting events help nurture social solidarity among media practitioners and community allies.

On balance, none of these needs appear to be insurmountable. A logical action outcome from the research would be a gathering of interested parties to prioritize identified needs and develop clear strategies for the road ahead.

7.4 A Call for Social Economy Solutions

The challenges facing Saskatchewan's media practitioners and their audiences are joined to a broader pattern of public funding cuts and corporate delocalization. These trends operate across many sectors, as do potential responses. In particular, affected communities are looking toward what answers the social economy may hold: "Social economy organizations are called upon to assume an ever-increasing role in production and delivery of goods and services in the public interest," observe Bouchard, Ferraton and Michaud (2006, p.1). Whether it is fresh food, affordable childcare services, adequate housing, or timely grain transportation, basic needs are being ill met under the current economic and political paradigm. To this list, I add journalism that places public interest before profit.

"By their very nature, origin and mission, social economy organizations present the conditions that favour local innovation," write Bouchard, Ferraton and Michaud (2006, p.i). Third sector media in Canada and Saskatchewan have been deeply impacted by declining government support in the context of a pervasive neoliberal cultural and economic shift. This creates duress but also opportunity. Innovation may be fostered and assisted by many allied organizations and supporters that fall within broad definitions of the social economy (Quarter, Mook & Armstrong, 2009). Indeed, there has never been a greater opportunity for civil society

organizations to step forward and contribute to the development of locally controlled, community-responsive media enterprises that are capable of better informing the public and engaging citizens in their own governance. As previously noted, the relatively small amount of attention paid to media in local governance discourse has been out of step with their impact in this arena. This is even more so in the case of third sector media. Yet there is great potential to democratize our communities by democratizing media. This calls for new forms of organization to wrest communications away from the marketplace and into the hands of citizens.

My research therefore calls for a coordinated effort among civil society organizations to recognize and strengthen the role of media enterprises within the social economy. This could involve building alliances with like-minded media reform groups, such as OpenMedia and Friends of Canadian Broadcasting, which have proven their ability to raise financial support and place issues on the public agenda. Community service groups, religious organizations, student public interest research groups, development-oriented charities, professional journalism associations, and citizen action coalitions stand among the many logical partners in this effort. These groups face their own limitations and stresses in the current environment, however. I therefore point to four principal pillars of organizational strength available in Saskatchewan: labour unions, the co-operative movement, Indigenous governments and organizations, and universities. The discussion that follows is not an attempt to prescribe definitive solutions. Rather, ideas are presented in the spirit of opening some conversations about third sector media opportunities, and identifying areas for further research and collaborative action planning.

7.4.1 Labour

Saskatchewan labour unions have an established record of engagement with and assistance to third sector media, through purchasing advertising and subscriptions, providing freelance contract work, sharing networks, and offering donations and small grants via the

Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL). Media practitioners interviewed frequently pointed to labour as their most reliable institutional supporter, and described a relationship that included some disagreement over media strategies but little direct interference or censorship.

In the 1990s, a concentrated effort was made to collect individual union donations into a single fund coordinated by the SFL; however, the project proved to be unsustainable in the long run. The fund was approved following a keynote address to the 1996 SFL convention by James Winter, professor of communications at the University of Windsor. Winter's speech, titled 'How Corporations Control the News,' outlined the financial and political interests of the two main media moguls of the day, Kenneth Thompson and Conrad Black; he then related their media control to unfavourable coverage of mass anti-government mobilizations held in Toronto just a few weeks earlier (Saskatchewan Federation of Labour [SFL], 1996). The following day, delegates voted on a motion advocating a mandatory contribution of $1 per member from each SFL affiliate, to establish "progressive community newspapers, radio stations and cable TV programming, as well as assist existing alternative publications like the Briarpatch Magazine and Prairie Dog" (SFL, 1999, p.3). While the idea of the fund received delegate support, the mandatory contribution was defeated in favour of a one-time voluntary contribution (SFL, 1996). In the first year, $7,800 was collected for the Alternative Media Fund, with the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses (SUN) making the largest contribution (SFL, 1997). However, it was not replenished in subsequent years, and was dropped as a line item in the 1999 budget. At the 1999 annual convention, a motion was once again brought forward for a mandatory $1 per member contribution; this time the motion was not even debated, but was forwarded to the SFL executive with a recommendation for defeat (SFL, 1999). SFL president Larry Hubich notes that a per-member fee would have been logistically impossible for some unions to collect, due to the structure of their locals, while at the same time a voluntary fee was difficult to keep front and

centre amid myriad other priorities (personal communication, August 15, 2012). A member of the committee tasked with administering the fund recalls:

> Maybe it was one of those things, where people have more pressing projects and people stop coming to meetings, and maybe the support kind of wanes, and there's not enough consensus among the committee members about what kind of direction the committee should pursue. I can't really remember, but I think the funds kind of dried up, and maybe some of us stopped attending meetings. (G. Marsden, personal communication, July 26, 2012)

SFL executive member Wanda Bartlett adds that cheques get written when presentations and requests are made, and that this is a difficult momentum for small organizations to maintain. "It's a tough road for anybody to be able to continue that kind of requesting…. If you've got to spend all your time asking, you don't get anything else done," Bartlett observes (personal communication, August 15, 2012).

Added to that is a lukewarm level of support among SFL member unions, which increasingly prefer to invest their funds in paid ads that provide mass audiences and message control, according to Hubich. "I don't know that there's a social consciousness that permeates the union executives about, 'Well, this is something that we really need to do, to actually nurture and create alternative media,'" he says (personal communication, August 15, 2012). Union leaders tend to think of media as a tool of mass persuasion, rather than as platform for investigative inquiry and dialogue and, in this light, gross ratings points matter, while smaller audiences of 'the converted' are not particularly sought after (L. Hubich, personal communication, August 15, 2012). Additionally, the advent of social media has fostered an attitude among union leaders that organized media enterprises are no longer necessary:

> They think that you don't need to have the mediated voice of some journalist, that we can tell our own stories through social media … because they think every political problem they have is going to be solved by following [them] on Twitter or Facebook, without really understanding what are the advantages and what are the limitations of that. They don't think in terms of alternative media. (anonymous, personal communication, May 23, 2012)

In contrast to this perspective of waning interest in third sector media, support for *Briarpatch* magazine was clearly evident at the 2013 SFL convention, where delegates overwhelmingly voted in favour of a resolution to sponsor 100 *Briarpatch* subscriptions for public libraries, a commitment valued at $4,000 annually, followed by the passing of a donations bucket, which netted more than $1,000 from the convention floor (Saskatchewan Federation of Labour, 2013). Yet while such measures garner immediately useful financial resources, their success depends on a cap-in-hand approach from individual media outlets, as Bartlett observed, rather than long-term arrangements that provide substantive and reliable funding for third sector media.

Given the difficulties of cultivating a solid donor base in the union movement, Hubich points to labour-sponsored venture capital funds as a more stable form of funding. This strategy is also among Fillmore's (2010) recommended options for supporting Canadian nonprofit journalism. The strategy has met some success in British Columbia, where the online newspaper *The Tyee* receives support from Working Enterprises, a Vancouver-based labour-affiliated investment group (*The Tyee*, n.d.). It should be noted, however, that *The Tyee* arrived at the table with a substantial private donation already in hand from a group of anonymous benefactors (Wright, 2005). An ability to prove some level of viability is an important factor for any investor, labour or non-labour. A second potential difficulty is that venture capital funds tend to fund start-ups, while there is a sense among labour activists that supporting existing alternative media should be prioritized over starting new enterprises (H. Smith, personal communication, August 15, 2012).

Saskatchewan's richest labour-sponsored investment fund is SaskWorks. Ironically, although it was created by the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP, today part of UNIFOR), a union that represented media workers, it does not list media among its key investment areas, which are energy, mining, and related services (SaskWorks Venture Funds,

Inc., 2013). Nonethless, the existence of a labour-sponsored investment fund that has a union relationship with media workers is a resource worth exploring. A second major labour-sponsored fund is the Golden Opportunities Fund, which is tailored to small and medium-sized Saskatchewan businesses of fewer than 500 employees (Golden Opportunities Fund, Inc., Fund information, 2013). As with SaskWorks, the prospectus states investment is focused on resource extraction (Golden Opportunities Fund, Inc., Prospectus, 2013). Clearly, the investment funds are not charities, and have not demonstrated interest in third sector media production as an attractive investment. Thus third sector media practitioners and their union supporters would need to make a concerted effort and provide a well-developed business plan to move Saskatchewan's main labour-sponsored funds into media investments.

SaskWorks and Golden Opportunities were among the possible sources of capital the SFL considered approaching for the purchase of SCN. Hubich hoped to make use of connections between CEP and the SFL, which were solidified when the SFL contributed to a national campaign against cuts to CBC in the late 1990s. He also hoped to draw in the credit unions and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF), which holds significant pension investment funds, with the idea of forming a co-operative authority to operate the broadcaster on behalf of the Saskatchewan public, or forming a worker co-operative. However, the concept failed to gain traction in the media and within government during the quick timeframe of the sale (L. Hubich, personal communication, August 15, 2012). This is a barrier identified by White (2013), who observes that "ownership transfers of local news outlets often happen at a speed that is beyond a community's ability to engage and respond." White suggests mobilizing organized networks of support for the complex task of engaging in media takeovers, which involve not only physical assets, but also intellectual property and external obligations (para. 6).

"I wasn't under the illusion that this was going to be successful, but I was certainly prepared to do the work if it were," recalls Hubich of the SFL's attempt. The purchase package would likely have involved some form of employee ownership, ideally in the form of a co-operative (personal communication, August 15, 2012). Despite Hubich's low expection of success, the idea was more than tilting at windmills; facilitating employee ownership is a field where the labour movement has historically demonstrated its most substantive involvement in media enterprises. Examples include *Le Monde*, employee-owned from 1944 until 2004, when debt prompted its sale (Boyle, 2012). Closer to home, in 2009, after owner Canwest Global announced the closure of CHEK TV in Victoria, B.C, CEP helped the employees to put together a successful purchase package. Workers who had taken over a Nanaimo pulp mill one year earlier advised the project ("Workers invest," 2009). CHEK is today North America's only employee-owned television station (CHEK TV, n.d.).

Employee ownership, whether union or non-union, generally comes wrapped in a sense of social mission beyond saving jobs. For example, *The Omaha World-Herald*, the largest employee-owned newspaper in the United States between 1979 and 2011, was committed to delivering papers to rural towns as a public service, even if it was unprofitable. "I don't fault ownerships unwilling to pay that price, but newspaper after newspaper has been sold into slavery, mediocrity and decline...by owners who look at them as properties," publisher John Gottschalk said in 1999 (cited by Roesgen, 1999). As the original employee owners retired, carrying the paper through the 2008 economic crisis became too large a challenge for those who remained. Ultimately, *The World-Herald* was sold in 2011 to a wealthy individual, Warren Buffett, in a bid to secure continued local ownership (Omaha World Herald Company, 2014).

CHEK is a rare success among several cases where unions have tried to facilitate employee takeovers of media outlets owned by major corporations. In 2009, the California

Media Workers Guild offered to purchase *The San Francisco Chronicle* from Hearst Corp, after Hearst announced it would close the paper. The union planned to pull together a public-labour partnership to finance the deal. The offer was ultimately rejected, and Hearst remains the paper's owner in 2014 (Jamison, 2009). In 2006, the Newspaper Guild-Communications Worker of America was thwarted in an attempt to purchase a group of Knight-Ridder newspapers, after the company announced that 32 papers were for sale. The Guild sought partners for the nine papers that were unionized, stating that worker ownership offered the advantages of an enthusiastic workforce and the ability to operate largely tax-free via investments funneled through the workers' pension funds. Although the takeover effort attracted a major private investor, Knight-Ridder refused to split off the nine papers, effectively ending the deal (Menn, 2006). Although the attempt was unsuccessful, the union continues to explore models for worker ownership (Pickard & Stearns, 2011).

One available ownership model is an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), seen in Canadian organizations such as WestJet, which offers employee buy-in at up to 20% of gross salary (WestJet, n.d.). Several employee-owned enterprises operating in Canada use this model to successfully manage large companies, such as Avis Car Rental, employee owned since 1987 (Avis Canada, n.d.). However, Bauen (1995) cautions that few ESOP workplaces provide majority ownership and control to workers, though the majority shareholders reap the benefits of increased worker loyalty: "Business leaders hope that ESOPs and participation schemes will raise productivity by reducing workers' alienation from their jobs," Bauen writes. "But both of these mechanisms are management-inspired, and neither, on its own, gives employees real power within their workplaces" (Bauen, 1995, para. 5). Moreover, ESOP schemes can lead to employees bearing the brunt of bad corporate decisions, as happened when Tribune Co., owner of *The Chicago Tribune*, borrowed from employee benefit plans to finance the owner's debt

(Pickard & Stearns, 2011). With this in mind, Pickard and Stearns (2011) recommend co-operative ownership as a better alternative for community media.

7.4.2 Co-operatives

With the exception of *Prairie Dog*'s original founders, none of the research participants noted any sort of sustained relationship with Saskatchewan's co-operative sector. In the case of *Prairie Dog*, co-operative contacts identified as being influential or helpful were primarily based in B.C. and Manitoba, rather than Saskatchewan. Among 1,256 Saskatchewan co-operatives counted in 2012, there were just two co-operative media enterprises listed, *Prairie Dog* and *Planet S*, along with one book publisher, Thunder Creek Publishing Co-operative, which operates under the title Coteau Books. Also listed was one major Saskatchewan co-operative that directly supports media production and distribution, the cable and Internet provider Access Communications Co-operative Ltd., which facilitates the Access7 community channel system in fulfillment of the 5% CRTC-mandated community access contribution (Saskatchewan Co-operative Association, 2012; Access Communications Co-operative Ltd, 2013). Not listed is the Saskatchewan Filmpool Co-operative, a registered co-operative that provides training, equipment, and outreach assistance for independent filmakers (ISC corporate records, entity no. 490014), and Missinipi Broadcasting. Additionally, a Saskatchewan Working Group has been formed under the Media Co-op, the first step to potentially becoming a formal Media Co-op local (The Media Co-op, n.d.). Together, these examples represent a minimal presence in Saskatchewan's co-operative sector. This is little different from the national scene; based on 2007 data, just 1.7% of 7,839 Canadian co-operatives fall into the media sphere, a figure that includes cable and Internet providers (Canada. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canda. Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat, 2010).

A relatively low level of co-operativism among third sector media in Saskatchewan appears out of step with the province's history of co-operative development. Co-operatives, agrarian populism, and alternative media have historic ties in Saskatchewan and the Canadian West through publications such as *The Western Producer, The Grain Growers Guide, The Nor'Wester,* and *The Commonwealth* (Diamantopoulos, 2014). As well, the early promise of co-operative media was identified by the founders of Canadian Press (CP); Nichols (1948) describes CP's co-operative ethos as an "inspiration" for "collective action for a common purpose" within an equalizing structure:

> Its charter confines it to nonprofit-making activities; when income exceeds expenditure the excess must be employed in furtherance of the Company's services…. The spirit of democracy is firmly implanted in the co-operative's principles and practices. "One newspaper: one vote" governs the proceedings of the members. The smallest daily has equal voting power with a metropolitan daily. (p. 2)

In interviews, major contributing factors for the lack of third sector media involvement with co-operatives today appeared to be lack of personal contacts within the sector, and lack of exposure to co-operative education and mentorship. "Why don't more people start worker co-operatives in Saskatchewan? Many simply lack information. Others aren't even aware the option exists," observe Diamantopoulos and Bourgeois (2014). Indeed, *Briarpatch*'s exploration of the co-operative option raised more questions than answers (staff discussion papers, 1978, 1979). Deficiencies in co-operative mentorship no doubt hamper the growth of co-operativism in the third sector media sphere, where stretched staff members are hard pressed to navigate the demands of organizational restructuring.

Similar to the experience of *Prairie Dog*, the Ontario-headquartered Media Co-op began as a nonprofit society publishing a single newspaper, *The Dominion*. In 2007, the group converted into a multi-stakeholder co-operative with locals across the country. Organizers found the legal process to becoming a co-operative relatively straightforward, but the level of

organizational restructuring required was a multi-year process involving all aspects of organization and production (Paley, 2011). Added to is the sense of being a 'square peg' among retail and financial co-operatives.

White (2013) observes that restructuring as a co-operative is daunting for media operators, and recommends establishing a system of specialist support, drawing on the examples of successful media co-ops. Indeed, the need for media-specific mentorship dates back at least to 1910; when CP's founding members became stalled over the task of converting co-operative principles to "body and bones," they invited Associated Press general manager Elijah Stone to Toronto:

> The hours spent with Stone were profitable. He explained the apportionment of costs as applied in The AP, the technique of operations of their wires, errors they had made a corrected, and working plans they had endured. Much of the American plan was accepted or adapted to the use of the Canadian organization, foremost among which was the principle of a co-operative, nonprofit-making association with the mercenary motive eliminated. (Nichols, 1948, p. 82)

This mentorship need is echoed decades later by Verma (2004), who recommends deploying a network of outreach workers with specific training in community media methodologies and strategies, who would travel to rural areas to promote the establishment of local media co-operatives. Further, Boyle (2012) recommends creating a specialist body that can advise communities on how to quickly and effectively take over media outlets when they come up on the market.

Once media enterprises find the on-ramp, co-operative models, whether for-profit or not-for-profit, offer some clear benefits for attracting capital. This is true despite some obvious limitations when it comes to attracting profit-seeking private investment capital, particularly in the case of worker co-operatives (Diamantopoulos & Bourgeois, 2014). However, examples of media-related co-operatives examined in this dissertation indicate that the process of becoming a co-operative invites its members to develop business plans, to think beyond traditional charity

models, and to make contact with social enterprise lenders and investors. By restructuring into a multi-stakeholder co-operative, the Media Co-op was able to attract seed money and grants that, along with sustaining donor contributions, achieved a budget of $87,762 in just three years, allowing the co-op to pay writers and editors (Paley, 2011). "The co-operative model has given us a lot of room to expand," observes Paley (2011), adding, "Even as we face organizational and financial challenges, we continue to be encouraged by our growing membership, which increasingly participates in major decisions, from what issues we cover to our budget priorities" (p.3). *Prairie Dog* similarly found that conversion to a worker co-operative acted as a catalyst to growth and new opportunities, as described in the preceding chapter. Of particular value was access to social enterprise investment funds, which helped aid the process of conversion and facilitated expansion of the co-operative into Saskatoon.

While labour-sponsored funds may have been appropriate to a major media investment, such as the purchase of SCN, a review of the investment goals and portfolio interests of SaskWorks and Golden Opportunities suggests there would be little room for small, struggling third sector media groups. In contrast, social enterprise funds are more likely to accommodate grassroots organizations, for example, the Alberta-based Social Enterprise Fund's loan to CKUA community radio for studio upgrades (Social Enterprise Fund, n.d.). Alternatively, Québec's largest labour-sponsored fund, *les Fonds de solidarité FTQ*, includes an envelope specifically directed toward social economy investments, through which media co-operatives have access to loans. For Saskatchewan third sector media organizations, access to capital could be boosted via the development of a provincial social enterprise fund amendable to small-scale media financing, and/or via a concerted effort to convince unions of the social value of making investments beyond the lucrative resource sector. Some Saskatchewan credit unions have experimented with

community development loan options, and there is certainly an opportunity to build on this experience as well.

Ultimately, investment benefits flow in both directions, as noted by Verma (2004): "Community media and co-operatives work on the same principle of empowerment. If empowerment is a strong common denominator for both of them, then a strong case exists for both of them exploring avenues to work together" (p.51). The Co-operatives UK report *Good News: A co-operative solution to the media crisis* (Boyle, 2012) states that the crisis in commercial media offers an opportunity for co-operatives to grow in a field that provides a valued public service. Boyle (2012) observes that co-operatives are trusted, resilient, and accountable to members, which fulfills the needs of journalists; he argues this constitutes a natural 'fit' between co-operativism and journalism. He further argues that the potential return on investment is boosted by specific advantages of co-operative media, namely:

- There is potential to attract new sources of capital through community shares.
- Locally-owned co-operative media gains greater support from local businesses.
- Volunteers are more likely to give up time to support a co-operative.
- There are opportunities for financial savings through community linkages.

An example of a co-operative advantage is cited by Glauber (2009), regarding the Inter-County Co-operative Publishing Association, publisher of *The Inter-County Leader* and *The Washburn Register*. The association was founded by Wisconsin farmers during the Depression, and is today owned by 225 members at a cost of $5 per member share, a price unchanged since its founding. Following the 2008 economic crisis, the co-operative saw dividends and profit-sharing decline by 4%; however, the publishers remained financially sound compared to private sector competitors (Glauber, 2009). The two weekly papers continue operations today, along

with five advertiser-style rural tabloids and a commercial printing venture owned by the co-operative (Inter-County Co-operative Publishing Association, n.d.).

In their review of options for the future of journalism, Pickard and Stearns (2011) also point to the potential of co-operatives to deliver news in a difficult market:

> cooperatively owned news organizations… are democratically controlled by their member/owners and surplus revenues are returned to those members. Furthermore, the co-op structure shifts the mission away from profit-making toward providing quality goods or services to its members. (p. 49)

This is not to say co-operative media are infallible. Mexico's *Excelsior*, for example, was sold in 2004 after having been a worker co-op since 1917 (Boyle, 2012). *The Winnipeg Citizen* lasted just 13 months in 1948-1949; ironically, the financial pressures it succumbed to included the high cost of subscribing to the Canadian Press wire service, also a co-operative at the time (Parker, 1982). Canadian Press itself ceased operating as a co-operative in November, 2010, after losing the Canwest and Quebecor chains as subscribers, and is now owned by a consortium of the three largest co-op members, Torstar, *The Globe and Mail*, and *La Presse*'s parent company (Allen, 2013). Ultimately, co-operative media enterprises operate in much the same economic environment as the commercial press, and therefore shared the impacts of the 2008 financial crisis (Deloitte, 2012). However, there have been long-standing successes, such as Associated Press, formed in 1846 (Associated Press, 2014), and the aforementioned Inter-County venture, formed in 1933 and still publishing co-operative newspapers in Wisconsin (Inter-County Co-operative Publishing Association). Boyle (2012) argues that while co-operative media have at times struggled in the 'old media' mass market models of the past, this does not mean they would experience the same problems in the new media environment, which holds advantages for third sector media. For example, while commercial media must resort to unpopular pay walls to make online news pay for itself, third sector media have the option of including a voluntary donation option for online visitors (Boyle, 2012). The members and supporters of co-operative

media form an essential network for sustaining operations as a valued public service, and are a source of support not available to profit-making media.

Clearly there are new opportunities and advantages to be gained by creating links between the co-operative sector and Saskatchewan media enterprises. Co-operative and nonprofit media practitioners promote the same informed, involved citizen engagement in governance that is the lifeblood of co-operativism. However, under-resourced enterprises that lack personal ties to the co-operative movement are unlikely to have the skills and networks needed to navigate the road to successful co-operative formation unaided. If media practitioners have not explored co-operative routes, it is not because they are uninterested:

> I think it's really needed and worth doing, exploring any possible inroad with the co-op movement, probably linked to a co-operative organizing model.… I think it's worth doing because there are resources there that are not being tapped at all that are potentially, there's at least the forms of democratic governance there and some affinity potentially. (D. Mitchell, personal communication, June 12, 2012)

Of particular use would be education on the different types of co-operative options available for media organizations. For example, *Briarpatch*'s staff and board initially rejected forming a worker co-operative because they felt that an ownership model would damage community ties. In retrospect, this was a decision that worked for the particular time and circumstances; the maintenance of a nonprofit board was one source of social networks that repeatedly rescued the magazine in times of crisis. This does not mean that a worker co-op could not have provided other unforeseen strengths, or that other models of co-operativism would not be fruitful in the future. A multi-stakeholder co-operative, as instituted by *the Dominion*, might have allowed *Briarpatch* to retain, and even improve, valuable community involvement. As well, a consumer co-operative structure—through which owner-members would receive the product/service of relevant news—could address Valerie Zink's desire to establish a dues-paying culture among the magazine's younger demographic. David Mitchell's

musings that it may be time for *Briarpatch* to revisit co-operativism represents a potential opportunity for the co-operative movement to re-establish its history of co-operative media activity on the Prairies.

The lack of contact to date implies co-operative educators and developers need themselves to develop a targeted strategy to proactively examine opportunities to link up with third sector media practitioners, as well as a strategy to step in alongside media workers when commercial assets go up for sale. One first step would be to circulate and discuss Co-operatives UK's report on co-operative solutions to the media crisis (Boyle, 2012), the organization's case study on the West Highland Free Press (Co-operatives UK, n.d.), and the resulting co-operative education campaign *How To Make Your Local News Work*, hosted at www.uk.coop.makethenews. If proactive engagement follows, it should be undertaken with the understanding that the end goal of support for third sector media is not to spread a controlled message about co-operativism, but rather to create a healthy media ecology that serves the public interest, thereby moving people toward social action. With this in mind, Verma (2004) states, "Unless freedom of expression and operational ownership is provided to the communities, any serious headway cannot be made as far as full impact of community media in the co-operative sector is concerned" (p. 52).

7.4.3 Indigenous Governments and Organizations

This dissertation has demonstrated that provincial and federal government support for Indigenous media has been unpredictable and mired in colonialist constructs. Established media enterprises such as MBC and APTN have gravitated to advertising as the primary means of support. This provides relative freedom from heavy-handed government controls and onerous reporting regimes. At the same time, it introduces a market model that, in its pursuit of mass audiences, is best known for flattening and homogenizing cultures, rather than celebrating and

protecting them. In any case, small-scale, localized Indigenous media undertakings such as Creek FM do not have comparable access to provincial and national advertising markets; the markets are even thinner in very remote and northern communities. The case of Creek FM revealed non-market revenue sources, namely community-fundraising and band funding, are also limited. Despite the limitations, several Saskatchewan Indigenous communities do invest in third sector media, particularly in the community radio sector. In addition to Creek FM, there are five 'Native Type B' community radio licensees in Saskatchewan, situated in Mistawasis, Muskeg Lake, White Bear, and Cowesses First Nations, and in the town of La Ronge (CRTC, radio station and TV lists, 2014). On the print side, the Aboriginal Multi-Media Society publishes *Saskatchewan Sage*, and there have also been scattered private Indigenous newspapers and magazines, the most long-lived example today being *Eagle Feather News*.

As argued by Avison and Meadows (2000), Indigenous-run media have developed as a key frontline strategy for countering the supplanting of Indigenous culture by a media-empowered tidal wave of colonialist attitudes and settler cultural products. The path to financial resources for these enterprises has narrowed considerably in recent decades, suggesting the need to seek new paths. In terms of access to financing, in 2014 there are 55 Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs), including six in Saskatchewan:

- Beaver River Community Futures
- Clarence Campeau Development Fund
- Northern Enterprise Fund
- Saskatchewan Indian Equity Foundation
- SaskMetis Economic Development Corporation
- Visions North CFDC (National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association, 2014)

These organizations were created in the 1980s and 1990s in consultation with the federal government to provide financing for Aboriginal business and community projects. Hammond Ketilson and Brown (2009) point out, however, that the AFIs themselves have difficulty meeting their operating costs and maintaining their capital base. They posit that a co-operative model could help AFIs maintain their social mission while staying afloat financially (Hammond Ketilson & Brown, 2009). Indeed, Indigenous third sector media development itself could tie into broader strategies of co-operative development in Aboriginal communities, as advocated by Hammond Ketilson and MacPherson (2001). The history of co-operative media enterprises, and rising interest in pursuing media co-operatives as an alternative to the fallibilities of commercial media, could provide strong models for the establishment of small-scale co-operatives focused on serving and empowering community members.

Saskatchewan AFIs also support community economic development (CED) projects, which offer another potential inroad for media development projects. Some Saskatchewan First Nations have begun to explore media enterprises within the context of CED. One of the more advanced examples was put forward by Cowesses First Nation in 2009, on the understanding that "good communication is the foundation of good governance and as such, it is important that the channels of communication remain open, transparent and easily accessible" (Cowesses First Nation, 2009, p. 53). The CED plan envisioned a community radio station and "a more well-rounded newsletter" (p. 79). In 2014 the plan was stalled in a political transition from one band council to the next, revealing the considerable challenge of growing strong enough roots in the early years to survive unforeseen political and economic shifts. However, the idea of including media as a component of community economic development, also suggested by Wolseley's mayor, is a concept worth raising in any Saskatchewan community that is undertaking CED planning.

On a provincial level, organizations representing the political interests of Aboriginal people have long been excluded from federal media development assistance, based on a policy framework that seeks to separate Indigenous media practice from collective struggles against colonialism (Avison & Meadows, 2000). Métis and First Nations organizations countered this by setting up media societies to publish *New Breed* and *Saskatchewan Indian*. While this strategy worked for many years, it was not enough to carry the magazines through the economic constraints of our current neoliberal era. Both magazines folded in the first decade of the 21st century, with *Saskatchewan Indian* publishing only sporadically since 2003. Given the precipitous funding cuts that Indigenous organizations and publishers have experienced in recent years, the financial barriers to reviving these provincial magazines are considerable. One factor worth considering, however, is that print magazines remain a popular option; total Canadian circulation rose from 79.9 million in 2010 to 83.5 million in 2012, with 71% of readers preferring printed copies over online versions (Magazines Canada, 2013). More importantly, while Saskatchewan does have established print/online publications such as *Saskatchewan Sage* and *Eagle Feather News*—as well as newer newspapers such as *Treaty 4 News*, launched in 2014—such publications are primarily focused on news reportage. While valuable as sources of relevant information, neither this print genre nor the province's Aboriginal broadcast undertakings fully replace *Saskatchewan Indian* and *New Breed*'s signature roles of critiquing policy and articulating Indigenous struggles for political and cultural sovereignty, as emblified by articles such as "Colonial policy impacts on Aboriginal rights and titles" (Palmer, 1985) and "Governing ourselves: The journey begins" (Leask, Long & Myo, 2003). Such voices are critical for breaking free from the colonial past that haunts all aspects of life in Saskatchewan and Canada, for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike. Although reviving or replacing these titles in today's economic climate seems a daunting task, it may be possible to share the

burden through creative financing options among AFIs and co-operative lenders, to gain the support of educational institutions, libraries, and labour unions through bulk subscriptions sales, and to instigate a sustaining donor system similar to *Briarpatch*'s Deeper Roots campaign. Of course, all of this presupposes available staff time to undertake market research and develop business plans, areas where university researchers and co-operative/CED mentors may be able to provide assistance.

7.4.4 Universities

Among interviewees, Don Kossick of *Making The Links* mentioned the highest degree of linkages with Saskatchewan's two universities, the University of Regina (U of R) and the University of Saskatchewan (U of S). He noted that *Making The Links* had partnered with the community health and epidemiology department to produce a half-hour program on health issues, and has also linked with Indigenous Studies classes at the U of S, through which students have created radio shows as class projects. As well, students taking an alternative media course at the U of R School of Journalism have contributed content as part of their coursework (personal communication, March 20, 2012). *Briarpatch* and *Prairie Dog* have also received student community service learning placements through the School of Journalism. These partnerships rely on personal networking channels more so than on formalized institutional partnerships, and represent a lightly tapped resource with significant room for building stronger linkages.

It should be noted that universities themselves engage in considerable third sector media production. Throughout North America, the student press and campus radios are supported by student fees and advertising, while university departments produce scholarly, literary, and arts journals, as well as departmental magazines aimed at wider audiences. One local example is *The Crow*, the University of Regina School of Journalism's annual collection of creative nonfiction. The same neoliberal trends and funding cuts that affect magazines like *Briarpatch* also affect

university-based publications, a dramatic example being the expulsion of periodicals with circulations of less than 5,000 from the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), a move that cut deeply into the budgets of academic journals (Adams, 2010). Although SSHRC funding is available to support journals via a competitive adjudication process (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 2014), PAP had the advantage of being a universally applied distribution grant; its loss was felt across the board. Perhaps a first step to strengthening campus-community media linkages is to recognize that universities are also part of a third sector of media production, a realization that would set the stage for more solidarity and shared purpose with community-based media practitioners.

A fine example of the fruits of such solidarity is the University of the Western Cape's (UWC) role in sparking the development of South Africa's Bush Radio in the early 1990s: "It was the beginning of a new media model for South Africa—a radio station not owned by either the apartheid state or commercial barons. This concept was in line with UWC's transformation programme, intended to ensure community participation in university life," radio activist Zane Ibrahim observed (Ibrahim, 2004). In Canada, 105.5 CHRY FM is an example of an independent nonprofit community radio station housed on a university campus, York University. The station draws its programming and volunteer base from both the campus and the surrounding community, a neighbourhood with a high percentage of minority and new Canadian residents (Khan, 2007). Similarly, *New Breed* found a university home in its final years of production, through a partnership with the Gabriel Dumont Insitute of Native Studies and Applied Research (GDI). Today, GDI remains the holder of *New Breed*'s extensive digital archive. As well, James Winter's speech to the 1996 SFL convention stands as an example of the role academic intervention can play in sparking discussion and action in support of third sector media.

"Community media work has always been hard to fund, and it's only getting tougher with today's economy. Meanwhile, universities are looking for creative ways to reach out to the communities that surround them and have the resources to do it," observes Ross (2009). As universities are not generally well positioned to fulfill the role of donors and granting agencies, a more promising area of mutual support is capacity sharing. Local accountability journalism is, ultimately, an act of research—and universities are full of student and faculty researchers seeking intriguing topics. Both Saskatchewan universities have units dedicated to linking community needs with university-based researchers: the Community Research Unit (CRU) at the U of R and the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) at the U of S. Additionally, such institutes seek alternative methods of knowledge translation and dissemination, an area of strength among community-based media practitioners. Another significant 'fit' is the indelible link between press freedom and academic freedom, particularly appropriate in that academic freedom is also under considerable stress today (Findlay & Bidwell, 2009).

The question, of course, is how to transfer this 'fit' into working collaborations. Practitioners interviewed frequently mentioned that the main barrier to investigative journalism is not being able to pay for the long hours of research required. With this in mind, it seems sensible to bring the research capacities and the training needs of universities into the mix. To do so requires a shared understanding of third sector journalism as a highly active and public form of community-based research. University research capacity can also be loaned toward business planning and market research, where media practitioners said they feel under-resourced and overwhelmed. In 2014, the U of R Community Research Unit undertook its first linkage in this regard, assisting the development of a pilot issue of the journal *Of Land and Living Skies: A Community Journal on Place, Land and Learning*, published by the Saskatchewan Outdoor Environmental Education Association (SOEEA/SaskOutdoors). This was preceded by debates

regarding recognition of a pilot issue as an established market research method for publishers, an indication that the world of media production was unfamiliar—although not unwelcomed—territory for many of the board members overseeing this unit (Minutes of the meeting of the CRU board of directors on Thursday, October 17, 2013). For campus-community research institutions, the development of a stream of activity specifically directed toward campus-community media linkages would doubtless help create a smoother path toward mutual capacity building. The existence of a School of Journalism in Saskatchewan is an obvious potential catalyzing organization to help set in motion such a course of action.

Findlay and Findlay (2014) frame solidarity with community-based media practitioners as one of many potential steps toward the decolonization of universities, and toward development of a co-creative class; in so doing, such work helps put knowledge to work for and with communities. The Art of Regional Change (ARC) at the University of California Davis provides a working example of a project that could be adapted to a Saskatchewan context. Founder Jesikah Maria Ross describes how she convinced university faculty to support the project, which saw university and community members working together on media arts projects:

> In discussions with potential partners at UC Davis, I pitched ARC as a strategic collaboration. I spelled out how it could give the university a platform for doing innovative campus-community engagement projects while generating media products that support university research, classroom teaching and community development. I spoke about how ARC could provide communities access to university resources (scholars, students, artists) which would entice local groups to participate and how it would pioneer a new venue for media makers to do public projects. I also pointed out how the university could make good on its commitment to serving the broader community though ARC projects. (Ross, 2009, para.11)

Another capacity asset is dedicated research chairs. With UNESCO's first community media chair, Dr. Vinod Pavarala, appointed in 2011 (UNESCO, 2011), the University of Hyderabad has shown leadership in campus engagement with community media. A featured project is Bol Hyderabad 90.4 FM, a radio administered by a board comprised of campus and

community representatives, under a mandate that includes "impartial, fair and immediate local coverage" and "the development of a culture of critical and constructive debate and, in this context, to ensure that all sectors of this community get a fair opportunity to state their views and concerns on air" (Bol Hyderabad 90.4 FM). While the likelihood of gaining a UNESCO chair in Saskatchewan is slim, the Canada Research Chair program could potentially bring focused third sector media research to the province. However, even without such additional resources, a base for mutually beneficial collaboration already exists and merely awaits the spark of action.

Finally, universities have long played an important role by providing public education in the critical consumption of media products and systems. This role is ideally not restricted to the classroom but also seeks out public venues, as illustrated by James Winter's speech to labour delegates. University faculty and students would do well to explore multiple arenas for public intervention—not only to critique existing systems, but also to learn from, critique, popularize, and promote alternative systems that too often escape academic attention.

7.5 Moving Forward

The major findings of this research are eloquently expressed by third sector media practitioners and their supporters in many ways, and in many contexts. Their media activities, deeply embedded in Saskatchewan's social and political discourse, provide a path to community-building and local governance, and help hold power to account when the rights and interests of citizens are threatened. Furthermore, the cases studied reveal a surprising level of organizational resiliency that draws much of its strength from supportive community networks. The level of social interchange with readers, audiences, and participants stands in stark contrast to the sense of powerlessness and alienation generated by today's barrage of non-contextualized information, a condition described by Bawdon and Robinson (2009) as a loss of identity and authority.

The research finds, however, that the challenges have deepened considerably in recent decades, testing this resiliency. The withdrawal of federal media development supports—once a hallmark of Canadian cultural policy—has been swift and precipitous, leaving the future of Saskatchewan's third sector media enterprises in jeopardy. The extent of the problem is largely unknown outside media practitioner circles, even among civil society allies. This appears to relate, in no small part, to a lack of recognition of nonprofit, co-operative, and volunteer media as a sector distinct unto itself—thus obscuring the cumulative impact when scores of small undertakings shed staff and reduce operations in multiple locations.

At the same time, there is increasing discourse that suggests third sector media are a viable option to fill at least some of the media voids caused by retreating state and commercial broadcasters. As stated in the introductory chapter, the idea of nonprofit journalism is no longer relegated to the fringes of the media landscape, a concept passionately expressed by Lewis (2007): "The journalists are ready. More than at any time I can remember in the past 30 years, respected journalists in the U.S. and around the world, frustrated by what has become of their profession, appear to be increasingly interested in … starting, leading or working in new nonprofit newsrooms locally, nationally, and even internationally" (para.28).

Thus we arrive at a crossroads, where the need for and the *promise* of third sector media shines brightly, but the *conditions* of third sector media sustainability are increasingly arduous. This dissertation cannot provide definitive recommendations for mapping and smoothing the road ahead. Instead, I have put forward ideas for further research and action, to be carried out in collaboration among media practitioners and allied communities of support, in the spirit of enhancing our shared media ecology and social economy. My initial positionality has expanded considerably during the course of this project, in the form of personal contacts, understanding, and involvement. I look forward to meeting with research participants to discuss and debate the

themes that emerged, and to take part in the actions they devise. Moreover, I look forward to sharing the thoughts of Saskatchewan practitioners with my past research contacts in the Global South and former East Bloc, who contributed the original spark for this inquiry. Thus we move forward together, as recommended by Lewin, on "a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the result of the action" (as cited by Susman & Everad, 1978, p. 587). We are compelled to do so by Canada's legacy as a global pioneer in democratizing media interventions such as participatory filmmaking, community access television, Indigenous community radio, and distribution assistance for tiny publications in a vast land. These innovations were not gifted to us by government, but were built by citizens and rightfully deserve our ongoing care and attention. In the words of Randy Stonechild, "If you can make it through the tough times, when the tough times are done, you're going to be that much farther ahead" (personal communication, July 9, 2014). It is my hope that the ideas and concepts presented in these pages comprise one more step in a journey that will indeed place us one step further ahead than where we stand today.

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APPENDIX A
LETTER OF INVITATION

(Date and Recipient Address)
Dear _____:

I am contacting you to invite your organization to participate in a research study titled 'Independent Voices: Third Sector Media Development and Local Governance' and supervised by Professor Isobel M. Findlay, University of Saskatchewan. This study will examine the state of Third Sector media in Saskatchewan, (non-commercial, non-state media enterprises, typically organized as a co-operatives, nonprofit societies, or ad hoc citizens' groups) and its relationship to citizen participation and local governance.

Your assistance is requested in making contact with individuals in your organization who could potentially provide information relevant to the topic. The research procedure will consist of in-person interviews with individuals and/or small groups, and may include brief follow-up interviews for further information as needed, carried out in person or by phone and email correspondence. The typical time commitment for interview is 90-120 minutes. Participant confidentiality and anonymity will be protected to the fullest extent, if requested by study participants.

Participation will help advance understanding of how Third Sector media impact citizen participation, and how they interact with civil society and government agencies. It is hoped that this study will advance public knowledge of both the barriers and opportunities facing this sector, and will provide ideas on how civil society organizations and government bodies can appropriately assess and support independent media activity.

I would like to arrange a meeting with you of approximately one half hour in duration, at a location and time convenient to you, to provide additional background information and answer your questions, which will help you to identify appropriate potential study participants. I would then ask you to contact the recommended participants and ask them to contact me by email at patricia.elliott@usask.ca or by telephone at 306-585-4449.

I will follow up this letter with a phone call. Meanwhile, if you are interested in learning more about this study, please contact me at patricia.elliott@usask.ca or by telephone at 306-585-4449 and more details will be provided.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, please contact the University of Saskatchewan's Behavioural Research Ethics board at 306-966-2084 or ethics.office@usask.ca

Sincerely,

Patricia W. Elliott, Ph.D candidate
Interdisciplinary Studies, University of Saskatchewan
c/o Centre for the Study of Co-operatives
University of Saskatchewan
101 Diefenbaker Place Saskatoon, SK S7N 5B8
Phone: (306) 966-8509

APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a research project titled 'Independent Voices: Third Sector Media Development and Local Governance.' Please read this form carefully, and feel free to ask questions.

Researcher:
Patricia W. Elliott, Ph.D. candidate, Interdisciplinary Studies (Co-operative Studies concentration), University of Saskatchewan c/o Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan 101 Diefenbaker Place Saskatoon, SK S7N 5B8 Phone: (306) 966-8509 patricia.elliott@usask.ca.
Supervisor: Dr. Isobel M. Findlay, Management and Marketing, Edwards School of Business, University of Saskatchewan, 25 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, SK S7N 5A7; (306) 966-2385; Email findlay@edwards.usask.ca.

Purpose and Procedure: The information you provide will be used in a Ph.D. dissertation that will examine the role of Third Sector media development in civic participation and local governance, and will address questions of how to appropriately and effectively support such media activity. Third Sector media is defined as media activity undertaken by cooperatives, nonprofit societies and ad hoc citizens' groups.

Participation will take the form of an interview (audio-taped, if you agree) of no more than 2 hours, to be scheduled at the time and location of your convenience. The researcher may contact you for follow-up information as needed, via telephone and email. The nature of the interview will be an active, informally structured discussion of the subject matter. To help you prepare, you will be provided an outline of topic areas in advance. You may suggest additional questions or discussion items, to assist the researcher in gaining a well-rounded picture.

You may also be invited to participate in a focus group that includes members of your organization. The focus group purpose will be to discuss and identify how your organization's media activities have impacted civic participation and social change. A separate consent form will be provided for that process.

Interview excerpts and summaries will be used in a Ph.D. dissertation and in related journal articles and presentations to conferences and citizens' forums. The completed dissertation will be available in the University of Saskatchewan library and online. Participant consent will be sought for any articles that will make use of their data, with specific information about the journal and/or conference proposed.

Potential Benefits: Your participation will help advance understanding of how Third Sector media impact citizen participation, and how they interact with civil society and government agencies. It is hoped that this study will advance public knowledge of both the barriers and opportunities facing this sector, and will provide ideas on how civil society organizations and government bodies can appropriately assess and support independent media activity.

Potential Risks: There are no known risks associated with this research project. If you are aware of any risks to you or your organization, please inform the researcher in advance of the interview.

Storage of Data: Raw data from the interviews consisting of the original digital audiofiles, transcripts and notes will be securely stored by the doctoral candidate's supervisor, Dr. Isobel Findlay at the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, University of Saskatchewan, for the required period of five years following the completion of the research project. Following this period all original data gathering documents will be destroyed. To maintain confidentiality, identifying materials such as consent forms will be kept separate from transcripts.

Confidentiality: You may request anonymity, or ask to use a pseudonym (fake name). Due to the nature of this study, however, it cannot be guaranteed that readers of resulting published works will not be able to ascertain your identity from the information provided. The researcher recognizes that confidentiality issues may vary and carry different levels of risk depending on the participant's role in the organization and on the nature of the participant's particular comments. In advance of the interview, or at any time during or after the interview, please discuss with the researcher any concerns you may have. The researcher will err on the side of caution on all matters that may call into question issues of anonymity of study participants who request anonymity. Every effort will be made to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of research participants who request such protection.

Right to Withdraw: Your participation is voluntary, and you may answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time, without penalty or prejudice of any sort. This may be accomplished by written or verbal request to the researcher. If you withdraw from the research project at any time, any data that you have contributed will be destroyed at your request. Your right to withdraw from the study will apply until the research has been completed and the data has been pooled. After this it is possible that some form of research dissemination will have already occurred and it may not be possible to withdraw your data.

The researcher will advise you of any new information that could have a bearing on your decision to participate. You may at any time during the course of the research contact the researcher to provide additional information and updates, or to amend information provided.

Review of transcripts: After your interview, and prior to the data being included in dissertation or other publication or presentation, you will be given the opportunity to review the transcript of your interview, and to add, alter, or delete information from the transcripts as you see fit.
Would you like to review the interview transcript?
□ YES □ NO

Questions: If you have any questions concerning the research project, please ask at any point; you are also free to contact the researcher at the numbers provided if you have other questions. This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board on **(insert date).** Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Ethics Office (966-2084). Out of town participants may call collect.

Follow-Up or Debriefing: Participants will be informed when the research is published, with information about where to access a copy. An electronic copy will be provided on request. Participants will be invited to attend/take part in any public meetings or presentations arising from the findings that are organized or co-organized by the researcher.

Consent to Participate: I have read and understood the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my/our questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project, understanding that I may withdraw my consent at any time. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____	_____
(Name of Participant)	(Date)
_____	_____
(Signature of Participant)	(Signature of Researcher)

APPENDIX C
QUESTION TEMPLATE

Detailed Question Template

The questions below are part of the semi-structured interview guide. Not all of the questions will be appropriate for every interview, nor is the list exhaustive. Rather, the semi-structured interview approach will allow the interviewer to probe the themes in more depth. However, these questions are an approximate guide to the kind of questions that will be asked.

MEDIA PRACTITIONERS

History of Person and Organization – Questions will include the individual's personal experience and history with the organization and larger networks of Third Sector media and related social movements, as well as a historical overview of the organization, its purpose and mandate. Personal information will also be solicited, including motivations for movement involvement. Sample questions include:

1.1 Tell me about yourself and how you came to be involved in Third Sector media (commonly referred to as community media) activities? Was there a formative experience that led you to this involvement?

2.1 What motivates your commitment to Third Sector media work?

3.1 Do your political, social, and/or personal values influence, or reinforce, those commitments? How?

4.1 Have you been actively involved in other social movements, such as the students, women's or labour movements for example?

5.1 Have these involvements influenced your work in Third Sector media? How?

6.1 Have you ever participated in formal media training?

7.1 How were you involved in media work before your involvement with this organization? Were you involved with other organizations like this?

8.1 How did you become involved with this organization?

9.1 Tell me about this organization; what is its purpose? Its history? How is it organized?

10.1 How does it relate to wider networks and community aspirations?

11.1 Is the organization part of provincial, national or international networks? If so, please describe these networks and your organization's relationship to them.

12.1 What are, or do you hope will be, the lasting contributions of your organization?

Social role theme– *Questions will include the individual's personal perceptions of the role of community media in public life. Sample questions include:*

1. How would you define Third Sector (or community) media? What are the distinctions, if any, among Third Sector media, mainstream media, and social media?

2. What role does your media work play in your surrounding social/political context?

3. What voice(s) do you feel your Third Sector media work represents?

4. How would you describe your primary geographical base?

5. How would you describe your audience?

6. How would you describe your volunteers?

7. How would you describe your organization's goals and objectives?

8. Are there particular community aspirations that you feel strongly connected to? If so, please describe your connection.

9. Do you see yourself as primarily a catalyst of public discourse or as a reporter/witness?

10. Who do you feel welcomes your role and why? If possible, provide examples.

11. Who do you feel doesn't welcome your role, and why? If possible, provide examples.

12. Do you feel you have contributed to social change? If so, what would you identify as a significant social change precipitated by your media activities?

13. Do you think your work advances civic participation? If so, how? Can you provide some examples?

Sustainability and Development theme – Questions will include the individual's personal perceptions of the state of community media, including its relationship to civic participation.

1. What would you say have been the greatest obstacles to your development and sustainability as a Third Sector media organization?

2. Who/what would you identify as your allies in this struggle?

3. Who/what would you identify as your opponents?

4. What is your organization's experience with formal media development support? (This might include grants, training programs, material support, etc.)

5. What is your organization's experience with informal media development support? (This might include purchase of ads, invitations to fundraise at conferences, exclusive news interviews and tips, etc.)

6. Have these supports come with any particular expectations on the part of the funders/supporters? Did these expectations match or conflict with your organizational goals?

7. Do you have any support from or connection to the co-operative movement?

8. Thinking of your stated obstacles to development and sustainability, what is your personal opinion of the effectiveness of these supports in helping your overcome such obstacles?

9. What in your opinion would be the best way to support your development as a community media organization?

Closing questions– *Questions will attempt to provide an opportunity for participants to voice any issues not covered that they feel is important and to further develop ideas emerging from the dialogue. Sample questions include:*

1. What is your overall feeling about your organization's future? Are you optimistic / pessimistic? Why?

2. Are there any questions I haven't asked but I should have?

3. Do you have any questions of me?

4. Would you be interested in participating in an open discussion forum with other Third Sector media practitioners and their allies/supporters, to discuss Third Sector media sustainability and development?

5. If yes, what are your ideas for structuring such a forum – location, within other planned gatherings, participants, timing, topics, etc?

Wrap up remarks

- Thanks.
- Would you like a copy of the final study?
- Would you suggest any people to whom you think I should also speak on these issues?
- Restate that I will provide an opportunity for review of attributed quotations. Insure I have correct contact information.

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTERS

History of Person and Organization – *Questions will include the individual's personal experience and history with Third Sector media development, including motivations for involvement. Questions will include the organization's history of support for media development, as well as a historical overview of the organization, its purpose and mandate. Sample questions include:*

Tell me about yourself and how you came to be involved in Third Sector media development? Did you have a prior interest or experience in this field?

1. Do you feel you have a personal commitment to media development?

2. What is your perception of the social and political role of Third Sector media? What is it, and/or what should it be?

3. Does your organization have a historical commitment to Third Sector media development? If so, describe.

4. Does your organization currently have a formal program of support for Third Sector media development? If so, describe.

5. Do you consider Third Sector media part of your organization's social movement network?

6. Does your organization rely on Third Sector media – for example for information dissemination, event coverage, platform for debate, citizen engagement, etc?

7. Does your organization informally support Third Sector media development? If so, describe.

8. If you do not have a program of support, explain why.

9. If you do, how would you describe the main goals and objectives of your Third Sector media development support?

10. Do you support mainstream media, formally or informally? In what ways? Do your media support activities draw a distinction between Third Sector and mainstream media?

11. What, if any, criteria do Third Sector media organizations need to fulfill to gain your support?

12. What are some common problems/barriers you have encountered in dealing with Third Sector media organizations?

13. What are, or do you hope will be, the lasting contributions of your organization to media development?

Social role theme – *Questions will include personal and organizational perceptions of the role of Third Sector media in public life. Sample questions include:*

1. How would you personally define Third Sector (or community) media? What, if any, are the distinctions between Third Sector media, mainstream media and social media?

2. Do you feel Third Sector media plays a role in its surrounding social/political context?

3. Is this role primarily positive or negative?

4. How does this role connect to your organizational goals and objectives?

5. Has your organization encountered any specific difficulties in its support of Third Sector media? Are there any activities your organization regrets supporting?

6. Do you think Third Sector media work advances civic participation? If so, how? If not, why not? Can you provide some examples?

Sustainability and Development theme – Questions will include perceptions of the state of community media, including its relationship to civic participation.

1. What would you say have been the greatest obstacles to development and sustainability of Third Sector media organizations?

2. If your organization is supporting Third Sector media development, what, if any, expectations does it have of the media organizations receiving support? What is your personal opinion of the effectiveness of your support work?

3. If your organization is not supporting Third Sector media development, is it something that has ever been discussed within your organization? Do you think there is interest within your organization for providing such support? What conditions would be required to support Third Sector media organizations?

4. What in your opinion would be the best way to support Third Sector media development?

Closing questions– *Questions will attempt to provide an opportunity for participants to voice any issues not covered that they feel is important and to further develop ideas emerging from the dialogue. Sample questions include:*

1. What is your overall feeling about the future of your organization's support for Third Sector media development? Are you optimistic / pessimistic? Why?

2. Are there any questions I haven't asked but I should have?

3. Do you have any questions of me?

4. Would you be interested in participating in an open discussion forum with other Third Sector media practitioners and their allies/supporters, to discuss Third Sector media sustainability and development?

5. If yes, what are your ideas for structuring such a forum – location, within other planned gatherings, participants, timing, topics, etc.?

Wrap up remarks

- Thanks.
- Would you like a copy of the final study?
- Would you suggest any people to whom you think I should also speak on these issues?
- Restate that I will provide an opportunity for review of attributed quotations. Insure I have correct contact information.

SMALL GROUP PARTICIPANTS

As stated in the ethics application, selected media organizations will be invited to participate in a Most Significant Change Technique (MSCT) guided group discussion. This process involves one catalyzing question for program volunteers and staff:

1. In the past (*participants define date range*), what has been the most significant change in your community that your media activity has contributed to, and how have you experienced media in your lives in this context?

Additional questions:

1. Would you be interested in participating in an open discussion forum with other Third Sector media practitioners and their allies/supporters, to discuss Third Sector media sustainability and development?

2. If yes, what are your ideas for structuring such a forum? – location, within other planned gatherings, participants, timing, topics, etc.

Wrap up remarks

- Thanks.
- Would you like a copy of the final study?
- Would you suggest any people to whom you think I should also speak on these issues?
- Restate that I will provide an opportunity for review of attributed quotations. Insure I have correct contact information.

APPENDIX D
SAMPLE ACCESS TO INFORMATION REQUEST

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

Info Source

Access to Information Request Form

Protected when completed

For official use only

Access to Information Act

Step 1
Determine which federal government institution is most likely to have the information you are seeking. Decide whether you wish to submit an informal request for the information or a formal request under the *Access to Information Act*. If you wish to make an informal request, contact the appropriate institution. The address can likely be found in ***Info Source*** publications which are available across Canada, generally in major public and academic libraries, constituency offices of federal Members of Parliament and most federal government public enquiry and service offices.

Step 2
To apply for information under the *Access to Information Act*, complete this form or a written request mentioning the Act. Describe the information being sought and provide any relevant details necessary to help the institution find it. If you require assistance, refer to ***Info Source (Sources of Federal Government Information)*** for a description of program records held by the institution or contact its Access to Information Coordinator.

Step 3
Forward the access request to the Coordinator of the institution holding the information. The address is listed in the "Introduction" to ***Info Source***. Enclose a $5.00 money-order or cheque payable to the Receiver General of Canada. Depending upon the type or amount of information being sought, you may be asked to authorize further charges.

Step 4
When you receive an answer to your request, review the information to determine whether you wish to make a further request under the Act. You also have the right to complain to the Access to Information Commissioner should you believe that you have been denied any of your rights under the Act.

Federal Government Institution
Canadian Heritage

Provide details regarding the information being sought
Any and all communication and documentation regarding applications to funding programs under the Canada Magazine/Periodicals Fund, including email and phone records for the following:
Canadian Dimension magazine 2009 to present
This Magazine 2007 to present
Our Times 2007 to present

Method of access preferred
☒ Receive copies of originals (CD) ☐ Examine originals in government offices

Name of applicant
Patricia Elliott

Street, address, apartment: (Personal contact information removed)
City or town: Regina
Province: SK
Postal Code:
Telephone number:

This request for access to information under the *Access to Information Act* is being made by
☒ a Canadian citizen, permanent resident or another individual present in Canada, or ☐ a corporation present in Canada

Signature
Date: Dec. 20, 2012

The personal information provided on this form is protected under the provisions of the *Access to Information Act* and the *Privacy Act*.

TBC 350-57 (Rev. 2000/06/19)

Canada

APPENDIX E
SCN / CITY TV WEB CONTENT, SELECTED DATES

Home Page Content – SCN / City TV website

October 7, 2001	Feb. 2, 2005	July 7, 2009	July 31, 2013
Links to other pages, including annual reports and information about distance education.	Invitation to viewers to show their Saskatchewan Homecoming 2005 videos on SCN News about the documentary *The Corporation*, to be aired on SCN Featured program: *A People's Century Series* (Saskatchewan history), episode about Father Athol Murray of Notre Dame, SK	News story: awards for two SCN programs, *Wapos Bay* (aboriginal children's series) and *Out in the Cold* (short film on the deaths of Aboriginal men in police custody) News story: Five SCN original programs received Golden Sheaf awards Link to Request for Proposals for original content Featured program: *A Few Good Men and Women* (reality-style documentary on the Saskatchewan Police College)	Advertising scroll Featured Programs: *Wipeout* (US game show) *America's Got Talent* (US reality) *The Bachelorette* (US reality) *Hell's Kitchen* (US reality) Ad for Android app Twitter feed and Facebook link Viewer poll (What show are you most excited about this fall?) Ads for Target department store and a Canadian Federation of Women's report on violence against women 'Must-watch' TV (*General Hospital, America's Got Talent*, and other top rated programs)

Sources: scn.ca Internet Archive web captures and citytv.com/saskatchewan/

Home page menu links – SCN / City TV website

October 7, 2001	Feb. 2, 2005	July 7, 2009	July 31, 2013
SCN Documents (Annual report, forms and information related to satellite service)	TV services	TV	Watch shows online
Distance learning opportunities (lists of school and university credit courses)	Education services	SCN Online	Schedule
TV listings and recipes from SCN series Cooking for Health	Satellite services, special events and legislative broadcasts	Friends of SCN	Shows
Information about SCN with link to Annual Report	Friends of SCN	Satellite services	
Contact information	Information for independent producers	Learning Services	
School Telecast Guide	Services overview	Producers	
Satellite Conferencing service information	Corporate overview (annual reports, board of directors, vision, mandate)	About	
Viewer survey – online or print form	News (press releases and job openings)	Program guide	
Connections to SCN partners, stakeholders and friends	Contact (contact info and viewer feedback form)	Request for Proposals for Original Content	
		Image Gallery – Photos of SCN events	

Sources: scn.ca Internet Archive web captures and citytv.com/saskatchewan/

APPENDIX F
COMMUNITY SUPPORT LETTERS RE. BRIARPATCH MAGAZINE, 1974 TO 1978

Author	Type	Year	Characteristics cited
Canadian Labour Congress Sask.	Labour	1974	Voice of the voiceless
Saskatoon Self-Help Council	Anti-poverty	1974	Relevant news coverage Networking and community-building
Linton Smith	Individual	1975	Voice of the voiceless
Sask Native Women	Equality-seeking	1975	Relevant news coverage
Métis Society of Sask.	Equality-seeking	1975	Relevant news coverage
Canadian Assoc. of Social Workers	Professional association	1975	Networking and community-building
Regina Community Education Centre	Adult education	1975	Networking and community-building Voice of the voiceless Relevant news coverage
Outreach Employment Services	Service agency	1975	Relevant news coverage Networking and community-building
Saskatchewan Dept of Social Services – Regina regional office	Government	1975	Support for social change Relevant news coverage Assists organization's public education goals
Alberta Health and Social Development	Government	1975	Relevant news coverage
Sask. Dept of Social Services – Estevan regional office	Government	1975	Support for social change

Author	Type	Year	Characteristics cited
K. Collier	Academic	1975	Support for social change Networking and community-building Relevant news coverage Public education
Interagency Committee on Advocacy and Voluntarism	Community	1977	Relevant news coverage Analysis/critique Voice of the voiceless
Sask. Human Rights Assoc.	Equality-seeking	1977	Relevant news coverage
Moose Jaw Women's Centre	Equality-seeking	1977	Relevant news coverage
Moose Jaw YWCA	Community	1977	Unspecified support ("long overdue service")
Community Switchboard	Service Agency	1977	Relevant news coverage Voice of the voiceless Support for social change
W. M. Harding	Individual	1977	Support for social change Relevant news coverage
Sask Coalition for Full Employment	Anti-poverty	1977	Support of social change
CUSO Sask	Development Education	1977	Voice of the voiceless Global linkages Assists group's public education and outreach Analysis/critique
Voice of the Handicapped	Equality-seeking	1977	Relevant news coverage Assists group's public education and

Author	Type	Year	Characteristics cited
			outreach
Sask Assoc for the Mentally Retarded	Equality-seeking	1977	Assists group's public education and outreach Voice of the voiceless
Sask Federation of Labour	Labour	1977	Relevant news coverage
Regina Women's Community Centre	Equality-seeking	1977	Relevant news coverage Voice of the voiceless
Glencairn Community Assoc.	Community	1977	Relevant news coverage Support of social change Public education
Regina Group for a Non-nuclear Society	Environmental	1977	Support of social change Relevant news coverage
Sask Conference of the United Church of Canada	Church	1978	Voice of the voiceless Assists group's public education and outreach Relevant news coverage

Source: *Briarpatch* office archives

APPENDIX G
CREEK FM PROGRAM SCHEDULE

All times are in Central Standard Time (CST). Source: www.creekfm.com

	Monday – Friday	Saturday	Sunday
06:00 AM	Savage Sunrise	Pow Wow Music	Pow Wow Music
07:00 AM	↓	Moccasin Road	Moccasin Road
08:00 AM	↓	*(Fri replay)*	*(Tues replay)*
09:00 AM	Old Time Fiddle (Mon, Wed, Fri), The Blues (Tue, Thurs)	Old Time Fiddle	Old Time Fiddle
10:00 AM	Moccasin Road	Moccasin Road	↓
11:00 AM	↓	*(Mon replay)*	↓
12:00 PM	CreeQuest Hour	Your Daily Cruise Down 80's Avenue	Your Daily Cruise Down 80's Avenue
01:00 PM	CreekFM Afternoons with Randy Stonechild	↓	↓
02:00 PM	↓	↓	↓
03:00 PM	↓	↓	↓
04:00 PM	↓	Moccasin Road	Moccasin Road
05:00 PM	Your Daily Cruise Down 80's Avenue	*(Wed Replay)*	*(Thurs replay)*
06:00 PM	Moccasin Road	Old Time Fiddle	Pow Wow Music
07:00 PM	*(Daily replay)*	The Blues	Moccasin Road
08:00 PM	Pow Wow Music	Saturday Night Solution	*(Fri replay)*
09:00 PM	↓	↓	The Blues
10:00 PM	Creek FM Evenings, Friday Night Oldies	↓	↓
11:00 PM	↓	↓	↓
12:00 AM	CreekFM Overnight	CreekFM Overnight	CreekFM Overnight

APPENDIX H
MAKING THE LINKS ARCHIVED PODCASTS

Human Rights

Tuesday, 20 May 2008	Oxfam on Heath, Education, Water and Sanitation as Rights
Saturday, 03 Nov. 2007	Stephen Lewis -- The Virus of Inequality

Art and Activism

Sunday, 03 May 2009	Bard of the Forest of Dean
Friday, 30 May 2008	Losing a Legend: Utah Philips
Saturday, 12 May 2007	Community Development in Winnipeg's Inner City
Saturday, 13 Dec. 2003	The Art of Making Peace
Friday, 04 April 2003	Michael Franti Spotlight

War and Peace

Tuesday, 27 Sept. 2005	Solidarity with the Soldiers ... Who Lay Down their Arms
Saturday, 13 Dec. 2003	From War to Peace

Health

Tuesday, 15 Sept. 2009	Celebrating Medicare
Friday, 20 February 2009	Global Health Watch 2
Wed., 30 August 2006	Aids: Access to Essential Medicines
Friday, 30 January 2004	Stephen Lewis -- Hope & Despair: Fighting the HIV/AIDS Pandemic
Saturday, 13 Dec. 2003	Transforming Institutions to Serve Communities
Saturday, 13 Dec. 2003	HIV/AIDS Prevention from the Bottom Up
Tuesday, 10 Sept. 2002	Stephen Lewis -- HIV/AIDS, NEPAD, & the G8
Tuesday, 05 March 2002	Rallying for Public Health Care

Gender

Wed., 10 November 2010	Missing Women, Missing News
Saturday, 13 Dec. 2003	Women of Africa

Indigenous Issues

Sunday, 22 June 2008	Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug: Defending the Land and Resisting Ontario's Colonial Mining Act
Tuesday, 06 May 2008	Local Resource Control in Northern Saskatchewan
Saturday, 03 June 2006	Winona LaDuke: Indigenous Communities in a Post-Petroleum

Economy

Friday, 02 June 2006	Winona LaDuke: Restoring Indigenous Land and Food Security
Saturday, 19 March 2005	A Little Matter of Genocide: Linking US Aggression Abroad to the Repression of Indigenous Peoples
Sunday, 28 July 2002	Native Youth Movement

Anti-Racism

Monday, 25 February 2002	Voices Against Racism

Environment

Saturday, 29 October 2011	The Walkers Against a Nuclear Waste Dump in Northern Saskatchewan
Wednesday, 29 June 2011	For Future Generations: Resisting Nuclear Waste
Friday, 15 January 2010	Reflections on Copenhagen
Thur., 10 December 2009	Update on Copenhagen
Friday, 04 December 2009	Climate Change Talks: From Bali to Poznan to Copenhagen
Sunday, 18 October 2009	Anti-Nuclear Rally in Saskatoon
Wed., 18 February 2009	Bali to Poznan to Copenhagen - Can We Save the Earth?
Friday, 13 June 2008	The Most Destructive Project on Earth: The Canadian Tar Sands
Sunday, 13 January 2008	Bali and After
Thur., 13 December 2007	Mid-Week Analysis from Bali
Tuesday, 11 December 2007	US and Australian Youth Environmental Mobilizers at Bali
Monday, 10 December 2007	Decoding the Procedings of the International Climate Change Meeting
Friday, 09 November 2007	Canada's Deadly Secret: The Nuclear Industry
Wednesday, 06 June 2007	The Real Meaning of Sustainability
Tuesday, 22 May 2007	Highgate Dam
Thursday, 22 March 2007	A Climate for Change?
Wednesday, 07 March 2007	Nuclear Power is Not the Answer
Wednesday, 07 March 2007	The Ever-present Danger of Nuclear War
Sunday, 04 March 2007	The Global Impact of Canadian Mining
Friday, 26 January 2007	Sierra Club: Politics, Energy and the Climate
Wed., 20 December 2006	Prebble Report on Renewable Energy and Conservation in Saskatchewan
Monday, 11 Dec. 2006	Boreal Beauty
Thur., 28 September 2006	Questioning Coalbed Methane Development
Monday, 22 May 2006	Sustainable Energy in Saskatchewan
Monday, 22 May 2006	Port Hope's Successful Resistance to Enriched Uranium Refining
Wed., 04 January 2006	Montreal Climate Change Conference

Politics and Democracy

Wed., 24 August 2011	Jack Layton
Thursday, 07 October 2010	Tyranny of Rights
Wed., 04 August 2010	Reflecting on the G8/G20 Protests a Month Later
Monday, 12 July 2010	Citizens voices from outside the G20 meetings
Tuesday, 22 June 2010	GASCD Remembered
Tuesday, 11 May 2010	Viva Raymond DesRochers!
Monday, 13 October 2008	Vote Against Harper
Saturday, 66 Sept. 2008	Building Civil Society

Sat., 17 November 2007	Dobbin on the Current Canadian Political Conjuncture
Thur., 13 September 2007	The Disappeared: Military Violence in Argentina
Saturday, 21 April 2007	City Governance
Wed., 17 January 2007	The Power of the Community to Create Social and Economic Change
Sunday, 30 July 2006	Big Box Backgrounder: A Former Saskatoon Councillor Discusses the Perils of Big Box Development
Thursday, 22 April 2004	Exposing the Deep Integration Agenda
Thursday, 22 April 2004	Paul Martin—CEO for Canada
Saturday, 13 Dec. 2003	Building Civil Society in Africa

Trade and Globalization

Friday, 29 April 2011	The Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement (CETA)
Friday, 11 June 2010	Remembering Seattle
Monday, 08 January 2007	Talking about Trade: What is TILMA?
Wednesday, 27 March 2002	Controversial Canadian Oil Pipeline in Ecuador
Monday, 18 February 2002	Youth and Globalization
Friday, 18 January 2002	No to the WTO
Monday, 13 Nov. 2000	The Imminent Threat of the Global Agreement on Trade in Services

Food and Agriculture

Friday, 07 November 2008	Good Crop / Bad Crop
Thursday, 31 July 2008	Seed Variety Control
Friday, 06 April 2007	Beyond Factory Farming
Wed., 09 August 2006	The Canadian Wheat Board and the Conservative Attack on Collective Marketing
Tuesday, 27 Sept. 2005	Farm Crisis
Saturday, 28 May 2005	Fighting Back Against Terminator Legislation: The National Farmer's Union & the Seed Saver Campaign
Wednesday, 25 May 2005	Biotechnology: The Ethical Dilemma
Saturday, 22 May 2004	Deep Integration and its Impacts at Home: Mad Cows and Crazy Economics
Saturday, 13 Dec. 2003	Farmers to Farmers: Putting Food on the Global Table
Saturday, 13 Dec. 2003	The Essence of the Land: The Struggle for Organic Agriculture
Saturday, 13 Dec. 2003	Global Agricultural Links
Wednesday, 12 June 2002	Bio-Justice
Thursday, 17 January 2002	Organic Farmers Sue Monsanto

Labour

Wednesday, 13 May 2009	Steelworkers Humanity Fund
Tuesday, 15 July 2008	GSU on the Line
Sunday, 13 January 2008	Locked Out CEP Workers

Wed., 28 November 2007	More Voices from the Line as CUPE 1975 Strike Continues
Saturday, 24 Nov. 2007	Voices on the Line: CUPE 1975
Friday, 26 August 2005	Locked Out: CBC Workers Speak Out on Public Broadcasting
Saturday, 13 Dec. 2003	Worker to Worker: Linking Occupational Health and Safety in Mozambique and Canada
Monday, 28 July 2003	Talking to Young Workers
Saturday, 28 June 2003	Young Workers and Unions
Thursday, 14 March 2002	Workers' World: Voices from South Africa

APPENDIX I
HIGHWAY ONE CONNECTOR AND CISE FM CONTENT, SELECTED DATES

Highway One Connector: Vol. 6, No. 8, October, 2013

Articles

Article	Category
Rural Development	Rural development—citizen involvement
Community Parks and Recreation Associations	Public education/community volunteerism
Amateur Sports Association	Public education/community volunteerism
Lethbridge Entertainment Expo	Community event
NeighbourhoodNeighbourhoodhood Power	Urban development—citizen involvement

Advertising

Advertiser	Category
Red Lilies hand-knit lace	Rural business/service
Woseley Motel	Rural business/service
Tubman Funeral	Rural business/service
Town of Mortlach promotional ad	Rural development
Ellisboro Artisans Guild and W. Photography Club annual show and sale	Community event
Grow Our Region community economic development website	Rural development
Coyote DJ services	Rural business/service
Wolseley Fall Supper	Community event
Wolseley Opera House – rental info	Rural business/service
Wolseley Virtual museum – history of the courthouse	Local culture
Wolseley Ag and Auto	Rural business/service
CISE 93 FM	Rural business/service
Hilderman's Home building centre	Rural business/service
Wolseley and District Chamber of Commerce	Rural development
Town of Wolseley promotional ad	Rural development
Charisma t-shirt shop	Rural business/service
Regina Jazz Society – membership ad	Local culture
City of Lethbridge promotional ad	Rural development
(CARP) Cdn Assoc of Retired Persons	National service
Bell satellite technician for hire	Rural business/service
Lethbridge Enterntainment Expo	Community event
Andrew Scheer, MLA	Political ad
Art Gallery of Swift Current	Local culture
Bigway Foods, Indian Head	Rural business/service
Yourlink rural internet service	Rural business/service

Advertiser	Category
Prairie Artist Guild show and sale	Community event
Volunteer Canada website	National service

CISE FM Radio content: August 28, 2012, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Program		Category
12:35	End of *Call of the Land*, Alberta Agriculture	Agriculture
12:37	Weather forecast and border crossing opening times	Local information
12:40	*Green Tips*, Regina Eco-Living	Environment/ecology
12:46	*Farmscapes Online*	Agriculture
1:50	*Happening Here* (local events)	Local information
12:58	*A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts,* WCBE Public Radio	General education
1:02	*Enviro-minute*, Conservation Ontario	Environment/ecology
1:05	Station ID, weather and highway reports	Local information
1:16	*Old Farmer's Almanac*, Almanac daily podcast	Agriculture
1:15	*Nature Watch*, NPR Exchange	Environment/ecology
1:21	*Engines of Ingenuity,* NPR Exchange	General education
1:30	*Animal Instincts,* Purina	Animal care
1:32	*Academic Minute*, Mt. Holyoke College	General education
1:46	Buddhist Dharma program	Religion
1:49	*Science Diary*, Pulse of the Planet (climate change info)	Environment/ecology
1:50	*Word of the Day*, Merrian Webster	General education
1:51	*Everyday Science*¸ Bayer	Environment/ecology
1:57	*Moment in Time*	General education
2:00	Wolseley Art Gallery	Local information
2:04	*Enviro-minute*	Environment/ecology
2:08	Station ID, weather and highways	Local information
2:20	*The Town Trekker* (Wolseley town)	Local information

Public Service Announcements / Ads

Announcement	Category
Main Street Wolseley Project	Local information
Diabetic clinic	Public health
Shop local	Local business
Sask Highways	Public safety
Volunteer Canada	Volunteerism
Ducks Unlimited	Organization
Bigway Foods	Local business

Announcement	Category
Andrew Sheer	Politics
Night Hawk Theatre	Local business
Fireworks safety	Public safety
Wolseley Gallery	Local service
Canadian Cancer Society	Public health
Consumer reports	Consumer education
SIDS	Public health
Sukanen Ship Threshing Bee	Local information
Your Link Internet	Local business
Indian Head Tech Services	Local business
Wolseley Walking Tour Guide Book	Local information
ATV safety	Public safety
Carpool.ca	Service
Heart and Stroke Foundations	Public health
Direction 2006 (train safety)	Public safety
Pioneer fiddling event	Local information
Wolseley Ag and Auto	Local business