

Cultural imperialism of the North? The expansion of the CBC Northern Service and community radio

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Abstract

Radio broadcasting spread quickly across southern Canada in the 1920s and 1930s through the licensing of private independent stations, supplemented from 1932 by the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission and by its successor, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, from 1936. Broadcasting in the Canadian North did not follow the same trajectory of development. The North was first served by the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals that operated the Northwest Territories and Yukon Radio System from 1923 until 1959. The northern Canadian radio stations then became part of the CBC. This work explores the resistance to the CBC Northern Broadcasting Plan of 1974, which envisaged a physical expansion of the network. Southern programming was extended to the North; however, indigenous culture and language made local northern programmes more popular. Efforts to reinforce local programming and stations were resisted by the network, while community groups in turn rebuffed the network's efforts to expand and establish its programming in the North, by persisting in attempts to establish a larger base for community radio.

Keywords

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Fears of American cultural domination and imperialism partially guided the creation of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission in 1932 and its successor the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in 1936. However, the possibility of the CBC assuming the role of cultural imperialist when it introduced and extended its service to the North is rarely considered. Rosemarie Kuptana, an Inuk CBC announcer and Inuit lobbyist for Nunavut, declared (in 1980) that 'the native broadcaster merely becomes a clone of the English Language Announcer, spreading news written by and for the already dominating southern culture [. . .] what actually is practiced is a kind of colonialism' (Kuptana as cited in Minority Rights Group 1994: 134).¹

Kuptana's comment refers to CBC television, but reflects the longstanding and more general resistance to the expansion of both CBC radio and television services in the 1970s. The initial impetus for the expansion of northern broadcasting through the CBC did not meet with immediate enthusiasm from the local population. The expansion manifested itself at first as a physical expansion of the network as a vehicle for southern Canadian programming. As the

¹ Inuit is the preferred term in present-day Canada to describe the nation's original population and its descendants. This work will also use the historical terms of Inuit, Eskimo, native and aboriginal in relation to the historical documents employed and historical eras in which the terms were in use.

expansion was realized, the desire for local programming by northern residents increased and was met with resistance. Finally, the delivery of local programming in larger quantities was made possible through the CBC network, but only after two decades of operations. Until the late 1970s, the growth of the CBC in the North facilitated rebroadcasting of southern programming to a far greater degree than it attempted to open up the network to local, northern cultures and languages.

In northern communities, the launch of the Anik A and Anik B satellites in 1972 and 1978, respectively, provoked both anticipation of the benefits of extended broadcasting service and anxieties over potential cultural threats posed by broadcasting originating largely from the South. This article focuses on the records, reports and correspondence leading up to the CBC Northern Broadcasting Plan of 15 March 1974, examining early resistance to the plan, its passage and execution and the conflicts arising from the expectations it created, particularly in the eastern Northwest Territories. The Plan's efforts to extend radio service reveal an interesting interplay between the CBC and the region, demonstrating widely divergent perspectives on the purpose and intent of the CBC's expansion in the North.

Resistant forces sought to preserve local languages and culture through the ideally suited medium of radio, while the physical expansion of the network (and the extension of its dominantly southern programmes) remained a priority for the CBC. The CBC is funded and overseen by the federal government but, as a Crown Corporation, has always been expected to operate in the public interest and at arm's length from the government. However, the CBC's mandate requires it to provide services that may on occasion be at odds with the reality of broadcasting. The 1967–68 *Broadcasting Act* promised a service 'in English and French, serving the special needs of geographical regions' (Section 3, subsection, g-iii). While the intention of serving 'the special needs' seems noble, the absence of other languages suggests that the needs being addressed were going to be those of the founding nations and not necessarily the Aboriginal population. The next subsection of the *Act* (g-iv) is worth noting as well, as it clearly states that the national broadcasting service should 'contribute to the development of national unity and provide for a continuing expression of Canadian unity'. The historical documents considered here indicate that the CBC's purpose as a national unifying force likely took precedence over the special needs of Canada's diverse regions.

Though not a unique case of tensions between national broadcasters and regional populations, the case of the Canadian North has rarely been critically considered in existing literature. Moreover, the hesitant reception of the CBC in the North reflects the wider cultural tensions between the Canadian national consciousness and fragile Aboriginal cultures in remote communities. Fears of cultural imperialism and lack of cultural representation were not unjustified. Similar tensions have been identified in historical accounts of the British Broadcasting Corporation's role in Scotland (McDowell 1992), Northern Ireland (McLoone 1996; Scannell 1996) and Wales (Howell 1982), as well as the Australian Broadcasting Commission's relationship with the Aborigines (Browne 1990). CBC also struggled to provide adequate service to the Canadian francophone population, and had itself come into existence as a tool for protecting Canadians from the feared cultural imperialism travelling via the airwaves from the United States. Rather than providing a linear chronological account of CBC's history in

the North, this work provides a critical account of the different aspects of the interplay between the CBC and Canada's northern communities.

Establishing the Network

According to the 1966 report of H. J. Williamson, Chief of Technical and Policy Coordination, Department of Transport,

Not so long ago the Indians were sceptical of the white man's strange notions about communications. But the vast expenditures that followed each communications breakthrough have produced results which far surpass the Shaman's fantasies. (Williamson 1966: 49)

While the changes were spectacular, most efforts to bring communication networks to the North before the 1970s were of a limited nature, concerned largely with military and commercial communication until the extension of services. Attempts to connect Canada from East to West were paralleled by efforts to join the North and South through communication and transportation networks. One of the earliest efforts was a failed attempt to connect the Yukon, the United States and Russia by telegraph in the 1850s, after several failed international efforts to connect the American continent to Europe via trans-Atlantic telegraph. The Western Union Telegraph Company explored the possibilities of this alternate route via the Bering Strait (Krumpelmann and Kennan 1972: 227–29). The attempt was abandoned in 1867 after the Anglo-American Telegraph Company completed the first successful trans-Atlantic cable in 1866. In 1898, Dawson City, Yukon, was linked by telegraph to Lake Bennett; the line was extended to Vancouver and Seattle in 1901 and operated for fifteen years (Williamson 1966). The gold rush, copper mining, military communication and oil exploration sparked the demand for communication networks, which served these endeavours more than they did the needs of local northern communities. Williamson commented that, 'Till radio came into being their only means of communication with the "outside" had been a once-a-year mail delivery' (Williamson 1966: 50). In fact, northern communities remained very isolated until the late twentieth century, despite the introduction of telegraph and radio.

The federal government initiated efforts to establish radio connections in the North when the Royal Canadian Corps of Signals (RCCS) constructed a wireless link from Dawson City to Mayo in the Yukon on 20 October 1923. The service was linked to Alaska and British Columbia in the same year. The Department of the Interior sought a more reliable means of communication and approached the Department of Defense to consider installation of army radio at the expense of the Department of the Interior ('A short history of the Northwest Territories' n.d.). In the next 35 years, 40 stations were put into operation, under the banner of the Northwest Territories and Yukon Radio System operated by the RCCS. The stations were not initially intended for broadcasting; they were established as radio-telegraph stations to deal with the post-World War I mining boom and the new need for communication.

The need for radio-telegraph communication to support military and commercial operations guided the initial installations. However, additional radio broadcasting for entertainment and general information did eventually arise, though rather haphazardly and accidentally, and completely ancillary to the plans of the RCCS. Communication among

government, military and commercial interests was the first priority; broadcasting for a general audience followed as an afterthought. Sgt. 'Red' MacLeod became one of the first broadcasters when he started a service of news, weather and messages that was very well received by the community (MacDonald, Walker and Godfrey 1968: 144). Anecdotal evidence suggests that other broadcasts followed, such as that on CJCU in the Aklavik District of the Northwest Territories in 1932, though the station had been established in 1925 (MacDonald, Walker and Godfrey 1968) These sporadic broadcasting efforts were unusual. Radio-telegraph communication remained strictly a military responsibility without change, largely to support operations not mandated to serve the community, until 1958.

More remote communities did not receive broadcasts until Canadian National Telegraph (CNT) took over from the RCCS in 1959, a year after they became part of the Department of Transport. The new landlines and microwaves installed by CNT provided Canadian news for NATO forces stationed in the North. The desire to provide broadcasts for lonely servicemen served as more of a stimulus for the establishment of a permanent network than did the desire to provide links for the locally established communities. Again, radio service for this non-local, transient population predominated, despite the unique opportunity radio might have offered isolated native people reliant on oral rather than written culture (MacDonald, Walker and Godfrey 1968: 146).

The Report of the Royal Commission on Broadcasting of 1957 (the Fowler Report) noted that radio service throughout the Yukon and the Northwest Territories was provided only by eight very low-power stations in Whitehorse, Dawson and Watson Lake, Yukon; Aklavik and Yellowknife, Northwest Territories; Fort Nelson, British Columbia; Fort Churchill, Manitoba; and Goose Bay, Labrador. While the Fowler Report highlights only the eight stations that were supplied with recorded CBC programmes in 1950, there were indeed another twenty stations operated by the RCCS (Military Communication and Electronics Museum n.d.; Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage 2003). All 28 stations would eventually be taken over by the Department of Transport (Canada, Royal Commission on Broadcasting 1957: 212–13). The arrival of the Department of Transport in the North was a fact lamented in the report of the RCCS. The historical records of the Corps explain that 'the reasoning behind the decision to hand the System over to a civilian department [. . .] was sound, still it was hard to realize that a glorious era of achievement for RC Signals was quickly coming to an end' ('A short history of the Northwest Territories' n.d.: 52). Stations were handed over one by one, in 1958 and early 1959. The RCCS report also explained that 'in 1958, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation *decided that it was their responsibility* to provide broadcast service' for the Yukon and Northwest Territories RCCS stations, which included CFYT Dawson, Yukon, CFHR Hayriver, Northwest Territories, CFYK, Yellowknife and CHAK Aklavik ('A short history of the Northwest Territories' n.d.: 54, emphasis added).

While the transition occurred smoothly, the RCCS's own history indicates by its tone that the arrival of the CBC was neither eagerly anticipated nor welcome. These changes came on the heels of briefs to the Fowler Commission from the Commissioners of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories pleading for an improvement in service. The CBC promised good service with a capital expenditure of \$25 million over the next three years for facilities and another \$450,000 in operating expenditures (Canada, Royal Commission on Broadcasting: 213). The

CBC's plans envisioned broadcasts from southern stations to serve the North. The Fowler Commission suggested that this amounted to an extraordinary expenditure for a population of a mere 30,000 people. Its aspiration, however, was that, by assigning authority to the CBC, the northern operations would become part of its ordinary service or be treated separately in the manner of the international service (Canada, Royal Commission on Broadcasting: 214).

In 1958, the Parliament voted to supply the funds for the establishment of a northern service. Over the next decade, a series of low-powered relay transmitters were slowly established across the North, and by 1968 a landline connected nearly all of the northern stations except those in the area surrounding Frobisher Bay in the eastern Arctic.² Ongoing attempts to cope with the extension of northern service resulted in the 1974 CBC Northern Broadcasting Plan, produced by local communities and the CBC to extend service to local community stations. The CBC was both welcomed and rebuffed, but the largest concerns in the local communities ultimately focused on the preservation of local language and culture.

Globally, broadcasting is closely associated with the preservation of national, regional and local languages and cultures (Brants, Hermes and van Zoonen 1998; Camporesi 2000; Chu and Alfian 1980; Daley and James 2004; Howell 1982; McChesney 2003; Raboy 2006; Romanow 2005; Taras, Pannekoek and Bakardjieva 2003; Van den Bulck 2001). Within Canada, the northern settlements initially hoped to use broadcasting to deliver much needed information and programming in aboriginal languages, not merely to receive broadcasting services from the South (Hudson 1977). Only a few local broadcasters succeeded in their efforts towards preservation of language and culture, as did the Wawata Radio Network³ broadcasting north of the 50th parallel in Ontario (Minore 1985). While Wawata Radio Network in northern Ontario is cited as a success, the development and extension of the northern service became an ongoing tug-of-war between the CBC and the local communities, who started to hope for more aboriginal language programming (Lintell 1988; Krauss as cited in Smith and Brigham 1992: 184).

These early stages of the CBC's expansion in the North show evidence of a pattern of development similar to that of southern Canadian broadcasting in the 1930s, when the CBC was in its infancy. During the CBC's novice stage, Canadian stations broadcast a haphazard collection of programming dependent on local resources; consequently programming was ad hoc and varied from station to station (MacLennan 2001). In its second stage, the CBC of the 1930s provided isolated stations with a schedule dominated by a ready supply of American network programmes. In a striking similarity, the isolated northern stations served by the RCCS experienced the CBC's own expansion in the North as a deluge of material from the outside, not US programmes this time but network programmes from the South. Starting with CFWH in Whitehorse on 10 November 1958, the CBC designed its northern service broadcast to provide the 'same news, music, plays, features and political talks as the national network', in addition to local news and programmes in English, French, 'Indian' and 'Eskimo' (MacDonald, Walker and Godfrey 1968: 143). This claim of a multilingual and multicultural programme schedule was overstated from the perspective of the northern aboriginal audience, who sought greater amounts of local programming in the schedule (CBC Frobisher Bay Listener Survey 1979; Minore 1985).

² Frobisher Bay was been renamed Iqaluit, the capital of the newly formed territory Nunavut, in 1999.

³ There are varying spellings for WaWaTa, some sources spell it WaWaTay.

The rapid expansion of the programme schedule using programmes originating in the South helped the CBC to successfully launch its northern services, but the shortfall in First Nations programming became a point of contention once the network was established.

The CBC expansion into the North paralleled and repeated earlier patterns down to the programming in the West. For instance, *Northern Messenger*, originally broadcast from Winnipeg in 1933 to the rest of the prairie provinces, at a time when the prairies were considered remote. It shifted its focus to the North in 1968, when the CBC began to originate it in Montreal. *Northern Messenger* was exactly as the name implied, a programme that allowed residents of remote communities, where phone and mail service were less consistent or non-existent, to send and receive messages by radio. Postcards were made available to the users of the service so that messages from the 'outside' could be broadcast. Frequently the messages would be read from members of the community who had gone 'outside' for education or hospital care. A sick child could write to tell his or her parents about an operation or the recovery. The same user could submit a new message every two weeks. The programme provided an extension of the two-way communication initiated by the RCCS. A perception of radio as a means to deliver personal messages persisted due to the limited access to telephones; radio was seen very much as a service rather than as a source of entertainment in its early years in the North. The need for communications, in this case personal messages, superseded the desire for entertainment or any of the programmes broadcast across the nation; these transmissions in the North were identical in nature to those in the West five decades earlier.

Yet another developmental obstacle that echoed the difficulties of the 1930s was the low rate of radio ownership, pegged at 68 per cent by a Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development survey (MacDonald, Walker and Godfrey 1968: 147). Ownership rates in the North were similar to the lower rates in rural Quebec during the 1930s, where lack of electrification and limited access to French-language programmes delayed radio set purchases (Lavoie 1971; MacLennan 2001: 59). In 1941, rural radio ownership in Quebec stood at 40.1 per cent, while the rate of ownership in urban Quebec was 85.1 per cent (Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics 1950: 421). Low ownership rates were reinforced not only by lack of electrification but also by the limited access, in both cases, to programming in the audience's own language. The first Inuit language programme was broadcast in 1960, thus making the initial appeal of radio limited for the local communities (Cowan and Jurgens 1986: 21). The proposed changes in the service in the 1970s meant that aboriginal-language programming could potentially increase from one hour a day to eight hours. During the 1930s in the South, as well as the 1960s and 1970s in the North, the expense of building a network took precedence over programming. By 1968, CFWH in Whitehorse became the centre for the CBC's Yukon Regional Network, serving 11,000 listeners out of a population of 15,533. The feed for the Mackenzie Regional Network came from Grand Prairie to CFYK Yellowknife for about 20,500 listeners and the Ungava Network, which served 22,849, came from Campbelltown, New Brunswick. CHFC Fort Churchill received the national network from Winnipeg serving 4000. CFFB Frobisher Bay with 1700 listeners received tape recordings from Montreal 1278 miles southwest (2056 km), and thus this much smaller audience of the eastern Arctic was still not served by a direct network link (MacDonald, Walker and Godfrey 1968: 145–46). Sackville, New Brunswick, handled short-wave broadcasts for the High Arctic. Much of the impetus for the costly network established came from the people from the South who were working, usually temporarily, in the North.

These listeners had a great desire to stay up to date with events and entertainment from the 'outside'. By the late 1960s, northern communities were not the focus of radio broadcasting programming.

Community Reactions

A change in the expectations of the aboriginal audience occurred between the arrival of the CBC in 1958 and the proposal of the corporation's plan to expand in 1974. Early listeners perceived radio to be a means of receiving southern news and entertainment, but as northerners received their first taste of local programming they started to yearn for more. By the 1960s, call-in shows such as UQATTARIT on CFFB in Frobisher Bay became as popular as call-in shows were in the South (MacDonald, Walker and Godfrey 1968: 150). Plans to expand radio and television broadcasting in the 1970s always included suggestions that broadcasts in aboriginal languages would potentially increase and greater local service would result. Bruce L. Smith and Jerry C. Brigham pointed to the parallel development of radio in Alaska and the Canadian Northwest Territories and the Yukon in the 1970s, explaining that the CBC Northern Service made no effort to meet the specific needs of the First Nations population and that a similar trend was evident in Alaska (1992: 183–84). While Smith and Brigham assert that 'native-controlled radio began to emerge' in Canada and the United States, this was only the beginning of change. It is quite clear that only some programmes were predominantly aboriginal in content and that the majority of the stations remained in the control of the CBC network rather than local interests or, in the case of Alaska, public broadcasting (Daley and James 2004). Chronic and ongoing concerns over insufficient funding, training and technical support were more recently cited in the *Aboriginal Broadcasters' Perspective on Broadcast Policy*. The report refers back to earlier broadcasting relationships to explain that

Aboriginal broadcasters have always identified themselves firmly as public broadcasters. Like the CBC, they are publicly owned, not-for profit corporations; they rely on public funding for a significant portion of their overall revenue, provide a full spectrum of programming that might otherwise not be available, and contribute to a shared, diverse and inclusive national consciousness and identity. However their organizations lack the legislative recognition accorded to the CBC, the relative security of CBC's funding, and the CBC's ability to approach the Federal government for special support when needed. (Smith 2004: 3–4)

In fact, radio broadcasting in the North was wedded to federal sponsorship and the CBC to safeguard its growth.

The prospect of satellite communications brought the opportunity for improved communications in the North to the foreground in the 1970s. A speech by Eric Kierans, Minister of Communications, delivered at the Northern Communications Conference in 1970, argued that 'the main social purpose on the part of the Canadian Government [. . .] was to provide more reliable communications service in the Canadian North'. Kierans (1970) disagreed with critics who asserted that the world's first domestic satellite would be a 'waste of money' and 'destroy indigenous culture' in the North or South. Discussion and planning of the future of northern broadcasting was always cognizant of not only the need to preserve culture, but also the more

pressing need to build a more reliable communication network to help eliminate extreme isolation.⁴

The imminent arrival of satellite communication provoked repeated discussion and planning. The Northern Communications Study of 1971 described radio as the ‘basic means of mass communication in the North [. . .] of prime importance to people living in small, isolated communities [. . .] the only problem is that it is not always available’ (Canada, Department of Communications 1971: 61). The CBC Northern Broadcasting Plan of 15 March 1974 committed resources to the physical expansion of the network and the support of community programming. Radio and television coverage would be extended to towns with populations of 500 or more, with radio alone extended to populations of 200 or more (CBC Northern Broadcasting Plan 1974). The plan contained six major goals for radio. The first consisted of extending radio coverage to communities with 200 people or more, the second was to enrich existing sub-regional radio production centres and the third goal was to provide ten additional sub-regional radio production centres (CBC Northern Broadcasting Plan 1974: 2). These first three goals entailed considerable capital expenditure and ultimately absorbed the bulk of the CBC’s focus in the North. The great expense of merely extending the network, a laudable goal, absorbed almost the entire budget for the projected plan. Physically linking the small, scattered population of the Northwest Territories provided the initial challenge.

The last three goals encouraged a belief that aboriginal programming would be part of the Broadcasting Plan. The fourth goal was a commitment to production of northern programmes in the South and radio control rooms to feed the programming to the North. The last two goals implied that there would be support for local community production of programmes: the fifth promised community radio production packages to communities requesting them, and the final commitment was to CBC support for community activity (CBC Northern Broadcasting Plan 1974: 2). The plan gave the local communities reason to hope that there would be considerable investment in aboriginal language and culturally based programming. However, the support for community activity only emerged within the narrow confines of the CBC schedule imported from the South. Once the commitments to the extension of the physical network were made, little funding remained for community programming and activity. This proved to be a source of disappointment and conflict for local communities when groups came forward to request radio production packages as promised in the fifth goal of the plan.

While the physical network was in dire need of support, the lack of community programming also captured the attention of the local communities, who hoped to gain programmes in their own languages. By 1972, programming in Inuktitut represented 16 per cent of the short-wave broadcasts from Montreal. Unfortunately, the reception for these broadcasts was poor; consequently, many members of the intended Inuktitut audience could not hear the programmes. In fact, American and Russian broadcasts were frequently received more clearly

⁴ A statement by James Arvaluk described the need for good communications in the Baffin Region as urgent. He cited a telegram message originating in Igloodik that took three days to arrive after its trip via Chesterfield Inlet, Churchill, Winnipeg, Montreal and Fort Chimo to Frobisher Bay, where the nearest hospital and doctor were located. Canada, Department of Communications. 1971. *Northern Communications Conference Record*, p. 36. Prof. Jameson Bond outlined the need for inexpensive radio communication for emergency and community broadcasts rather than the development of television. Communications. *Northern Communications Conference Record*, pp. 55–58.

(Cowan and Jurgens 1986: 21). The urgent need for community programming was also highlighted by illegal radio broadcasts that tried to meet the local needs for information. In *Something New in the Air*, Lorna Roth recounts the story of pilots flying over Dorval Airport in 1964 who asked air traffic control to locate the source of a foreign language broadcast they intercepted and believed was Russian. The broadcasts originated from an illegal community-based station in Pond Inlet, Baffin Island, where reception of Russian programming was clearer than Canadian broadcasts.⁵ Eventually, the aboriginal language station was granted a licence, but this procedure was not without difficulty, demonstrating that the licensing of community stations remained a lower priority than the network (Roth 2005: 68).

Contrary to the expectations created by the sixth-stated goal of community activity in CBC Northern Broadcasting Plan, enthusiastic community groups did not readily find support or encouragement for their activities from the CBC. Many applicants were confronted by a series of procedural roadblocks, making it clear that the expansion of the CBC's physical network would take precedence over the encouragement and support of local or indigenous programming. A letter to Peter Kooneeloosie, Settlement Chairman in Clyde River, NWT, from Patrick T. Reilly, Location Manager, CRRB Radio Station, demonstrates that it was difficult for community groups to broadcast unless they operated under strict guidelines. Mr. Reilly supported Mr. Kooneeloosie's goal of making an application for a local radio station with the support of an \$8000 Alcohol Education Grant. Reilly wrote that there was a need for communities to establish stations, and referred Kooneeloosie to thirteen agencies both inside and outside the government. Reilly, however, had reservations about the Settlement Council's application, as he explained: 'The Canadian Radio-Television Commission [. . .] will not give a license to a government or municipal body (such as a Settlement Council). They will license an individual or an incorporated group' (Letter to Peter Kooneeloosie n.d.). He suggested a good example was

what the people in Sanikiluaq did to raise some money. The Co-op there pays carvers a sum of money for each carving. The artists volunteered to donate ten per cent of their earnings per carving toward raising money to buy radio broadcasting equipment. (Letter to Kooneeloosie n.d.)

Kooneeloosie believed that some support would be forthcoming soon after the changes outlined by the CBC Northern Broadcasting Plan, as did many would-be broadcasters, who approached the CBC directly for support of their community-based ideas.

The inability to provide assistance resurfaced frequently in the correspondence with the CBC. Requests were often redirected to other agencies or back to the Government of the Northwest Territories. For example, in a letter from Marcel Ouimet, Vice-President, Special Services Division, CBC, to Mr. Hugh Ungungai, President of the Qamanituap Naalautaa Society, Baker Lake, Northwest Territories, a similar request to assist a recently licensed station to stay

⁵ Although it was established that the broadcasts originated from an aboriginal station, the idea that they were Russian language broadcasts was not outrageous. Under financial pressure in 1981 Radio Tuktoyaktuk on the Beaufort Sea was considering an offer of five hours a month of pre-taped English-language shows from Radio Moscow to solve its financial difficulties. Barstow (1981); 'Radio Moscow hits the North' (1981); Internal Memo, Accession N-2003-002, 1-3.

afloat was redirected to the Government of the Northwest Territories and the Secretary of State. Ouimet explained:

Our inability to grant you the money you need may seem unsatisfactory to you because of you having been told by several people that ‘all Federal funding for community radio stations was to be channelled through the C.B.C.’ The truth is that we have no such funds. A proposal was made to this effect, and it is contained in a plan to improve Northern broadcasting [. . .]. The C.B.C., however, is now preparing a ‘submission’ to ask for these funds. (Letter to Hugh Ungungai n.d.)

Ouimet went on to suggest that the Qamanituap Naalautaa Society might want to consider producing a regular weekly programme in Inuit for CHFC Churchill, as well as for CBC’s northern shortwave service from Montreal. The immediate reaction to the CBC Northern Broadcasting Plan was clearly demonstrated by the requests by existing and potential northern broadcasters. Baker Lake, in particular, was singled out in a speech by Gérard Pelletier to mark the opening of its radio station CKQN as part of CBC’s Accelerated Coverage Program with broadcasts via the Anik satellite and the CBC. CKQN started out as a community-owned station and, as noted in the reply to inquiries to the CBC above, the financial burdens made it difficult to operate. Pelletier explained:

Over the longer term [. . .] Baker Lake Radio is only a very small step in meeting the communications needs of the North. Those needs, it is clear, are for a combination of what I might call ‘southern quality’ communication [. . .] as can be provided by satellite [. . .] to meet the unique cultural, social and political interests of the North. (Pelletier 1974)

Thus it was by becoming part of the CBC network that the Qamanituap Naalautaa Society was able to overcome its difficulties in broadcasting independently.

Once approved, however, the initial proposals for community radio production that appeared in the Broadcasting Plan were allocated only a small amount of funding by comparison to that allocated to the extension of the network. In 1974–75, the planned capital expenditures for sub-regional centres amounted to \$1,290,000, with \$150,000 for booths and control rooms; extension to populations of 200 or more accounted for \$283,000 for both radio and television. The community packages amounted to \$48,000, and CBC support was limited to additional operations but no capital expenditures. The expenditures on the infrastructure were projected to extend until 1978, but the support for community packages was consistent from 1974 to 1980, when support was expected to end (CBC Northern Broadcasting Plan 1974: 8). The limited support for community broadcasts was repeatedly demonstrated by correspondence in addition to the goals originally announced in the Broadcasting Plan. Technical gaps in communications made the continued quotidian operation of the network challenging prior to its expansion and the introduction of indigenous programming. In a letter to all CBC Access and Affiliated Community Radio Stations served by CBC Frobisher Bay, Brian Cousins, CBC Area Manager, Baffin & Eastern Arctic Region, Frobisher Bay NWT, wrote:

We have not been successful in getting telephone contacts for each Community [. . .] contacting each station by phone is expensive and takes a lot of time.[so he explained]

Every Monday we will broadcast a message in [Inuktitut] to community stations advising of any changes planned during the week. (Cousins 1979)

In a 1980 internal memo, Cousins noted that the Cape Dorset group had a legitimate request for a meeting, and he quotes their Cape Dorset's settlement chairman as acknowledging that 'all of us have to try to understand someone else's rules' (Cousins 1979). He explained that he would only pay transportation costs for one representative of each society, including, Pond Inlet, Pangnirtung and Igloolik with Cape Dorset. Cousins was sympathetic to indigenous broadcasting. He seemed to grasp that the southern and CBC rules of operation were quite foreign to settlements struggling to get the structures in which they worked to conform to the network's guidelines. Despite the great strides in the expansion of the infrastructure, the internal workings of CBC stations and their affiliates were plagued by a lack of funds and shortages of equipment that made growth and consistency difficult.

While the CBC Northern Broadcasting Plan made community broadcasting one of its major objectives on paper, its internal document circulated on the eve of the report, 'CBC Policy on Community Broadcasting', reveals some hesitation and strict guidelines. The policy document explained:

CBC recognized the importance of community broadcasting in providing the people of remote or isolated Northern communities, with a means of expressing their views on matters of interest and concern to themselves and to the rest of Canada; and of exercising their talent for drama, story telling, and music. By expressing themselves in their own language, *where necessary or desired*, native people help maintain the continuity of their traditional culture. (CBC Policy on Community Broadcasting 1974, emphasis added)

This policy document casts a pall of doubt on the long-term execution of the CBC's goals to promote local programming and broadcasting activities. The indication that aboriginal programming would be added 'where necessary or desired' seems to run counter to the stations that hoped to broadcast exclusively in indigenous languages. The report's writers did indicate as strong a commitment to such programming as possible. Despite the statement that the 'CBC recognized the importance of community broadcasting', reservations indicated in the policy suggested that the decision regarding aboriginal programming would be in the hands of the CBC.

In the same document, the CBC made a commitment to provide communities with programme and technical assistance, advice and the potential use of CBC transmitting facilities. In return, the CBC expected the community to organize and incorporate a broadcasting association to run their stations largely with volunteers and a minimum of paid staff; to produce programmes of local interest as agreed; to provide premises with heating, lighting and cleaning; and finally to hire and pay a programme producer or coordinator either full or parttime, recruit volunteers, operate a studio, administer funds according to public service standards and operate within regulations. In many cases, this resulted in the community running the station with the safety net of CBC programming. The burden of starting and running community stations from the 'ground floor' in exchange for technical assistance, advice and the possibility of access to facilities meant that the stations became a part of the network, broadcasting southern programmes due to a lack of resources.

While the technical equipment and physical needs of building a network were addressed, the activities of the eastern Arctic region, particularly Frobisher Bay, began to stand out as quite distinct. As previously noted, Frobisher Bay was not linked to the larger network and became a bit of 'rogue' station in comparison to those with direct network links. The dependence upon local resources to fill the gaps in funding and resources meant that consistent programming originating in the North became difficult to guarantee. The sharing of news throughout the Northwest Territories was touted as a unifying service. However, according to a 1973 article in *The Yellowknifer* (CBC Contributing to Disunity 1973), when resources did not permit Frobisher Bay to continue providing its share of English-language news, CFFB concentrated exclusively on 'Eskimo' language broadcasting and ceased participating in the English-language news service. Andrew Cowan, the Ottawa-based head of CBC Northern Services was 'accused of losing sight of everything but the native' (CBC Policy on Community Broadcasting 1974). This pronouncement indicated that the CBC's position was one of maintaining network consistency. While newspaper reports declared that Frobisher Bay had lost sight of all but 'the native', an internal memo from Patrick Reilly, Location Manager in Frobisher Bay, declared the 1973 project to change the news to Inuit unfeasible. In 1974, Reilly explained that a fully gathered and prepared newscast in Inuktitut had not yet aired, but the number of original Inuktitut items had increased, leaving the newscast less dependent on the translation of English language items (Internal Memo on Inuktituk Territorial Eastern Arctic News 1974). Provision of support for indigenous culture and aboriginal language broadcasts varied from region to region, usually leaving the eastern Arctic as the most isolated and most likely to diverge from the normal course of CBC practices and programming. Left to its own devices, Frobisher Bay was able to draw on resources in a way that would have been impossible for stations firmly connected to the network. In this case, promises to develop local programming fell by the wayside. The CBC made only limited efforts to support local initiatives, as evidenced in the instance of Frobisher Bay, which was clearly viewed as an intersection between the CBC standard provision of English-language programming and the possibilities of expansion of aboriginal language programming.

Despite the fact that the use of facilities and provision of programmes seem to have been the major benefit of the affiliation with the CBC, some of the surviving correspondence indicates that the CBC did not always keep its commitments to Inuit community radio stations. In letters addressed to Peter Baril, station manager of CFFB in Frobisher Bay, Doug Ward, Director of the CBC Northern Service in Ottawa, and Marilyn Mercer, CBC Office of Community Radio in Toronto, fourteen signatories representing community radio stations asked that the CBC honour the commitments made at a Frobisher Bay community radio workshop. The commitments were that the CBC

[. . .] update and translate into Inuktitut the handbook 'Community Radio in Canada' and mail it to every Inuit community [. . .] translate into Inuktitut a report explaining community radio including items such as incorporation, charitable status, possible funding sources [. . .] to assist in providing technician to install radio broadcasting equipment in communities that do not have CBC service [. . .] [and] to provide training assistance [. . .] by a CBC staff person or through a visit from someone from a successful community radio station. (Letters from 14 Inuit community radio station representatives 1976)

While the CBC expected participants to follow its basic rules, the lack of translation of these guidelines demonstrated one element of the CBC's top-down approach to the expansion in the North. CBC assistance, however, usually came in the form of national network programmes and its own schedule and regulations, thus aggravating those who hoped to use the medium to preserve local culture. In 1975, a headline proclaimed 'Eskimos shun TV and radio worry about cultural influence'. Igloolik, 700 miles north of Frobisher Bay, voted against television that year and expressed reservations about a CBC application to operate an FM radio station. 'The community fear[ed] the effect of radio's cultural and emotional influences unless [. . .] tempered by local input reflecting local values and traditions' ('Eskimos shun TV and radio worry about cultural influence'). This fear reinforced the communities' cultural awareness of the threat, thereby providing some defence against the potential onslaught of a fully formed network.

Igloolik's assertion was that it would only accept a CBC station if it was allowed to broadcast local shows three hours a day ('Eskimos shun TV and radio worry about cultural influence' 1975). Ultimately, in 1979, Igloolik accepted an agreement similar to that offered to other communities in the Northwest Territories. Given that seventeen years had passed since the CBC's first contact, the response was based on some prior knowledge of CBC strategies. In another newspaper, the CBC explained it would allow time for local broadcasts, in an article entitled 'Eskimo settlement may reject radio' ('Eskimo settlement may reject radio' 1975). Three years later, the settlement of Igloolik proposed its own FM station with the call letters CBII. The broadcast schedule submitted with the application estimated that programming would be 99 per cent Inuktitut and 1 per cent English-language broadcasts (Agreement 1979). The projected schedule that accompanied the Igloolik agreement with the CBC was followed up by a letter of understanding between CBC and the Igloolik local radio that indicated that the 'CBC is willing to co-operate with the Igloolik Radio Society, which would like to begin local information programming on a trial basis'; these programmes in Inuktitut were, however, restricted to 12:18 to 12:30 p.m. and 11:00 to 11:15 p.m. Monday to Friday (Letter of understanding 1976). Thus Igloolik's dream of 99 per cent Inuktitut programming was countered with 27 minutes daily. This small proportion of aboriginal programming was consistent with the schedules at other stations initially lacking the resources for programme development.

Shifts in the Balance of Programming

By the end of the decade, aboriginal language programming finally gained greater prominence in the programme schedule. The 1979 schedule of CFFB in Frobisher Bay featured *Morningside*, *CBC News*, *The World at Six*, *As It Happens* and a variety of programmes regularly broadcast in the national network (Program Schedule 1979). It also allowed breaks for local programming: QULLIQ provided some local news from 6:00 to 9:00 a.m.; local Frobisher Bay news programmes were scheduled from 9:00 to 9:13 a.m.; and more local programming followed from noon to 12:23 p.m. NALLACHINE was broadcast for 30 minutes, TAUSONII for 86 minutes and ADLIQ for 90 minutes in the afternoon. *The Rankin Inlet Magazine* was broadcast from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. The evening was largely CBC network programmes, but the day ended with 52 minutes of TAAQSUIT after midnight (Program Schedule 1979). Major national network shows were broadcast across the Northwest Territories through the provision of the CBC Northern Service.

Despite the prevalence of southern programming broadcast in the North, the local community programming was consistently more popular with the northern audiences. A CBC Frobisher Bay Listener Survey in Cape Dorset dated March 1979 revealed that the local show TAUSONII was very popular, with 68.8 per cent of the respondents replying that they ‘always’ listen to the show (CBC Frobisher Bay Listener Survey 1979). Monday to Friday listening patterns demonstrated that local programmes were more popular than those received from the national network. The open-ended comments received at the end of the survey were also revealing. As is the case with many surveys, there were many conflicting comments, but a demand for more Inuktitut or local programmes in the schedule appeared repeatedly. Generally, the local and Inuktitut programmes were most popular.

Thus the CBC, its northern service and the CBC Northern Broadcasting Plan were most effective in the extension of the physical network. Demand for radio grew by the 1970s. When the CBC arrived in 1957–58, it was at the behest of economic and military interests and its audience that originated in the South but made its home, whether temporarily or in the longer term, in the North. Once the network was in place, it did not become an immediate success. As the prospect of local and native language broadcasting became a possibility due to the adaptability of the medium and its comparative cheapness when compared with television, local groups, usually in association with the settlement, slowly incorporated so that they could apply for their own licenses. The culture of the South was not universally welcome in the 1970s; the population hoped that radio stations could become venues for the expression of their own languages and cultures, while CBC only conceded to include aboriginal languages ‘if necessary or desired’. Finances may have dictated that aboriginal language programming would remain subordinate to southern English-language programming, despite the efforts of local stations. The northern audiences resisted southern programming to maintain their cultural identities in a similar fashion to that of Canadians when confronted with American broadcasting (Charland 1986; MacLennan 2005; Morley 2000; Romanow 2005). The CBC’s role was complicated by the mandate that required it to meet regional needs while at the same time promoting national unity, objectives which in this case proved to be contradictory. The northern will to resist remained strong, and the CBC’s role as a potential cultural imperialist was thwarted in part by the persistence of a strong desire for local programming, despite the initial obstacles to its delivery.

The years of aboriginal lobbying ultimately resulted in the promised expansion of programming and the northern network. On 10 March 1983, the Northern Broadcasting Policy took full advantage of the existing satellite service. It offered an increased range of programming as well as greater participation, access, relevance and representation for aboriginal people. The trends prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s continued into the following decades. Lorna Roth explains:

In the native broadcasting policy case, the federal government has demonstrated at least two parallel and contradictory policy tracks – that of positively responding to the aboriginal demands for broadcasting, on one hand, and that of pulling cultural funding away from aboriginal people on the other. (Roth 1998: 159)

Roth observes that native broadcasting temporarily received priority funding in the decade immediately following the introduction of the Northern Broadcasting Policy, but fell by the wayside again in the 1990s. Funding, and more often the lack of it, has governed the direction of

northern broadcasting since its inception. *Our Cultural Sovereignty: The Second Century of Canadian Broadcasting*, a report of the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, returns to this theme in its critique of Section 3 of the 1991 amendment to the Broadcasting Act, stating that 'the Canadian broadcasting system should [. . .] reflect [. . .] the special place of Aboriginal peoples within [Canadian] society [and] reflects the Aboriginal cultures [. . .] as resources become available' (Canada, Parliament, House of Commons, Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage 2003). The success of the establishment of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, in spite of the 'often neither deliberate nor mean-spirited' resistance of the CBC and cable carriers, is still unparalleled in the United States (Evans 2002: 311–12). The chronic shortage of funding for aboriginal programming in the North has altered the direction of broadcasting, but has consistently been met with the desire for expanded service and representation within Canadian media.

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