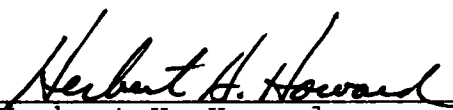
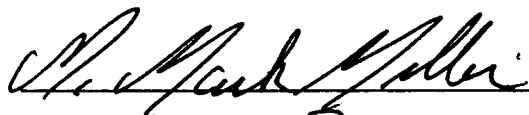
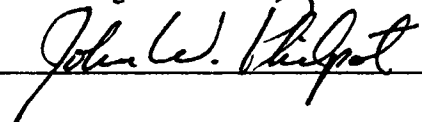


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Frank Allen Aycock entitled "A Comparison of Blunting, Hybrid, and Counterprogramming Strategies and Their Effects on Total Network Television Viewing." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Communications.


Herbert H. Howard
Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:


Vice Provost and
Dean of The Graduate School

A COMPARISON OF BLUNTING, HYBRID, AND COUNTERPROGRAMMING
TELEVISION STRATEGIES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON TOTAL NETWORK
TELEVISION VIEWING

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Frank Allen Aycock

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving wife, Gail Woods Aycock, and my new son, Frank Allen Aycock, Jr., of Boone, North Carolina, whose love, affection, encouragement, and support have been a constant throughout the completion of this dissertation, and to the memory of my father, James Frederick Aycock of Birmingham, Alabama, who always believed I could be whatever I wanted to be.

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ABSTRACT

Since the late-1970s, the three major television networks in the United States have seen a steady erosion of their shares of the total television audience. Challenges from independent television stations and cable services offering alternative programs to those on the three networks have cost the networks more than twenty percent of their prime time viewing audience since 1980.

The networks have traditionally used three major programming strategies in competing against each other. The first is blunting, whereby each of the three networks program the same genre of program. The second is counterprogramming, whereby each network programs a different genre of program against the others. The third is what is termed in this study as hybrid programming, whereby two networks blunt while the third counterprograms. This study seeks to determine which of these three strategies provides the largest overall total prime time viewing audience across the three networks.

Ratings data for prime time programming over a ten year period were collected from national totals prepared by the Arbitron Ratings Service. The data were then combined so as

to produce an index for each half hour segment of prime time programming for each day of the week across the ratings months and years under study. The data were then coded as to the strategy used by the three networks. Then the data were subjected to regression analysis to determine which strategy produced the largest overall share of the total audience across the three networks.

The results showed that counterprogramming produced the largest overall total viewing audience across the three networks during the period under study, and produced directional results to suggest that these same results would hold true across the various demographic groups of which the total viewing audience consist. It was concluded that widespread use of counterprogramming by network programmers would provide the largest total viewing audience during prime time and could possibly reduce or even eliminate the current erosion of the network prime time viewing audience.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is a first attempt to determine which of three programming strategies provides the largest total viewing audience across the three major television networks. The dissertation, using ratings data compiled by the Arbitron Ratings Service, compares the three programming strategies employed during prime time by ABC, NBC, and CBS during the period from 1975 to 1987.

Background to the Problem

In April 1939, at the New York World's Fair, the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) officially introduced a new electronic medium to the American public--a medium of both sight and sound. That new medium was television. By the 1950s television had become the dominant entertainment medium for the average citizen, and the "Big Three" networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) held a virtual oligopoly (i.e., a three-way monopoly) on prime time television viewing. That oligopoly continued unabated until the mid- to late-1970s, when two new phenomena provided major challenges to the networks' dominance. These two new phenomena were satellite transmission of cable network television signals and the

proliferation of new independent television stations, offering alternatives to the broadcast networks' over-the-air programming fare (for discussions of the history and development of television see e.g., Sterling and Kittross, 1978).

In 1975, Home Box Office, a subsidiary of Time, Inc., became the first cable service to use satellite transmission to feed its programs to its cable system affiliates. Before HBO's successful attempt at satellite transmission of its programming, cable programming had consisted mainly of retransmission of local broadcast signals and any other broadcast signals near enough to be received by the system's master antenna. HBO's innovative use of satellite transmission provided cable with a way to compete with broadcast television with its own programming. This development changed the nature of television programming forever.

Following HBO's success with satellite transmission, it became practical to develop a variety of different cable networks and superstations (a superstation is a broadcast television station that transmits its signal to a satellite that cable systems can receive and retransmit to their subscribers) that could deliver signals to national cable audiences. Several dozen satellite-fed cable networks have emerged, with most providing a very narrow type of programming designed for a specific audience. Such cable networks have provided programming specifically for sports fans,

music lovers (both rock and country music fans), the news junkie, and other groups. Others, such as Ted Turner's superstation WTBS and the USA Cable Network have broadened their programming and have attempted to compete directly with the mass appeal broadcast network.

The development of cable networks also became a major threat to the broadcast networks. While the networks still dominate prime time viewing, the variety of non-network sources has resulted in a collection of fragmented and often specialized audiences, and has siphoned away viewers from the networks to non-network choices of programming. Also, cable networks are challenging the networks using syndicated episodes of the networks' own programming. The USA Cable Network has been especially adept in its usage of network programs in syndication, cablecasting such current network programs as Miami Vice and Murder, She Wrote. In addition, sports programming has further drawn viewers away from the networks as more and more sporting events end up on cable networks. Already the National Basketball Association, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (the governing body of college sports), the National Football League, the Professional Golfers' Association, the Ladies Professional Golfers' Association, and the Association of Tennis Professionals have contracted with cable networks to telecast sporting events on a regular (weekly or almost weekly)

basis. Also, it is anticipated that NBC will sell the rights to many of the early (preliminary) rounds of events in the 1992 Summer Olympic games from Barcelona, Spain, to a cable network (most probably ESPN), keeping only the final rounds of events for network telecasting.

Further, in the late 1970s and the 1980s, new independent television stations emerged in markets across the United States and have become a force to be reckoned with, drawing an almost-equal percentage of viewers away from network television as has cable. The independent station operators found a new generation eager to enjoy many of the older prime time programs by then in syndication, as well as early episodes of the current prime time favorites, and a variety of classic and newly-released movies. The new independents offered other alternative programs to their viewers in the forms of movies, children's shows and cartoons, first-run syndication programs, and in many of the larger markets, local programming such as local news and major sporting events. In addition, independent stations also gained access to national news from Ted Turner's Cable News Network, and quasi-networks such as Independent Network News. In 1987, the Fox Network, the first quasi-network to provide network-quality prime time entertainment fare, began providing programming to independent stations around the country, albeit on a limited schedule.

The videocassette recorder (VCR) has also provided the home television viewer with a wider range of evening viewing choices. Owners of VCRs today can opt to watch a feature movie or a self-improvement videotape bought or rented at any of the numerous rental establishments across the country, instead of watching anything on either broadcast or cable television. Further, programs can be recorded from the networks or from cable networks (if the home is wired for cable as more than 50% of the homes in America are today) on VCRs for viewing at a different time during the day, or even days later.

The result has been a reduction in the percentage of the viewing audiences of the three major broadcast networks--ABC, CBS, and NBC--a trend that began in the mid-to-late 1970s and has continued to this day. The combined audience during prime time for the three networks has slipped from approximately 95% in 1978 to approximately 75% for the 1986-1987 television season (see "Networks Suffering...", 1986; Sanoff, A. P., & Kyle, C., 1987). (While in reality, the total television audience has grown slowly during the period of time under study, the networks have declined in both the size and the share of their audiences. The result is a net loss in both absolute numbers and percentage of viewers.)

In an effort to combat this trend of reduced network viewership, the beginning of the 1986-1987 television season was heralded as a new and unusual season for the television industry. Industry magazines carried reports that the network lineups were scheduled so as not to battle each other head-to-head with similar program types that "cut into" each other's audience, but rather, to target specific segments of the audience through counterprogramming against their competitor networks.

In counterprogramming, each network would offer a different genre program from either of the other two networks. Such counterprogramming would result in the segmentation of each night of prime time television by networks, with each network attempting to offer a different type of program from its competitors during the various time slots. For instance, on Friday nights, NBC offered at 9:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) Miami Vice, a crime drama. CBS offered Dallas, a soap opera, and ABC offered an action comedy Sidekicks and a farce comedy Sledgehammer!. With few exceptions, this pattern of pure counterprogramming of the various networks held throughout the week. (TV Guide, p. A-3) However, as this study will show, what was heralded as a new and different venture only appeared to be such. Indeed, it was simply that the three networks had attempted to use occasional head-to-head, same-genre competition the year before that

made the 1986-1987 season appear to be so different. The 1986-1987 season was, in fact, a return to "normalcy," a return to the programming strategies of the previous years.

Network Scheduling Practices

Every fall, a new television season begins, and with it new programs, as well as holdovers, are offered for viewer entertainment. Some shows "make it," become successful and survive the entire season to return for a second year. Most don't, however, and under normal circumstances, the odds for any given show to survive to return for a second year are 750-1 (Blum & Lindheim, 1987). The following is the usual scenario for developing and scheduling a program into a network's schedule, but there are exceptions to this description.

The production of a network fall schedule is virtually a year-round proposition. Each network invites producers to provide them with written concepts of programs for review. Most are dismissed out-of-hand (Eastman, Head, & Klein, 1989; Blum & Lindheim, 1987); some are given further consideration, either for the quality of the concept or because of favoritism of certain producers by a given network (TV Guide, Oct. 8, 1988; Oct. 15, 1988).

Once a concept has been accepted, a script will be ordered, and if approved, a pilot episode will be produced

and delivered in the spring (Eastman, Head, & Klein, pp. 148-149). The odds of an idea even becoming a pilot production are only 50-1 (Blum & Lindheim, p. 139).

Pilot productions are viewed by network programming officials, then are subjected to audience analysis, generally first through theatre viewings by selected audiences who provide feedback on their likes and dislikes about the program. If the program scores well with the theatre viewers, the pilot may then be scheduled for airing as a "special" on the network. Reactions in the form of overnight ratings provide the network programmer with further information regarding the likely acceptance of the program for which the pilot was developed.

If the pilot receives favorable ratings (or for some other reason the programming executives believe that the program will be successful, such as the likelihood of the leading actor/actress to draw a strong audience (TV Guide, Oct. 8, 1988; Oct. 15, 1988), then the network will order a first-run of the program for scheduling during the fall. Historically, this order was for the full 39-week season. However, in the mid-1970s, that total had dropped to 32-weeks of programs. With the high mortality rate of programs in the 1980s (reaching upwards of 75% or higher of new program cancellation during the new season), the number of episodes ordered by the networks has consistently dwindled

to a current low of 6 to 11 episodes ordered (Eastman, Head, & Klein, p. 141).

Once the programs are ordered, the network programming executives begin to develop their listings of programs for each night of the week. Although each network devises its program schedule in secret, each network receives information through various sources (referred to as "spies" by network executives) on its competitors' schedules before the official announcement (TV Guide, Oct. 15, 1988). When the program schedules have been finalized, the leading network from the previous year announces its fall schedule first, with the second-place network announcing second, and the third-place network announcing last, generally within a few days of each other (TV Guide, Oct. 15, 1988).

It is interesting to note here that books and articles on this subject state that each network attempts to counter-program the other two, and thus reach different demographic groups. Indeed, Gitlin (1985) suggests that networks are identified by the demographic audiences they attract. Further, in books on broadcast programming such as Gitlin, textbooks on programming such as Eastman, Head, & Klein, and even popular articles such as those mentioned earlier in TV

Guide all suggest attempts by the networks to deliberately counterprogram against their competitors.

Program Appeals

For a network program to be successful, it must be able to capture a large segment of the television audience. There are a number of different audience appeals a program can contain, and a successful program usually will incorporate several of these basic audience appeals.

Eastman, Head, and Klein (1989) and Howard and Kievman (1983) provide excellent discussions of the basic appeals that a program may contain. Eastman, Head, and Klein divide the appeals into primary and secondary appeals, while Howard and Kievman provide detailed discussions of the the appeals without the primary and secondary categorization. The basic appeals include conflict; comedy; love, romance and sex; human interest; emotional stimulation; information; and importance. Conflict, the most prevalent of the appeals, can include an individual (or group) against himself (itself), against nature, against another individual (group), or against God. Conflict appears in virtually all types of programs discussed in this study.

Comedy is a desired appeal in many cases because people enjoy laughing and being happy. Comedy comes in a variety of forms including (but not limited to) slapstick, satire,

and sophisticated forms of humor. Comedy appears in many forms of programming either as the main appeal or as an appeal designed to enhance a serious program or to break the intensity. Howard and Kievman (1983) refer to comedy as "the universal appeal" (pp. 182-187).

Love, romance and sex appeal to virtually all categories of adult viewers. These appeals can also take on a variety of forms from the most innocent, implicit form to the most overt form of sexuality. Love, romance and sex appeals often are included as an enhancement for a program, but can also play a major role in a program.

Human interest arises from the desires of people to know about the behavior of others. Further, people also enjoy gauging their lives against others to reaffirm the quality of their own lives. The desire to understand important or famous people, or merely to gauge oneself against others similar in thoughts, actions or station in life can all be reasons for the human interest appeal.

The appeal of emotional stimulation can encompass a variety of forms, including identification with a character or an episode in the life of a character, sympathy for a character, nostalgia for a time past, or the beauty a time, place or person. Emotional stimulation is present in all types of television programs, although it is generally not

the major or dominant appeal; rather it plays a subordinate, enhancement role.

People are interested in information. Information can be more than merely the news of the day. In addition, information can come in the form of newsmagazine programs and documentaries (Eastman, Head, & Klein, p. 18; Howard & Kievman, pp. 193-195). But information can also be provided to viewers in terms of lifestyles, current fashions, and social mores, relationships, and what's acceptable. Further, sports and weather information are important to many viewers.

The final appeal listed is importance. Importance in entertainment programming is concerned with how important a program is to a viewer. The importance of a program is achieved on a grand scale because of importance of the information (news), the event (the Super Bowl), the personality, etc. The question then becomes "Is a given show the most desired viewing choice?" If so, then that program is most important to a person desiring to watch television.

Research Idea

While studies have been done in the area of programming strategies, the proposed research idea is to determine which of three different programming strategies--pure blunting, hybrid programming, or pure counterprogramming--(defined

later in this study) produces the largest overall audience across all three networks. These considerations are important to the television networks, given the significant decline that has occurred in network television viewing, especially during prime time. A showing that segmenting the total audience through the use of the pure counterprogramming strategy produces the largest total audience would suggest that during prime time, the networks could use counterprogramming to increase both their ratings and their revenues.

Statement of the Problem

During the early years of television, the networks had a virtual oligopoly (i.e., a three-way monopoly) over what the television viewer could watch. However, with the advent of cable satellite transmission, the growth of independent television stations across the country, and the use of VCRs, the networks have continually lost viewers to these other forms of television. Thus this study seeks to find out if there is a way to maximize viewership of the networks through the use of selected network programming strategies.

Definition of Terms and Basic Underlying Assumptions

In the area of television programming, two major strategies are used by network executives for planning their

prime-time program hours. Those two major strategies are blunting and counterprogramming. Bedell (1978) suggests blunting is a term used by network programmers to describe a situation where a network will attempt to reduce a competitor's audience by running a similar type of program against the competitor's. An example of this would be the Fall 1986-1987 season's Friday night schedule where all three networks broadcast situation comedies in the 8:00 to 8:30 p.m. time slot. Essentially, the three programs appealed to the same type of viewer.

One extreme form of blunting is power programming. As Howard and Kievman (1983) point out, power programming occurs when one or two competing networks place strong programs against the third network's well-entrenched, very popular program. This forces viewers to choose among two, or possibly three very desirable programs. The result can be either the neutralizing of the well-entrenched program's popularity (the desired effect), or the wasting of two good programs by the competing networks. An example of the neutralizing effect is provided by Howard and Kievman:

One of the most memorable examples of power programming at the network level occurred during a national ratings sweep in the late 1970s. In this particular case, on one Sunday evening, NBC scheduled "Gone With the Wind," CBS had the movie "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest," and ABC carried an Elvis Presley special. With three blockbuster shows power programmed against each other,

however, none of the networks gained an advantage in the ratings. (p. 222)

Counterprogramming, on the other hand, can best be described as a network's attempt at programming to a different audience from the one its competitors are attempting to attract during a given time slot. An example of this from the 1986-1987 prime-time schedule is the 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. time slot on Thursday night when NBC programmed two situation comedies (Cosby and Family Ties), CBS programmed an action/adventure show (Wizard), and ABC programmed an historical/news magazine show (Our World).

For purposes of this study, a third strategy was added, which the author has termed hybrid programming. Tiedge and Ksobiech (1987) suggest there are two hybrid forms of either pure blunting or pure counterprogramming. They call these two hybrids "countering a blunt" and "blunting a counter." The "countering a blunt" strategy suggests that if two networks are programming the same type of program against each other, the third network should offer some type of counter-program in an effort to attract an audience not served by the other two networks. The "blunting a counter" strategy suggests that if two networks are counterprogramming against each other, the third network should attempt to offer the same type of program as one of the other networks, most

probably the program more vulnerable to having its audience taken away.

In this case, however, the authors approached their research from a single network perspective. In other words, their major research question was not what strategy provided the largest total viewing audience (as this study seeks to determine), but rather, which strategy provided the largest audience for a given network, or, in other words, which strategy provided the highest ratings for a specific network given the programming decisions of the other two networks.

For this study, both hybrid strategies, "countering a blunt" and "blunting a counter" have been collapsed into the hybrid strategy category, because in each case there were two networks offering the same type of programming and one network offering counterprogramming. Further, because this research has attempted to determine the strategy that offers the largest total audience across all three networks, the extra categories of programming strategies were unnecessary and redundant.

In each of the two major strategies (blunting and counterprogramming) Tiedge and Ksobiech suggested that there are several underlying assumptions that must be addressed. The blunting strategy is based on programming beliefs that audience preferences are not widely diverse, that audiences prefer a few special types of programming to having a wide

variety from which to choose. This, practically speaking, leads to the development of imitation programs and spinoffs from popular programs as each network tries to draw a portion of the audience attracted by the popular show. Dominick and Pearce (1976) and Wakshlag and Adams (1985) both found that the diversity of programming on network television has been decreasing during the last two decades, thus suggesting that a blunting mind-set by network executives has been traditional over the years.

The second basic assumption underlying the blunting strategy is that audiences do have program preferences. Several studies bear out this fact (e.g., Bruno, 1973; Gensch & Ranganathan, 1974; Webster & Wakshlag, 1983; Webster, 1985). This assumption suggests that, rather than being passive viewers, flowing from one program to another, or watching one channel to the exclusion of others (channel loyalty), audiences do distinguish between program types and do make choices (albeit limited ones, as explained above). This assumption also would account for the decisions by network executives to develop spinoffs and imitations of popular programs, which would naturally lead to a limited amount of diversity among programs on prime-time network television, as has been shown to be the case in the discussion above.

The third, and final, assumption underlying a blunting strategy is that the strength of the competing networks' programming is a factor in the programming success of the third network. The importance of a program's success in attracting an audience as being a function of its competitors' programs' strengths and types has often been studied and affirmed (Adams, Eastman, Horney, & Popovich, 1983; Darmon, 1976; Lewin, 1981; Sabavala & Morrison, 1977). Industry executives have not let this fact go unnoticed ("Expert Selects," 1979; Gates, 1979; "Handicapping Starts," 1979; "Showing the Troops," 1979).

The counterprogramming strategy is not at odds with the second and third assumptions underlying the blunting strategy. Counterprogramming assumes that individuals make choices and that the strength of a program's competition on its given night and time slot is a factor in the success of the given program. Where the counterprogramming strategy differs completely from blunting is in the first assumption mentioned above. Counterprogramming assumes that audience preferences for programs are more widely diversified than in the blunting strategy, and that having a wider variety of program types possible across any given time period (i.e., three different types of programs from which to choose, rather than only one, as in the blunting strategy) will attract the largest audience possible. Counterprogramming

can also attract viewers who would not otherwise watch television by providing this wider diversity of programming. Tiedge and Ksobiech (1987), authors of the only study to deal with the varying programming strategies so far, suggest that counterprogramming strategies fare better than blunting strategies, at least when the comparison is made using one network's programming as a baseline from which to compare the other two. One reason for the lack of studies in this area may be that until the late 1970s, cable television was not widespread and did not pose a significant threat to the networks with regard to audience totals. Now however, with the explosion of narrowcast cable channels, independent television stations, and the development of other forms of home viewing entertainment such as low-cost videocassette recorders, rental programs, and made-for-VCR programming, studies determining the best programming strategies to attract the largest audiences have become pertinent.

In addition to the major assumptions discussed above, certain specific terms are used that must be placed in a context whereby they may be considered in quantitative situations. The first term needing explication is total network audience, which includes the total number of households watching any and all of the three networks at any one time. In describing the number of households watching network

television at any one time, this study used an aggregate of the network shares (referred to as the "overall network share level") of the total viewing audience for each thirty-minute period of prime time as provided in the Arbitron rating service's Network Program Analysis. The overall network share level was achieved by combining the shares for each of the three network programs for each individual time period within each month of the television years under study. Where the share was not provided by Arbitron (as it was not during the 1970s), the share for each network during the individual time period was determined by dividing the overall rating by the homes using television or HUT level and multiplying by 100%.

A share, a term common to audience research, is the ratio of the total number of viewers watching a given network during a specific period of time to the total number of viewers actually watching anything on television at all at that specific period of time.

Rating is another term common to audience research. It is the ratio of the total number of viewers (or viewing households) watching a given network during a specific period of time to the total potential audience during that specific period of time.

The HUT level, or Homes Using Television, is a third term common to audience research. It is the ratio of the

total number of homes with television sets actually in use to all homes equipped with a television set.

Year in this study refers to the television season, a twenty-six week period running from, roughly, mid-September through mid-March. During this time the networks program new shows and new episodes of continuing shows. The television "year" then, encompasses the November ratings period of one calendar year and the February ratings period of the subsequent year. Ten such "years" were included in this study.

Month is defined in this study as the four-week survey period during which the rating services conduct their surveys. There are four "months" during a ratings year--February, May, July, and November. For purposes of this study, only the February and November months were used because only those months fall into the regular television year. The other two ratings months are within the re-run season.

Prime time is considered by the Federal Communications Commission as the period from 7:30 p.m. until 11:00 p.m. Monday through Sunday. However, for purposes of this study, prime time is the period from 8:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m. Monday through Sunday. These are the prime time hours programmed by the networks under the FCC's Prime Time Access Rule. (Sundays are slightly different under the Prime Time Access Rule. There the hours are from 7:00 p.m. until 11:00

p.m., with some restrictions on the types of programs broadcast. For purposes of this study, and to maintain continuity throughout the week, 8:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m. was also used for Sunday.)

Strategy in this study is defined as the three competitive major programming techniques discussed in detail above. They are blunting, hybrid programming, and counter-programming.

The final term that must to be defined is program type. Program type can defined as the specific genre or category into which a program falls. The typology of program types will be discussed below.

Hypotheses

The first hypothesis, together with its three sub-hypotheses, focuses on the major question this study is attempting to address. The question addressed by this hypothesis and the sub-hypotheses is whether or not programming strategy makes a difference in the total network viewing audience. It is anticipated that as the number of different types of programs during any one prime time programming period (with a maximum of three different program types possible) increases, the size of the total network audience will increase. If it does, then the three sub-hypotheses are designed to determine which of the three

programming strategies produces the largest total network audience. The sub-hypotheses have been developed with the belief that counterprogramming, because of its greater variety of genres, is the most effective programming strategy for producing the largest total network audience. Likewise, for the same reason, it has been anticipated that hybrid programming will produce a larger overall network audience than will blunting, but will be less effective than counterprogramming will be.

H1: There will be a statistically significant difference in the relative total audience across the three network programming strategies.

H1a: Pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant higher relative total audience across the three networks than will the hybrid programming strategy;

H1b: Pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant higher relative total audience across the three networks than will the pure blunting programming strategy;

H1c: Because it contains an element of counterprogramming, hybrid programming will produce a statistically significant higher relative total audience across the three networks than will pure blunting, but not as high a

relative total audience as pure counterprogramming.

The second hypothesis, along with its sub-hypotheses, attempts first to support the first hypothesis, and second, to determine whether or not counterprogramming has been more effective throughout the years under study in slowing the rate of erosion of the total network audience than have either of the other two programming strategies. By testing whether counterprogramming is more effective than the other two programming strategies at slowing the rate of erosion of the total network audience, the second hypothesis, along with its sub-hypotheses, could also demonstrate that counterprogramming is the most effective strategy for producing the largest total network audience.

H2: There will be a statistically significant difference in the rate of decline in the total television audience across the three network programming strategies.

H2a: By producing a higher total relative audience across the three networks, pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant slower rate of decline in the total television audience over the years under study than will the hybrid programming strategy.

H2b: By producing a higher total relative audience across the three networks, pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant slower rate of decline in the total television audience over the years under study than will the pure blunting programming strategy.

H2c: Because it contains an element of counterprogramming, hybrid programming will produce a statistically significant slower rate of decline in the total audience over the years under study than will pure blunting, but not as small a rate of decline as pure counterprogramming.

The third hypothesis, along with its sub-hypotheses, suggests that because counterprogramming produces more variety across the three networks than the other two programming strategies, it attracts viewers from more demographic groups in producing the largest total network audience. By attracting more viewers from across the demographic groups, counterprogramming would produce the largest total network audience.

H3: There will be a statistically significant difference in the total variance among the various

demographic divisions of the network television audience across the network programming strategies.

H3a: Pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant smaller total variance in the various demographic divisions of the audience than will the hybrid programming strategy;

H3b: Pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant smaller total variance in the various demographic divisions of the audience than will the pure blunting programming strategy;

H3c: Because it contains an element of counterprogramming, hybrid programming will produce a statistically significant smaller total variance in the various demographic divisions of the audience than will pure blunting, but will not produce as low a variance as will pure counterprogramming.

The three hypotheses with their sub-hypotheses thus are designed to support the thesis of this study that the choice of television programming strategies does make a difference in the size of the total network audience. There is good

reason believe that counterprogramming should make a difference.

It is interesting to note here that books and articles on this subject state that each network attempts to counterprogram the other two, and thus reach different demographic groups. Indeed, Gitlin (1985) suggests that networks are identified by the demographic audiences they attract. The Sweeps by Christensen and Stauth (1984) quote industry executives such as Brandon Tartikoff, the programming head of NBC, on the need for counterprogramming by the networks. Further, in books on broadcast programming such as Gitlin's and Christensen and Stauth's, textbooks on programming such as Eastman, Head, & Klein, and even popular articles such as the TV Guide articles mentioned earlier all suggest attempts by the networks to deliberately counterprogram against their competitors.

The scholarly literature also provides rationale for the aforementioned hypotheses. For example, Tiedge and Ksobiech (1987), in the discussion section of study (discussed below), suggest that using counterprogramming techniques could provide a larger audience across all three networks because no two networks would be competing directly against one another.

Yet, for all the claims made by industry executives, and for the discussion in books, articles, and magazines,

both popular and industry-oriented, no research has been conducted to determine if counterprogramming really does produce the largest total audience, does attract the widest viewership from among the various demographic groups, and can slow the rate of erosion of the total share of the prime time viewing audience belonging to the networks.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 of this study has outlined the background of the problem; has provided a description of the problem facing network programming executives and the researcher; has explained the ways in which network programmers develop their prime time schedules and has discussed various appeals used within programs to attract audiences; and has suggested three major hypotheses, each with three sub-hypotheses. Further, Chapter 1 also has defined certain key terms and has provided introductory material to familiarize the reader with the direction and scope of the study.

Chapter 2 will provide the reader with a review of the literature of the field of communication in the area currently under study.

Chapter 3 will discuss the methodology used by the researcher in conducting the study, along with a typology of television program types, operational definitions of the key terms used in the study, and basic underlying assumptions

involved in the determination of the key programming strategies. The chapter also will present the limitations of the study.

Chapter 4 will present the results of the study, while Chapter 5 will offer conclusions and will discuss the implications of the study both for the networks and for future study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will first provide a review of the literature in several areas of programming research. These include genre studies and specific program studies, followed by a review of pertinent uses and gratifications studies of mass media consumption. Finally, this chapter provides an in-depth discussion in the areas of audience flow and network programming, which is the focus of the study.

The information provided in the review of genre and program studies, as well as the information from Chapter 1 regarding the ways in which network programmers make choices and develop program schedules and the discussion of the audience appeals that attract viewers provide a contextual framework within which to place the discussion of programming strategies.

The literature of television programming research is rich and varied, much of it dealing with the effects television has on its viewers. Some of the earliest studies dealt with various aspects of the persuasiveness of media messages (see for example, studies by Irving Janis and Carl Hovland).

Bandura and Gerbner have cautioned the industry as to the effect violence on television can have on viewers, especially children. The best known of these studies have been the "Violence Profiles" of Gerbner and his associates (e.g., Gerbner, Gross, Jackson-Beeck, Jeffries-Fox, & Signorielli, 1978; and Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, Morgan, & Jackson-Beeck, 1979, 1980).

Sesame Street and Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood have been shown to be useful tools in pro-social learning by children, and social learning theory as a whole has been a rich area of study for television programming.

Research in the area of the agenda setting function of the press has suggested that the media, including television, set social and political agenda for the country, and research in the area of uses and gratifications (discussed in more detail later) has suggested that viewers use television to meet specific needs and to satisfy specific gratifications.

While the aforementioned areas of research are listed here, with the exception of uses and gratifications, they are acknowledged only to show the variety of the types of studies conducted in the area of television programming and will not be discussed as pertinent areas to this study.

Genre and Program Studies

Numerous studies have been published on the various genre and on specific programs within those genre. Examples of books devoted to discussions of genre types include Brooks and Marsh's The Complete Directory to Prime time Network TV Shows: 1946-Present (1979), Gitlin's Inside Prime Time (1983), Kaminsky and Mahan's american TELEVISION genres (sic) (1985), and Rose's TV Genres: A Handbook and Reference Guide (1985).

In the area of genre studies, Richard Goggin (1951) provided one of the earliest discussions of the form and content of television drama in an article in the Western Journal of Speech Communication. Goggin, in an essay on television, argued even at that early stage in the development of television that the medium has too often taken the "low road" of expediency. He also cautioned speech teachers who would be instructing students in the new medium to teach the ethical responsibilities of the medium as well as the technical aspects of television, lest television become over-commercialized and trivialized.

Richard Hawes (1963) reviewed the programming including both comedy and drama programs covering the first twenty years of television in an essay in Communication Quarterly. His conclusion after reviewing (in a relatively haphazard way) the drama and comedy programs during those first twenty

years was that many of the techniques and principles used in the production of programs in 1963 were developed during the first twenty years (approximately 1939-1958).

Tedesco (1974) researched patterns in the roles, images, and messages communicated by women performers on prime time television across all genre except cartoon programs. In her study, the author found that males were generally more active, independent, mature, serious, and more likely to be employed, have more adventures, and be involved in more violent situations than females. Females were younger, more likely to be married, and less likely to be employed, independent, or found in adventure situations.

Miller and Reeves (1976) studied the content of television drama and children's sex-role stereotypes. The authors found that television helps shape children's sex-role stereotypes. The authors also found that children do select role models from television programs, boys often on the basis of physical aggression attributes and girls on the physical attractiveness of their role models. Further, Miller and Reeves suggest that the children who choose role models will imitate those people who they want to be like.

Winick and Winick (1974) have researched a sub-area of drama on prime time television, the courtroom drama. In their study, the authors found that television courtroom dramas portray an unrealistic expectation of what a lawyer

can do for a person. Further, while most criminal lawyers in real life only win about half their cases, television defense attorneys were seen as almost invincible, winning virtually every time. Winick and Winick suggest that not only do courtroom dramas entertain, they also help form society's images of the criminal justice system.

Rarick, Townsend, and Boyd (1973) looked at the perceptions adolescents held of the police, both actual and as depicted in crime dramas. The authors found that adolescents classified as delinquents have similar perceptions of television police as their nondelinquent counterparts. Also the authors found that delinquents do not see greater differences between television and real-life police than do nondelinquent adolescents. Finally, the authors found that among both groups of adolescents there is the belief that television police are idealized dramatizations of real-life police.

Dominick (1974) also studied crime dramas, but how they affected children's perceptions of police. He found that children who watched more crime dramas believed that criminals usually got caught; they identified with law enforcement TV characters; and they were more likely to know the rights of a suspect when arrested. He also found that the more important television was to a child, the less likely the child was to inform police about a witnessed crime.

Estep and Macdonald (1983) studied the evolution of the crime genre on television during the late 1970s and early 1980s (specifically 1976-1981). They found that television crime programs overrepresent violent crimes which, they argue, maximizes the fear of crime within society. They also documented that by 1981, television murders more often had women as victims than men, thus heightening the fear among women of being a victim in real life. The authors also found that the motivation for violent crimes most often were psychological (the perpetrator was "crazy") than due to other factors such as poverty, the need for money, drugs, etc. Finally, the authors found that in television crime programs the police apprehend virtually every criminal, which is also an unrealistic overrepresentation of real life.

Seggar, Haffen, and Hannonen-Gladden (1981) studied the way television portrayed both women and minorities in both prime time dramas and comedy-dramas during the decade of the 1970s. The authors found that between 1975-1980, blacks in general were shown slightly less frequently in 1980 than in 1975, black females had become almost invisible by 1980, and the incidents of blacks of both sexes in major roles had dropped considerably. The authors also found that use of minorities other than blacks in programs had dropped considerably by 1980, primarily due to a large reduction in

minority female portrayals. The authors did find, though, that white women had increased in the number of portrayals on television in prime time.

Butsch and Glennon (1983) looked at trends in the frequency of occurrence of various social classes in situation comedies from 1946-1978. The authors found that during the 32 years under study that by and large there was a significant overrepresentation of the middle class and a significant underrepresentation of the lower (or working) class in prime time domestic situation comedy series.

The serial drama, or soap opera, one of the staples of the television industry, has also been studied by researchers, both the afternoon soap operas and the evening prime time soap operas. Lowry, Love, and Kirby (1981) studied patterns of intimacy on soap operas. They found that acts of a sexual nature (including kissing and erotic hugging as well as verbal references to sexual activities (references such as "seduce," "making love," etc.) occurred in daytime soap operas about once every nine minutes, many of which occurred between unmarried persons or between married persons, but outside of the marriage situation. The authors stated that "Soap operas portray numbers of beautiful, rich, successful..., and very sexy role models engaging in intercourse outside of marriage twice as often as...within the bond of marriage" (pp. 95-96). The authors then worried

about the consequences of such program content suggesting that the amount of fornication and adultery could influence or "cultivate" viewers' attitudes about what is "normal" and "proper" in society. Other studies include Babrow (1987) and Rubin (1985).

Buerkel-Rothfuss and Mayes (1981) studied the cultivation effect of soap opera viewing. The authors found positive relationships between the amount of viewing of soap operas and what the viewer believes is true about the real world. The authors found that heavy viewers of soap operas believed there were more men and women who have had affairs, more illegitimate children, more divorces, and less men and women who were happily married. The authors argued that their results provided further support to the notion of the cultivation effect of television.

Soap operas have been an area of interest for mass communication researchers through the years. Even as recently as 1985, the Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media provided a symposium on the soap opera (Summer 1985), with articles dealing with various aspects of the genre.

In addition to genre studies, much research has been conducted on individual programs within the various genre. There have been a number of studies conducted on the effects of programs such as All in the Family (Brigham & Giesbrecht, 1976; Leckenby & Surlin, 1976; Meyer, 1976; Surlin & Tate,

1976; Tate & Surlin, 1976; Vidmar & Rokeach, 1974; and Wilhoit & de Brock, 1976) and Sanford and Son (Leckenby & Surlin, 1976) that have provided interesting findings about perceptions of comedy programs. Brigham and Geisbrecht (1976) found that those who liked and identified with Archie Bunker in All in the Family were more likely to express agreement with his views. Overall though, enjoyment or frequent viewing of All in the Family did not mean the viewers liked or agreed with the main character's views. Leckenby and Surlin (1976) found that All in the Family and Sanford and Son were perceived in similar ways by black and white audiences. The authors found that the more a viewer watched a show, the more he/she found it entertaining and to accept the idea that the program showed how most blacks/whites behaved in real life. Meyer (1976) found there were no uniform effects of All in the Family among children 6-10 years old, and as an instrument of learning, All in the Family provided not moral/ethical lessons, but lessons about physical appearance, role stereotypes, and comedy behavior. Surlin and Tate (1976) found that the cultural background, sex, and personality of the viewer are important in predicting perceived humor in a program (i.e., All in the Family) and in developing a social/psychological identity with a given character. Tate and Surlin (1976) found Canadian viewers did not see as much humor in All in

the Family as did American viewers nor did the Canadian viewers perceive the program to be as realistic. However, the authors found that persons that possess social and psychological characteristics similar to those in the program identify with those characters and see those characters as supporting their beliefs. Vidmar and Rokeach (1974) found that the effects of All in the Family were more effective in the reinforcing of prejudice and racism than in the combating of them. Wilhoit and de Brock (1976) found that All in the Family did not have a reinforcing effect on Dutch viewers who were authoritarian, lifestyle intolerant, or ethnocentric unlike studies on U.S. viewers who displayed those characteristics. The authors further found that uses and gratification factors were unlikely mediators of Dutch perceptions of All in the Family.

Research has also been on the production aspect of television programs (Ravage, 1977) and the fantasy aspects of Fantasy Island (Budd, Craig, & Steinman, 1983). Ravage, using the participant/observer method of inquiry, found that the dictates of the business orientation of the major studios and the pressure from networks to be popular have reduced the abilities of producers, writers, actors, and those associated with the production of television programs to develop creative, ingenious, "quality" programs. Other studies include Barker (1985).

Budd, Craig, and Steinman (1983), in their study of Fantasy Island found that for the characters in the program the fantasies in which they participate are therapeutic. However, for the audience, especially for women who are avid watchers of the program, needs, fears, wishes, etc., are not satisfied and that there is only a "fantasy of therapy."

Uses and Gratifications of Television

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, uses and gratifications of the mass media has been the subject of much research during the 1970s and 1980s. The theory of uses and gratifications provides an alternative to persuasion theories, and suggests that people use the media to satisfy various needs (Tan, 1985). Uses and gratifications perceive audiences as active rather than passive, using the media for fulfillment of specific needs and desires. Uses and gratifications has been used to explain the reasons why people choose to watch television (uses) and the various needs that are satisfied by watching television (gratifications). Most of the research has been directed either toward the uses and gratifications of television vis-a-vis other forms of media and interpersonal relationships or toward the uses and gratifications derived from a specialized type of program. Much less has been done with the uses and gratifications derived from prime time programming, despite the

variety of program types (and the program appeals used in those programs (see Chapter 1)) and the potential uses and gratifications available to the prime time audience.

Uses and gratifications offers four assumptions. The first assumption is that media use is goal-oriented. People use the media for satisfying specific needs. Second, the audience initiates the mass communication process and actively selects media types and contents to satisfy their needs. Third, the mass media must compete with other forms of need satisfaction, including interpersonal contacts. The fourth assumption is that the audience is aware of their needs and can articulate them when asked, and are also aware of the reasons they use the media (Tan, 1985).

Tan (1985) divides audience needs into five major categories. The first category is cognitive needs (information-oriented, including surveillance of the environment, curiosity, and understanding). The second is affective needs (aesthetic, pleasure-seeking, including entertainment). The third category is personal needs (desire for self-esteem and self-confidence). The fourth is social needs (desire for social affiliation and connection to peer groups, understanding of the "correct way to act" among friends, etc., in social surroundings). The fifth category is escapist needs (tension release, to pass time).

While there have been a number of studies in the area of uses and gratifications, few have dealt specifically with the different uses of television program types in general, and the gratifications derived from the media use. In fact, a search of the literature produced no studies dealing specifically with the different uses of program types during prime time alone and the gratifications derived from those uses. Indeed, Webster and Newton (1988) in their study of structural determinants of the television news audience state that audience needs and expectations are only one of numerous causes in determining people's exposure to television programming.

One study produced by a search of the literature offered some insight into the gratifications sought by viewers of television programming in general and their choices of programming. Rubin (1981), found some support for specific viewing motivations (gratifications sought) of various types of television programming. The results, produced from a survey conducted in personal interviews with 626 respondents ages 4 to 89 years of age, showed that comedy was used to relax and to pass time. Action-drama programs were used primarily for companionship and for arousal purposes. Sports were also used for arousal purposes. Game shows were used for information purposes. Talk-interview programs were also used to inform. Further, the results showed that news

and talk-interview programs were negatively correlated with passing time and as a social activity. Talk-interview programs were also negatively correlated with companionship and arousal motivations. Sports was negatively correlated with viewing specifically for the content of the program. Other program types (children's, movies, daytime serials, and music-variety) did not produce any statistically significant correlations among the various motivation categories.

Although Rubin's study did find statistically significant correlations among various program types and audience motivations, the correlations were extremely low. In fact, the largest correlation produced in the study was a negative correlation of $-.19$. While the correlation was statistically significant, a negative correlation of that magnitude offers little in the way of illumination. Indeed, the larger correlations were negative, explaining what were not the respondents' motivations, but not explaining what the respondents motivations were.

A more illuminating study in this area is Frank and Greenberg's work The Public's Use of Television (1980). In their survey, conducted through personal interviews of more than 2400 respondents nationwide, the authors first attempted to redefine the television audience, not by demographics, but by certain interests indigenous to specific groups. The

authors used factor analysis to develop their interest groups.

Following the development of the interest group categories, again using results from the factor analysis, the authors developed a series of needs for which various forms of media could satisfy. Finally, the authors derived the amount of television and the types of television programs each interest group preferred (as expressed by a sample of individual programs from which the respondents could choose). The authors also derived information on other forms of media used by the respondents. An example of these interest groups is the following:

MECHANICS AND OUTDOOR LIFE

Young adult, blue-collar males whose interests focus on noncompetitive activities emphasizing personal physical accomplishment-e.g., auto repair, fishing, camping-interests which, by their very nature, do not require emphasis on interpersonal cooperation or support. High on needs for escape and unique/creative accomplishment. Television. Below-average television exposure and in-home availability. Relatively high on escape/fantasy-related adventure, science fiction, crime, movies. Low on programming containing intellectual content. Quite low on sports programming, especially for a predominantly male segment. Magazine. Heavy users on men's, outdoor, automotive, mechanics, and miscellaneous (Modern Photography). Magazine readership concentrated on entertainment and recreation, especially on personal interests and hobbies. Books, Movies, Newspapers, and Radio (Other Media). Heavy users of movies and radio, "how to" books, farm and country radio programs. Heavy on escape-related books and movies such as science fiction and horror. Also heavy readers of newspaper comics.

(For a complete description of the various interest groups, including interests, needs, and media usage, see Appendix pp. 124-136.)

While Frank and Greenberg's study provides a new (and in many ways illuminating) way of considering the uses of television by different types of viewers, there are some drawbacks for the scholar and the industry executive. First, by the use of interest groups, it is impossible to ascertain a demographic target market such that advertisers could use for marketing their products. Each group contained both men and women, from various socioeconomic groups, and generally covered a wide range of ages. Thus an attempt to convince an advertiser of his/her need to market a specific product to virtually any of the interest groups could meet with objections from the advertiser that the product is specifically for males (i.e., a particular hair groom, a bass boat, etc.). While it is possible to make an argument that this type of viewer division could open new markets (especially secondary ones), it could also cause advertisers to be reluctant to accept the division, especially if their own marketing research on their product contradicts the target established by the new viewer division.

Second, the divisions have a great deal of overlap. For instance, "Adventure" programs are watched more than the

mean viewing amount (established by the study) by eight of the fourteen interest groups. This includes two of the three interest groups within the "Adult Male" category, two of the four interest groups within the "Adult Female" category, two of the three interest groups within the "Youth" category, and two of the four interest groups within the "Mixed" category. Further, by being enjoyed by the eight different interest groups, "Adventure" programs garnered virtually every demographic and socioeconomic group within the study, and a variety of diverse and seemingly contradictory groups. Further, this pattern holds throughout the study, with at least four and as many as eight different groups enjoying each program type. While in some cases the overlap makes some sense (such as situation comedies which were female/youth oriented), even so, there is considerable overlap because of the range of demographic groups within each interest group.

Nevertheless, the attempt by Frank and Greenberg to reclassify the television viewing population does provide new insights into the way television is used. Further, the classification scheme developed by the authors seems to be a plausible alternative and complementary way of classifying viewers. Perhaps, if at some future point a marriage of the Frank and Greenberg classification scheme with traditional demographic classification schemes could be produced (and

the authors themselves suggest their classification scheme as a complement), a greater understanding of the public's use of television and accompanying needs gratifications could be provided.

While the above studies do not deal specifically with prime time programming to the exclusion of other time periods, the results in general suggest there is a possible need for further study. The showing of certain specific motivations or needs being met by various program types suggest that network programmers attempting to develop the best "mix" of programming and to utilize programming strategy to the fullest could conceivably benefit from further studies in this area. However, at this time, while acknowledging the uses and gratifications literature, most scholars studying programming strategy are unwilling to establish a direct tie between the two areas (as pointed out earlier in this section).

Television Programming Strategies

This study focuses on one specific sub-area under television programming, television programming strategy research. As will be shown, the attempts at counterprogramming by the network programmers during the 1986-1987 television season were not without supporting research. The literature on television programming techniques is rich with

both books (most notably Eastman, Head, & Klein, 1988; and Howard & Keivman, 1983) and journal studies. In addition, certain trade publications routinely report on network television programming strategies. These include Broadcasting, Channels of Communication, Television-Radio Age, and Advertising Age, among others.

Many studies (discussed below) focus on the abilities of lead-in programs to produce inheritance effects between adjacent programs that sustain a network throughout a given night. Block programming is built upon the idea of positive audience flow: that is, people who watch one program on a network tend to continue on through the night watching the same network. This suggests the need for strong lead-in and carryover programming that can hold an audience through the entire night.

Eastman, Head, and Klein (1988) suggest several forms of audience flow strategies. One form that emerges in the literature is the lead-off or, as other researchers refer to this form, the lead-in strategy. This strategy suggests the need for network programmers to begin a programming period (such as prime time) with a strong program to set the tone for the programming period and to begin building the programming period's audience for that network. This building of the audience throughout the programming period is termed an "inheritance effect." There has been much research on

inheritance effects, which will be discussed shortly; however, research on lead-in programming strategy is much more limited. Tiedge and Ksobiech (1986) found that programs following heavily-viewed lead-in programs had significantly higher ratings (i.e., more viewers) than did programs following less-heavily-viewed lead-in programs. The authors also found the same to hold for new programs following heavily-viewed lead-in programs. Finally Tiedge and Ksobiech also found that people were more likely to view programs that followed similar-type programs (e.g., to situation comedies back-to-back). They also were more likely to view back-to-back programs when the options at the time of the second program was limited (e.g., if at 8:30 p.m. one network programmed a second situation comedy against the other networks' one-hour programs). This research suggests that attention to lead-in programming should be of concern to network programmers. Conventional industry wisdom supports this notion.

Further, Webster and Newton (1988) found that the type of lead-in programming also affected the viewing audience for local and network news. The authors found that when local news led into network news the correlation of viewers between the two programs was extremely high (.96). When other forms of non-news programming led into the news the correlation between the two programs was smaller (.71)

than the local-to-network programming, but still there was a strong correlation. When network news led into local news the correlation between the two programs was moderate (.58).

Two other forms of audience flow strategy are hammocking and tent-poling. (Hammocking is the placing of a new or weaker program between two popular, established programs. The strategy suggests that the two established programs at either end of the new or weaker program support the "hammocked" program. Thus the audience will stay with the new or weaker program after watching the popular one preceding it and in anticipation of the popular program following the hammocked one. Tent-poling is the placement of a popular program in the middle of two weaker programs. This strategy suggests that the popular program will support two programs on either side of it much as the center pole of a tent supports the tent.) In the only study found to date, Tiedge and Ksobiech (1988) found no support for the hammock strategy of audience flow. No studies have been found on the tent-poling strategy.

One of the earliest studies of audience flow patterns was conducted by A. S. C. Ehrenberg in 1968. In that study, Ehrenberg reported that channel loyalty rather than differentiation in program types was responsible for any inheritance effects between adjacent programs (Ehrenberg, 1968,

p. 59). This theory of audience inheritance between adjacent programs has been supported by others throughout the last two decades (Goodhardt & Ehrenberg, 1969; Rao, 1975; Darmon, 1976; Henriksen, 1985). Goodhardt and Ehrenberg (1969) stated that "duplication-of-viewing law" (their name for audience flow) was supported for a number of various conditions. But the authors argued strongly that program content had little to no effect on the number of viewers that two programs had in common (p. 177), and argued

This result counters the widely held belief that programs with similar content appeal especially to some particular subgroup of viewers....In particular, a study of the discrepancies from the duplication law in relation to certain standard program categories (e.g., news, documentaries, religious programs, plays, drama series, and serials) has shown no special tendency for people who view a particular program to view any other program in the same category. (pp. 177-178)

Thus while supporting the idea of audience flow, the authors suggested that there was at best a marginal relationship between the necessity for similar types of programs during an evening and the continuity of audience viewing. Stated differently, the authors supported the notion of audience flow while arguing against the need to "block program" to achieve the flow.

Rao (1975) suggested that program scheduling and the individual's background characteristics are the major variables affecting inheritance effects. Working from a sample

of 1796 respondents, Rao found that the network on which a program was scheduled, along with certain background characteristics of the respondents such as enjoyment of movies, family entertainment programming, and westerns were the major determinants for producing inheritance effects.

Darmon (1976) on the other hand, found that, as a single predictor, channel loyalty was a "much more powerful" predictor of inheritance effects than program type (pp. 19-20) during weekday prime time viewing. He found that channel loyalty throughout the evening to be a stronger predictor of inheritance effects than program-type loyalty, at least for prime time Canadian television viewing.

Another group of studies contradicts Ehrenberg's and Goodhardt's earlier work. Bruno (1973), Gensch and Ranganaathan (1974), Headen, Klompmaker, and Rust (1979), and Webster (1985) all suggest that inheritance effects are the result of specific, highly-popular program types, rather than simply channel loyalty from one program to another or across time (generally from one week to another). Bruno (1973), in his comparison of the New York City and Grand Rapids, Michigan, markets, found a strong "network" preference, that is that people prefer to watch specific networks throughout an evening. While Bruno's results would seem to support the contention that channel loyalty is important for developing inheritance effects, the results of Bruno's study

also suggest that there was a statistically significant relationship between program type and inheritance effects, albeit a less strong relationship than network loyalty. Thus Bruno's study both supports channel loyalty (or as he terms it "network loyalty) as well as program specific loyalty in developing inheritance effects.

Gensch and Ranganathan (1974), on the other hand, strongly argue that individuals prefer specific and defined program types. The authors studied three sets of data containing one thousand respondents concerning their television viewing patterns. Using factor analysis and a variation on canonical correlation called a "similarity index," the authors found that program choice during prime time, not channel loyalty, was the reason for the respondents' viewing habits. Indeed, the authors emphasized as much: "Each factor contained shows that were broadcast by different networks on different nights at different times" (emphasis original authors'). The authors thus reached the following conclusion: "In essence we are saying that...the individual's choice of programs is not random. Individuals appear to have certain tastes or preferences for defined sets of programs" (p. 393).

Headen, Klompmaker, and Rust (1979) and Webster (1985) also support the idea that program types provide major inheritance effects as contrary to Goodhardt and Ehrenberg,

but concede that both channel loyalty and program types can lead to inheritance effects. Headen et al. compared the results of studies conducted by Goodhardt and Ehrenberg (1966, 1969) on television audience viewing patterns in Great Britain and in those selected cities studied by Goodhardt and Ehrenberg with results of the United States-wide study conducted by the authors. Headen et al. found that there were major differences between the Goodhardt and Ehrenberg studies and the results of their study in terms of audience flow. Most importantly, the authors reported that there was positive evidence of program-type loyalty rather than simple channel loyalty in their study. The authors further stated that television dayparts should also be taken into consideration when determining audience flow and inheritance effects in television viewing, that television viewers in the United States have tendencies to watch specific types of programs depending on the daypart in which they are televised.

Webster (1985) in his analysis of Arbitron data from the Portland, Maine, television market, found that contrary to the studies by Goodhardt & Ehrenberg discussed earlier, program type does have a significant, although somewhat limited, effect on audience duplication patterns of viewing. Further, Webster found that network programs that run back-to-back share large numbers of viewers because many of the

same viewers tend to watch television during those same consecutive time periods. Thus the availability of an audience to watch adjacent programs is an important factor in audience duplication. Finally, Webster found an inverse relationship between audience duplication and the number of similar programs offered by competing networks. In other words, as the number of similar-type programs across networks increased for a given time period, the less likely a viewer was to "flow through" that time period from a preceding one. This finding is significant for the present study.

Webster (1986), in a later study, also found that the addition of the newer forms of media (such as cable, video-cassette recorders, etc.) added to the viewers' desires to be selective about their viewing.

Finally, in the area of inheritance effects, Walker (1988) found in his study of prime time programming that with the increase in cable, VCR, and remote-control television penetration throughout the country, inheritance effects on network television have decreased during prime time. Walker found that although inheritance effects increased in his sample years until 1982, inheritance effects decreased from 1982-1985. This follows the growth of independent television, cable television, videocassette recorders, etc., in the country during the decade of the 1980s.

Other research has focused on counterprogramming as a strategy. The amount of research in this area is scarce, focusing mainly on how counterprogramming affects the ability of a specific program to deliver an audience (Wakshlag & Greenberg, 1979). Wakshlag and Greenberg (1979) sought to test the effectiveness of the counterprogramming technique of programming on children in the fourth, sixth, and eighth grades. The authors found that programming familiarity produced more response from the children than did the counterprogramming technique. The juxtaposition of audience flow and counterprogramming in the preceding paragraphs is not designed to suggest that audience flow and counterprogramming are incompatible. Certainly, one network can provide a strong lead-in program in an attempt to develop positive audience flow, while still counterprogramming against competing networks. As discussed earlier, counterprogramming has two major forms of competing programming strategies, blunting and what this study will refer to as hybrid programming.

However, as pointed out above, the research studies on programming strategies have generally been limited to research on audience flow throughout a period of the television day (mostly prime time) or on the counterprogramming strategy of programming. The studies have not addressed the question of generation of audience across all three net-

works. Rather, the studies have approached this aspect from the individual network level or individual station level. Thus, the studies have dealt with those factors perceived to affect the popularity between two adjacent programs on the same channel. The results have been contradictory, with many of the earlier studies suggesting the desire for channel loyalty as a way to build audience flow, while later studies suggest program choice as a more logical way to build flow throughout the evening.

To date, there has been only one study to consider which type of programming strategy would yield the best results in terms of program popularity. Tiedge and Ksobiech (1987) sought to compare four types of programming strategies (pure counterprogramming, pure blunting, countering a blunt, and blunting a counter) to determine which strategy a single network should undertake to yield the best results in terms of rating points when compared to the other two networks. ("Blunting" describes a situation where all three networks broadcast the same type of program. "Countering a blunt" describes a situation where two networks are blunting each other; the third network (the network of choice) would then counterprogram the other two networks. "Blunting a counter" describes a situation where two networks are counterprogramming each other; the network of choice would then blunt one or the other of the two networks.) The authors

found that counterprogramming techniques in general (pure counterprogramming and countering a blunt) were superior to blunting techniques in providing higher mean shares (mean shares are the averages of all shares for one year for one program on one night on one network) for the network of choice. In their discussion, the authors suggested that using counterprogramming techniques could provide a larger audience across all three networks due to the fact that no two networks would be competing directly against one another. That suggestion forms the basis for this dissertation.

Why, then, is this study important? As mentioned in the introduction, viewing audiences for network television have been dropping throughout the past ten years. In addition, there has also been a reduction in the number of different programming choices available to the viewing public over the years. Gone are the Western and the anthology drama; likewise, there have only been token attempts at variety programs, where once they were a regular part of the prime time schedule (e.g., Ed Sullivan's Toast of the Town). This erosion of the network television viewing choices was established first by Dominick and Pearce (1976) and later was reaffirmed by Wakshlag and Adams (1985). In their 1976 study, Dominick and Pearce found that variety in network programming had been decreasing almost constantly since the mid-1950s. The authors argued that as a program becomes

more profitable in terms of popularity, it spawns a variety of imitators by the other networks, thus bringing about a decrease in the diversity of program types. In their 1985 study, however, Wakshlag and Adams found no gradual drop off of program variety, but rather a sharp plummet in the program diversity following the Federal Communications Commission's implementation of the Prime Time Access Rule (PTAR) in 1971. (The Prime Time Access Rule was implemented by the Federal Communications Commission to foster the development of local programming during the early evening (7:00-8:00 p.m. ET) time slot. Thus that hour was taken away from the networks' prime time schedule and returned to the local stations.) Regardless of whether the erosion of the network television viewing choices has been a gradual thirty-year decrease as suggested by Dominick and Pearce, or has dropped precipitously in the last seventeen years as suggested by Wakshlag and Adams, this continued reduction in program diversity combined with a corresponding loss in the network television viewing audience suggests a need for a re-thinking of programming strategies by network executives. Hence, the fanfare over the "new and different" 1986-1987 television season. If this attempt at more or less pure counter-programming by the networks produced larger overall audiences than have been previously produced by network programming strategies, then it would signal the need for a

restructuring of programming decisions by network executives from a broadcast type of programming strategy, to a more narrow type of mass appeal programming, whereby network executives specifically program their networks toward certain audiences not being reached by the other two networks. While as a practical matter the network programming executives cannot meet to develop their programming strategies together to produce the largest and most varied programming possible (this would be a form of collusion, and a violation of anti-trust laws), it is possible for the individual networks to make last-minute changes to their prime-time television lineups to maximize the use of counterprogramming. If arrived at independently of the other two networks as suggested earlier in this study, then the changes made by each network would not run afoul of anti-trust legislation.

Further, for economic reasons, it may become easier for networks to provide more variety in their programming in the near future. Currently, the networks are both restricted by the numbers and types of programs that are available from program producers and thus are limited in their abilities to counterprogram extensively; also, they have been prohibited or at least limited legally in their own production of entertainment programming. This condition will change however, in 1991, when the networks will be allowed to produce as many prime-time entertainment television programs as they

wish. This change will allow the networks ample time to begin developing the programs necessary to supplement the independent producers' program inventories, and thus will allow for the possibility of a greater degree of counterprogramming.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a typology of eleven categories to describe television program types. The categories were taken from previous studies that suggest certain standard categories of program types (see Dominick & Pearce, 1976; McLeod, Atkin, & Chaffee, 1971; Rao, 1975; Wakshlag & Greenberg, 1979; Webster, 1985). Ten of the categories used in this study were cited by Tiedge and Ksobiech (1987). An eleventh "Other" category was added to accommodate any miscellaneous program types. The eleven categories are as follows:

1. Movies: theatrical or made-for-television movies (e.g., ABC, NBC, or CBS Sunday Night Movie).
2. News/Information/Talk: news, documentary, interview programs, and panel discussions primarily nonentertainment in nature (e.g., 60 Minutes; 20/20; Meet the Press).
3. Sports: sports-oriented series (e.g., ABC Monday Night Football).
4. Quiz/Game: series where contestants attempt to win prizes (e.g., To Tell the Truth; I've Got a Secret; Wheel of Fortune; Jeopardy).

5. Comedy: typically (but not limited to) a one-half hour series whose primary aim is humor using the same characters and settings from episode to episode (e.g., I Love Lucy; Cheers; The Cosby Show; Family Ties); or other forms of programs where humor is the overriding device used (e.g., Laugh-In).
6. Variety: series using distinct acts or routines that may be (but not necessarily limited to) comedic or musical in nature (e.g., Ed Sullivan Show; Barbara Mandrell Show; Hee Haw; Dolly).
7. Science Fiction: series dealing with the future or the supernatural (Star Trek; Lost in Space).
8. Mystery/Suspense: series in which the audience is provided clues as to the ending, but is not given the outcome early, such that there is an element of suspense involved (Quincy; Murder, She Wrote).
9. Action/Adventure: series in which the emphasis is on the action created by the characters, usually violent in nature with fast-paced excitement (e.g., Dukes of Hazard; Miami Vice).
10. Drama: noncomedy series primarily involving the nonviolent resolution of a problem where the action is more intellectual than physical (e.g., Lou Grant; Family).

11. Other: other programs not able to be categorized.

This category was seldom used.

Nielsen (1988) research shows that throughout the prime time viewing period, women comprise the largest portion of the audience (as mentioned earlier in this study). Older women (55+) watch more drama, mystery/suspense, and action/adventure series, and movies than any other demographic group. Younger women (18-34) watch more comedies, while middle-aged women (35-54 as defined by Nielsen) prefer mystery/suspense and action/adventure programs, and movies (but in no category are they the largest group). Older men (55+) prefer dramas, while younger men (18-34) watch comedies most often, and middle-aged men (35-54) prefer mystery/suspense and action/adventure programs, and movies. The other forms of programming account for so little of the viewing time that Nielsen does not provide a breakdown of viewing. It is reasonable to assume that older members of the audience prefer news/information/talk programming (Frank & Greenberg, 1980) and that sports programs cater to male-dominated audiences.

The various programs provided by the networks during the years under study were coded by the author into one of the eleven categories of program types. Further, fifty-four half hours of programs selected at random were also coded by one other coder (a colleague in the department of

Communication Arts at Appalachian State University whose doctorate is from the University of Texas at Austin and who teaches television programming courses at Appalachian State) as an intercoder reliability check. Using the intercoder reliability test Scott's pi, the coefficient of reliability among the programs coded by the author and the second coder was 88.3%, thus substantiating the reliability of the coding. Then, using the programs broken down by categories, the different programming strategies were analyzed for all time periods during the years under study.

To determine the program strategy used, the types of programs broadcast during each half hour segment were compared. Three programs of the same type (e.g., three situation comedies) in a given half hour segment were coded as a blunting strategy. Two programs of the same type with one program of a different type (e.g., two situation comedies and one drama) in a given half hour were coded as a hybrid strategy. Three programs of different types (e.g., one situation comedy, one drama, and one news/information) in a given half hour were coded as a counterprogramming strategy.

Data for this study were gathered from the Arbitron Rating Company's Network Program Analysis available from the University of Georgia library. The University of Georgia is one of two repositories for Arbitron ratings material in the country (the other being San Diego State University). The

material is located in the special collections portion of the library and is available to anyone who might need the material in the course of that person's research.

The data gathered included the television year, the month, the day of the week, the time period, the overall rating of the individual time period, the share for the individual time period, the homes using television level (HUT level), and the demographic ratings for the following categories: "ADI Total," "Men 18+," "Men 18-49," "Men 18-34," "Men 25-49," and "Men 25-54," and "Women 18+," "Women 18-49," "Women 12-24," "Women 18-34," "Women 25-49," and "Women 25-54" (a rating is defined as the percentage of all television households or persons in those households watching a particular program). These categories are the ones used by the rating service itself, and therefore lend themselves to easy use in this study.

The data were gathered from the November and February ratings books for all prime time network programming (8:00-11:00 pm) for all days of the week for the years 1976-1987 with certain exceptions (see pg. 73). Time slots were broken down into thirty minute segments, with the overall and demographic ratings, shares, and HUT levels being determined for each segment. The data were national in scope, rather than provided by individual markets.

The November and February ratings periods were chosen because they represent the two ratings periods during the year when traditionally there has been a preponderance of original programming (not re-runs). The television years 1976-1987 were chosen in an effort to minimize the differences between pre- and post-satellite cable transmission development. As the results of this study will bear out, the development of satellite cable transmission and the impact of independent stations had negligible effect on the total network audience before the 1980s. Therefore, although the 1976 television year (November 1975-February 1976) occurred after the initial cable satellite transmission, it and the rest of the television years during the 1970s provide an excellent base line from which to study the downturn in the total television network viewing audience.

Also, it was conceivable that strategies in the pre-satellite cable transmission period (when the three major networks competed only with each other and a minimum of other independent and public stations) could provide inaccuracies in attempting to determine the best overall broadcast programming strategy in a cable-rich era of television, simply because of the lack of the national cable services. Further, in an effort to minimize problems with comparisons across the years, network shares were used to standardize the levels.

Once the Arbitron data were gathered, they were entered into the computer where they were subjected to statistical analysis using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) computer program. Descriptive statistics in the forms of cross tabulations, frequencies, and percentages were run in order to determine which program types were used most often throughout the years under study, and to determine if there was a trend toward certain favored types of programming strategies during certain periods and if certain programming strategies are currently increasing or decreasing.

In addition, inferential statistical techniques in the form of regression analyses were used to determine the relationships among the different programming strategies across time. Using regression analysis provided the ability to determine if different programming strategies produced different levels of overall network television viewing across the years under study. This allowed the researcher to determine if one strategy was more effective in producing a larger total network audience than either or both of the other two strategies. In addition, using the same regression analysis with an included interaction effect provided comparisons among the three programming strategies showing the differences in the change in the aggregate network share levels during the years under study. A concentration index was computed to determine any differences in the dispersion

of the audience among the three programming strategies. This index formed the dependent variable in the final regression analyses run to determine if programming strategy made a difference in terms of the concentrating or broadening of the networks' audience appeals across the various demographic groups. Because of the overlapping nature of the demographic data provided by Arbitron, the demographic segments used in the computations were collapsed through various combinations to produce young, middle, and old demographic categories for both males and females (with "young" being 18-34, "middle" being 35-49, and "old" being 50+). These breakdowns in age groups were used because they were the only ones that could be broken out from the demographic categories. Means were calculated for each category and concentration indices were calculated. The concentration indices for all time slots were computed by subtracting each expected category mean from each observed category frequency, squaring the difference, summing the squared differences across the various categories and dividing by the number of categories. The formula can be expressed as

$$V = \Sigma(O - E)^2/n,$$

where "V" is the concentration index,

"O" is the observed category frequency,

"E" is the expected category frequency, and

"n" is the number of categories.

To arrive at the concentration indices, the following procedures were conducted. First, for every time period a 6 x 3 factorial was developed using the ratings from the various categories. For instance, for any given time period (e.g., 8:00 p.m. Saturday night in November of the seventh television year) there was a separate rating for young men, for middle-aged men, and for old men, and a separate rating for young women, for middle-aged women, and for old women, for each network. This produced eighteen separate cells with values in each cell (see Table 1).

The expected value for each cell was derived by summing across the cells and dividing that sum by eighteen (the number of cells in the time period). This produced the expected value for each cell. At that point the actual computation could be run.

For each cell, the expected frequency was subtracted from the observed frequency. That difference was then squared, and the value was divided by 18 (the number of cells). This computation was conducted eighteen times, once for each cell. The sum of those eighteen computations then formed the concentration index for that one given time period. The same computations were then conducted for all time

Table 1
Sample Factorial Table (Blunting)

	YM ^a	MM ^b	OM ^c	YW ^d	MW ^e	OW ^f
ABC	2	22	1	2	3	3
CBS	4	23	4	3	1	2
NBC	5	20	1	2	1	1

^a Young Men

^b Middle-Aged Men

^c Old Men

^d Young Women

^e Middle-Aged Women

^f Old Women

periods. These computations provided the concentration indices needed.

The concentration indices provided measures of audience dispersion needed to test for significant differences in the variation of the aggregate network share levels, depending on the programming strategy. It was anticipated that the pure blunting strategy would have a more focused appeal among the different demographic groups than the other two programming strategies in that, there would be a high concentration in one demographic category of viewers that would enjoy the type of programming in the blunting strategy and very low concentrations of viewers in the other demographic categories for any given time period. Thus the blunting strategy would have the highest concentration index across demographic categories of the three strategies (see Table 1). This would be expected, given that in the pure blunting strategy the three networks are broadcasting the same category of program. It was expected that this would have the net effect of drawing similar types of viewers, with other viewers choosing alternate forms of media.

Similar results were anticipated from hybrid programming. It was expected that there would be a high concentrations of viewers corresponding to the group most likely to view the programs broadcast by the networks that were blunting, an intermediate level of concentration of viewers cor-

responding to the group most likely to view the program broadcast by the network that is counterprogramming, and low concentrations of viewers corresponding to the groups not wishing to view either of the two program types being offered by the three networks (see Table 2). Thus it was expected that hybrid programming would produce more choice variation than would pure blunting, but not as much choice variation as would pure counterprogramming. Therefore, hybrid programming would produce a lower total concentration index than would blunting, but a higher concentration index than would counterprogramming.

Finally, it was anticipated that the pure counterprogramming strategy would produce the broadest appeal of the three programming strategies and thus the lowest overall concentration index across the demographic groups (see Table 3). The differences in the variability scores would indicate that viewers who have more different types of programs to choose from were most likely to stay with broadcast television across the time periods than those who have fewer choices of program types.

Final regression analyses were run using the concentration indices as the dependent variable rather than the aggregate network share levels. It was hoped that these analyses would provide information as to which of the various programming strategies has been most responsible for the

Table 2
Sample Factorial Table (Hybrid)

	YM ^a	MM ^b	OM ^c	YW ^d	MW ^e	OW ^f
ABC	0	1	15	2	1	10
CBS	1	0	14	1	0	11
NBC	3	16	2	4	16	3

^a Young Men

^b Middle-Aged Men

^c Old Men

^d Young Women

^e Middle-Aged Women

^f Old Women

Table 3
Sample Factorial Table (Counterprogramming)

	YM ^a	MM ^b	OM ^c	YW ^d	MW ^e	OW ^f
ABC	17	4	3	14	3	2
CBS	3	12	4	3	12	2
NBC	0	1	10	0	0	10

a Young Men

b Middle-Aged Men

c Old Men

d Young Women

e Middle-Aged Women

f Old Women

differences in the aggregate network share levels. In addition, a follow-up paired t-test was conducted on only those instances when the strategy differed from one ratings book to the other in a given year. For instance, if the November 1986 ratings book produced a counterprogramming strategy for a given time period and the February 1987 ratings book produced a hybrid programming strategy for a given time period, then those two concentration indices were paired and the hybrid programming value subtracted from the counterprogramming value. This difference then became the value used in the paired t-test (along with other such instances throughout the years under study). There were sixty-six such occurrences used in the analysis.

In addition to its theoretical implications in the area of television programming strategy, the study offers some practical implications for the networks to consider in maximizing their prime time viewership.

Limitations

It must be noted that this study takes as its focus prime time programming and the use of certain strategies during those hours. Further, this study focuses on adult viewers only. The author concedes that the results of this study may or may not produce similar results during other television dayparts. The author chose the prime time

viewing period because of the greater variety of types of programming used during prime time (as opposed to other day-parts) and because it is the most watched portion of the broadcast day with the most varied audience composition. Further, prime time is the daypart with the broadest audience potential. The programs are directed at the mass audience, even though the real audience is skewed more toward female than to male (Nielsen, 1988). Other dayparts on network are programmed to the prevailing demographic audience (i.e., afternoon soap operas), but prime time is for all demographic groups. In addition, prime time was used because it is during prime time that a statistically significant difference among the strategies would have the most impact, both on programming choice and on network revenues (because of the large audience delivered during prime time advertisers pay more per commercial advertisement than during any other time of the broadcast day (major specials such as "The Super Bowl" being exceptions).

One limitation of this study was the inability to distinguish between movie program types. The network ratings data combine the ratings of the individual movies shown during a ratings period and take the average to develop the rating for the specified movie (such as the ABC Saturday Night Movie). It is conceded that a variety of genre lend themselves to movie form, but for purposes of this study the

standard category of "Movie" has been used. Further, while there can be elements of various genre in each program type (example Dukes of Hazzard, a comedic action/adventure type program), the programs were typed by the main thrust of the program (as mentioned at the outset of this chapter, these are standard types of programs that have been used in a number of different studies in this area by a variety of authors).

A second limitation was that during certain occasional time periods one or more networks would program four different shows during the four weeks of the ratings period. Without having a dominant program, it was impossible to specify a particular program for the time period. To remedy the problem the ratings and shares were taken from the four individual programs and averaged together to develop an index that could be used for that time period. The averaging of the different data cells from each of the four different programs during the sweeps period provide a good approximation of the ratings, shares, HUT levels, etc., for those individual time periods within the ratings period. Classification of the time period was determined by taking the program type most often used during the four weeks. For example, if a time period provided two comedies, one drama, and one variety program the time period would be classified as a comedy type due to comedies providing the bulk of the

programming during the four-week period. If four different program types were broadcast during the four-week period, then the time period would be classified as "Other". The total number of cases where the "Other" category had to be used was only 37 or 1.64% of the total number of programs coded.

A third limitation to this study was the lack of a complete set of ratings books at the University of Georgia. Of the years under study, 1978 was missing entirely, while parts of other years in the 1970s were also missing. With the exception of 1978, there was at least one February or one November ratings book for the other years. From 1981 on, the collection was complete. These were the Arbitron Network Program Analysis ratings books used in the study: November 1975, November 1976, February 1977, November 1979, February 1980, November 1980, November 1981, February 1982, November 1982, February 1983, November 1983, February, 1984, November 1984, February 1985, November 1985, February 1986, November 1986, February 1987. Also, for the portion of the analysis involving the development of concentration indices, only the last seven years' worth of data could be used. The data development of the Arbitron service changed greatly between the third and fourth years. As such, the demographic categories described earlier did not exist for the first three years of the study.

A final limitation of this study was that the data available for research ended with the February 1987 ratings period because of the way Arbitron provides ratings information to academic researchers. Arbitron withholds the most recent ratings period information until the data for the next ratings period are available to its industry clients. Therefore, the November 1987 ratings information was not available to the researcher until after the February 1988 ratings book was released to clients (late March 1988) and the February 1988 ratings information was not available to the researcher until after the May 1988 ratings book was released to clients (June 1988). Because year in this study is defined as the November ratings period of one year and the February ratings period of the subsequent year, information for the 1987-1988 year was not available in time for this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter first provides descriptive statistics in the forms of contingency tables designed to provide the reader with an understanding of the changes in uses of program strategies and program types across the time period under study. The chapter then provides a detailed analysis of the hypotheses and sub-hypotheses presented in Chapter 1.

Trends in Uses of Program Strategies and Types

The descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and cross-tabulations) include a number of different categories: (1) Frequencies and percentages were computed for the number of occurrences of the various programming strategies and the various program types; (2) Cross-tabulations are provided for the number and percentage of occurrences of various programming strategies during each of the television seasons under study, across the days of the week, and across the prime time time periods; and (3) Cross-tabulations are also shown for the number and percentage of occurrences of each of the program types across the television seasons under study, across the days of the week, and across the prime time periods. The cross-tabulations allow the

reader to readily understand the changing nature of program choice and strategy choice during the television seasons under study.

Program Strategies

Counterprogramming was the most used strategy of network programmers during the years under study, occurring 383 times or 51.55% of the decision-making instances. The hybrid strategy was nearly as prominent, occurring 346 times or 46.57% of the instances. Blunting was virtually nonexistent, accounting for only 1.88% of the program strategy occurrences (14 times out of a total of 743). In thirteen cases, it was impossible to discern a strategy due to missing data from one or more of the networks, and those thirteen cases were removed from the analyses (see Table 4).

Contingency tables derived from cross tabulations involving programming strategy across the television years suggested no particular pattern of one strategy increasing over the other (see Table 5). Further the ranges of percentages for the three strategies were from 0% to 7% for blunting, from 27% to 57% for hybrid programming, and from 38% to 73% for counterprogramming. In addition, highs and lows for hybrid programming and counterprogramming occurred during the early 1980s, with the split between hybrid and counterprogramming being about equal during the

Table 4
Frequency of Strategy Use

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Blunting	14	1.88%
Counterprogramming	383	51.55%
Hybrid Programming	346	46.57%
Total	743	100.00%

Table 5
 Programming Strategy across Television Years
 (Frequency of Occurrence)

Strategy	1975 1976	1976 1977	1979 1980	1980 1981	1981 1982	1982 1983	1983 1984	1984 1985	1985 1986	1986 1987
BL ^a	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	4 5%	0 0%	4 5%	6 7%
CP ^b	20 53%	52 62%	36 48%	18 43%	61 73%	42 50%	32 38%	40 48%	42 50%	40 48%
HP ^c	18 47%	32 38%	39 52%	24 57%	23 27%	42 50%	48 57%	44 52%	38 45%	38 45%
Total	38	84	75	42	84	84	84	84	84	84

^aBlunting

^bCounterprogramming

^cHybrid Programming

mid-to-late-1980s. Interestingly enough, during the 1986-1987 television season, blunting accounted for its highest percentage of programming during the years under study. This suggests that the "new and improved" strategy of counterprogramming of the 1986-1987 television season was no new direction after all. However, cross tabulating strategy by day of the week provided interesting results (see Table 6). Hybrid programming was much more prevalent only on Sunday night where it accounted for almost 73% of the programming. Tuesday through Thursday nights were dominated by counterprogramming with the largest night in terms of occurrences being Wednesday night (74%). Friday night slightly more hybrid programming occurred (53% for hybrid programming versus 45%) while on Monday and Saturday nights slightly more counterprogramming occurred. The predominant night for blunting was Sunday night when the strategy occurred 11% of the time. Primarily the blunting took the form of movies shown on all three of the networks.

While no definitive reasons for this breakdown are given in the literature, reasonable speculations derived from the data can be offered. On the two nights when hybrid programming predominated (Sunday and Friday), one program type occurred significantly more often than any of the other program types. For Sunday night, movies provided almost 55% (177 of 323 half hours) of the programming during the

Table 6
Program Strategy by Day of the Week
(Frequency of Occurrence)

Strategy	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
BL ^a	12 11%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	2 2%	0 0%
CP ^b	17 16%	56 52%	67 63%	78 74%	62 58%	47 45%	56 53%
HP ^c	78 73%	52 48%	39 37%	28 26%	44 42%	55 53%	50 47%
Total	107	108	106	106	106	104	106

^aBlunting

^bCounterprogramming

^cHybrid Programming

evening hours. This is also why blunting occurred most often during Sunday evenings. On Friday night, action/adventure programs provided more than 39% (125 of 320 half hours) of the programming during prime time. No other night was as dominated by one single program type. In fact, for the three nights when counterprogramming occurred most often (Tuesday with 63%, Wednesday with 74%, and Thursday with 58%), six different programming types produced double-digit frequency of occurrences, and the largest percentage of occurrences for either night was 29% (Wednesday night). Further, for those remaining nights (Monday and Saturday) when counterprogramming occurred only slightly more often than hybrid programming did, each night had one program type that produced triple-digit occurrences, but each night had an unusual quirk about it. For instance, on Monday night movies produced 110 of 324 occurrences (34%), but on the Monday nights during the November ratings period, sports in the form of Monday Night Football were telecast, thus raising significantly the number of counterprogramming instances (whenever Monday Night Football appeared counterprogramming also appeared). On Saturday night comedy produced 104 of 322 occurrences (32%), but action/adventure programs produced 90 of 322 occurrences (28%) and movies produced 70 of 322 occurrences (22%), thus reducing the dominating effect of the comedy program type. It must be further noted that

while Monday and Saturday nights produced slightly more counterprogramming than hybrid programming, the differences were not large (52% to 48% on Monday night and 53% to 47% for Saturday night), and were there not Monday Night Football, then most probably hybrid programming would have dominated (especially if ABC programmed movies in place of football as they do during the rest of the television year).

With regard to programming strategy across time periods only the 9:30 pm to 10:00 pm half hour showed slightly more occurrences of hybrid programming (49.2% to 48.4%), while counterprogramming dominated during the other half hours of prime time (see Table 7). Blunting was used only during the later hours, accounting for between 2.4% and 3.2% per half hour from 9:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m.

It is surprising to realize that counterprogramming accounted for only slightly more than 50% of the occurrences of programming strategy during the years under study. As noted elsewhere in this study, programmers are quick to acknowledge the need to counterprogram against their competitors; however, as the data show, almost half the time at least one network is attempting to blunt a competitor. Thus the results in this area seem to suggest that there has been less counterprogramming occurring than network programmers have realized, or at least have acknowledged.

Table 7
Program Strategy by Time Period
(Frequency of Occurrence)

Strategy	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
BL ^a	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	3 2.38%	3 2.38%	4 3.20%	4 3.20%
CP ^b	68 56.20%	68 56.67%	62 49.21%	61 48.41%	62 49.60%	62 49.60%
HP ^c	53 43.80%	52 43.33%	61 48.41%	62 49.21%	59 47.20%	59 47.20%
Total	121	120	126	126	125	125

^aBlunting

^bCounterprogramming

^cHybrid Programming

Program Types

In terms of program types, four categories produced 85% of all programming during the television years under study (see Table 8). The movie category produced the largest number of programs during the period with 564 half hour segments (or 25% of the 2255 half hour segments). Action/adventure programs were close to movies, producing the second largest number of half hour segments (533 or 23.6%). Third was situation comedies with 463 half hour segments (20.5%). Fourth largest was drama with 358 half hour segments (15.9%). The other six categories appearing during the television years under study accounted for much less of the total: mystery/suspense (139 half hours or 6.2%), variety (71 or 3.2%), news/information (54 or 2.4%), other (37 or 1.6%) and sports (36 or 1.6%). The science fiction category did not appear during prime time during the year under study.

As has been mentioned earlier in this study, it was not unexpected to find that the four program types mentioned above accounted for more than 85% of all programming. These four program types, along with the mystery/suspense category (added together the five account for 91.2% of all programming) have traditionally been considered as mass appeal, high-ratings-generating program types. As such, they would

Table 8
Frequency of Program Type^a

Program Type ^a	Frequency	Percentage
Movie	564	25.01%
News/Info	54	2.39%
Sports	36	1.60%
Comedy	463	20.53%
Variety	71	3.15%
Mystery	139	6.16%
Action/Ad	533	23.64%
Drama	358	15.88%
Other	37	1.64%
Total	2255	100.00%

^aThe Quiz/Game Show and Science Fiction categories did not appear in the data.

be expected to dominate the prime time viewing. The other types of programs are more specialized in nature.

Frequency of Program Type Occurrences

Across Television Years

The contingency tables produced by the cross tabulation of program type and television year suggest certain categories increasing during the years under study with other categories falling out of favor (see Table 9). The most noticeable change was the decrease in variety programs across the years. During the late 1970s and early 1980s (the early years of this study), variety programs occurred at least several times throughout the television year. However, from the 1984-1985 television year on, no series variety programs were aired during prime time on a regular basis. Also decreasing across the years were movies (although there were still plenty of movies being aired even in 1986-1987) and the mystery/suspense program type, although the latter category did experience a resurgence during the 1985-1986 and 1986-1987 seasons.

Categories that gained in prominence included comedies, action/adventure programs. News/information programming, sports programming, and dramas stayed relatively the same over the years under study.

Table 9

Program Type by Television Year
(Frequency of Occurrence)

Prog. Type ^a	1975 1976	1976 1977	1979 1980	1980 1981	1981 1982	1982 1983	1983 1984	1984 1985	1985 1986	1986 1987
Movie	24	68	72	60	52	57	67	60	52	52
News/Info	0	2	10	4	12	4	4	4	4	10
Sports	4	4	4	4	4	0	4	4	4	4
Comedy	20	47	47	26	57	58	54	48	46	60
Variety	8	21	8	4	14	8	8	0	0	0
Mystery	22	28	18	4	12	8	4	4	15	24
Action/Ad	26	48	46	8	43	67	68	88	87	52
Drama	16	32	38	16	44	46	40	42	36	48
Other	2	2	0	0	14	4	3	2	8	2
Total ^b	122	252	243	126	252	252	252	252	252	252

^aThe Quiz/Game Show and Science Fiction categories did not appear in the data.

^bYearly totals for 1975-1976 and 1980-1981 differ due to unavailability of data from Arbitron.

The most prominent type of programming in terms of occurrences during the late 1970s and early 1980s (from November 1975-February 1981) by far was the movies category. The most popular category during the 1981-1982 and the 1986-1987 television years was the situation comedy category. From November 1982 through February 1986 the most popular category of programming was the action/adventure category (see Table 9).

Frequency of Program Type Occurrences

Across Days of the Week

In terms of the most frequently occurring programs by day of the week, movies dominated Sunday through Tuesday nights, providing the largest number of half hours each night (see Table 10). During three of the years under study all three networks blunted each other with movies on Sunday night. As expected then, Sunday was the night when the largest number of movies were broadcast, providing almost 55% of the programming during the prime time hours across the years under study. Monday night movies provided slightly more than 34% and by Tuesday that percentage had shrunk to only 24.5%, with action/adventure programs accounting for 23% of the programming.

On Wednesday nights the predominant program types were the drama programs and action/adventure programs. Drama

Table 10
Program Type by Day of Week
(Frequency of Occurrence)

Program Type ^a	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.
Movies	177	110	79	50	26	52	70
News/Info	2	4	4	2	34	6	2
Sports	0	32	0	0	4	0	0
Comedy	44	68	65	55	82	45	104
Variety	6	16	2	21	2	10	14
Mystery	19	4	40	20	32	18	6
Action/Ad	45	46	75	80	72	125	90
Drama	28	40	40	92	66	62	30
Other	2	4	17	2	4	2	6
Total	323	324	322	322	322	320	322

^aThe Quiz/Game Show and Science Fiction categories did not appear in the data.

programs provided slightly less than 29% of the programming available, while the action/adventure category produced almost 25% of the programming. Movies dropped to fourth behind comedies.

Thursday night was predominantly comedy night during the years under study. Comedy was the program type most often aired, accounting for almost 25.5% of the programs aired on Thursday night with action/adventure accounting for 22% and dramas accounting for 20.5% (see Table 10).

Friday night, the predominant program type was the action/adventure program, with programs from that category producing almost 40% of the programming available on Friday night. Dramas and movies were also prevalent (18% and 17% respectively), but action/adventure programs outdistanced drama and movies by more than two-to-one (see Table 10).

Saturday night was once again primarily a comedy night with comedy programs providing more than 32% of all programming. However, action/adventure and movies were also popular (28% and 22% respectively) (see Table 10).

Frequency of Program Type Occurrences

Across Time Period

The time of night also provided interesting data about prime time television programs (see Table 11). During the early hours of prime time action/adventure and comedies

Table 11
Program Type by Time Period
(Frequency of Occurrence)

Program Type ^a	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
Movies	23	25	132	132	126	126
News/Info	7	7	1	1	19	19
Sports	1	1	9	9	8	8
Comedy	126	119	104	102	6	6
Variety	28	29	3	3	4	4
Mystery	11	14	26	26	31	31
Action/Ad	128	126	64	65	75	75
Drama	37	37	35	37	106	106
Other	12	14	4	3	2	2
Total	373	372	378	378	377	377

^aThe Quiz/Game Show and Science Fiction categories did not appear in the data.

dominated the television fare, providing 34.3% and 33.8% respectively. Comedies were also popular during the 9:00 pm to 10:00 pm hour as were movies (28% and 33% respectively for both the 9:00 pm and 9:30 pm half hours). Action/adventure programs were third, but were less than half as prevalent as during the early hour of prime time. During the 10:00 pm to 11:00 pm hour (the late hour of prime time) movies and dramas far outdistanced the other categories.

Hypotheses Analysis

The results of the study showed strong statistical support for certain hypotheses and sub-hypotheses. The results produced strong statistical support for the major hypothesis that counterprogramming produces the largest total audience. It was impossible to determine whether or not the hypotheses involving the blunting strategy were supportable due to the lack of examples of the blunting strategy during the years under study (blunting accounted for 14 cases of the 743 cases in the analysis or less than 2% of the available for use in the analysis). The hypotheses concerning variability were not statistically significant at the .05 level in the regression analysis and were not supportable as such. In fact, the results of a follow-up paired t-test lent support to an opposite conclusion--that hybrid programming produced a more diverse

audience. Finally, the results of the analysis also did not support the hypotheses suggesting that there would be a statistically significant difference in the rates of decline of network shares across time and that counterprogramming would produce the slowest rate of decline across the years under study. Each hypothesis and sub-hypotheses will be discussed fully below.

H1: There will be a statistically significant difference in the relative total audience across the three network programming strategies.

H1a: Pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant higher relative total audience across the three networks than will the hybrid programming strategy.

Both the above hypotheses were supported by the data analysis. For the first two hypotheses, a regression analysis (expressed in the formula $y = b_0 + b_{\text{year}} + b_{\text{day}} + b_{\text{time}} + b_{\text{strategy}}$) was used to determine any significant differences among the three strategies. In the equation, the "y" variable was the total network share levels during the given sweeps periods for all time slots and was a continuous, ratio-level variable. The "year" variable was treated as a nominal class variable, as were the other variables (day, time, and strategy) used in the regression analysis. "Year," "day," "time," and "strategy," were each used in the

regression equation because it is these variables that impacted on the total network share levels (the "y" variable). The total network audience can vary by the time of day the program airs, by the day of the week that the program airs; by the year in which the program occurs; and, it was expected, by the strategy used across the three networks during that given time period, day, or year. Given the above, it was expected that the regression analysis would produce an F^* test statistic that was statistically significant at the $p \leq .05$ level of significance. It must be noted here that the "year" variable could have been treated as an interval level variable, and in fact was tested as such in the regression equation. The results discussed below were not affected by the class of variable assigned to the "year" variable.

The analysis showed that both the y-intercept and the slope of the line representing the pure counterprogramming strategy were higher than the slopes and the y-intercepts of the hybrid strategy (see Table 12). The result of the analysis produced a highly significant F-value ($F^* = 101.95$, $p \leq 0.0000$) for the overall equation as well as a highly significant Type III SS value ($F^* = 24.86$, $p \leq 0.0001$). The significant F-value for the overall equation suggests that the overall equation did not occur by chance (as would a nonsignificant F-value), while the significant Type III SS

Table 12
Regression Analysis without Interaction

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square
Model	21	45983.82385884	2189.70589804
Error	707	15184.85729459	21.47787453
Ct. Total	728	61168.68115344	

F Value	PR > F	R-Square
101.95	0.0	0.751754

Source	DF	Type III SS	F Value	PR > F
Year	9	40709.11076249	210.60	0.0
Day	6	2259.13018464	17.53	0.0001
Time	5	1285.78322258	11.97	0.0001
Strategy	1	533.87571290	24.86	0.0001

F-value suggests that the choice of strategy makes a difference in the size of the overall network audience share. The Ryan-Einot-Gabriel-Welsch Multiple Range Test (REGWQ) further substantiated the findings of the regression analysis by producing statistically significant different means (a "mean" is another term for "average") between the counterprogramming and hybrid strategies (Counterprogramming mean = 85.402, Hybrid Programming mean = 83.8376; $p \leq .05$). Finally, a paired t-test of differences for the overall means across the ten television seasons produced a t-value that was statistically significant ($t_d = 2.1777$, $p \leq .05$, d.f. = 9). (A positive t-value in the paired t-test of differences establishes that counterprogramming has the higher mean overall. A negative value would have suggested the opposite.) This result supports both the first hypothesis (H1: There will be a statistically significant difference in the relative total audience across the three network programming strategies) and the first sub-hypothesis (H1a: Pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant higher relative total audience across the three networks than will the hybrid programming strategy).

A second regression analysis was run that included an interaction effect (expressed in the formula $y = b_0 + b_{\text{year}} + b_{\text{day}} + b_{\text{time}} + b_{\text{strategy}} + b_{\text{year} \times \text{strategy}}$) to determine if the interaction of year and strategy affected the equation.

An interaction effect is the analyzing of two independent variables in combination such that a change in one variable is dependent on a specific change in the other variable. In this study, the Type III SS for the interaction effect was not statistically significant at the .05 level of significance ($F^* = 0.93$, $p \leq 0.4957$) (see Table 13). This also lends strong support to the first hypotheses, but lack of an interaction effect refutes the Hypothesis 2 and 2a dealing with the rates of decline in network audiences across the years under study (H2: There will be a statistically significant difference in the rate of decline in the total television audience across the three network programming strategies. H2a: By producing a higher total relative audience across the three networks, pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant slower rate of decline in the total television audience over the years under study than will the hybrid programming strategy.).

H1b: Pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant higher relative total audience across the three networks than will the pure blunting programming strategy.

H1c: Because it contains an element of counterprogramming, hybrid programming will produce a statistically significant higher relative total audience across the three networks

Table 13
Regression Analysis with Interaction

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square
Model	30	46164.28296181	1538.80943206
Error	698	15004.39819163	21.49627248
Ct. Total	728	61168.68115344	

F Value	PR > F	R-Square
71.58	0.0	0.754705

Source	DF	Type III SS	F Value	PR > F
Year	9	40051.69276935	207.02	0.0
Day	6	2129.83556374	16.51	0.0001
Time	5	1242.49073702	11.56	0.0001
Strategy	1	439.31948425	20.44	0.0001
Interact	9	180.45910296	0.93	0.4957

than will pure blunting, but not as high a relative total audience as pure counterprogramming.

These two hypotheses were untestable due to the lack of data. As mentioned at the opening of this chapter, the use of the blunting technique accounted for less than 2% of the occurrences in the study. Further, those occurrences were not spread throughout the years under study, thus making analysis even more difficult and imprecise. Due to the lack of occurrences, the blunting category was dropped, thus rendering these two sub-hypotheses untestable. This does not, however, mean that the hypotheses are invalid. Rather, there simply weren't enough instances of the blunting strategy to allow analysis of the hypotheses.

H2: There will be a statistically significant difference in the rate of decline in the total television audience across the three network programming strategies.

H2a: By producing a higher total relative audience across the three networks, pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant slower rate of decline in the total television audience over the years under study than will the hybrid programming strategy.

The same regression equation containing the interaction effect mentioned earlier (see Table 10) ($y = b_0 + b_{\text{year}} + b_{\text{day}} + b_{\text{time}} + b_{\text{strategy}} + b_{\text{year} \times \text{strategy}}$) was used along

with a plot of the means (derived separately) across the various years under study. Taken together, the results produced a graphic illustration of the decline in television viewing among the three networks across the years under study (see Figure 1). In addition, the Beta coefficients in the regression analysis for the variable "year" also strongly indicate a downward trend across the years under study (see Table 14). The decreasing Beta coefficients from year one to year ten (with year 10 equal to 0.00) point to the downward trend in the overall network shares. Further, the plot shows that the counterprogramming strategy produced consistently higher total television audiences than did the hybrid strategy beginning in 1980 and continuing throughout the years under study, with one variation in 1985-1986 when the differences were not significantly different (during the first three years under study there were no differences in the sizes of the audiences produced by the two strategies, most probably because cable and independent stations had yet to have an impact on the market).

The results of both the regression analysis with the interaction term and the plot of the average network shares across television seasons do not support hypothesis two (H2: There will be a statistically significant difference in the rate of decline in the total television audience across the three network programming strategies) or sub-hypothesis 2a

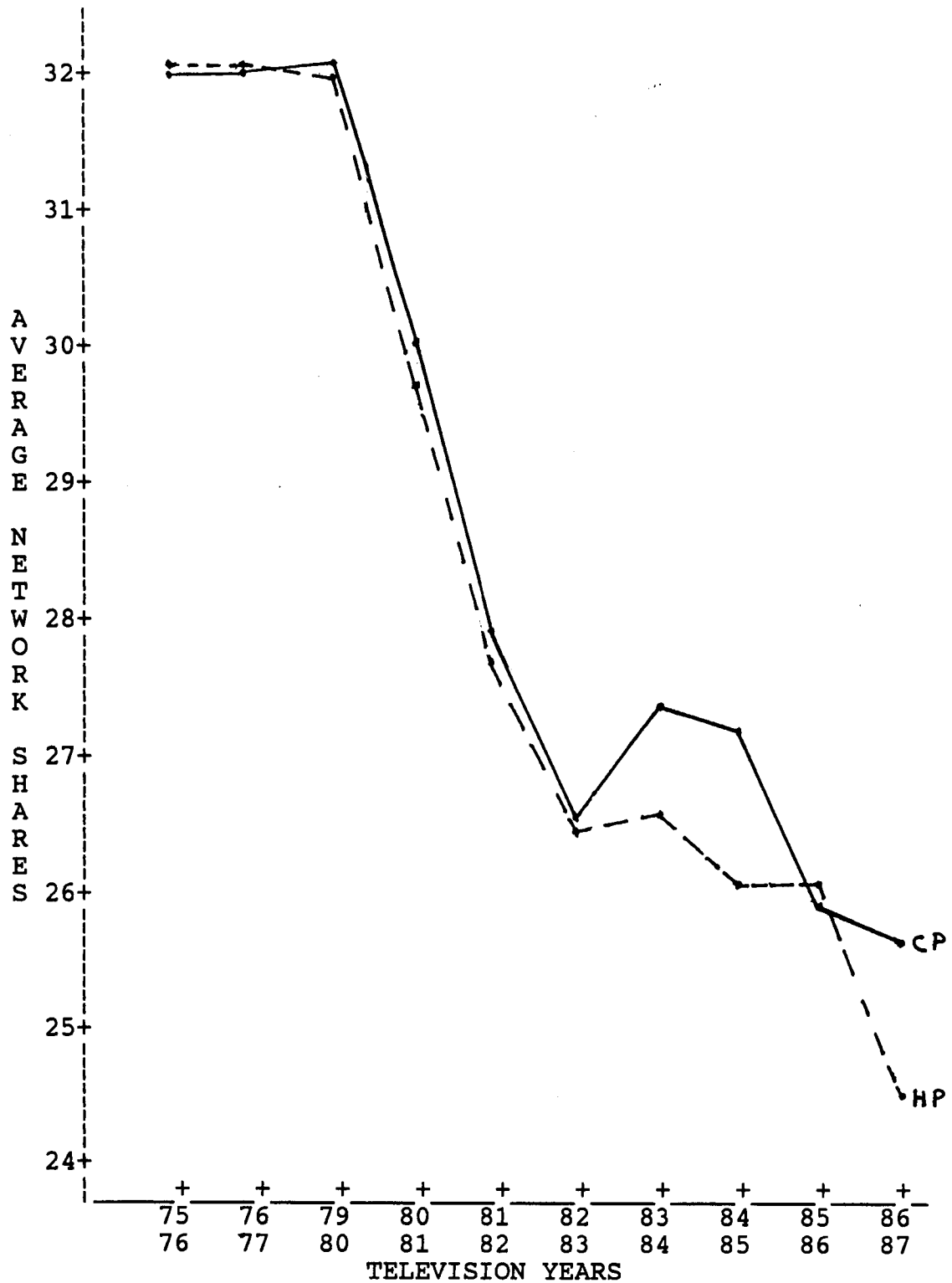


Figure 1. Erosion of Average Network Shares across Television Years

CP = Pure Counterprogramming (—)
 HP = Hybrid Programming (---)

Table 14

Beta Coefficients of Regression Analysis
(Intercept & Year Variables)

Variable	Coefficient	T for H0	p ≥ F
Intercept	76.70926886	106.11	0.0
Year 1	20.63197505	21.08	0.0
Year 2	20.54570423	26.38	0.0
Year 3	20.57611064	25.69	0.0
Year 4	14.29233211	15.09	0.0
Year 5	7.92629654	10.14	0.0001
Year 6	4.34734071	5.59	0.0001
Year 7	5.57350322	7.07	0.0001
Year 8	4.60281404	5.92	0.0001
Year 9	2.64476828	3.36	0.0008
Year 10	0.00000000		

(H2a: By producing a higher total relative audience across the three networks, pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant slower rate of decline in the total audience over the years under study than will the hybrid programming strategy). Without a statistically significant interaction in the regression equation, the plot shows that the rate of decline for the counterprogramming and hybrid programming strategies were equal across the television years (i.e., the slopes for the two strategies were parallel). While there was no statistically significant difference in the rates of decline between the counterprogramming and hybrid strategies, the larger mean values plotted for the counterprogramming strategy further support the fact that counterprogramming produces a statistically significant larger audience than does hybrid programming (Hypothesis 1 and 1a).

H2b: By producing a higher total relative audience across the three networks, pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant slower rate of decline in the total television audience over the years under study than will the pure blunting programming strategy.

H2c: Because it contains an element of counterprogramming, hybrid programming will produce a statistically significant slower rate of decline in the total audience over the years

under study than will pure blunting, but not as small a rate of decline as pure counterprogramming.

As with hypothesis 1b and 1c, these two sub-hypotheses are also untestable due to inadequate occurrences of the blunting strategy.

H3: There will be a statistically significant difference in the total variance among the various demographic divisions of the network television audience across the network programming strategies.

H3a: Pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant smaller total variance in the various demographic divisions of the audience than will the hybrid programming strategy.

The concentration indices tests provided measures of audience dispersion needed to test for significant differences in the variation of the aggregate network share levels, depending on the programming strategy. It was anticipated that the pure blunting strategy would have a more focused appeal among the different demographic groups than the other two programming strategies in that, there will a high concentration of one demographic category of viewers that would enjoy the type of programming in the blunting strategy with very low concentrations of viewers in the other demographic categories for any given time period.

Thus the blunting strategy would have the highest concentration index across demographic categories of the three strategies. This would be expected, given that in the pure blunting strategy the three networks are broadcasting the same category of programs. It was expected that this would have the net effect of drawing similar types of viewers, with other viewers choosing alternate forms of media.

Similar results were anticipated from hybrid programming. It was expected that there would be a high concentration of viewers corresponding to the group most likely to view the programs broadcast by the networks that were blunting, an intermediate level of concentration of viewers corresponding to the group most likely to view the program broadcast by the network that is counterprogramming, and low concentrations of viewers corresponding to the groups not wishing to view either of the two program types being offered by the three networks. Thus it was expected that hybrid programming would produce more choice variation than would pure blunting, but not as much choice variation as would pure counterprogramming. Therefore, hybrid programming would produce a lower total concentration index than would blunting, but a higher concentration index than would counterprogramming.

In addition, it was anticipated that the pure counterprogramming strategy would produce the broadest appeal of

the three programming strategies and thus the lowest overall concentration index across the demographic groups. The differences in the variability scores would indicate that viewers who have more different types of programs to choose from were most likely to stay with broadcast television across the time periods than those who have fewer choices of program types.

Finally, the regression analyses using the concentration indices as the dependent variable were also run and were expected also to confirm the effectiveness of the counterprogramming strategy in relation to the other two. From the analysis it was anticipated that there would be a statistically significant F-value for the regression equation as a whole as well as a statistically significant F-value for the Type III SS for the "strategy" variable. It was also anticipated that there would be a statistically significant difference between the mean concentration indices produced by the REGWQ post-hoc test of differences of means. The data analysis did not produce any of the anticipated results.

While the overall F-value was statistically significant ($F^* = 12.83$, $p \leq 0.0001$), the Type III SS for strategy was not statistically significant ($F^* = 1.65$, $p \leq 0.1933$). Further, the amount of variability explained in the model (the same used in the earlier equations) was less than 32%

($r^2 = 0.316735$). In addition, removing the "day" variable from the model (which contributed the major portion of the variability) reduced the r-square value to less than 7% ($r^2 = 0.061276$) (see Table 15). Likewise, the REGWQ post-hoc test showed no statistical difference between the means of the two strategies in the concentration index equation (Counterprogramming mean = 36.605, Hybrid Programming mean = 35.320, n.s.). Indeed, the direction of the means, with counterprogramming producing a higher mean, is counter-intuitive. However, a follow-up paired t-test on the differences in concentration indices during those time periods where strategies changed between ratings books supported the counterintuitive conclusion ($t = 4.096$, $p \leq .001$, d.f. = 65). For those time periods at least then, there was support for the conclusion opposite that which was hypothesized.

Thus hypothesis 3 (H3: There will be a statistically significant difference in the total variance among the various demographic divisions of the network television audience by program strategy) and sub-hypothesis 3a (H3a: Pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically smaller total variance in the demographic divisions of the audience than will the hybrid programming strategy) were not statistically significant at the .05 level for the regression

Table 15

Regression Analysis without Interaction
(Dependent Variable: Concentration Index)

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square
Model	19	51173.15374108	2693.32388111
Error	526	110391.41063339	209.86960196
Ct. Total	545	161564.56437446	
F Value	PR > F	R-Square	
12.83	0.0001	0.316735	

Source	DF	Type III SS	F Value	PR > F
Year	6	4668.67780720	3.71	0.0013
Day	6	40627.93919575	32.26	0.0001
Time	5	5731.29477665	5.46	0.0001
Strategy	1	692.06148335	1.65	0.1933

analysis, and did not support the hypotheses in certain circumstances.

H3b: Pure counterprogramming will produce a statistically significant smaller total variance in the various demographic divisions of the audience than will the pure blunting programming strategy.

H3c: Because it contains an element of counterprogramming, hybrid programming will produce a statistically significant smaller total variance in the various demographic divisions of the audience than will pure blunting, but will not produce as low a variance as will pure counterprogramming.

As with the other sub-hypotheses comparing the other types of strategies to the blunting strategy, these two sub-hypotheses were untestable due to inadequate occurrences of the blunting strategy.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The following chapter is divided into two separate sections. The first section contains the conclusions that are drawn from the results produced in the study. The second section contains a discussion on the importance of the study to both industry executives and academicians, the applications of the study for both groups, and ideas for further research.

Conclusions

The descriptive statistics analyzed in this study led a number of interesting and in some cases surprising conclusions. The first such conclusion is that the number of occurrences in the uses of either the hybrid programming strategy or the counterprogramming strategy in prime time are neither increasing nor decreasing. Although individual years throughout the period under study have seen unusual swings from counterprogramming to hybrid programming, overall, and especially in the last three years, the percentage of the instances of both counterprogramming and hybrid programming have been almost equal. Further, this study has shown that the blunting strategy is, for the most part,

nonexistent in the area of network television programming in prime time, except for a few instances on Sunday nights when all three networks programmed movies. The total number of instances when blunting occurred was 14, with 12 of those instances coming on Sunday night when the networks programmed movies.

A second conclusion in the area of programming strategies is that when hybrid programming dominates a given night, one type of program seems to be predominant. When counterprogramming dominates a given night, the programs are spread across more different program types. This is unusual only in that it seems to suggest that even though four program types dominate the prime time hours (movies, action/adventure programs, comedies, and dramas), on the nights when hybrid programming occurs most often, one of the four will dominate even the other three. On those nights when counterprogramming occurs most often, the programming is not only spread more evenly across the four major types (with no one type dominating the evening), but other program types also begin to appear with some regularity.

A third conclusion to be drawn from the results of this study is that television choices are not very wide-ranging and have become fewer in number during the latter portion of the years under study. While during the earlier years under study variety programs made infrequent, though regular

appearances as weekly series, by the 1986-1987 television year they had ceased to exist. In addition, the more information-oriented program types such as "news/information" and "sports" remained about the same in terms of instances of occurrence in prime time. Despite the success of such programs as 60 Minutes, 20/20, Monday Night Football, and now West 57th, prime time remains for the entertainment of its viewing audience.

Another interesting finding provided by the descriptive statistics is that for each night of the week, regardless of which program strategy was prevalent, one or occasionally two, program types would stand out in the number of occurrences over the rest of the program types. This was the case even on those nights when counterprogramming was predominant and the programs were spread across several different program types. Rather than each network concentrating on a different program type (which would seem to logical to reach different audiences), the three seemed to focus on one or two main program types and draw their programming from those types. Even looking at the program types by the time of night gives no real clues to this phenomenon other than to suggest that during the early hours the networks draw specific programs from the evening's most popular program type(s) that are "lighter" viewing than in the later hours of the evening. It can be argued that

given the size of the children/youth population during the early prime time hours, networks are limited to broadcasting programs even children can enjoy. This argument has the fallacy that there are many single adults, married couples (both young and old) without children, and elderly who could be interested in watching adult programming during the early evening hours. Nevertheless, looking at the breakdown of program types by time period suggests a possible lack of programming for these population subsets on the networks.

The results of the analysis of the hypotheses also provided a number of interesting findings and conclusions. First, the results of the study strongly indicate that the use of the counterprogramming strategy by the three networks during prime time throughout the years under study has produced a statistically significant larger audience than have any attempts at blunting the competition through the use of hybrid programming. (The pure blunting strategy, it must be pointed out, appeared so little that all the hypotheses and sub-hypotheses developed for this study were untestable). Given that on nights when counterprogramming was dominant, generally there were more program types during the prime time hours from which viewers could make choices; it seems logical then, that counterprogramming did produce a statistically larger audience for the three networks across the years under study than did the other strategies. There were

simply more choices available from which viewers could select their favorites.

The results confirmed the researcher's expectations, given that it would seem a cogent argument that the more diversified the programming across the three networks during prime time (the time when there is the largest and most diverse audience in terms of different demographics), the more likely it will be that viewers will be able to find programs to their liking on one of the three networks. Intuitively, the results would seem to make sense.

The results of the study did not support the hypothesis that counterprogramming would produce a slower rate of decline in the network audience during the years under study than did the hybrid programming strategy. Nevertheless, while there was no statistically significant difference, a comparison of the three years where there appeared to be a relatively substantial difference in the average shares across the three networks seems to suggest that the counterprogramming strategy produced the larger audience. Statistically, the hypothesis and sub-hypotheses relating to rate of audience decline was not supported; from a viewing of the results during the years where there are differences in the rates of decline between hybrid programming and counterprogramming, counterprogramming produced a larger audience.

The final conclusion to be derived from the hypotheses analysis is that counterprogramming produces a larger but more homogeneous audience, while hybrid programming produces a smaller but more heterogeneous audience. (This is finding of the hypothesis and sub-hypotheses dealing with variety of demographic groups produced by each programming strategy.) This is the most unusual conclusion to be drawn in that it seems to suggest the inverse of what would, logically, be the case, especially considering that during the days of the week when counterprogramming dominated, there were more different types of programs aired from which the viewers could choose.

The answer to this strange finding may be in the days in which the various programming strategies dominated. Hybrid programming dominated by a wide margin on Sunday night, producing 73% of the programming, while counterprogramming dominated through the middle of the week (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, with Wednesday night producing 74%). Monday, Friday, and Saturday were about equal across the two strategies. Because Sunday night is such a heavy viewing night, much heavier than any other night (Nielsen, 1988), and because Wednesday night is second only to Saturday night in lack of viewers (Nielsen, 1988), the differences between the two nights when hybrid programming and

counterprogramming are at their peaks could provide the difference necessary to produce this unusual conclusion.

A second reason for the unusual conclusion may be what one can call the "movie factor." Because movies were prevalent throughout the years under study, especially in the hybrid and blunting categories, movies played an important role in determining cell values and concentration indices. Movies, however, as mentioned in the "Limitations" section can vary greatly in content. Thus movies during a given time period could be drastically different in content (one a comedy and the other a drama) but due to coding limitation they would both be coded in the movie category. Movies, and especially made-for-TV movies, draw a varied audience. Thus the movie category could artificially inflate the heterogeneous nature of the hybrid category.

Discussion

The question of which type of programming strategy produces the largest overall audience across the three networks in prime time has not previously appeared in the research literature nor has the author been able to ascertain that this research has been conducted by the networks. Following the development of this study, the author attempted to contact the three networks regarding their research efforts in this area. The responsiveness of the networks

was of little help in that the efforts to contact the networks met with nonsuccess for two of the three networks. However, in a telephone conversation, Alan Wurtzel, the director of programming research for ABC-TV network, while unwilling either to confirm or to deny the development of research such as the present study, did, on three occasions state that simply "looking at the Nielsen ratings" was enough to affirm the desirability of counterprogramming as the best strategy. (In fact, Wurtzel referred to blunting as a "Kamikaze strategy.") (A. Wurtzel, personal communication, April 10, 1989)

Possibly, as mentioned at the outset of this study, this lack of research resulted from the fact that until the 1980s, the networks did not have to worry about competition from other media. Now, there is competition from cable television networks and independent television stations in many markets across the country, as well as newer forms of televised entertainment (such as pay-per-view television which appears to be on the verge of providing major competition to network broadcasters in the major sports event area (TV Guide, 1988)). This enhanced competition has forced network programmers to be more diligent in order to hold as much of their current audience as possible while attempting to recapture those who are now turning to alternative forms of media entertainment.

The results of this study over the ten-year period suggest that the extensive use of counterprogramming by the networks, to offer programming different from the other two networks, would produce overall larger audiences across the three networks. (During the years under study, only one half the time are all three networks counterprogramming against each other. The rest of the time at least one network is blunting.) If, as mentioned earlier, the books and articles describing programming decisions by network executives are correct in their statements that programming executives are concerned about the need for counterprogramming their prime time schedules to reach specific demographic audiences, then this study can provide support for their intuitions. Certainly then, this study could provide additional evidence of the need for the network programming executives to increase their counterprogramming efforts, if in fact that is what they believe they must do to retain as much audience as possible. (It has been noted elsewhere in this study that although network programmers say they believe they must counterprogram extensively, they do it only about half the time. Further, Tiedge and Ksobiech (1987) found in their study that their two counterprogramming categories (pure counterprogramming and countering a blunt) were the two most effective ways for a single network to improve its share of the market.) Efforts in this direction,

however, would have to be a concerted effort by each of the networks' programming executives not in collusion, but independent of the other two networks. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, while programming executives independently decide what programs to air opposite their competitors' programs, they do not do so in a vacuum. Rather, they rely on information from others to help them know what their competitors' are planning. With the addition of the results of this study, along with the information provided them from other sources, network programming executives can plan extensive counterprogramming efforts during prime time, thus raising the overall total network audience while still trying to remain or become the top-rated network.

It is possible that there are several reasons why network programmers have not counterprogrammed more than 50% of the time. The first possible reason is that at this time programmers are, for the most part, wholly dependent on independent production companies for their prime time programs. As discussed in Christensen and Stauth's The Sweeps (1984), production companies quite often produce only a handful of different types of programs (those they believe they can do best, have achieved a reputation for quality for, or those they can afford to do). Further, as discussed earlier, only a small portion of the programs produced are of high enough quality to sustain a viewing audience. Also,

suppliers now have more buyers for their new programs in the forms of independent stations and to a lesser degree, cable networks. Thus the supply of programs is split among a variety of buyers, so the networks may not be able to have as great a variety from which to choose. This then would force networks to blunt at least one network a fair percentage of the time for lack of quality counterprogramming choices.

This problem may be remedied in large part in the next few years when the networks can begin producing their own programming. Their supplies of network-produced programs, coupled with the inventories of the independent producers, could provide networks with a large enough assortment of different types of programs to make more extensive counterprogramming viable.

A second reason why programmers may not counterprogram as extensively as they could (or possibly should, as this study suggests) is that, quite often, a form of "office politics" affects program choices. It has been suggested by Christensen and Stauth (1984) and in certain articles in TV Guide (1988) that programmers on occasion buy programs of certain producers or from certain production companies for more personal reasons, including friendship, former business associations such as a former employer, employee, or co-worker, or even being related to a specific supplier.

A final reason why programmers may not always counter-program as extensively as possible is that a programmer (for a variety of economic reasons) may try to develop programming to reach a specific demographic audience regardless of what the other two networks are programming. Industry wisdom is that women are the major purchasers of most products (with a few exceptions), so it may be that programmers will attempt to program to reach that audience regardless of what the others are doing, believing it better to reach a smaller portion of that demographic segment of audience than a larger overall audience comprised mainly of men or young people (children and teenagers).

Nevertheless, it is important for the networks to retain as large a portion of the total television audience as possible. Revenues are tied to audience size and makeup. A larger audience (either total or within a certain demographic group) produces more revenue. A continual loss of audience to other media would produce less revenue for all the networks, the hardest hit being the one in third place. Not only that, but as other forms of program transmission continue to "drain off" viewers from the networks through their niche programming, these "new media" begin to see their credibility increase and their revenues increase correspondingly. Thus many of the one-network major events that have traditionally been large revenue producers could

begin to telecast on these new forms of media (indeed, the next round of Super Bowl bidding is expected to include the three networks plus ESPN, Turner Network Television/WTBS Superstations, and a variety of subscription television outlets). In fact, a recent article in Sports Illustrated (Taaffe, 1988) has suggested that within the next ten years virtually all major sporting events (including the Super Bowl, the Olympics, the World Series, the NBA and NFL playoffs, and the NCAA Basketball Tournament, as well as virtually all important boxing matches) will be telecast on subscription television. These have traditionally been important revenue-makers for the networks. Other major revenue-making events not related to sports could also move to alternate forms of media. With them will go their revenues. Thus, in many ways, the networks could (although probably not too likely) be relegated to second-class status, as the various forms of alternative media continue to "drain away" valuable segments of the audience by doing a better job at what the networks do than the networks can do themselves.

It may well be argued that a larger overall audience may do nothing for the network in last place in any given time period (although, in that same telephone conversation Dr. Wurtzel stated that when the three networks counterprogrammed each other, the overall network share increased. Once again, though, he admitted that he was speaking from

Nielsen tables in front of him and not from research he or others in the department had conducted. (April 10, 1988)). However, a rise in the overall network share of the total television viewing audience could have a spill-over effect to each of the networks in the long run. Further, should the total network share begin to rise, it is conceivable that advertisers would be more willing to invest larger sums of money in advertising, thus providing more revenue to the networks. This added advertising revenue could provide network programmers with more funds with which to buy programming as well as to experiment with different forms of programs. An example of one such experiment with different forms of programs by a network occurred during the 1988 "second season" using programs such as Thirty Something. These new programs were used in attempts to recapture certain segments of the lost audience. The programs were aimed at specific segments of the viewing audience and the episodes dealt with incidents with which the target viewing audience could identify. By improving the networks' shares of the audience (and thus, it is hoped, adding new viewers to each of the individual networks), the networks could build on such attempts as the one described earlier that was made during the 1988 "second season," and could expand those attempts into a full season of counterprogramming. If this development and expansion occurred, then as the results of

this study suggest, larger audiences could mean more profits and stronger networks and thus more improvement in programming.

However, for the results of this study to be of use to the networks' executives, it would be important for them not to be short-sighted. It has taken nearly a decade for the networks' overall television audience share to erode to the current level. Although the results of this study suggest the need for a conscientious effort by each network to counterprogram as extensively as possible, overnight success is obviously not guaranteed. It would seem reasonable to conclude that short-sightedness by network executives and an unwillingness to commit to extensive counterprogramming for the long run could meet with disastrous consequences, as audiences would probably return as slowly as they left. Thus it is possible that any small gains made early could become greater reversals should the networks give up on using extensive counterprogramming. It would seem imperative for each of the networks to appeal to audiences different from the other two if they wish to retain the largest share of the audience that is possible. Otherwise, the networks probably will continue to see the size of their total audience decrease with a corresponding decrease in their total advertising revenues.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study is a first attempt to determine whether or not programming strategies have an effect on the total viewing audience. Given that the study provides strong support for the hypothesis that counterprogramming provides the largest total audience across the three networks in prime time, the study provides new information to the field of television programming research. Further studies should be conducted in the area of programming research along these lines to determine if there are any changes in the patterns in future years. This study, though, provides a beginning from which other researchers in the area can explore further into programming strategies and audience behavior.

The results of the study also show that while counterprogramming has delivered the largest prime time audience across the years under study, it so far has been no more effective at slowing the rate of decline in the television audience than was the hybrid programming strategy. That there have been no statistically significant changes in the erosion of the television audience during the 1980s regardless of programming strategy, does not however, preclude the possibility that widespread counterprogramming (more than the current 50%) would increase the networks' share of the total viewing audience. Even with the continual erosion of

the network audience, the results show that counterprogramming delivered the largest overall audience across the three networks during prime time. It would seem reasonable to assume that extensive counterprogramming would provide the networks with the maximum audience possible even if counterprogramming is unable to slow the erosion of the networks' share of the total audience. Further studies in this area should be undertaken at periodic intervals to determine if such strategies are being implemented by the networks and if those strategies are successful. In addition, a replication of this portion of the study should be conducted in the next five-to-ten years to determine if, in this era of proliferating cable networks and independent stations the counterprogramming strategy is better at slowing the erosion of the audience. From looking at the graph of the last four years, there is some reason to believe a difference may actually occur.

The results of this study did not support the hypotheses that counterprogramming provides more variability across the various demographic groups than do the other forms of programming strategies. This lack of support seems surprising because one would think that the more program choices that are available, the greater the variability of viewers across demographic segments should be. It could be that there was not enough data to produce the expected results.

Given more years (and thus more data) it is conceivable that the expected results would be obtained. Of course, it can also be argued that there is more directional support to assume that hybrid programming produces more variability across demographic groups than does counterprogramming, but that argument does not seem logically to follow. If the directional results are correct, then it can be argued that people prefer to have only two choices of network programming types rather than three. This does not seem to be a reasonable conclusion. Once again, the lack of data may offer an explanation here. With a larger data set from which to work, covering a wider range of years of programming could provide the hypothesized results.

Another possible reason for lack of support for the hypotheses concerning variability across demographic groups could be that one of the blunting programs was very popular across enough different demographic groups so that its effects overshadowed the time period to such a degree that the result could be skewed in favor of the blunting programs. Should enough skewing occur during hybrid programming time slots, it could cause the results found in the study. That reason though, is mere speculation, and is one that is beyond the scope of this study. More research is needed in this area.

A third possible reason for this result could be a "tune-out" factor when hybrid programming occurs. As the results of the first hypothesis show, counterprogramming produces a larger audience, hybrid programming a smaller one. Thus when a station is counterprogramming it may be reaching a less varied audience but a larger one. If one network decides to blunt another network (thus producing hybrid programming), then the portion of the audience watching the program that was changed so the blunting of another network may be lost. This would produce a smaller audience but could also produce a more varied audience by virtue of the fact that outliers among the viewers could artificially inflate the variability. More study is needed on all three of these possible reasons for this unusual conclusion to determine if any one or more provides illumination to this conclusion.

In addition, further study is needed for understanding the part the control variables play in this analysis. What part does the variability in the "year" variable play in the equation? Why should there be variation in the audience across year and is it (or why is it) declining? The same is true for the day and time variable (especially the day variable which accounts for the largest portion of the variation in the regression equation). More study is needed in this area.

While a number of studies have considered the effectiveness of lead-in and lead-out programming on viewing habits, and while other studies have considered the difference program types have on viewing habits, this study provides the first information on the direct effects of programming strategies on the viewing habits of the total audience. This study provides further insights into viewer choices and programming strategy development, which have been lacking, especially in the years since the arrival of the national cable television narrowcast networks, and adds new information to the body of knowledge in the area of television programming and programming choices.

The information developed from this study provides both the network programmer and the television programming scholar with new results to consider in the development of the network television viewing audience and their preferred viewing habits. Follow up studies in this area could include replication of this study at specific intervals to assess differences in both in the use of the different programming strategies and the results from those differences. Also studies should be conducted to determine if the time of day, the day of the week, or the time of the year could make significant differences in the choice of strategy for maximizing audience size and retention. Further, studies should be conducted to determine if these findings hold during the

re-run period of the year, or if other programming strategies could better maximize audience size and retention during rerun time. In addition, studies should be conducted to determine which combinations of program types produce the largest total viewing audiences during prime time. Finally, studies of individual demographic groups such as teenagers, children, older adults, etc., could very well offer different and interesting insights into the ways in which the network television programming strategies during prime time are affected.. While this study dealt with adult viewing, the addition of the "teen" and "children" categories could provide new findings concerning program strategies.

The areas of needed research mentioned in the above paragraphs and others can be developed using this research as a beginning point. Network shares of the overall television audience have eroded. This study offers a fresh look at the strategies used by the networks and the effects those strategies have in producing network viewing audiences. Further studies using these results as a beginning point should be able to provide even more information useful not only to the researcher but also to the programmer as the television networks continue to compete with the new developing media for portions of the television audience.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

Overall Media Behavior
Interest Segment Characteristics

ADULT MALE CONCENTRATION

MECHANICS AND OUTDOOR LIFE

Young adult, blue-collar males whose interests focus on noncompetitive activities emphasizing personal physical accomplishment-e.g., auto repair, fishing, camping- interests which, by their very nature, do not require emphasis on interpersonal cooperation or support. High on needs for escap and unique/creative accomplishment. Television. Below-average television exposure and in-home availability. Relatively high on escape/fantasy-related adventure, science fiction, crime, movies. Low on programming containing intellectual content. Quite low on sports programming, especially for a predominantly male segment. Magazine. Heavy users on men's, outdoor, automotive, mechanics, and miscellaneous (Modern Photography). Magazine readership concentrated on entertainment and recreation, especially on personal interests and hobbies. Books, Movies, Newspapers, and Radio (Other Media). Heavy users of movies and radio, "how to" books, farm and country radio programs. Heavy on escape-related books and movies such as science fiction and horror. Also heavy readers of newspaper comics.

MONEY AND NATURE'S PRODUCTS

Older males with a higher proportion being rural and retired. Interests in passive activities that obtain some form of tangible return or product-fishing, hunting, investments. Low interest in active physical activities- camping out, participant sports-as well as culturally upscale or abstract-classical arts, international affairs. Somewhat complacent, but need interpersonal contact and support, especially from their families. Television. Average viewing level. Attracted to programming associated with one or more of the following four elements: outdoor nature-related activities; need for social contact, support, and respect; interest in money/business; need to be knowledgeable about events and trends in the world around them. Support of traditional American virtues. Magazines. Below-average overall magazine readership. Only type on which they are above fifth is outdoor. Next in line are automotive, mechanics, and business/finance. Other Media. Generally below-average media usage. Daily papers only above-average type. Above-average newspaper readership for real estate, business, and travel. Attracted to types of books and movies in which strong male personalities are in positions of power or control.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY CENTERED

Employed, blue-collar/white-collar adult males. Married, living in nonmetropolitan areas. Broad interests, including outdoor activities, investments, and home and community centered activities as well as religion. Very strong need for family ties. Television. Below-average television viewers, with family and community activities competing for time. Religious convictions may limit use of television. Program types favored tend to be least offensive-religious, sports, news. Magazines. Below-average readership of magazines. Third on outdoor. Fourth on sports, automotive, mechanics, and business/finance. Breadth and level of interests not well matched to magazines. Better suited to local, daily newspapers. Other Media. Above-average usage of all newspaper types. Below average on book, movie, and radio usage. Broad subject matter coverage focuses on news in newspaper and on radio. Religious subject matter also ranks high.

ADULT FEMALE CONCENTRATION

ELDERLY CONCERNS

Oldest segment, high percentage of retirees, widowed, few children. Very few interests include religion and news and information. Focus on maintaining sense of social

integration and belonging in absence of direct interpersonal contact. Needs to overcome loneliness and lift spirits. Low need for intellectual stimulation. Television. Above-average viewers. Highest in-home availability. Needs for vicarious participation, social integration, and acceptance appear to be common denominators of above-average viewing behavior. Favored program types-dramas, games shows, soap operas, religious programming, as well as news, talk shows, and variety shows. Typical programs- The Waltons, Merv Griffin, Lawrence Welk. Magazines. Lightest of all magazine users. Slightly higher levels of usage among women-oriented magazines, romance. Magazine choices seem, in general, to help them cope with loneliness. Other Media. Moderate to light users of all four "other" media. Relatively highest rates for Sunday, daily, and local papers. Religious, news, and advertising content all somewhat above average.

ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Highly educated, adult women in households with manager or professional as head. Broad range of intellectual and cultural interests-especially classical arts. Low interest in households activities and management. High needs for intellectual stimulation and growth and for understanding others, with low needs for status enhancement or escape.

Television. Average viewing level. Selective viewers satisfying informational needs and seeking to broaden intellectual and cultural horizons. Extremely high on theatrical performances, musical performances, documentaries, news/commentary. Magazines. Above-average readership. Heavy on select, business/finance, and news. Lower relative to other adult female segments on women's services and home service/home. Other Media. Heavy users of books, Sunday papers and supplements, and daily papers. Generally high intellectual content such as historical novels, musicals, operas, or dance movies. Newspapers focus on news sections and entertainment listings section.

HOME AND COMMUNITY CENTERED

Adult females with a relatively high percentage of married homemakers. Home and local community interests. Highest needs for family ties and understanding others. Lowest needs for intellectual stimulation and for unique/creative accomplishment. Television. Slightly below-average overall viewing. Focus on family relations. Favored program types-soap operas, religious. Magazine. Average overall readership. Heavy on women's services, home services/home. Narrow subject matter focus of reading tends to be related to home activities. Other Media. Moderate usage of most media. About average only on Sunday, daily, and local papers.

Content is home and community related, such as cooking, gardening, social news, and entertainment, as well as children's movies and religion.

FAMILY INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES

High percentage of adult women with young children. Strong interest in home and in family interactive activities-household activities and management and indoor games. High need for family ties. Child presence influences adult interest patterns. Television. Slightly above-average viewing rate. Focus on family entertainment and child development. Program types-children's programs, dramas, and movies. Exceptionally high on educational children's programs such as Sesame Street, Mister Rogers. Dramas tend to be nonviolent with family content. Also true of programs in other categories-Once Upon a Classic, All My Children, Family Feud. Television used as a means to bring together adults and children for shared viewing experiences. Magazines. Heavy users. Rank first on women's services and home service/home. Broad home/family readership is reflected in their ranking first on eleven of the sixteen magazines in these categories. Other Media. Heavy on radio and readership of Sunday supplements. Focus of content is family-related activities including children's movies and

relationships, such as personal advice newspaper section and psychology self-help books.

YOUTH CONCENTRATION

COMPETITIVE SPORTS AND SCIENCE/ENGINEERING

Teenage male students with interests in male-associated mechanical activities and competitive athletics. Avoidance of female-oriented subjects and interests. High on needs for unique/creative accomplishment, intellectual stimulation and growth, status enhancement, and escape from boredom. Low needs for understanding others and for greater self-acceptance. Television. Average level of viewing. Heavy viewers of programs and program types with male personalities, especially young men who are admired because of their physical and/or social prowess. Watch programs that mock authority figures. Low on programming that is intellectually upscaled or abstract, copes with problems that do not yield to immediate solutions, or features female personalities in assertive roles. Generally avoid traditional authority relationships that appear to threaten their need to establish personal independence. Magazines. Intermediate overall readership. First on sports, automotive, and mechanics. Also high on men's and miscellaneous (National Lampoon). Other Media. Heavy users on movies. Books and

movie content are escapist-oriented, such as science fiction books and horror movies. Highest usage rate for sports in newspapers and on radio. Radio used for broad range of content, with special emphasis on different types of music.

ATHLETIC AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Teenage females from high-income families. The youngest of all the segments. Interests in active, away-from-home, face-to-face activities. High need to escape from problems and to be socially stimulating. Low need for family ties. Television. Well below average television viewers. Lowest level of in-home availability. Heavy viewers of escape programming and programming involving male-female relationships in nonfamily, light-hearted contexts. Need to get away from problems of home life. Magazines. Intermediate usage. Along with Indoor Games and Social Activities segment, heavy on women's services, romance, and fashion. Somewhat more usage than the female youth segment on outdoor, automotive, and mechanics. Other Media. Heavy usage of movies and radio while relatively light for all types of newspapers. Escapist content for books and movies similar to previous segment, but more oriented to love, romance, and children's movies. Radio listening mainly music.

INDOOR GAMES AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Young, low-income females. Interests in activities, especially indoor games. Low interest in most subject matter areas. Nonintellectual. High needs for status enhancement and the need to be socially stimulating. Television. Well above average viewers of television. Low on informational or cultural program types. Above average on virtually all others. Overall profile reflects combination of youth and young homemaker oriented programming. Both roles coexist in segment. Television a major source of entertainment for this segment. Magazines. Above-average readership. Along with Athletic and Social Activities segment, heavy on women's services, romance, and fashion. Somewhat more usage than the other segment of men's, home service/home, general, and Black publications. Other Media. Heavy on books and movies. Somewhat more intellectual, less escapist than other Youth Concentration segments. Somewhat high readership of biographies, religious books, world news, and business newspaper content, as well as viewing of horror, science fiction types of movies.

MIXED CONCENTRATION

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Passive interests related to keeping informed on a broad range of subjects and activities. Needs are focused on

being socially stimulating and maintaining family ties. Television. Highest of any segment in overall television viewing. Second highest on television share of in-home time. Favor news, talk shows, variety shows, documentaries, movies, sports. Good cannon fodder for day-to-day casual conversation. Need to be socially stimulating and conversant with many subjects. Magazines. Slightly below-average overall readership. Heavy on news and general. Other Media. Heavy usage of all types of newspapers. Focus on all news sections of newspapers.

DETACHED

Low socioeconomic profile. Extremely few interests and activities and few psychological needs satisfied by them. Low scores on needs related to both intellectual stimulation and interpersonal contact and support. Television. Below-average viewing. Less intellectually demanding, somewhat escape-oriented. Crime dramas, movies, science fiction, soap operas are high for the segment, but not compared to others. Magazines. Second lightest overall readership. Below population average on fourteen out of fifteen types. Highest ranking types are Black and mechanics. Other Media. Extremely light users of books, movies, and newspapers.

COSMOPOLITAN SELF-ENRICHMENT

Extremely high socioeconomic profile. Diverse pattern of intellectual and cultural interests. Physically active. High needs for intellectual stimulation, unique/creative accomplishment, and understanding others. Low needs for status enhancement and for escape from boredom. Television. Lightest television viewing segment. Highly literate, print-oriented persons. Television viewing is highly selective. Program types/programs favored that resemble print preferences. Theatrical performances (Once Upon a Classic, Dickens of London), news shows, talk shows, documentaries. Avoid escape, general entertainment-oriented program types such as adventure and crime drama. Magazine. Heavy overall readership, especially select, news, business/finance, sports, miscellaneous. Next in line are men's magazines. Other Media. Moderate to heavy usage of all media, especially books and financial newspapers. Focus on all types of nonfiction books. High intellectual content regarding films such as biographies and documentaries. Newspapers used as source of information related to entertainment, as well as news, travel, and business. Broad range of music in radio listening.

HIGHLY DIVERSIFIED

Southern, black, adults with children. Broad range of interests, especially those permitting personal participation with family and/or other informal small group settings. High need for intellectual stimulation and growth. Television. Second highest viewing segment. Highest share of home time watching television. Average or above average on eighteen of nineteen program types. General family fare viewing reflects diversity of family member interests. Highest scoring types-adventure, crime drama, movies, musical performances (Soul Train, Music Hall America). Also high on children's programs (cartoons), science fiction, specials, religion. Magazines. Heaviest overall readership. Rank sixth or higher on all fifteen types of magazines, especially Black. Other Media. Above-average usage of movies, local weekly papers, and radio. Radio used as principal vehicle for covering broad range of interests. Newspaper content centers on local concerns such as real estate and social news. Movie content reflects impact of children and probably a process of accommodation to interests of other family members.

VITA

Frank Allen Aycock was born in Birmingham, Alabama, on October 8, 1953. He attended elementary schools in that city and was graduated from Shades Valley High School in June 1971. The following September he entered the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa where he studied for three years. Following several years of work in broadcasting a WKAB-TV in Montgomery, Alabama, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Broadcasting in May 1983.

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