Isn’t it About Time?
American Television Networks in the Face of Temporal and Institutional Challenges 1970-1985

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Abstract

Isn't it About Time?
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This dissertation investigates the Big Three American commercial television networks' responses to the industry upheavals of the 1970s and early 1980s, specifically those that altered program scheduling practices. During those years, the Big Three faced the FCC's shifting approach to regulation, the introduction of VCRs, the growth of cable television, and the accompanying increased competition as specialty cable channels and Superstations burst onto the scene. Those changes not only challenged the networks as the primary sources of television programming, they threatened to undermine the temporal structure of television that the networks had developed to coordinate viewers and to feed them through their programming and to their advertisers. This dissertation examines how the Big Three responded to the establishment of the Prime Time Access Rule, the proliferation of cable channels, CNN in particular, and the introduction of the VCR to the American market. Furthermore, it analyzes the fallout from these events and how they influenced the timing of prime time, the length and flow of the broadcast day, and evening news viewing rituals. Although the television schedule is central to the American commercial television networks' business model, it became clear that the Big Three overlooked television's temporality in their responses to the changing television landscape.

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Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

Tables

Figures

List of Acronyms

CATV	Community Antenna Television
DVR	Digital Video Recorder
FCC	Federal Communication Commission
HBO	Home Box Office
HUT	Homes Using Television
NAB	National Association of Broadcasters
O&O	Owned and Operated
P2P	Peer-to-Peer
PTAR	Prime Time Access Rule
RCD	Remote Control Device
UHF	Ultra-High Frequency
VCR	Video Cassette Recorder

List of Terms

Affiliate	A broadcast station that is contractually associated with one of the major television networks, but is not owned by one of them.
Big Three	ABC, CBS, and NBC. The three largest television networks in the 1970s and 1980s. Currently, the largest networks are identified as the Big Four (ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC) or the Big Five (ABC, CBS, CW, Fox, NBC).
Bridging	A scheduling strategy to reduce viewers' opportunities to sample the competition. This could include starting a show before the competition or timing ads to miss the rival channel's transition from one show to the next.
Daypart	Television programmers divide up the broadcast day into segments called dayparts based on the presumed work and leisure patterns of their audience.
O&O	A broadcast station that is owned and operated by one of the major television networks.
Ratings	The overall number of households watching a given show.
Shares	The percentage of households watching television at that time that is tuned in to a particular program.
Stripped	The practice of scheduling a series in the same timeslot five days a week.
Sweeps	The four months a year that Nielsen Media measures local television station ratings: November, February, May, and July.
TiVo	TiVo is the American DVR brand leader. The brand name has become slang for digitally recording a program on television.
Zapping	1. The act of changing channels with a Remote Control Device, especially during commercial breaks. 2. The act of temporarily pausing a VCR tape while recording something so that segment does not end up on the videotape.
Zipping	The act of using the fast forward function on a VCR or DVR to speed past certain segments of a recorded videotape, such as a commercial

Introduction
Hollywood's Shaky Ground is not an Earthquake: Looking Back to Understand the Present

Put down the remote. Every note from his throat is like a not-to-be-Tivo'd kiss…
Don't jump online, 'cause this fine mug of mine needs a huge high-def screen!...
Turn off that phone, 'cause I want you alone for the treasures I've got to share.
Don't hit the loo and whatever you do put down the remote![1]

Any lingering questions about the television industry's anxiety over the state of industry flux were laid to rest during the 2009 broadcast of the *61st Primetime Emmy Awards*. In his opening production number, host Neil Patrick Harris told joke after joke about mobile media, screen size and fidelity, online video streaming, downloading, digital video recorders (DVRs), and time-shifting. He both celebrated and derided the technological advances that are changing the ways people can watch television. The opening song's chorus (quoted above) was most telling, as he repeatedly begged viewers to "put down the remote" and stay tuned.[2]

It is fitting that Neil Patrick Harris delivered this performance. At the *61st Primetime Emmy Awards*, he both voiced and epitomized network television's greatest fears. Harris' recent career embodies the multi-media hype that Hollywood finds both exciting and threatening. Harris is a former child TV star (*Doogie Howser, M.D.*), who found success on Broadway (*Rent*), in film (the *Harold and Kumar* series), on television as an adult (*How I Met Your Mother*), and in the Emmy-winning web-series *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog*. Over a twelve month period he hosted the *Tony Awards* and the *Emmy Awards*, and then performed the opening musical number for the *Oscars*. In the 2009-2010 television season he was featured on CBS (*How I Met Your Mother*), ABC (*82nd Academy Awards*), and FOX (*Glee*). Harris regularly interacts with fans on the social-networking platform Twitter and, on at least one occasion, encouraged them to

"TiVo" a cable television program.[3*] Neil Patrick Harris is not bound by form, network, or platform, much like the media products in which he stars.

The ever-increasing integration of entertainment conglomerates and the growing reach of their subsidiaries over the last twenty years have made the boundaries between corporate entities more fluid than in any previous era. In her 2005 book, *Why TV is Not Our Fault*, Eileen Meehan dismantled the common assumption that the television networks act solely as competitors with one another. Meehan argued that the sheer number of subsidiaries each conglomerate owns hides the breadth of their corporate reach and provides a false sense of competition.[4] For example, NBC Universal's television holdings include national network NBC as well as numerous cable channels including Bravo, HBO, USA Network, and SyFy. An episode of Bravo's *Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D-List* focused on series' star Kathy Griffin filming a guest spot on NBC's *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*.[5] It included behind-the-scenes footage of the *Law and Order* shoot and a scene of Griffin watching the episode on television. The *D-List* episode promoted the NBC series to Bravo viewers, and the *Law and Order* episode increased Griffin's profile with NBC viewers. Although NBC competes with Bravo in the nightly ratings, the stations share a degree of synergy under the same corporate umbrella.

Meehan further argued that relationships between entertainment conglomerates are best characterized as friendly rivalries that betray the rhetoric of fierce competition perpetuated in the press.[6] For example, in 2005 the CBS Corporation owned two competing television networks: CBS and UPN. When UPN merged with Time/Warner's

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[*] TiVo is the American DVR brand leader. The brand name has become slang for digitally recording a program on television.

WB network, CBS Corporation became co-owner of The CW network in equal partnership with Time/Warner. CBS and The CW are two networks that compete for viewership on a national scale, and are members of the same corporate family. CBS Corporation and Time/Warner are partners in their ownership of The CW, but competitors elsewhere. Meehan explained that relationships such as this one alternate between rivalry and collaboration.[7]

As the lines between corporate entities blur, the boundaries between distribution venues are also becoming more fluid. Many networks now traverse platforms when they produce web-only episodes (webisodes) of some of their most popular television series. NBC's *The Office*, SyFy's *Battlestar Galactica*, The CW's *Gossip Girl*, and FOX's *Glee* have all released original shorts online between regular seasons. Television series are not just entertainment products; they are brands that networks can extend across platforms.

DVD box sets, DVRs, Video on Demand services, Peer-to-Peer (P2P) file-sharing and online video streaming provide television producers with more distribution venues than ever before. Producers and distributors have reaped the benefits of selling television series on DVD for almost a decade.[8] DVD box sets provide copyright holders with an ancillary revenue stream. In addition, viewers who missed a season or more of a popular television series when it first broadcast can catch up by watching it on DVD. These DVD viewers may become regular audience members for the series' future seasons. In such a scenario, DVDs can increase viewership of broadcast television.

DVRs, Video on Demand services, P2P file-sharing and online video streaming could provide producers and distributors with similar benefits. Viewers can use these technologies to watch television shows at a time of their own convenience, watch each episode multiple times, catch up on missed episodes or seasons, and watch two television shows scheduled to broadcast at the same time. These viewing methods could increase broadcast television viewership, similar to television series distributed on DVD box sets. In addition, each of these distribution methods could become a revenue stream if distributors adequately monetize them.

The same technological advances and industry developments that promise to broaden entertainment revenue streams also threaten to further undermine the Hollywood hierarchy. The television industry has not yet figured out how to make all of the potential revenue streams profitable. Viewers now have a multitude of options for watching entertainment programs outside network parameters. American cable channels are producing critically acclaimed, original television series at an increasing rate. Emmy nominee lists are filled with entries from cable channels such as HBO, AMC, Showtime, and F/X. The typically small audiences that flock to these series provide enough revenue from subscription fees for premium cable channels. However, similar ratings on network television would not sustain adequate advertising income to support production budgets. The networks are no longer the primary source for so-called "quality" television series.[†] The major entertainment conglomerates own production companies in order to feed original programming into the 500-channel universe, including the many cable channels they each own. Yet, their television networks are floundering, losing both audience share

[†] "Quality" is not an objective descriptor of cultural products and is often based on classist notions of high and low culture. Even though network television itself is generally classified as low culture due to its intended appeal to mass audiences, there are echoes of these elitist distinctions within its programming. Expensive looking scripted dramas and comedies are often deemed to be of higher "quality" than "Reality TV" programs and talk shows, which are less expensive to produce. My use of this descriptor here is intended to reference these distinctions, rather than perpetuate them.

and prestige. One way that the networks have responded to these threats has been to alter their scheduling practices.

In 2004, I first noticed these shifting television scheduling strategies. That spring, FOX announced that instead of having an annual launch of its new television season after several months of summer reruns, it would switch to a year-round programming schedule, with season premieres launching in January, June, and November.[9] The following fall, the Saturday night prime time programming of ABC, CBS, and NBC included reruns of shows that they had already broadcast earlier in the week, truncating their standard rerun cycle.[10] The changes were neither sudden nor completely unexpected. Their significance is better understood within the larger history of television scheduling practices.

After an initial period of intermittent broadcasting, by 1949 the then four U.S. television networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, and the now defunct Dumont) managed to produce a full slate of prime time programming.[11] Each network produced fifty-two weeks of original programming every year.[12‡] Even at that time, television programming was seasonal. The broadcast year was initially divided into the outdoor summer months and the indoor winter months. Programs were developed around this schedule; lighter fare was produced for the summer and more serious programs for the winter.[13] Furthermore, all television programs were produced and broadcast live. However, the cost of producing fifty-two weeks of original, live programming each year was prohibitively expensive. In 1951, *I Love Lucy* became the first episodic series to be filmed, and others quickly followed.[14] As the networks began to film more and more of

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‡ Although local stations were running syndicated programming and Hollywood films throughout this period, the networks did not pick up this practice until the late 1950s (Boddy, *Fifties Television*).

their own original programming, they started to rerun these programs in the summer months.[15] The seasonal pattern of broadcasting original programming from the fall through the spring and then reruns in the summer became standardized in network prime time television schedules by 1953 and continued to be the industry standard well into the 1980s.[16]

FOX's year-round original programming and the shortened rerun cycles on ABC, CBS, and NBC were the culmination of ongoing adjustments and innovations to network scheduling practices since the mid-1980s. In 1983, ABC, CBS, and NBC considered broadcasting fewer reruns as a response to increased competition from cable channels and independent television stations.[17] The networks extended their regular television season beyond its traditional conclusion in March or April to counter alternative programming during the May sweeps period.[18§] They managed to do so without increasing the number of episodes in the season by including reruns throughout the year instead of only in the summer months.[19] FOX's 1986 entrance into the ratings race further challenged the Big Three television networks. The upstart network launched high profile series, such as *It's Garry Shandling Show*, *Married...With Children*, and *The Tracey Ullman Show*, before ABC, CBS, and NBC premiered their fall line-ups.[20] Over the next decade, cable channels began introducing original programs on a staggered launch schedule throughout the year.[21] Once again, the summer became a time for the networks to try out different kinds of programming.[22]

It was within this context that *Survivor* and *Big Brother* premiered on CBS in the spring of 2000. By mid-summer 2001, the networks noticed a significant drop in their

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[§] "Sweeps period" refers to the four months a year that Nielsen Media measures local television station ratings: November, February, May, and July (Perebinossoff, Gross, and Gross, *Programming for TV, Radio & The Internet*).

ratings for reruns.[23] Within the television industry, this is understood to be the result of a combination of the increased competition from cable channels and the strength of CBS' original "Reality" television shows.[24]

FOX's 2004 announcement, along with its marketing campaign selling the addition of sitcoms and a prestige drama to its standard summer fare, can be considered a response to this shift in summer viewing habits. Making summer an official launch season can be seen as an acknowledgement by FOX that original programming broadcast on cable channels posed a viable threat to its market share. Another, equally intriguing assessment is that cable channels (USA, HBO, FX, and others) developed a market for summer viewers and FOX was following their lead. In either case, the shift from testing out different kinds of programs in the summer and launching new shows in the fall, to officially launching high-profile new series three times a year illustrates a temporal dimension in the network's response to television's changing landscape.

The shortened rerun cycle on ABC, CBS, and NBC further emphasizes the significance of timing to the television industry. The free-falling ratings for summer reruns in 2001 presented a challenge to the economic model of television production that was particularly temporal. The networks relied on two airings of a show to cover their production and licensing costs.[25] The four major U.S. networks lost 14-30% of their overall audience for their highest rated series during the summer rerun period between 2000 and 2001.[26] Without the benefit of a highly rated second run in the summer, network executives turned to repurposing to make up for lost advertising revenue previously expected from summer reruns.[27] In this context, "repurposing" refers to the practice of rerunning an original series, usually on a cable channel, and typically several days after it initially aired on the main network. The major networks had experimented with repurposing prior to 2001, but it was widely reported as a major shift in the industry after summer reruns lost their appeal.[28] Repurposing provides viewers with two opportunities to watch a given show, which, in turn, allows the networks to maintain their revenue from the second broadcast. ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX all began repurposing their series on their networks, rather than on cable channels. By 2005, ABC, CBS, and NBC broadcast original episodes twice in one week. This practice was largely borrowed from HBO, where its original series are scheduled to run at least twice during the week in which they premiere.[29] This development highlights the financial role that scheduling practices plays in the television industry.

As the stories of FOX's 2004 announcement and the other networks' truncated rerun cycle illustrate, television schedules are cyclical structures of time that have been marked by both change and continuity throughout the history of commercial television in the United States. Recent changes to the temporal structure of television sometimes echo earlier conventions, such as the use of summer timeslots to experiment with new kinds of programming. Broadcast networks borrow scheduling practices from cable and vice versa. This brief history demonstrates how network executives adjust scheduling strategies as part of their response to shifts in the television landscape: both increased competition and changes in audience viewing habits.

The American television industry is now in a state of flux, arguably more unstable than at any time since it was first established over sixty years ago. Technologies are merging and people can now watch television on their computers or cell phones. DVRs and P2P downloading allow viewers to watch television shows without commercials. Digital cable and satellite offer a multitude of channels from around the world, and the U.S. television industry is facing stronger competition than ever before. How will network executives adjust the timing of television in response to this uncertainty?

As network executives respond to the transforming media environment, they work with a body of knowledge about industry practices (including scheduling) and previous responses to such changes. We would be better able to knowledgably discuss how network executives are responding to ongoing industry uncertainty and understand the dynamics concerned if we knew how network practices and television scheduling strategies were adjusted in previous moments of industry upheaval.

In this dissertation, I investigate the logic of television scheduling practices, beyond network programming strategies. Of particular interest are the temporal structure of the television schedules and the logic that goes into their creation and modification. As is evident in the descriptions above, talk about television scheduling practices surfaces in industry trade magazines and mass-market publications during moments of flux. By focusing on moments of transition in the television industry, I will delve into discussions that circulate among television executives and industry insiders. These discussions can provide a glimpse into industry thinking behind television scheduling practices.

In the pages that follow, I will situate this work within the broader field of media industry studies. This will be followed by an explanation of how my research is situated within the limited but growing scholarship on television schedules and scheduling practices. I will contextualize my historical study within the recent work on broadcast television histories and explain why 1970-1985 was a remarkable time for the television industry. This chapter will conclude with descriptions of my research methodology and of the chapters that follow.

Media Industries

As Douglas Kellner argued, "media industries are powerful forces in contemporary societies, and it is essential to comprehend how they work in order to understand, act in, and transform the environment in which we live our lives."[30] To this end, media industry studies refocuses a range of theoretical approaches and methodologies found in the humanities, media studies in particular, on the industries themselves. According to Jennifer Holt and Alisa Perren, this reconfiguration incorporates a multidisciplinary approach and prioritizes structural inequity within and around media.[31] In other words, media industry studies interrogates the potential influence and limitations of individuals and media subsidiaries working within conglomerates; of media institutions dealing with regulatory, political, and market forces; and of media consumers engaging with the morphing media environment.

In the introduction to their anthology *Media Industries: History, Theory, and Method*, Holt and Perren traced the origins of media industry studies to the Frankfurt School, specifically to the essay "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno.[32] "The Frankfurt School" refers to a group of primarily Jewish intellectuals including Theodore Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and Walter Benjamin, who formed the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt, Germany in the 1930s and later moved to the United States as

Hitler rose to power.[33] Their experience of the Nazis' use of propaganda influenced The Frankfurt School's critical approach to media and culture in America.

Douglas Kellner identified the Frankfurt School intellectuals as the first to contribute a critique of what they called "the culture industry."[34] In "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," Horkeimer and Adorno described the role and function of the culture industry.[35] They argued that the culture industry is as profit driven as other capitalist industries, and it creates cultural products to meet these ends rather than for any loftier, creative goal. Furthermore, the cultural products that the industry mass produces are so standardized that there are little more than superficial differences between them. Finally, in its repetition, avoidance of new ideas, and emphasis on style over all else, the culture industry promotes conformity to established social hierarchies.

Kellner described the Frankfurt School approach as the investigation of cultural production and distribution, as well as the relative position of cultural products within social structures.[36] The Frankfurt School faces criticism for reifying elitist distinctions between authentic high culture (opera, symphonies) and debased low culture (cinema, popular music), simplifying media industries into a monolithic entity with a singular purpose, and dismissing those who engage with media and cultural products as passive consumers.[37]

One of several areas in which media industry studies departs from the Frankfurt School is in the latter's theoretical construction of a monolithic culture industry. Key to the current approach is the awareness that media industries are not a unified organisation with a singular interest. As Michele Hilmes explained, each industry represents "the coming together of a host of interests and efforts around the production of goods or services in a marketplace for accumulation of profit."[38] When I use the term "the television industry," I am referring to the amalgamation of a multitude of competing and cooperating interests including media conglomerates, production companies, producers, directors, actors, writers, cable companies, distribution companies, networks, affiliates, local independent stations, station managers, programmers, etc. Their conflicts are often over how to divide revenue among themselves and how to best produce content. Other than that, they have fairly concordant interests: producing and distributing news and entertainment products for profit.

In addition, the television industry is not a static entity. Media mergers occur so frequently that most corporate ownership charts are quickly outdated. As of early 2011, there are five television networks (ABC, CBS, The CW, FOX, and NBC) which are owned by The Disney Corporation, CBS Corporation, CBS Corporation/Time Warner, News Corporation, and GE, respectively.[**] The current makeup of the television industry is, in part, influenced by some of the changes in the 1970s and early 1980s that I cover in this dissertation. The conglomerates that own television networks are larger and have a greater reach than ever before. In the 1970s, there were three television networks: ABC, CBS, and NBC. ABC and CBS were independently owned, and RCA owned NBC. As Alan Pearce detailed in "The TV Networks: A Primer," each of these network owners had other media and non-media holdings, including RCA's electronics division, CBS' music division, and ABC's publishing house.[39] "The television industry" refers to the

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[**] As of this writing, GE is the majority shareholder of NBC's parent company NBC Universal. Comcast's bid to become NBC Universal's majority shareholder is pending.

television arms of these companies, with the understanding that the specific owners and their holdings change over time.

Holt, Perren, and Kellner suggested that cultural studies addresses the shortcomings of the Frankfurt school approach.[40] Cultural studies can refer to a wide range of approaches that developed out of numerous traditions and contexts. In his essay "Cultural Studies: What's in a Name? (One More Time)," Lawrence Grossberg identified a unifying theme within the field when he wrote that cultural studies "tends to look at culture itself as the site of the production and struggle over power, where power is understood, not necessarily in the form of domination, but always as an unequal relation of forces in the interests of particular fractions of the population."[41] In other words, cultural meaning is not static, but is negotiated by creators and consumers or even among creators. Furthermore, these negotiations occur within, and are influenced by, hierarchical social structures. Yet, relative positions of power, or lack thereof, do not completely remove an individual's ability to actively engage in the negotiations. This approach maintains the Frankfurt School's investigation of social hierarchies, but cultural studies allows for a more complex understanding of how cultural industries operate and how individuals engage with culture. Holt and Perren argued that media industry studies builds on the Frankfurt School's focus on cultural industries by applying a "cultural studies' view of culture as a site of struggle, contestation, and negotiation to the industry itself."[42]

Although there are numerous disciplinary influences on media industry studies, including sociology and anthropology, journalism studies, and film studies, this dissertation draws from both cultural studies and political economy. Robert E. Babe argued that these two fields were "fully integrated, consistent, and mutually supportive" in the early days of cultural studies analysis.[43] Babe explained that this changed when cultural studies took a poststructuralist turn and eschewed questions about the influence of structural inequities for an emphasis on the equal value of all interpretations of cultural artefacts.[44] Both Babe and Kellner suggested that Raymond Williams' cultural materialist approach can provide a way of reintegrating the fields.[45] Williams' approach analyzes "all forms of signification...within the actual means and conditions of their production..."[46] That is, cultural materialism analyzes cultural artefacts such as books, films, or television shows within the political, economic, social, and historical contexts they were created.

In this dissertation I draw on the cultural materialist strand of cultural studies as I map what Lawrence Grossberg called "the deployment and effects of discursive practices and alliances within the specific social spaces and milieus."[47] To this end, I investigate the discursive construction and reconstruction of television's timing within the particular matrix of industry, policy, and technical influences of the 1970s and early 1980s. My research builds on what Holt and Perren described as the media industry studies investigation of cultural production, where such production refers to "everything from production itself to distribution, marketing, and exhibition practices."[48] Holt and Perren included production culture studies within their expansive definition of media industry studies. According to John Thornton Caldwell, production culture studies investigates "the cultural practices and belief systems of film/video production workers," including everyone on the production team from the producers to the crew members.[49] Although this line of inquiry is included in Holt and Perren's definition of media industry studies, it is not part of my investigation. Instead, this dissertation examines the production of the television schedule, by which I mean the dominant temporal structure of television programs. This temporal structure is reflected in and constituted by the multitudinous, frequently changing, individual television network and local station program schedules. I use “the television schedule” to refer to the dominant overall temporal structure, and “television schedules” to refer to the many individual station program schedules and continually tweaked network program schedules.

I also employ a political economy analysis as I consider how, to use Kellner’s description, the “forces of production (such as media technologies and creative practice) are shaped according to dominant relations of production (such as profit imperative, the maintenance of hierarchical control, and relations of domination).”[50] “Scheduling,” one such “force of production,” refers to the act of placing shows on television schedules. As John Ellis described the practice, it is “an ordering of time, and a hierarchisation of material.”[51] The construction of schedules falls under the dominion of the programmer, whose job entails, according to Susan Tyler Eastman and Douglas A. Ferguson, “selecting, scheduling, promoting, and evaluating programs...”[52] Programmers aim to attract the largest possible audience to their station and keep the viewers watching. To do so they use a variety of scheduling strategies that I will address in the next chapter.

The most prolific ongoing research on television schedules is from a business and marketing perspective. These include evaluations of scheduling strategies such as in Srinivas K. Reddy, Jay E. Aronson, and Antonie Stam’s “SPOT: Scheduling Programs Optimally for Television” and “Has Lead-In Lost its Punch?: An Analysis of Prime Time Inheritance Effects: Comparing 1992 with 2002” by Walter S. McDowell and

Steve J. Dick.[53] Some such articles focus on audience activity, as is the case in Susan Tyler Easman, Jeffrey Neal-Lunsford, and Karen E. Riggs' "Coping with Grazing: Prime-Time Strategies for Accelerated Program Transitions" and "Scheduling Practices Based on Audience Flow: What are the Effects on New Program Success?" by William J. Adams.[54] These are often economic approaches that assess the success or failure of scheduling strategies based on ratings and series renewals. They do not address the logic of the television schedule's temporal structure.

Television industry texts, such as *Programming for TV, Radio, & the Internet: Strategy, Development & Evaluation* by Philippe Perebinossof, Brian Gross, and Lynn S. Gross or *Media Programming: Strategies and Practices* by Susan Tyler Eastman and Douglas A. Ferguson explain what is involved in the programming process. They provide an overview of how broadcasting industries work, including basic program development steps, scheduling strategies, and audience testing. These are essentially guides for people interested in becoming programmers. Books such as these often focus solely on the economic influences of scheduling: who is the audience targeted, what are the options, what time is best?[55] In contrast, this dissertation investigates the myriad of other influences on the schedule and how the networks respond to these other influences (e.g. policy, technology, and competition).

There are numerous analyses or straight-forward descriptions of schedule grids and the programs that fill them.[56] In *Television Network Weekend Programming, 1959-* 1990, Mitchell E. Shapiro compared sections of the schedule (Saturday morning, Saturday afternoon, etc.) at each of the Big Three television networks over several decades.[57] He presented the grids themselves and listed all of the schedule changes.

Harry Castleman and Walter J. Podrazik provided similar detailed television schedule grids in *The TV Schedule Book*.[58] They included television grids of the broadcast day for each season from 1944 to 1984. Castleman and Podrazik discussed the content of the grids and what programs premiered in which years, but their focus remained on these grids. They did not expand their study to scheduling practices, why these schedules were structured this way, or how these decisions were made. These commendable contributions to the history of television are significant steps in the study of television schedules; we now can look at the grids provided by Castleman and Podrazik to compare the shifting schedules over time. However, they lack critical cultural analysis.

Collectively, Eileen Meehan, Ien Ang, Todd Gitlin, and John Ellis have built the framework for such analysis. Meehan explained that the American television industry's business model consists of "advertisers as the basic source of revenues, access to audience as the basic commodity sold by networks."[59] The work of Ien Ang and Todd Gitlin highlights the role of television schedules within this model. Ang explained that revenues from advertisers are contingent on the accurate prediction of the number of viewers watching a specific network at a particular time.[60] These predictions are based on ratings, researched and calculated by audience measurement companies such as Nielsen Media. Gitlin noted that television schedules are constructed to maximize ratings through audience composition and flow.[61] That is, the programs on the schedule and the way they are organized are intended to attract the largest audience, often with an emphasis on a particular set of demographic characteristics, and encourage them to stay tuned throughout the program block. According to Ang, scheduling practices are one of "a range of risk-reducing techniques and strategies of regulating television programming…aimed at the codification, routinization and synchronization of the audiences' viewing practices, to make them less capricious and more predictable."[62] John Ellis built on this theoretical framework when he wrote about the schedule as a narrative the network executives tell about the habits, routines, and lives of their viewers.[63] Even though he called for more research to this end a decade ago, it is just now being taken up by scholars in Europe.[64] These analyses from Ang, Ellis, Gitlin, and Meehan touch on the unequal distribution of power in constructing television schedules fit within and, therefore, fall within the purview of political economy and cultural studies. I endeavour to contribute to this work, and build a larger picture of the temporal logics of television and the multitude of influences that go into the structure of these schedules.

Television Histories

John Corner best explained the need for historical research: "An enriched sense of 'then' produces, in its differences and commonalities combined, a stronger, imaginative and analytically energized sense of 'now'."[65] Following this logic, I contend that knowledge of the networks' responses to previous periods of increasing competition in the television market enhances any discussion of the television industry's responses to today's morphing media environment. The television networks' recent responses, including altering television's temporality, are informed by their previous successes and failures. Knowledge of this network history contextualizes their current strategies within a longer struggle to retain or regain their audience shares from the early days of television. From an historical perspective, video streaming, P2P downloading, DVRs, and "quality" scripted dramas from cable television are the latest in a long line of increasingly difficult challenges to the networks' dominance over television, rather than unprecedented events.

My research contributes to a large and varied body of historical American television research. Eric Barnouw's *Tube of Plenty* and Hilliard and Keith's *Broadcast Century and Beyond* are emblematic of the numerous television histories that media scholars have written since the early days of TV.[66] *Tube of Plenty* and *Broadcast Century and Beyond* trace broadcasting from its roots in the nineteenth century with Alexander Graham Bell's telephone. Both books follow communications developments from the telephone, through the telegraph, radio, and television. The most recent edition of *Broadcast Century and Beyond* incorporates webcasting into the history of broadcasting.[67] These histories focus on a combination of the development of the television industry in the United States and related technologies, policy concerns, and content (programs). They tell rich, descriptive stories as they provide an overview of the history of American broadcasting, with a focus on television.

The details of these histories are further fleshed out by scholars such as William Boddy and Aniko Bodroghkozy in their work on 1950s television and 1960s television respectively.[68] These authors situated their subject within the political and social context of these particular eras. In *Fifties Television*, Boddy investigated the influence of corporate structures, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations, and economic practices, among other elements, on the emerging television industry. He emphasized that these many influences shaped the business and aesthetic conventions of the television industry, and that the forms they took were not inevitable. Bodroghkozy's focus on the struggle over television content in a tumultuous era provides insight into the hegemonic negotiation over youth rebellion and dissent. In addition to focusing on a shorter period in television's history than Barnouw or Hilliard and Keith, both Boddy and Bodroghkozy illuminated a particular struggle in defining television.

Ken Auletta's *Three Blind Mice: How the TV Networks Lost Their Way* examines how network executives at ABC, CBS, and NBC dealt with the fallout from a period of deregulation and corporate restructuring in the 1980s.[69] Although Auletta's book was published immediately following its period of focus, *Three Blind Mice* took an historical snapshot of the television industry. In doing so, it provides similar historical insight as Boddy's and Bodroghkozy's books.

In their respective works, Lynn Spigel, Anna McCarthy, and Derek Kompare explored aspects of television that had previously been overlooked. In *Make Room for TV*, Lynn Spigel investigated the ways in which newspapers, magazines, advertisements, television programs and films advised TV owners to integrate the emergent medium into their domestic spaces and home lives.[70] Spigel emphasized how the discourses circulating when many Americans bought their first television sets in the years following the Second World War influenced the ways that people understood television.

Elaborating on television's spatiality, Anna McCarthy's *Ambient Television* uncovered the roles that televisions play in non-domestic spaces such as doctors' offices, pubs, and airport lounges.[71] McCarthy argued that the locations of televisions influence how they are used and how they are understood by those around them. In other words, the meanings of television and the roles it plays are context specific.

Derek Kompare's *Rerun Nation* probes the history of the television rerun, drawing out one aspect of television's temporality. [72] Kompare argued that repetition has always been an integral part of the business of television, and he demonstrated how the television industry's use of repetition has evolved with the technology and the corporate landscape.

Spigel, McCarthy, and Kompare filled in gaps and silences that remained in previous television histories. Spigel and McCarthy explored the history of television's spatiality, and Kompare addressed the temporality of television. Each of these authors identified formerly taken for granted aspects of television, and used historically specific evidence to enrich our understanding of the medium.

My project will contribute additional historical detail, focusing on a temporal dimension of television. Television schedules may seem like benign aspects of popular culture. David Morley suggested otherwise when he argued that there is power in defining time.[73] As I will discuss in Chapter One, whoever defines temporal structures influences the shape of people's everyday lives. My study examines the temporal structuring of television content and the surrounding logics.

My work further echoes Spigel, McCarthy, and Kompare in my analysis of industrial and popular discourses. I investigate industry trade magazines to trace out what McCarthy called "the public culture of TV companies."[74] As Spigel has explained, articles by knowledgeable television critics and quotes from television executives can provide a glimpse into industry thinking.[75] I gathered my material from entertainment and advertising industry trade magazines *Variety*, *Broadcasting*, *Channels*, and *Advertising Age*. According to Kompare, trade publications "have thus functioned as important intellectual spaces in the industry, fostering discussions and shaping concepts and practices that have impacted broadcasting in the United States, and around the world."[76] The ways that schedules are publicly discussed in these sources allow me to trace debates that have centered on emerging technologies or television scheduling, anxieties that were expressed about the timing of television, or discussion about changes to these schedules. In addition, I turn to mainstream publications *Business Week*, *Newsweek*, *Time* and *New York Times* to track how these discourses circulated in the public.

Initially, I intended to incorporate internal documents from the television networks, but their archives over this period remain elusive. Although there are numerous television archives, these are primarily extensive video collections. NBC is the only network with an archive of documents. Unfortunately, its archives only store records dated prior to 1969 and after 1986. However, I found no shortage of material in trade papers, mass market publications, and personal accounts in biographies, autobiographies and other manuscripts.[77] This collection of resources allows me to make an argument about the public representations of industry logics. These should not be mistaken for truth claims about how business is done.

The methods William Boddy used in his exhaustive text *Fifties Television* inform my integrated cultural studies and political economy analysis.[78] Boddy provided an excellent example of how publicly expressed logics can be considered against the institutional makeup at the time. Boddy weighed quotes from network executives against other documented actions instead of taking their words at face value. His approach goes some distance in accounting for any public relations spin that the industry executives pitch in their public announcements.

Following Boddy's lead, I consider comments from network executives as well as their networks' actions. My ability to counter public relations spin was limited by my lack of access to internal memos and documentation from the Big Three throughout my period of study. Instead, I weigh executives' comments against other publicly documented actions. Furthermore, like Boddy, I focus a critical eye on institutional practices in light of multiple economic, policy, and political factors.

Selecting an era to study is both "somewhat arbitrary," as Boddy argued, and quite reasoned.[79] One must place historical boundaries on a project to determine the period of study. Yet, doing so removes the chosen period from its wider historical context, places false limitations on events, their antecedents and outcomes, and creates inaccurate distinctions between one year and the next as though eras shift overnight. I have attempted to balance the necessary limitations of such periodization by extending my study to the years immediately preceding the most significant upheavals of the 1970s and following their initial fallout.

The shifts to the television industry from 1970 to 1985 reflect general changes in the economic, political, and social culture of America over that period. Building on the momentum of social justice movements in the 1960s, the early 1970s was a time of significant legal reform and civil rights activism. Congress passed a number of bills protecting consumers, workers, and the environment, including the Clean Air Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Act.[80] President Richard Nixon signed these bills into law, expanding regulatory controls over business.[81] Activists working to improve the lives of marginalized communities succeeded on numerous fronts. Disability rights advocates shifted the onus for accommodating people with disabilities from the individuals living with disabilities to their communities.[82] They fought for, and won, employment opportunities, access to public education, and minimum standards of care and treatment in medical facilities.[83] Gay rights activists convinced several cities to repeal discrimination laws based on sexual orientation and persuaded six states to rescind laws banning sexual acts between consenting adults of the same sex.[84] The women's movement began the decade with bipartisan support for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), a proposed constitutional amendment that would outlaw discrimination based on sex.[85] President Nixon endorsed the amendment when Congress passed it in 1972.[86] However, the ERA stalled when it was sent to individual states for ratification.[87] Women's rights advocates won other battles in the early 1970s, including Title IX which tied federal education funds to non-discriminatory practices based on sex in school programs and activities.[88] The following year the Supreme Court determined that a woman's right to terminate her pregnancy fell under the scope of her right to privacy in the landmark case Roe v. Wade.[89]

During this period of progressive intervention at the federal, state, and municipal levels, the American people lost confidence in their government over the country's involvement in the Vietnam War.[90] Any trust they may have regained when the American military withdrew from the war in 1973 was shattered by two key events that year. The Watergate scandal broke, revealing White House corruption linked directly to the President, and an oil embargo triggered a 350% increase in gas prices and a simultaneous gas shortage.[91] The following year, President Nixon resigned and the

Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) raised oil prices, causing the cost of gas to increase once again. The rising cost of oil instigated a parallel increase in the price of production and distribution across industries.[92] Low productivity rates further destabilized the economy as companies moved their production facilities to countries with cheaper labour and the service industry grew.[93] With the loss of well-paid manufacturing jobs and increase of non-unionized service jobs, income dropped as prices and unemployment soared.[94] America faced a period of stagflation: simultaneous inflation and economic stagnation.[95]

The Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations faced an economic conundrum. When they tried to decrease the unemployment rate by stimulating the economy, inflation would rise; but when they tried to lower inflation by reigning in spending, the unemployment rate would go up.[96] The Iranian revolution triggered another oil shortage in 1979, exacerbating the inflation problem.[97] Although the economy stabilized from 1975 until 1978, the energy crisis and stagflation dominated the decade.[98]

In the midst of this economic uncertainty, middle class Americans began questioning government spending on social programs.[99] Lower middle class and working class Americans resented programs that developed out of social justice movements, such as affirmative action.[100] Corporations increased their lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill and pushed back against union labour.[101] The modern American conservative movement had been slowly gaining momentum since Barry Goldwater's unsuccessful presidential campaign in 1964.[102] In the mid-1970s, this movement was able to tap into the rightward drift in public opinion in the context of the economic instability to promote a reduced role for government through deregulation, tax cuts, and rolling back social programs.[103]

As the country entered its second recession of the decade in 1978, President Jimmy Carter cut back on government social spending commitments and began deregulating business in order to stimulate the economy.[104] By the time the economy stabilized once again, Ronald Reagan had replaced Carter in the White House. Reagan's election marked the ascendency of American conservatism, as he continued to reduce spending on social programs.[105] He undermined the bargaining power of labour unions, going so far as to decertify the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization after an illegal strike.[106] In addition, he weakened regulations on business and placed ideological allies into key regulatory agencies such as the FCC.[107] Thus, between 1970 and 1985, the economic, political, and cultural climate in America shifted from a public interest agenda and corporate regulation to a pro-corporate agenda and defunded social programs. There was a parallel shift over the same period in the television industry.

The 1970s and early 1980s are a relatively under-examined period in American television history. Numerous scholars such as William Boddy, Lynn Spigel, and Anna McCarthy traced the industry's early days as television developed from experimental technology to culturally entrenched medium.[108] After this initial period of upheaval, television became fairly standard in the mid-1950s and continued this way until the mid-1970s. ABC, CBS, and NBC faced little competition. The significant events in television in the 1960s were not structural or technological, but related to politics and issues of representation on television.[109]

Throughout the 1960s, television provided viewers with a window to several tragic political assassinations, the civil rights movement, the Second Wave feminist movement, and the anti-war movement. It ended with people gathered around their television sets to watch the moon landing. In the early 1970s Americans witnessed the end of the Vietnam War, an American president leaving the White House in disgrace, and a recession. Television was firmly embedded in Americans' everyday lives.

The 1970s was a roller coaster for the television industry. At the start of the decade, PBS entered the scene while CBS and NBC battled for the number one spot in the ratings and ABC was consistently third.[110][††] As the United States government introduced progressive environmental and civil rights legislation, the FCC regulated with an eye towards promoting a diversity of media ownership.[111] The networks enjoyed a combined viewing share of 93% in the 1975-1976 season.[112][‡‡] That season, ABC solidified its position as a competitive network when it surged ahead of CBS and NBC in the ratings.[113] As the first recession ended in 1975, advertisers poured money into television.[114] The networks and advertisers became more interested in reaching specific demographic groups rather than simply the largest possible audience.[115] A series of technological innovations and changes to FCC regulation triggered the expansion of cable television and increased competition for the networks.[116] Sony and JVC launched VCRs in the United States.[117] The proliferation of cable boxes and VCRs increased the use of remote control devices.[118] This confluence of changes introduced audiences to time-shifted television, channel surfing, commercial zipping, cable channels such as HBO, and cable distributed UHF channels with a greater reach than ever before. By the end of the decade, the networks saw their audience shares begin to drop, never to recover. Over this same period, the FCC's approach to broadcasting regulation changed,

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[††] As a public broadcaster, PBS' network schedule is influenced by a related, but distinct set of variables from those that influence commercial broadcasting schedules. The scheduling logics and practices of public broadcasting are beyond the scope of this study.

[‡‡] "Shares" refers to the percentage of the audience watching television at that time that is tuned in to a particular program. "Ratings" describes the overall number of viewers watching a given show.

reflecting the general regulatory shift in the country. The commission shifted from limiting concentration of media ownership to deregulation.[119] During Reagan's partisan regulatory appointments, like-minded Mark Fowler became the new FCC chairman. The 1980s was a period of commodification and increased competition in the television industry.[120] These multiple factors all seemed to culminate in 1986, when Capital Cities Communication, Loews Corporation, and General Electric assumed control of ABC, CBS, and NBC respectively, and Rupert Murdoch launched the FOX television network.[121]

This dissertation examines a tumultuous but underexamined period in the television industry, from 1970 to 1985. It begins with a period of anti-monopoly regulatory reform at the FCC. In 1970, the FCC worked on two pieces of regulation to limit television monopolies: the Prime Time Access Rule (PTAR) and the Financial Interest and Syndication Rule (FinSyn). Although these regulations were not implemented until the following year, the 1970 start date provides insight into the industry debates that influenced these important pieces of regulation.

The 1986 ownership overhaul had severe repercussions that we continue to see play out today. However, those events and their fallout have been thoroughly addressed by authors such as Auletta.[122] My project covers the years leading up to those momentous events, providing their context. It contributes insight into how the industry works in a time of relative stasis, through an initial destabilization, and the immediate fallout. This period marks the beginning of the end of the network era.

Coming up next...

This dissertation investigates how the networks dealt with a number of significant changes in television from the 1970s into the 1980s, including direct challenges to television's temporality. The way these events unfolded requires some overlapping stories and retracing steps. Some events unfolded concurrently, but tell very different stories. In addition, policy changes in the mid-1970s allowed for industry shifts at the end of the decade, the repercussions of which became apparent in the 1980s. Each chapter follows a rough chronology, but the timeline is not linear throughout.

Chapter One examines why schedules, particularly television schedules, matter. How does time structure our everyday lives? What significance do television schedules have for viewers? What do television network executives think about the role of these schedules? What techniques do they use to feed viewers through their programming? Chapter One expands on some of the ideas touched on in this introductory chapter, establishing the stakes in the temporality of television and the logic of television schedules.

Chapter Two delves into the regulation of prime time, one of the key structural elements in the broadcast day. The aptly named prime time television is central to any network's schedule for a number of reasons. The prime time "daypart" delivers the largest Homes Using Television (HUT) numbers of the broadcast day.[§§] The networks produce the most varied original programming for prime time, with different series every night of the week. The scripted series that fill the majority of timeslots during the evening hours of prime time are some of the most expensive to produce, and they have

[§§] Television programmers divide up the broadcast day into segments called "dayparts" based on the presumed work and leisure patterns of their audience.

promotional budgets to match. A network's success or failure is largely synonymous with that of its prime time line-up. The television industry trade papers cover network prime time schedule announcements leading up to the big fall season launch, and their minor prime time schedule adjustments throughout the year. Despite all of this money, time, and interest invested in these few hours of nightly television, the timing of network prime time programming was not designed by the broadcasters as part of a well informed scheduling strategy. Chapter Two starts with a look back to the early development of prime time, upending the common wisdom that the hours between 8:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. are deemed prime time simply because that is when most viewers watch television. The focus then shifts to the FCC's Prime Time Access Rule (PTAR) and the industrial discord that followed. It reveals how a series of negotiations between the television networks, their affiliates, independent producers, and the FCC determined the timing of the highest profile network programs.

Chapter Three examines the TV industry's response to growth of cable television. Cable television and satellite distribution triggered the first significant challenge to the Big Three television networks after several decades of stability. Together, cable and satellite introduced an unprecedented number of channels competing with the television networks for viewers' attention. The structure of cable channels' program schedules differed from those of the Big Three networks, offering viewers alternative temporalities in which they could watch television. The increased program options at different times undermined the effectiveness of network television schedules at directing viewers through their flow of programs. This chapter investigates how cable channels altered television's temporality and how the networks reacted to this increased competition for viewers' attention.

Chapter Four looks at the introduction of the first television time-shifters, videocassette recorders (VCRs). Of all the changes in the television industry throughout the 1970s, the VCR presented the most direct challenge to television's established temporality. VCRs and the timing of television were intertwined from the technology's conception, through its development, distribution, and marketing campaigns. Yet, the emergent technology did not inspire much concern about its potential to undermine the TV schedule and the television industry's business model. While producers, distributors, and advertisers responded to the threat VCRs posed to their profits, the networks responded to the technology, when they did at all, as a business opportunity. In this chapter, I investigate how the American television networks responded to the introduction of VCRs to the U.S. market, highlighting the logical gaps in their counter-intuitive strategies.

Chapter Five focuses on network news. The timing of television news plays a particularly visible role in structuring our everyday lives. For many people, news marks the transition from sleep to work, from work to evening leisure, then from leisure time back to sleep. By the genre's very nature, news programs that are time-shifted by a day or a week are no longer news. They soon become part of the historical record. For these reasons, among others, the timing of news is unique in content and structure. The 1970s and 1980s witnessed modifications to the length, timing, format, and availability of news. The way these changes unfolded reveals the struggle between networks, affiliates, independent local stations and cable news. These struggles echo the tensions and shifting emphasis in this era from television as a tool for the benefit of the public interest to television as solely a commercial venture.[***] Chapter Five looks at the timing of news in two ways: its position on the schedules and its length. It reviews the networks' ongoing struggle to expand their newscasts and the opportunity and challenge that CNN posed to the Big Three.

This project started out as an investigation of how the television industry responded to moments of flux by adjusting the timing of television. Over the course of this research, I found quite the opposite. Network executives seemed to understand the significance of the schedule and the role that habit and ritual play in television viewing. However, they did not put this knowledge to good use at moments of industry instability or in the face of challenges to television's temporality. They were primarily focused on the content, rather than the temporality of the television schedule.

The American television networks failed to comprehend the relationship between the timing of television and our everyday lives. This dissertation examines how the television industry has been scrambling to keep up since the first glimmers of a post-network era, while publicly maintaining an air of confidence. This close analysis of television schedules' structural elements investigates the multitude of influences on its construction. Policy, competition, experimentation, advertiser interests, economic concerns, assumptions of viewer behaviour, and egotism all play a role. The chapters that follow lay bare the industrial illogic behind television's temporality.

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Chapter One
Time, Control, and Television

Questions of time inevitably also involve questions of power,
questions of who has the power to define time,
questions of the imposition of a standard or national time
and of the relationship between time and modes of communication.[1]

The television schedule is one iteration of an historical struggle over temporality and everyday life. It is the site of negotiation between viewers and programmers for control over one's time. The television industry's business model relies on the schedule as a way to deliver viewers to network advertisers. Although viewers are less invested specifically in the television schedule, it is one of the many temporal structures that can contribute to the shape of viewers' everyday lives.

Theories about time and temporality often engage with questions of power and control. Just as we use clocks, calendars, and schedules to structure our day to day lives, individuals and institutions can use the same temporal tools to shape the lives of others. In this chapter, I will review how the connection between time and control emerges across disciplines. Sociological contributions by Barbara Adam, E.P. Thompson, and Eviatar Zerubaval engage with time and social coordination in ways that parallel media studies work by Ien Ang, Paddy Scannell, and Roger Silverstone.[2] It is within the amalgamation of sociological theories and media studies theories that we can better understand the role of the television schedule and the stakes of scheduling strategies and viewing practices.

Temporal Orders and Everyday Life

Sociological approaches to time emphasize the social coordination of temporal orders. According to this framework, people work within and around multiple temporal orders, some natural and others constructed. Natural temporal orders include biotemporal and physiotemporal orders. Jeremy Rifkin described how these temporalities work together:

> Living things seem to be composed of myriad internal biological clocks entrained to work in precise coordination with the rhythms of the external physical world. Living things time their internal and external functions with the solar day, the lunar month, the seasons, and the annual rotation of the earth around the sun.[3]

The division between day and night is a physiotemporal order marked by the rising and setting of the sun. It is an occurrence beyond people's control, but one which influences how we go about our lives. Sleep patterns are somewhat synchronized with the rotation of the earth on its axis. This is the coordination between biotemporal and physiotemporal orders to which Rifkin referred.

E. P. Thompson identified task-orientation as an organic temporal order. When people measure time based on domestic chores or other processes, they are working within a task-oriented temporality.[4] This timing is derived from the tasks themselves. Thompson draws his examples from peasant communities and small farms, but elements of task-oriented temporality are evident in a modern, urban context. Homeowners shovelling their snow-filled sidewalks continue to do so until all of the snow is cleared. They usually do not stop shovelling after a set amount of time and leave their sidewalks partially covered in snow. Most people who shovel snow do so with a task-oriented temporality. This example also illustrates how people work within multiple temporalities. Snow-shovelling does not begin until there is snow on the ground. In this case, task-oriented temporality is contingent on the physiotemporal order of the seasons and weather patterns.

Eviatar Zerubavel distinguished sociotemporal orders from natural processes such as physiotemporal, biotemporal, or task-oriented temporal orders, defining a sociotemporal order as a "socially constructed artefact which rests upon rather arbitrary social conventions."[5] The division of a week into seven days each segmented by twenty-four hours of equal duration or the standard workday lasting eight hours are simply conventions. They are part of a sociotemporal order distinct from physiotemporal, biotemporal, or task-oriented temporal orders.

Barbara Adam described the role of such a temporal order: "It has its root in social organization and synchronization, and in the need to anticipate, plan and regulate collective existence."[6] It coordinates activities so that multiple, varied schedules combine into a single larger one. Robert Hassan further explained how these individual temporal structures become sociotemporal when he wrote, "[m]any cultural practices have thus evolved as contexts, as ways to understand and control time by grafting onto embedded times the rules or customs that imbue them with importance."[7] Hassan referred specifically to cultural events that are given meaning at certain points in the calendar, such as religious holidays. This could be expanded to explain how the above temporalities integrate the individual into the community. Home owners may feel pressure to shovel their sidewalks shortly after the snow falls if their neighbours imbue cleared sidewalks with significance. If a community considers shovelled sidewalks an important safety measure, timely snow shovelling becomes conflated with being a good neighbour. In this way, external pressure shapes the temporality that structures individuals' everyday lives.

The significance of coordinated activities and their timing are often maintained through keeping a calendar. According to Rifkin,

> [i]t is through the use of calendars that advanced civilizations have created reference points for shared group activity. The concept of days, weeks, months, years, the celebration of births and the memorializing of deaths, the recording of changing seasons, and the acknowledgment of rites of passage, are all incorporated in and an outgrowth of the creation of calendars.[8]

The calendar is a tool to track these events. It works to reinforce the cultural significance of the events and the cyclical temporality in which they occur. Zerubavel argued that where the calendar performs this function on a macro level, tracking weekly, seasonal, or annual events, schedules do this on a micro level, tracking hours and days.[9] However similar calendars and schedules may be, the introduction and implementation of the highly regulated schedule influenced the current dominant sociotemporality.

Both Rifkin and Zerubavel detailed the link between strict schedules and mechanical clocks to the Benedictine monks.[10] Zerubavel described the connection: "even though the Benedictine horarium clearly differed to a large extent from most modern schedules, it nevertheless constituted the original model for all of them as well as an ideal-typical example of a generic schedule."[11] Instead of simply maintaining the weekly, monthly, seasonal and annual rituals tracked by the calendar, the Benedictine monks moved to a more rigid daily routine. Rifkin explained that they implemented the use of the mechanical clock to help them track this highly regulated time.[12] According to Zerubavel, standardization was a major draw of this new device. He wrote that the clock "made it possible for man to transform the traditional seasonally based 'hours' into durationally uniform ones, as the effective use of the schedule required."[13] Time became somewhat divorced from natural temporal orders. The clock may have maintained the cycle of day and night along with the earth's rotation around the sun, but the time within that cycle was artificially divided. In addition, the more precise segmentation allowed for a strict schedule of activities in the monastery.

According to Lewis Mumford, the clock has a dual purpose. He argued that "the clock is not merely a means of keeping track of the hours, but of synchronizing the actions of men."[14] In other words, it became a tool to enforce the dominant sociotemporal order of the era. Possibly for this reason, the new mechanism was taken up by factory owners to coordinate their large labour force.[15] Barbara Adam further explained this transition: "In factories, people synchronized to the clock-time rhythm come to be treated as appendages to the machine. The machine time gets elevated as the norm to which they are expected to perform."[16] While the factory owners found the precise synchronization of clocks valuable to their businesses, the populace found this new rhythm appealing and applied it to other areas of life. Adam continued: "Children are educated in accordance with its mechanistic beat. Public life is regulated to its invariable rhythm. Accuracy and precision, punctuality and the regularity of the clockwork become the socially valued ideals of conduct."[17] Adam's statement about "the socially valued ideals of conduct" indicates why such strict time keeping spoke to people within a specific socio-cultural context: this temporality conformed to the Protestant Work Ethic. As described by Max Weber, the Protestant Work Ethic equates hard work with godliness and leisure with sin.[18] This was perpetuated by what Thompson described as "time-thrift" propaganda aimed at the British working and lower classes.[19] Clocks allowed for time-keeping in a way that regulated workers and supported this Protestant

Work Ethic. This clock-based temporal synchronization incorporated and complimented other existing temporalities, eventually becoming a new dominant sociotemporal order in Britain and beyond.

It was not something particular to the clock itself that instigated this grand shift in how people thought about the timing of their everyday lives. The clock was one piece of a larger shift. As Heather Menzies explained, "[t]he standardization of time didn't just happen as a deterministic consequence of invention. Rather, being on time – standardized clock time, that is – took hold because it fit with the general constellation of developments that came to be known as modernity."[20] Even though the meeting of the clock and modernity were serendipitous, they became intertwined in symbolic meaning. According to Manuel Castells, "[m]odernity can be conceived, in material terms, as the dominance of clock time over space and society."[21] Castells' comment encapsulates the impact that clocks had on the temporal structure over this period of modernity.

Clocks had far reaching implications for how people relate to time. Adam explained how time was no longer as intricately connected to biotemporal and physiotemporal rhythms:

> With the mechanical clock, time became dissociated from planetary rhythms and seasons, from change and ageing, from experience and memory. It became independent from time and space, self-sufficient, empty of meaning and thus apparently neutral. This allowed for entirely new associations, linkages and contents to be developed and imposed.[22]

Lewis Mumford argued that these new associations were scientific and quantifiable:

> When one thinks of time, not as a sequence of experiences, but as a collection of hours, minutes, and seconds, the habits of adding time and saving time come into existence. Time took on the character of an enclosed space: it could

> be divided, it could be filled up, it could be expanded by the invention of labor-saving instruments. Abstract time became the new medium of existence. Organic functions themselves were regulated by it: one ate, not upon feeling hungry, but when prompted by the clock: one slept, not when one was tired, but when the clock sanctioned it.[23]

Time shifted outside of individuals' experience and practice. This new way of thinking about and relating to time changed the way people work. People time tasks to the schedule, a reversal from the task-oriented temporality that Thompson described.

Once time was quantifiable, it became a commodity to be bought, sold, or stolen. Thompson related a story about the latter, when factory owners altered the clocks to extend the workday and shorten meal breaks without their employees' knowledge.[24] Factory owners used time to exploit their workforce. Thompson's example illustrates an explicit connection between time and control that is often implicit in discussions of sociotemporal orders and social coordination. Once people began structuring their lives by the clock rather than by physiotemporal or biotemporal orders, their lives could be shaped by whoever is in charge of that clock.

Sociotemporal orders are constructed in that they are not organic, nor did they naturally develop. However, they are not necessarily simply imposed by the more powerful classes on the rest of the culture. E.P. Thompson's description of transitions illuminates the dynamics at play in sociotemporal shifts. Thomspon explained, "[t]he stress of the transition falls upon the whole culture: resistance to change and assent to change arise from the whole culture."[25] Although Thompson referred specifically to industrialization, his comment is relevant to shifting sociotemporal orders including those that were introduced with industrialization. In order for clock-based temporality to become the dominant socio-temporality, the culture at large had to integrate it into their everyday lives. The particular form it took was influenced by the many ways in which individuals, communities, and institutions both implemented and challenged clock time.

Transitions are continually contested and never are truly completed shifts from one form to the next. We continue to work with and around a number of temporal orders: work, domestic/family, community, religious, cultural. The dominant sociotemporal order incorporates multiple temporal orders, and as individuals, communities and institutions alter their engagement with clock-time, the dominant socio-temporality continues to change. Roger Silverstone's work in *Television and Everyday Life* explains how structures such as the sociotemporal order continually evolves. Silverstone wrote, "structures are simultaneously accepted, exploited and challenged. Herein lies the possibility, indeed the necessity and inevitability, of change."[26] Silverstone's model acknowledges that sociotemporal structures influence the temporality of everyday life, while allowing individuals to manoeuvre within said structures. Individual temporalities rarely, if ever, work completely outside the predominant sociotemporalities. Rather, individual and domestic routines can coincide, merge or diverge from sociotemporal structures to varying degrees. Such negotiation is part of the mundane experience of everyday life.

In the first volume of his series *Critique of Everyday Life*, Henri Lefebvre argued that everyday life is easily dismissed because "[w]e perceive everyday life only in its familiar, trivial, inauthentic guises."[27] It is easy to overlook the significance of the minor and mundane aspects of daily life. However, the structural negotiations to which Silverstone referred occur in these small moments, rather than in large confrontations.

People engage with the many temporal orders as part of this mundane experience. The television schedule is one such temporal order; it is part of the everyday, the mundane.

Television and Everyday Life

When describing work and leisure patterns, Roger Silverstone tied everyday life to time. As Silverstone explained, "[e]veryday life is the product of all these temporalities, but it is in the first, in the experienced routines and rhythms of the day, that time is felt, lived & secured."[28] This definition suggests that "everyday life" refers to a regular or ordinary occurrence (it is not unusual), and the phrase itself indicates something cyclical (it happens daily). Everyday life is the location of a temporal negotiation, but it is also wrapped up in temporal structures.

Silverstone's argument is supported by Paddy Scannell's work in *Radio, Television and Modern Life*.[29] Both Roger Silverstone and Paddy Scannell connect everyday life, time, and television. Scannell contended that the primary structure of television and everyday life is dailiness:

> Is there an organizing principle that can account for the parts and the whole - that indeed produces a sense of the whole and the parts? We will try to show that *dailiness* is such a structure; that for radio and television it is *the* unifying structure of all its activities - the particular, distinctive, earliest mark of its being (original emphasis).[30]

In other words, the cyclical nature of dailiness, the day after day routine, structures discrete events into a whole. Similar to Silverstone, Scannell sees routines as organizing, structuring and regimenting the stream of events that makes up our lives. Scannell's contribution to this discussion is his explanation of this temporal aspect of radio and television and their never-ending production and broadcasting cycles.[31]

Silverstone furthered this discussion when he identified television as a key instrument in the timing of everyday life. According to Silverstone, "[t]elevision is very much part of the taken for granted seriality and spatiality of everyday life. Broadcast schedules reproduce (or define) the structure of the household day (itself significantly determined by the temporality of work in industrial society...particularly of the housewife[)]."[32] Scannell pointed to the temporality of the production and broadcasting of television, and Silverstone introduced the significance of time and television in the home.

Social theorists and television studies scholars argue that schedules provide a comforting structure for people. As I will discuss, these theories run the gamut from cognitive and emotional responses to community-building rituals. The truth value of these assessments is less relevant to this dissertation than is their consistency. Scholars from numerous disciplines identified the significance that schedules hold for people as worthy of study.

According to Eviatar Zerubavel, we have a cognitive response to temporal regularity in general. As Zerubavel explained,

> In allowing us to have certain expectations regarding the temporal structure of our environment, it certainly helps us considerably to develop some sense of orderliness. By providing us with a highly reliable repertoire of what is expected, likely, or unlikely to take place within certain temporal boundaries, it adds a strong touch of predictability to the world around us, thus enhancing our cognitive well-being.[33]

This suggests that people find comfort in simply knowing what is to come. Jeremy Rifkin connected this line of argument directly to schedules when he wrote, "[s]cheduling time became a way to ward off anxiety. By planning every detail of life in advance, it was possible to fill in the future in such a way as to leave no time for uncertainty to intervene."[34] It is unclear whether or not the structure of clock time filled a need or created it. Either way, Rifkin maintained that people appreciate the structure of schedules and temporal regularity.

Silverstone and Scannell both argued that the television schedule in particular has an emotional impact on audiences. Scannell claimed that "[t]he broadcast calendar creates a horizon of expectations, a mood of anticipation, a directedness towards that which is to come, thereby giving substance and structure to everyday life."[35] Many series include scenes from the following week's episodes to run alongside the end credits. These previews offer some information about the following week's episode, but leave enough gaps so that the audience members have to guess what will happen. This helps build a sense of excitement and expectancy throughout the week leading to the next episode. The entertainment "news" industry promotes these cyclical events. It helps create "buzz" for new television series and reveal upcoming guest stars on current shows. The cyclical nature of the television schedule ensures that there is a never-ending cycle of buzz, build-up, and expectation. Once one event concludes, the build up for the next event commences.

Silverstone proposed another way that television schedules emotionally impact viewers that recalls Rifkin's earlier comment: they fend off anxiety of open-ended time. Silverstone contended that "routines protect individuals and collectivities from unmanageable anxieties."[36] According to this argument, open-ended time is overwhelming. The desire for contained time becomes evident when people have breaks in their regular routines. For example, vacation time is often filled with activities or even discussions of upcoming activities. The television schedule is one of the soothing routines to which Silverstone referred. It helps reinforce the containment of the temporalities of the everyday.

Paddy Scannell illuminated the second part of Silverstone's above comment when he explained the significance of structured time. Building on what he refers to as the "Heideggerian anxiety," Scannell argued that "our day-to-day life is essentially cyclical. We live in the routine repetitive cycle of days, weeks, months and years. Do we escape the arrow of time, our being-towards-death in these ways?"[37] Once again there is an emphasis on a cyclical series of events. I contend that Scannell's question speaks directly to Silverstone's comment. The recurring routine of timing every day offers a structure in which people can ignore the linearity of life. This may be the security to which Silverstone referred.

Ben Highmore countered these assessments, problematizing the repetitive pattern of everyday life. His primary concern was how a repeated series of events becomes routinized and mundane. Highmore argued, "when routines saturate and subsume temporal experience, instead of marking time they unmark it by dedifferentiating it, leaving us temporally adrift (for instance, the difficulty we have in assessing the passing of time in thoroughly standardized work routines.)"[38] This contradicts Silverstone's claim that routines structure and serialize life.[39] The distinction may sit in the definition of routine as a standardized series of events that shape everyday life, or as the flow of indistinct events through which we wander. In this part of his argument, Highmore seemed to make an unsupported leap from one definition to the other.

The scholarship on ritual addresses Highmore's concerns. Rituals mark a distinction within the routine of everyday life. Torunn Selberg's work on television in Norway emphasizes the role that television plays in the ritualization of everyday life. According to Selberg, "[r]ituals interrupt the continuum, and create periods and symbolic order in our everyday life."[40] Silverstone expanded on this argument, but specifically in relation to television, when he wrote: "Even within the pattern of the domestic day, certain times, certain programmes, are marked and protected, as special. During those times or programmes the pattern of the day is both preserved and interrupted."[41] These descriptions of life's temporality emphasize significant moments within the routine of everyday life. This kind of ritual could emerge when a viewer marks the end of the workday by watching the 6:30 p.m. news. It is not the regular act of watching television that is meaningful; it is the significance that it holds for the viewer. In this example, it could be that watching the evening news indicates the shift from work to leisure. These meaningful moments prevent life from becoming too standardized and mundane.

James Carey's description of the ritual view of communication highlights another way that television ritual can become meaningful. Carey reconnected the ideas of community and communication. According to Carey, "[a] ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting the information but the representation of shared beliefs."[42] Drawing on Carey's point that communication builds connections within communities, one way that television can become ritual is through communal viewing. Shared television viewing rituals date back to the early days of television when people gathered at the only house in the neighbourhood with a TV set on Saturday nights to watch *Your Show of Shows*. Similar rituals are enacted when people gather for weekly viewings of popular television series. The participants in these groups may not set out with the intention of building community through participating in rituals, but the outcome is the same: people get together to view a favourite show and feel connected to other viewers.

Conversely, Daniel Dayan argued that this communal feeling does not require the presence of others in the room. According to Dayan, "[w]atching television is always a collective exercise, even when one is alone in front of the set. Watching television means being part of a 'reverse-angle shot' consisting of everyone watching the same image at the same time, or more exactly, of all those believed to be watching."[43] Watching the same show as a multitude of other, anonymous viewers provides a sense of connection to them. In an earlier work, Dayan and Elihu Katz explained that knowledge of this larger audience provides an "'oceanic' feeling of being immersed in it."[44]

This sense of community can be further engendered by talking about a favourite series with other viewers. A common example of TV talk is "water-cooler talk," the conversations about a favourite series at the office water-cooler the morning after the show is broadcast. This practice has expanded to virtual communities with the proliferation of TV recaps online that allow viewers to discuss the episode and the series in comment sections following each recap. Social networking platforms such as Twitter and Facebook provide viewers with the tools to participate in television talk immediately after an episode concludes, or even during its broadcast, as viewers discuss shows via "status updates." Online entertainment news sources, such as *Entertainment Weekly*'s

PopWatch and *The Onion*'s *A.V. Club*, "live blog" entertainment awards shows.[45] Readers can virtually interact with each other and participating entertainment columnists by adding their own comments to the "live blog" platform. These are a few of the internet platforms that provide viewers with ways to participate in activities (rituals) that create connections among otherwise anonymous audience members. Although the connections themselves might be fleeting, as they are in "water-cooler" talk or "live blogging," they can provide a sense of community among viewers in much the same way that community rituals functioned in the past.

In such discussions, viewers can engage with television as a "cultural forum," to borrow a phrase from Horace Newcomb and Paul Hirsch.[46] Newcomb and Hirsch based their argument on Carey's view that "[c]ommunication is a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed."[47]According to Newcomb and Hirsch, television texts provide a range of ideological positions that are specific to the period and culture in which they were created. They argued that talking about television allows people to engage in debates about these ideologies and work through their views on the subjects. From Newcomb and Hirsch's perspective, television is a significant entry point into the symbolic process of communication that Carey tied to the communicators' understandings of reality.

The proliferation of online television discussions has coincided with the increased availability of technologies such as DVRs, P2P downloading, and streaming video that allow viewers to watch programs hours, days, or months after the initial broadcast date (time-shifting). Viewers who decide to time-shift can still participate in online discussions, but they may miss the window of active comments in the days following an episode. Furthermore, time-shifters may find out about key plot points when looking at their friends' Facebook status updates and Twitter feeds. These online discussions, as well as the previously mentioned viewing rituals, all depend on the television schedule coordinating viewers.

Television's Temporality

To this point, the discussion about time and television has been primarily theoretical. Scholars such as Barbara Adam, Eviatar Zerubavel, Lewis Mumford, and E. P. Thompson have constructed frameworks for understanding the significance of time and temporal structures in people's everyday lives, and the interaction at play between such structures and those who live within and around them. Roger Silverstone and Paddy Scannell, among other cultural studies and television studies scholars, have addressed the role of television and television schedules within this dynamic. Television schedules can only act as a social coordinator if television content, and the schedules themselves, hold meaning for viewers.

While television schedules provide structures in which viewers can enjoy the benefits of community, ritual, predictability, contained temporality, and anticipation, they serve a more concrete purpose for broadcasters. Dallas Smythe proposed this counter-approach to the timing of television in the home. Smythe noted that schedules "optimize the 'flow' of particular types of audiences to one programme from its immediate predecessors and to its immediate successors with regard to the strategies of rival networks."[48*] Smythe offered a noteworthy reminder that television schedules operate to support the television industry's business model by directing large groups of viewers through an evening's television programming, commercials and all. With this argument, Smythe presented a significant counterpoint to the discussion in the previous sections of this chapter. Although the television schedule is one of many soothing structures in everyday life that contributes to meaningful rituals, it also serves the purpose of supporting the television industry's business model.

The American television industry is primarily a commercial endeavour. Eileen Meehan traced the television networks' relationships with advertisers back to the early days of radio. According to Meehan, regular radio programs were developed as a marketing tool to sell radios.[49] Radio stations earned income by selling time to advertisers, who would then produce programs promoting their products to which audiences would listen free of charge. This set the stage for the business model used by the television industry. As Meehan explained, "by 1927, then, through the struggles of private corporate interests, the basic structure of both radio and television broadcasting had largely emerged: three national networks, advertisers as the basic source of revenues, access to audience as the basic commodity sold by networks."[50] Although the specifics (e.g. the number of networks) have changed, this model continues to be the standard by which commercial television operates in the United States.

In *Desperately Seeking the Audience*, Ien Ang described the role of what she referred to as "the institutional point of view" of the audience, that is, from the television

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[*] Smythe's use of "flow" here is distinct from Raymond Williams' conception of "flow." (Williams, *On Television*). Williams focused on the viewing experience as one television segment or program drifts into the next. Smythe referred to the movement of audience members from one program to the next.

industry's perspective, to this business model.[51] According to Ang, control is central to this viewpoint. The primary problem that the industry faces is its inability to exert what Ang referred to as "material control" over viewers. Networks cannot control viewing by literally compelling people to watch a particular show, tune in to a given channel, or even turn on the television. Ang described how the industry attempts to overcome this problem by building a body of knowledge about the audience through market research and ratings data. In doing so, the industry seeks commonalities between audience members and their behaviours, rather than outliers. Its understanding of viewers is narrowed to quantifiable data and predictable behaviours. This creates a distinction between actual viewers with their myriad behaviours and viewing contexts and the institutionally knowable audience. Ang referred to this as discursively constructing the audience, because the industry sets the parameters around who counts as part of the audience and which behaviours are associated with them. The networks then implement this knowledge about the discursively constructed audience in the programs they develop, produce and broadcast, as well as in their scheduling strategies and practices.

Ien Ang and Todd Gitlin have explained the significance of television schedules within the television industry's business model.[52] In short, schedules are broadcasters' attempts to funnel viewers through their programming blocks, accumulating and maintaining the highest possible ratings to boost their commercial revenue from advertisers. Using Ang's terminology, schedules are one of the techniques that the industry uses to try to manage the audience. This model is based on the assumption that viewers watch television attentively and that they sit through the commercial breaks. It does not take into account the varied viewing habits of audience members such as multitasking with the television turned on, distracted viewing, channel surfing, or even leaving the room during commercial breaks. Despite this obvious fallacy, intent commercial viewing is the myth on which the television industry's business model is based.

Television schedule conventions reflect other ways in which our time is ordered or marked by temporal regularity. Zerubavel listed sequential structure, duration, and temporal location as three key elements that provide orderliness to our time.[53] He explained that "'rounded off' time periods," "relatively fixed durations," "uniform rates of recurrence," and "sequential rigidity" are typical markers of temporal convention.[54] Although Zerubavel illustrated these traits with examples of doctors' appointments and jail sentences, they all apply to television scheduling practices as well.

Tables 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 illustrate how the network television schedule contains the temporal traits Zerubavel described. Later chapters will address how many of these conventions developed and evolved in previous decades. These four tables present a snapshot of the 2010-2011 American network television schedule and the conventions therein. The details within the prime time schedule (Table 1.1) change frequently as network executives tweak their program line-up intermittently throughout the year. For example, the series *Lonestar* and *My Generation* were scheduled in FOX's Monday 9:00 p.m. and ABC's Thursday 8:00 p.m. timeslots, respectively. The networks cancelled both of these shows after two episodes and replaced them with other series. However, the temporal structure of this schedule remains the same, unless noted otherwise.

	8:00 P.M.	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	
Monday	Dancing with the Stars				Castle		ABC
	How I Met Your Mother	Rules of Engagement	Two and a Half Men	Mike & Molly	Hawaii Five-0		CBS
	90210		Gossip Girl		Local Programming		CW
	House		Lone Star		Local Programming		FOX
	Chuck		The Event		Chase		NBC
Tuesday	No Ordinary Family		Dancing with the Stars results		Detroit 1-8-7		ABC
	NCIS		NCIS: Los Angeles		The Good Wife		CBS
	One Tree Hill		Life Unexpected		Local Programming		CW
	Glee		Raising Hope	Running Wilde	Local Programming		FOX
	The Biggest Loser				Parenthood		NBC
Wednesday	The Middle	Better with You	Modern Family	Cougar Town	The Whole Truth		ABC
	Survivor		Criminal Minds		The Defenders		CBS
	America's Next Top Model		Hellcats		Local Programming		CW
	Lie to Me		Hell's Kitchen		Local Programming		FOX
	Undercovers		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Law & Order: Los Angeles		NBC
Thursday	My Generation		Grey's Anatomy		Private Practice		ABC
	The Big Bang Theory	$#*! My Dad Says	CSI		The Mentalist		CBS
	Vampire Diaries		Nikita		Local Programming		CW
	Bones		Fringe		Local Programming		FOX
	Community	30 Rock	The Office	Outsourced	The Apprentice		NBC
Friday	Secret Millionaire		Body of Proof		20/20		ABC
	Medium		CSI: New York		Blue Bloods		CBS
	Smallville		Supernatural		Local Programming		CW
	Human Target		Good Guys		Local Programming		FOX
	Who Do You Think You Are?		Dateline NBC		Outlaw		NBC
Saturday	College Football						ABC
	Various crime shows - repeats		Various crime shows - repeats		48 Hours Mystery		CBS
	Local Programming						CW
	Cops	Cops	America's Most Wanted		Local Programming		FOX
	Various programs – repeats						NBC
Sunday	Extreme Makeover: Home Edition		Desperate Housewives		Brothers & Sisters		ABC
	The Amazing Race		Undercover Boss		CSI: Miami		CBS
	Local Programming						CW
	The Simpsons	Cleveland Show	Family Guy	American Dad	Local Programming		FOX
	Football Night in America	Sunday Night Football					NBC

Table 1.1 Fall 2010 Prime Time Network Television Schedule[55]

2:00 A.M.	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	4:30	
Local Programming						ABC
Local Programming						CBS
Poker After Dark		Late Night with Jimmy Fallon (repeat)		Local Prog.	Early Today	NBC

5:00 A.M.	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	
America This Morning				Good Morning America		ABC
Local Programming				The Early Show		CBS
Local Programming				Today		NBC

8:00 A.M.	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	
Good Morning America		Local Programming				ABC
The Early Show		Local Programming				CBS
Today						NBC

11:00 A.M.	11:30	12:00	12:30	1:00	1:30	
The View		Local Programming		All My Children		ABC
The Price is Right		Local Prog.	The Young and The Restless		The Bold & The Beautiful	CBS
Local Programming				Days of Our Lives		NBC

2:00 P.M.	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	4:30	
One Life to Live		General Hospital		Local Programming		ABC
The Talk		Let's Make a Deal		Local Programming		CBS
Local Programming						NBC

5:00 P.M.	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	
Local Programming			ABC World News	Local Programming		ABC
Local Programming			CBS Evening News	Local Programming		CBS
Local Programming			NBC Nightly News	Local Programming		NBC

SEE TABLE 1.1 FOR THE 8:00 – 11:00 P.M. NETWORK TELEVISION SCHEDULE.

11:00 P.M.	11:30	12:00	12:30	1:00	1:30	
Local Prog.	Nightline	Jimmy Kimmel Live		Local Programming		ABC
Local Prog.	Late Show with David Letterman (11:35 P.M.)		Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson		Local Prog.	CBS
Local Prog.	Tonight Show with Jay Leno (11:35 P.M.)		Late Night with Jimmy Fallon		Last Call with Carson Daly	NBC

Table 1.2 Winter 2011 Non-Prime Time Monday-Friday Network Television Schedule[56†]

† CW and FOX do not broadcast network programming outside of prime time hours during weekdays.

2:00 A.M.	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	4:30	
Local Programming						ABC
Local Programming						CBS
Local Programming						CW
Poker After Dark		Late Night with Jimmy Fallon (repeat)		Local Programming		NBC

5:00 A.M.	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	
Local Programming				Good Morning America Weekend Edition		ABC
Local Programming				Doodlebops	Doodlebops	CBS
Local Programming				Cubix	Cubix	CW
Local Programming				Today		NBC

8:00 A.M.	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	
Local Programming		Emperor's New School	The Replacements	That's So Raven	That's So Raven	ABC
Sabrina's Secret Life	Sabrina: The Animated Series	Early Show				CBS
Sonic X	Sonic X	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Sonic X	Dragon Ball Z Kai	Dragon Ball Z Kai	CW
Today		Local Programming		Turbo Dogs	Sheldon	NBC

11:00 A.M.	11:30	12:00	12:30	1:00	1:30	
Hannah Montana	Hannah Montana	Hannah Montana	Suite Life of Zack & Cody	Local Programming		ABC
Busytown Mysteries	Busytown Mysteries	Local Programming		Off Road Racing: Lucas Oil Series		CBS
Yu-Gi-Oh! 5D's	Yu-Gi-Oh! 5D's	Local Programming				CW
Magic School Bus	Babar	Willa's Wild Life	Pearlie	High School Football All Star Game		NBC

2:00 P.M.	2:30	3:00	3:30	4:00	4:30	
Local Programming				30 for 30		ABC
Women's Basketball						CBS
Local Programming						CW
High School Football All Star Game				Football Night in America	NFL Playoff	NBC

5:00 P.M.	5:30	6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	
Winner's Bracket		Local Prog.	ABC World News Saturday	Local Programming		ABC
Women's Basketball		Local Prog.	CBS Evening News	Local Programming		CBS
Local Programming						CW
NFL Playoff						NBC

SEE TABLE 1.1 FOR THE 8:00 – 11:00 P.M. NETWORK TELEVISION SCHEDULE.

11:00 P.M.	11:30	12:00	12:30	1:00	1:30	
Local Programming						ABC
Local Programming						CBS
Local Programming						CW
Local Prog.	Saturday Night Live			Poker After Dark		NBC

Table 1.3 Winter 2011 Non-Prime Time Saturday Network Television Schedule[57‡]

‡ FOX broadcasts a combination of local programming and paid programming on Saturdays.

<table>
<tr><th>2:00 A.M.</th><th>2:30</th><th>3:00</th><th>3:30</th><th>4:00</th><th>4:30</th><th></th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Local Programming</td><td>ABC</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Local Programming</td><td>CBS</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Local Programming</td><td>FOX</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Local Programming</td><td>Fighting Championships</td><td colspan="3">Local Programming</td><td>NBC</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th>5:00 A.M.</th><th>5:30</th><th>6:00</th><th>6:30</th><th>7:00</th><th>7:30</th><th></th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Local Programming</td><td colspan="2">Good Morning America Weekend Edition</td><td>ABC</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Local Programming</td><td>CBS</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Local Programming</td><td>FOX</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Local Programming</td><td>NBC</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th>8:00 A.M.</th><th>8:30</th><th>9:00</th><th>9:30</th><th>10:00</th><th>10:30</th><th></th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Local Programming</td><td>This Week with Christiane Amanpour</td><td>ABC</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Local Programming</td><td colspan="3">Sunday Morning</td><td>Face the Nation</td><td>CBS</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Local Programming</td><td colspan="2">FOX News Sunday with Chris Wallace</td><td colspan="2">Local Programming</td><td>FOX</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Today</td><td colspan="2">Meet the Press</td><td colspan="2">Local Programming</td><td>NBC</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th>11:00 A.M.</th><th>11:30</th><th>12:00</th><th>12:30</th><th>1:00</th><th>1:30</th><th></th></tr>
<tr><td>This Week with Christiane Amanpour</td><td colspan="5">Local Programming</td><td>ABC</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Local Programming</td><td>College Basketball</td><td>CBS</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Local Programming</td><td colspan="2">FOX NFL Sunday</td><td colspan="2">NFL Football</td><td>FOX</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Local Programming</td><td>NBC</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th>2:00 P.M.</th><th>2:30</th><th>3:00</th><th>3:30</th><th>4:00</th><th>4:30</th><th></th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Local Programming</td><td colspan="2">Dreamer: Inspired by a True Story</td><td>ABC</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">College Basketball</td><td>NFL Today</td><td>NFL Playoffs</td><td>CBS</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">NFL Football</td><td>FOX</td></tr>
<tr><td>Local Prog.</td><td colspan="3">Bull Riding</td><td colspan="2">Skating and Gymnastics Spectacular</td><td>NBC</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><th>5:00 P.M.</th><th>5:30</th><th>6:00</th><th>6:30</th><th>7:00</th><th>7:30</th><th></th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Dreamer: Inspired by a True Story</td><td>Local Prog.</td><td>ABC World News Sunday</td><td colspan="2">America’s Funniest Home Videos</td><td>ABC</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">NFL Playoffs</td><td colspan="2">60 Minutes</td><td>CBS</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">NFL Football</td><td>The OT</td><td>FOX</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Skating and Gymnastics Spectacular</td><td>Local Prog.</td><td>NBC Nightly News</td><td colspan="2">Dateline NBC</td><td>NBC</td></tr>
</table>

SEE TABLE 1.1 FOR THE 8:00 – 11:00 P.M. NETWORK TELEVISION SCHEDULE.

<table>
<tr><th>11:00 P.M.</th><th>11:30</th><th>12:00</th><th>12:30</th><th>1:00</th><th>1:30</th><th></th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Local Programming</td><td>ABC</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Local Programming</td><td>CBS</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="6">Local Programming</td><td>FOX</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Local Programming</td><td colspan="2">Dateline NBC (repeat)</td><td colspan="2">Meet the Press (repeat)</td><td>NBC</td></tr>
</table>

Table 1.4 Winter 2011 Non-Prime Time Sunday Network Television Schedule[58§]

§ CW broadcasts only local programming on Sundays.

Individual programs on the American network television schedule are examples of rounded off time periods, one of Zerubavel's noted conventions. The networks typically begin and end programming on the hour and half hour marks. This coordination simplifies schedules for viewers who know that the show they want to watch will start at 8:00 p.m. or 8:30 p.m. or 9:00 p.m. They do not have to keep track of one show that begins at 8:17 p.m. or another with a 10:22 p.m. start time.

According to Bart Beaty and Rebecca Sullivan, ABC unsettled this convention in 2004 when the network "routinely extended the ending of popular shows like *Lost* and *Desperate Housewives* slightly past the hour."[59] Doing so thwarted DVR owners, whose machines stopped recording on the hour, missing the final minutes of each episode. ABC continues this practice throughout its prime time programming, but the conventions have remained consistent for its competitors. *Late Show with David Letterman* and *Tonight Show with Jay Leno* are the two other exceptions to this rule (see Table 1.2). Both of these late night talk shows start at 11:35 p.m. on weeknights. However, CBS and NBC list this shifted start time on their websites, whereas ABC continues to list its series as starting on the hour even when they do not.

The way that American network television episodes broadcast for fixed durations highlights the conventional nature of the program length. Typically, dramas are scheduled for sixty minutes and comedies are scheduled for thirty minutes including commercials. Sixty minute episodes of sitcoms such as *The Office* or *How I Met Your Mother* are special events. Two recent network exceptions are *Ugly Betty* and *Desperate Housewives*. Both have been nominated for Emmy Awards as comedies, but they typically broadcast in sixty minute episodes. However, these series are neither strictly drama nor comedy, and they are definitely not sitcoms. They both blend several genres including soap opera, drama, and comedy. Their dramatic elements and the kinds of story they tell are congruous with their sixty minute episode length.

American television programs are broadcast on a regular rate of recurrence. According to Susan Tyler Eastman and Douglas A. Ferguson, this convention is based on the notion that "scheduling programs for strict predictability (along with promotional efforts to make people aware of both the service as a whole and of individual programs) establishes tuning habits that eventually become automatic."[60] Recurrence rate varies from show to show, typically based on genre or timeslot. News shows and daytime programming are scheduled on a daily basis from Monday to Friday (see Table 1.2). In industry parlance, the practice of scheduling a show every day in the same timeslot is called "stripping."[61] News magazine shows and prime time programming are usually weekly events (see Table 1.1). However, once a prime time series has accumulated enough episodes, it can be sold as a syndicated series and "stripped" during non-prime time hours.

The television schedule contains forms of sequential rigidity that can be seen in the daily sequence of programming across the American television networks. The television industry term for this is "dayparting." Philipe Perebinossoff, Brian Gross, and Lynne Gross explained that it is based on the idea that "people's needs, activities, and moods change throughout the day," and broadcasters provide compatible programming.[62] According to Eastman and Ferguson, programmers build schedules around

> what most people do – getting up in the morning and preparing for the day; driving to work; doing the morning

> household chores; breaking for lunch; enjoying an afternoon lull; engaging with children after they return from the school; accelerating the tempo of home activities as the day draws to a close; relaxing during early prime time; and indulging in the more exclusively adult interests of later prime time, the late fringe hours, and the small hours of the morning.[63]

"Dayparting" is structured around sociotemporal rhythms of work and leisure. Even though it does not reflect the daily schedule of each member of the potential television audience, the general sociotemporal structures coordinate a large enough segment of the population that the pool of possible viewers appeals to broadcasters and advertisers.

The weekly television network schedule, as seen in Table 1.2, illustrates the "daypart" pattern consistent across the three American television networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) that currently broadcast a mix of network and local programming throughout the day. CW and FOX do not broadcast network programming during the week outside of prime time hours. ABC, CBS, and NBC follow a basic pattern, with a few variations. ABC and NBC both have some news programming in the early morning hours. All three networks begin their morning talk shows at 7:00 a.m. to coincide with people eating breakfast and getting ready for work. From 9:00 a.m. until noon, the networks alternate between talk shows, game shows, and local programming. Soap operas dominate the early afternoon network broadcasts. These give way to local programming until all three networks broadcast their national evening newscasts at 6:30 p.m. Local stations are responsible for programming between 7:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., when the networks start their prime time programming. Once prime time concludes at 11:00 p.m., the local stations broadcast their newscasts. Then the late night talk shows commence on CBS and NBC. ABC broadcasts a thirty minute news program before launching their late night talk show. NBC's late night programming, including a second broadcast of *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*, runs longer than that of the other two networks.

This weekday schedule coincides with Eastman and Ferguson's description of the presumed audience's daily routines. The kinds of programs scheduled in each "daypart" are consistent with feminist research on television and domestic spaces. According to David Morley's *Nationwide* audience studies and Ann Gray's work on VCRs, men and women have different associations between work, leisure, and the home.[64] Both Morley and Gray found that men considered the home to be primarily a site of leisure, while women considered it to be a place of both work and leisure regardless of whether or not they worked outside of the home. Morley found this gendered distinction reflected in his subjects' reported viewing habits: men watched television attentively, and women watched distractedly, mixing television viewing with socializing and domestic chores. Tania Modleski argued that the tempo of daytime programming mirrored this distracted viewing and the demands of domestic work.[65] She highlighted the similarities between the time pressures in daytime quiz shows to answer question before the clock runs out and domestic workers' time crunch to finish daily chores. Furthermore, Modleski contended that plot and dialogue repetition in soap operas allow viewers to drift in and out of viewing as they work on other domestic activities without missing key plot points. Finally, she pointed out that prime time offers more subtle changes in tempo and mood than daytime television. Prime time programs move from comedies to dramas, but this shift is not as extreme as that from quiz shows to soap operas. Although more women have joined the American workforce and the division of domestic labour has changed, even if to a limited degree, since Gray, Modleski, and Morley conducted these studies over twenty years ago, their findings are still relevant. The distinctions between daytime and prime time programming that Modleski identified were established within a context of traditionally gendered division of labour, such as those studied by Morley and Gray. Furthermore, they are evident in the programming patterns throughout the day on the current television schedule.

Television's daily programming cycle is enveloped in a weekly cycle. As is evident in Table 1.1, prime time programming rotates nightly on a weekly cycle. A notable convention of the weekly prime time schedule is the dearth of original network programming on Saturday nights. CBS and NBC only broadcast repeats, ABC broadcasts College Football games, and CW does not provide affiliates with any weekend prime time programming. Only FOX produces original programs with *Cops* and *America's Most Wanted*. From Sunday through Friday the networks schedule their highest profile series from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., but they have largely abandoned producing original programming for the Saturday night prime time schedule.

The networks' Fall 2010 prime time schedule illustrates other temporal conventions. Hour-long episodes fill most prime time timeslots. The networks that do include thirty minute series shift to sixty minute shows in the 10:00 p.m. timeslot. A notable exception that proves this rule is NBC's Winter 2011 Thursday night schedule. NBC made headlines when the network announced that it would broadcast six thirty-minute sitcoms back-to-back on Thursdays. This was such an unusual move that *Entertainment Weekly* cited a 20 year old precedent to illustrate that it has happened before.[66] That the reporter had to reach that far back for an example emphasizes the rigidity of this convention.

Table 1.2 contains the networks' schedule from Monday through Friday, but all five networks have weekend schedules that represent a change from the discursively constructed audience's weekday routines. Saturday mornings on ABC, CBS, CW, and NBC are dominated by children's programming. ABC and NBC set aside some time to broadcast weekend versions of their morning talk shows. After lunch, ABC, CBS, and NBC shift from children's programming to sports and the CW ceases network programming for the weekend. FOX broadcasts paid programming intermittently throughout the day. NBC's *Saturday Night Live* is the only original network series scheduled after prime time.

The conventions of the Sunday network television schedule are evident in Table 1.4. Once again, ABC and NBC broadcast weekend versions of their morning talk shows. Then ABC, CBS, FOX and NBC fill their Sunday morning broadcasts with news and current affairs series. Sunday afternoons are dominated by sports. The timing of these series may shift throughout the year as sport seasons change. CW stations only broadcast local programming throughout Sunday. A notable distinction in Sunday prime time is that network programming starts at 7:00 p.m. instead of 8:00 p.m.

This standardized schedule runs through an annual cycle that I have described in the introduction chapter. Briefly, the networks launch new seasons of their highest profile shows in the fall. This is typically accompanied by the largest promotional campaigns. The fall launch begins unofficially in late August, and gains momentum in the weeks after the *Primetime Emmy Awards* in September.

The daily and weekly program patterns that I have described are the most prominent conventions of network television in the United States in the 2010-2011 television season. As I have pointed out throughout this discussion, these temporal conventions are not absolute. There are exceptions and adjustments, such as ABC's shifted start and end times and NBC's Winter 2011 Thursday night line-up of sitcoms. It should also be noted that these conventions do not all translate internationally. For example, Canadian network television schedules resemble the American schedules, but the British Broadcast Corporation (BBC) schedule diverges in notable ways. The BBC does not have the same standard start times on the hour and half hour. American networks broadcast repeats on Christmas, but the BBC broadcast a new *Doctor Who* episode on each December 25 of the last five years. The conventions discussed in this section are not typical of all television schedules, but of those for the American television networks. As this dissertation is focused the American network television schedule, these are the conventions and temporal logics to which I refer throughout.

American television schedules are set by the networks' programmers. Programmers consider a number of factors when making scheduling decisions, including the shows under consideration, what the competition is doing, demographics of the available audience, and the time period.[67] They have developed numerous scheduling strategies to guide viewers through their programming. According to Richard A. Blum and Richard D. Lindheim, many scheduling strategies are based on the assumption that "the average viewer prefers to make as few choices (defined as channel changes) as possible."[68] This presumption stands even in the face of increased cable and satellite options.[69]

One strategy that takes advantage of viewer inertia is called "blocking" or "stacking."[70] When a network places several series in a row that belong to a single genre, it is “stacking” those shows.[71] NBC deploys this strategy on its Winter 2011 Thursday night schedule where it stacks six sitcoms from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The network hopes that viewers will tune in for the first sitcom, and then continue watching the rest of them.

“Lead-ins,” “tentpoling,” and “hammocking” are scheduling strategies that programmers often use in concert with “stacking.” Blum and Lindheim described a “lead-in” as the program “preceding a specific show.”[72] A strong start or “lead-in” to an evening of “stacked” shows may draw in an audience who end up watching throughout the evening. “Hammocking” refers to the practice of scheduling a weak series between two highly rated shows.[73] Programmers hope that viewers will want to watch both of the stronger series and watch the episode in the middle to pass the time. When a programmer places a highly rated show between struggling shows, she or he is implementing the “tentpoling” strategy. The programmer hopes that the strong show in the centre will raise the ratings of the show on either side of it.[74] According to Perebinossoff et al.’s recent industry text, “tentpoling” was more effective in a less competitive television landscape.[75] NBC has tried both “lead-in” and “hammocking” strategies for its Thursday night comedy series in the past. In the 1990s, NBC began its Thursday night line-up with strong “lead-in” series *Friends*. It struggled for many seasons to find a strong companion series for the 8:30 p.m. timeslot. Instead, it “hammocked” a weaker series between two stronger series, *Friends* at 8:00 p.m. and *Frasier* at 9:00 p.m.

“Counterprogramming” and “blunting” are scheduling strategies based on the competitions’ schedules. As Eastman and Ferguson explained, “counterprogramming” refers to "scheduling programs with differing appeals against each other."[76] ABC "counterprogrammed" Thursday nights when it moved *Grey's Anatomy*, a drama series that relies on melodramatic, serialized storytelling, to the 9:00 p.m. slot in competition with crime procedural *CSI* and Reality series *Survivor*. "Blunting" is the opposite of "counterprogramming." In this scenario, a broadcaster schedules a strong contender against a weak show that appeals to a similar audience.[77] Like "counterprogramming," "blunting" is a direct attack on a competitor, but it directly attacks an established audience rather than appealing to an underserved audience.

The television schedule conventions described above and these scheduling strategies form the temporal structure of television. According to Ien Ang, the networks utilize these conventions and strategies to try to get the actual audience to behave in ways that coincide with predictions based on the discursively constructed audience.[78] However, as Ang emphasized, institutional control over actual audiences is always symbolic, and never literal. In this formulation, the schedule becomes an instrument of the symbolic control over the audience.

Questions of Choice and Control

In the quote at the top of this chapter, David Morley integrated questions of power in his discussion of timing and everyday life: "Questions of time inevitably also involve questions of power, questions of who has the power to define time, questions of the imposition of a standard or national time and of the relationship between time and modes of communication."[79] With this observation, Morley touched on a significant question underlying this discussion of television schedules in the temporal regularity of everyday life: where does the power to determine our daily routines lie?

Scannell and Silverstone emphasized how television schedules influence viewers' daily lives. Scannell reflected on how broadcasting schedules shape our viewing habits and our other daily patterns and routines. According to Scannell, "[o]ur sense of days is always already in part determined by the ways in which media contribute to the shaping of our sense of days."[80] His acknowledgement that our daily lives are only "in part" determined by the media makes this comment less affirmative than it first seems. However, elsewhere in his book *Radio, Television & Modern Life*, Scannell was quite clear on his position that broadcasting structures daily life. Summarizing his work, he claimed that he had shown how

> broadcasting gathered together a quite new kind of public life - a world of public persons, events and happenings - and gave this world an ordered, orderly, familiar, knowable appearance by virtue of an unobtrusively unfolding temporal sequence of events that gave substance and structure to everyday life.[81]

In this statement, Scannell placed the broadcasting schedule in a position of power over people's everyday lives.

Silverstone was less firm on the matter, but emphasized external, structural influences on household routines: "Broadcast schedules reproduce (or define) the structure of the household (itself significantly determined by the temporality of work in the industrial society…)."[82] The first half of his statement is ambivalent about the relationship between television schedules and individuals' routines; Silverstone asserted that one affects the other but does not confirm the direction of this determination. Yet, the second half of his comment indicates that the household schedule is not determined by the individual family members, but by societal institutions. Thus, even if the household schedule defines the broadcast schedule, the household's temporal structures are a reflection of the dominant sociotemporal orders of the day.

In *Television, Audiences and Cultural Studies*, Morley countered the above approaches, taking aim specifically at Scannell. Morley argued, "[i]t would be quite possible to derive from Scannell's analysis a perspective which assumed that 'broadcasting times' simply imposed themselves on their audiences."[83] Once he identified his point of intervention into Scannell's work, Morley proposed a more complex view of the dynamics between individual routines and institutional schedules:

> Matters are, of course, not quite so simple as that. It is also a question of how different pre-existing cultural formulations of temporality determine how audiences relate to broadcast schedules, whether at the macro-level of variations in national or regional cultural or at the micro-level of differences in family cultures…[84]

Morley made a valuable contribution to this debate as he examined multiple layers of routine, habit and customs with his inclusion of the micro- and macro-levels of cultures.

As he constructed this argument, Morley evenly considered institutional influence and cultural reception when he wrote,

> Thus, we need to be attentive on the one hand to the ways in which, at both micro- and macro-levels, the organization of broadcasting is influenced by pre-existing cultural orientations to time, within the society at large, or within a particular sub-culture or family and, on the other hand, to the effect of broadcast schedules themselves on the organization of time.[85]

This represents an evenly weighted approach to the subject. Morley attempted to integrate a discussion of reception without ignoring powerful institutional influences.

Several other scholars appear to agree with Morley. Their approaches to the negotiation of daily routines vary, but they contribute other points that further enrich the debate.

John Ellis' position on schedules and everyday life is similar to, but not as expansive as, Morley's. Ellis proposed that broadcast schedules reflect and affect routines. According to Ellis, "[t]elevision moulded itself to the patterns of everyday life and in doing so defined and standardized them."[86] This point is similar to Morley's statement that "[b]roadcasting and other technologies of communication must be seen both as entering into already constructed, historically specific divisions of space and time, and also as transforming those pre-existing divisions."[87] Ellis explained this duality further, "as the television schedule was based on an averaging of the variety of national domestic life into one pattern, it was forced towards the standardization of everyday life."[88] In this argument, Ellis rejected the idea that domestic schedules were constructed by broadcasters, but he prioritized the long term influence of television's temporality over viewers' lives. Ellis elaborated on the institutional influences and duality that Morley addressed, but did not fully explain.

When we talk about the television schedule reflecting people's daily routines, we are making several assumptions. Eileen Meehan has detailed how particular segments of the audience are more "desirable" to advertisers than others.[89] As Meehan explained, a 40-year-old man with a decent income who orders the premium cable package is a more desirable viewer than a 65-year-old woman on a pension with basic cable.[90] Programs and schedules are both directed at these desirable viewers: their viewing preferences and their work and leisure routines. In other words, the television schedule reflects the work and leisure routines of particular segments of the larger population. In "Planning the

Family: The Art of the Television Schedule," Richard Paterson pointed out that early television schedules were based around conventional notions of the family and "family viewing patterns in the 'domestic situation'."[91] This might explain why the daily shifts in programming fit well with a nine-to-five workday. Morning shows coincide with getting ready for work and these are over by 9:00 a.m. The evening news is at 6:30 p.m., marking the shift from the workday to "family time" in the evening. Prime time, from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m., marks the hours between dinner and bedtime. These schedules do not work as well for someone who works the evening or night shifts. They ignore the daily routines of those who are underemployed, work flexible hours, work from home, etc. Although my project will not address this at great length, any further discussion of viewers' work and leisure routines will refer to the routines of these "desirable" viewers. Any changes to schedules that might try to recapture viewers whose routines are changing are based on the concern of these "desirable" viewers changing routines.

Highmore put forth an argument that would be problematic on its own, but is productive within his larger project and in conjunction with the above arguments from Morley and Ellis. Highmore asserted that it is difficult to grasp routines and how they function because they represent a negotiation of structural determinates and individual preferences. As he explained,

> what routine feels like, how it is experienced, is by no means clear. Partly, I think, because routine is not only a form dictated from above. We establish our own daily routines to give our lives rhythm and predictability. We use routine to bring order and control to lives that may otherwise seem entirely determined by the contingencies of context…[92]

Highmore's critique references individual intention or autonomous action when he mentioned how "we use" routines for our own ends. According to Highmore's argument, individual use of routine is a way to stake out one's own temporal territory in a context determined by outside structures.

Discussions about the interplay between television schedules and the timing of everyday life are sometimes formulated as a struggle for control over television viewing. Television technologies from Remote Control Devices (RCDs) and VCRs to DVRs, P2P downloading and video streaming inspire claims about viewer empowerment. James R. Walker and Robert V. Bellamy Jr. described RCDs as instruments that provided television viewers with "the means to construct an individualized media mix that may, or increasingly may not, contain advertising."[93] Walker and Bellamy then equated media personalization and the ability to skip commercials with control. As I will discuss in Chapter Four, the VCR was created and marketed as a time-shifting technology that provided viewers with a way to regain control over their time. DVRs, P2P downloading, and streaming video give viewers the option of time-shifting. In addition, P2P downloading and streaming video allow viewers to watch television shows in a variety of locations away from their television sets, including mobile screens such as laptops and cell phones. This is commonly referred to as "place-shifting." Both Daniel Chamberlain and Graeme Turner pointed out that the notion of viewer empowerment through personalization underlies many discussions about place-shifting and time-shifting technologies.[94] Writing about recently emerging television technologies, Joshua Green discussed the increased control viewers have over the "space in which television is produced, distributed, and consumed."[95] Matt Carlson equated personalization of television viewing experience with control and explained that digital technologies "facilitate a shift from a one-way mass media model to a two-way interactive model."[96] These arguments are based on the assumption that an increased number of options (more channels and modes of distribution) and personalization via place-shifting and time-shifting are the equivalent of increased control. In the latter case, this presumed control is over the timing of viewing and how television fits into the temporality of everyday life.

There are a number of challenges to these claims that emergent television technologies allow audience members to control their television viewing. Turner questioned whether increased choice is the same as democratization.[97] Both Hallvard Moë and Daniel Chamberlain delved further into this line of inquiry. Moë argued that although viewers' options have increased, the television industry retains their position of influence over the individual viewer through controlling the means of production and distribution.[98] He concluded that "instead of labelling the television viewer 'free' and 'in charge,' it is more useful to take into consideration how the structures of broadcasted television contribute to the shaping of the developments."[99] According to Chamberlain, discussions about viewer control ignore the ties between emergent digital media and the already established, far-reaching media conglomerates.[100] Furthermore, he explained that, although viewers may personalize their viewing experience, they are doing so with products largely supplied by the same major media conglomerates. He pointed to YouTube's partnership with CBS and NBC. Another example would be the traditional broadcasters distributing media content on iTunes and Hulu. As Chamberlain explained, although viewers can time-shift and place-shift their television viewing, the gate-keepers remain largely the same.

The above critiques interrogate what other writers mean when they claim that emergent television technologies give viewers control over television. However, Moë's and Chamberlain's arguments acknowledge that viewers have leeway in defining the timing of television viewing. In other words, time-shifting technologies provide viewers with tools for greater influence over the temporal structure of television. Once a show is broadcast, viewers can determine the timing of their viewing. Moë and Chamberlain directed their challenges towards the influence of this temporal element on the overall power dynamic between viewers and the television industry.

Ellis countered the idea that emergent technologies and increased viewer choice will necessarily undermine the industry's role in determining the timing of television.[101] According to Ellis, television viewers in the digital age may experience "choice fatigue," which he defines as "the feeling that choices are simply too difficult; a nostalgia for pattern, habit and an era when choices seemed few. Choice fatigue is a combination of impatience, a great modern vice, and the sense of simply not wanting to be bothered."[102] Ellis then proposed that broadcast schedules can alleviate choice fatigue:

> There are moments when choice is an imposition rather than a freedom. Broadcast television answers to this feeling. From the perspective of choice fatigue, its schedules might appear to be liberating. They take away the crushing burden of having to make a selection by offering a pattern in which there is just one option (this programme at this time only) or a manageable range of choice between clearly defined known quantities (the pattern of the terrestrial broadcast schedule).[103]

Following this logic, time-shifting technologies provide individuals with the means to increase control over the timing of their television viewing, but the options may be overwhelming. Once again, routines and schedules are configured as comforting and desirable. If this is indeed the case, time-shifting technologies will have a limited effect on the power dynamic involved in determining the temporal structures of television.

Conclusion

The television schedule is a sociotemporal order that works in coordination with other dominant sociotemporal orders, such as the nine-to-five workday and culturally based seasonal rituals (ex. Christmas, summer vacation). From the television industry's perspective, the primary purpose of the television schedule is to guide viewers from one program to the next throughout the broadcast day. Its value for the television industry as a coordinating tool is only relevant if the routines and schedules in general, and television schedules in particular, hold significance for viewers. Television's temporal structure matters because viewers engage with it and let it play a role in shaping their everyday lives to varying degrees. The television schedule is contested temporal terrain. This understanding of the dynamic between viewers, the television industry, and the television schedule informs the present investigation into the construction of, and influences on, television's temporality.

Ellis, Scannell, and Silverstone, among others, have written about the significance of the television schedule in the structure of people's everyday lives. Morley, Meehan, and Ang have explained the television industry's reliance on the TV schedule within the industry's business model. This dissertation further contributes to our understanding of the television schedule, an important structure for the television industry and television viewers. More specifically, the chapters that follow provide insight into the logics of this temporal structuring and the ways that the television networks responded to external challenges to TV's established temporality.

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Chapter Two
Tinkering with Prime Time

In 1928, the Association of National Advertisers and the American Association of Advertising Agencies hired Archibald M. Crossley to collect data on people's radio listening habits.[1] This data would assist the advertisers in selecting radio programs to sponsor. Crossley's company, Co-operative Analysis of Broadcasting (CAB) conducted telephone interviews in which it asked respondents which radio programs they had listened to the previous day. Through the course of these interviews, Crossley found that radio listening was at its highest between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. and deemed those hours "prime time."[2]

Eileen Meehan detailed how Crossley's research methodology shaped his findings.[3] According to Meehan, the advertisers who hired Crossley were not interested in a survey of national radio listening habits, but in the habits of "bona fide consumers." She defined these consumers as "people who pay extra for name brands, who embrace consumerism as a way of life, and who have easy access to retail spaces filled with brand name goods."[4] Focusing on telephone households assured advertisers that the radio listening data would reflect the audience segment they most desired. As Meehan pointed out, telephones were considered a luxury in the 1920s. Only 40% of American households paid the monthly telephone service fees. Fewer homes had telephones than had radios. Crossley's designated prime time referred to the listening habits of this affluent segment of the population, not to overall radio households. In the 1930s, C. E. Hooper's Hooperatings and A. C. Nielsen replaced CAB as broadcast ratings sources. As Meehan detailed, they too sought the radio listening habits of consumers. In commercial radio, advertisers paid radio networks for access to their stations as well as for the programs. According to Eileen Meehan, this funding structure ensured that advertisers determined what got on the air, and where programs were placed in the schedule.[5] Thus, advertisers determined early radio schedules based on the listening habits of affluent consumers.

This is how Ien Ang's concept of the discursively constructed audience influenced the actual audience. To review, Ang distinguished the actual audience from the audience that is defined by ratings companies, broadcasters, and advertisers.[6] In the case of commercial radio from the 1920s on, ratings companies discursively defined the radio audience as affluent consumers by only including this segment of the population in their surveys. Ratings companies collected data on this segment of the radio audience and provided clients (advertisers) with the information about these listeners' quantifiable listening habits, i.e. when and for how long they turned on the radio or tuned in to a particular station. The advertisers then determined the radio program schedule based on the aggregate data on this discursively defined audience. If actual audience members wanted to listen to the radio, they had to do so according to the schedule determined by the collective listening habits of a selected portion of the audience. One could argue that most people worked a standard nine-to-five workday and that all radio listeners would heighten their listening in the evening. However, there is no data on early non-affluent radio listeners so it remains unclear whether or not this was true.

John Ellis contended that early television scheduling practices borrowed heavily from radio.[7] When the television industry launched in earnest after the Second World War, advertisers first expressed interest in buying the time that overlapped with radio's peak listening period. According to *Business Week*, advertisers began purchasing television ad time during the hours they identified as most desirable, those between 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.[8] Even though only 60,000 television sets were sold throughout the United States in 1947, many advertisers expected a remarkable growth in television sales the following year.[9] In early 1948, NBC announced that it would set aside the hours between 7:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. as network broadcast time.[10] *Business Week* predicted that advertisers would buy up all the available ad space on many television stations during the evening hours by the end of that year.[11] In 1949, researchers reported that New Yorkers and Philadelphians had similar television viewing habits. According to Gomery's account of their study, "TV viewing started after supper, peaked at 9:00 p.m. each evening, and ended with bedtime."[12]

In short, advertisers and NBC had identified evening hours as prime broadcasting time early on in the television industry's history. However, not enough television sets had been sold in the country yet to get an accurate picture of how viewers would incorporate the new medium into the timing of their everyday lives. Late adapters of a new media technology do not always replicate usage of early adopters.[13] Any research conducted with these first 60,000 television owners would not necessarily be helpful in predicting later usage. The findings that Gomery described were not released until the year after NBC announced its evening network hours. It was unclear whether or not television viewing would replace or complement radio listening habits, so the timing of prime hours might well not be transferable. A study by Nielsen Newscast, an A.C. Nielsen company, found that viewers tended to incorporate both media into their evening routines. Respondents listened to their radios more than they watched television until 10:00 p.m., then their television use surpassed radio from 10:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.[14]

This study was published in 1952, four years after NBC and advertisers had built their television business around the evening hours between 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. Advertisers and at least one of the television networks had identified these hours as the prime time for network programming and advertising before many people owned television sets. Their prior experience with radio and their understanding of conventional work and leisure routines both seem to be factors in their decision to prioritize evening broadcasts.

According to Ellis, "[o]riginally, schedules 'just grew' by trial and error, providing people with the programmes when they were perceived as wanting or needing them, without much thought to the fact that they might want different kinds of programmes to those on offer."[15] Although network and station programmers did not discuss their process of trial and error scheduling in the trade papers, examples of this trial and error, and the assumptions broadcasters made about the television audience and their viewing habits, are evident in those elements of early television schedules that diverge from radio scheduling practices and from current television schedule conventions.

According to Sterling and Kittross, many television programs of the late 1940s, other than sports events, ran for ten to twenty minutes, departing from radio's fifteen minute standard program length.[16] An examination of the *New York Times* television listings from January 1947 reveals that program lengths were even less consistent than that. For example, on Friday nights in January 1947, NBC's WNBT provided the following Friday evening schedule:

8:00 Campus Show
8:20 Let's Rhumba
8:30 I Love To Eat
8:45 World in Your Home – Film
9:00 Boxing, Madison Square Gardens[17]

Within one hour, WNBT broadcast four shows, one ten minutes in length, one twenty minutes, and two fifteen minutes. Sterling and Kittross explained that "[t]elevision programmers were uncertain as to how long audience attention would be held. With radio one could use imagination, but with television the audience had to pay total attention which, it was believed, programs of an hour or longer could not command."[18]

Another element of the schedule that the New York television stations played around with was the start time of the news. In September 1947, DuMont's New York station WABD broadcast its Wednesday news at 6:45 p.m. and WNBT broadcast its Thursday evening news at 7:50 p.m.[19] That year television stations did not yet have a full broadcast schedule. These newscasts marked the start of the stations' evening television programming. Now that programs and "dayparts" are on the hour and half hour, starting an evening's broadcast ten or fifteen minutes before the hour seems counter-intuitive.

Harry Castleman and Walter J. Podrazik's collection of schedule grids in *The TV Schedule Book: Four Decades of Network Programming from Sign-on to Sign-off* illustrates the evolution of television programming practices as the industry developed scheduling conventions. [20] According to these grids, the networks broadcast primarily in the evenings in the fall of 1948. Depending on the network, these broadcasts typically began at 6:30 p.m. or 7:00 p.m. and ran until anywhere from 9:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The total length of network broadcast time varied from day to day and network to network. Over the next two years, the networks expanded their broadcast hours, first during the evening and later in the daytime. In 1950, CBS broadcast from 1:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. five days a week, while the other networks interspersed network and local programming throughout the afternoon. ABC, CBS, and NBC broadcast a programming block throughout the evening hours, as DuMont continued to include both network and local programming on its evening schedule. The start and end times of the networks' evening programming varied by network and night. ABC, CBS, and NBC continued to increase their broadcasts in the early 1950s. Over this same period, DuMont repeatedly reduced its offerings until the network's eventual demise in 1955. The temporal structure of prime time television did not become standardized across networks and nights of the week until 1965. At that time, all three networks broadcast shows from 7:30 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and then from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on Sunday.

By staggering hours inconsistently across the week, the networks sometimes pitted their affiliates' local programming against a competitor's network show. Once the networks established consistent evening scheduling blocks in 1965, the hours between 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. became synonymous with prime time television. It is remarkable that NBC had identified these very hours as key broadcast times prior to two decades of network experimentation. The 1965 prime time schedule conventions remained in place until the FCC altered the timing of prime time television with the Prime Time Access Rule several years later.

PTAR: The FCC takes on Prime Time

In 1970, the FCC enacted the Financial Interest and Syndication Rule (FinSyn) and the Prime Time Access Rule (PTAR). This occurred in an era of progressive regulation in the United States when the federal government created significant environmental and civil rights legislation. FinSyn and PTAR were part of the spate of regulations aimed at the Big Three during the Nixon administration. Mara Einstein argued that part of what motivated these regulations was the President's disdain for the networks for what he considered their biased reporting.[21] Yet, FinSyn and PTAR were also the products of ongoing federal concerns about the television networks' ever-increasing influence of over the airwaves.

The networks' rise to power can be traced to the early days of commercial television. Experimental television broadcasts began in 1927.[22] In 1934, the Federal Radio Commission (FRC) was replaced by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which was mandated to regulate all electronic communications, including television.[23] By the early 1940s, the CBS and NBC radio networks, along with electronics manufacturer DuMont, owned three of only six commercial television stations in the U.S.[24] The FCC issued no new television licences during America's involvement in the Second World War, but resumed licensing new television stations shortly after the war ended.[25] AT&T established coaxial cable connections and microwave relays linking several television stations in the immediate postwar period.[26] This provided the technology needed for television stations to establish networks. In 1947, NBC televised the first network television event: the World Series.[27]

By 1948, the FCC was receiving far more television license applications than it had available frequencies.[28] The federal regulator announced a license freeze so it could create what Moore et al. referred to as a "master blueprint" for television stations and avoid signal interference, particularly in major markets.[29] Established stations gained an advantage over those not yet licensed: they had been able to develop programs and to build an audience without facing new competition.[30] According to William Boddy, the freeze entrenched CBS and NBC as the dominant networks, while DuMont and the recently formed ABC struggled.[31*] AT&T's network connection fees favoured the networks with many affiliated television stations as well as those that also rented lines for their radio networks.[32] ABC was short of the former and DuMont lacked the latter. AT&T charged ABC and DuMont similar fees to CBS and NBC, although the two struggling networks reached a smaller audience. ABC, CBS, and NBC networks used radio revenues to fund television programming.[33] DuMont was at a disadvantage without a radio revenue stream, so they produced cheaper programming than their competition.[34] Yet, when the struggling network found success with a new series or a burgeoning television star, its competition would lure the talent away from DuMont by offering more money.[35]

The license freeze was supposed to last six to nine months, but the FCC did not revoke it until 1952.[36] The FCC's return to issuing new television licenses was a boon for ABC. CBS and NBC were the top two networks, and the first two choices for markets with only one or two television stations.[37] An increasing number of regions opened three television stations, which meant that ABC had more opportunities to sign up affiliates.[38] After the FCC lifted the license freeze, DuMont continued to struggle until it went out of business three years later.[39] Stations previously affiliated with DuMont began to broadcast ABC programming.[40] Between ABC's expanded reach and

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[*] In 1945, the Supreme Court upheld an FCC ruling that required RCA to divest itself of one of their two NBC radio networks (NBC Red and NBC Blue). RCA sold NBC Blue to Life Saver manufacturer Edward J. Noble, who renamed the network American Broadcast Company (ABC) (Sterling and Kittross, *Stay Tuned*).

an infusion of funds from the network's merger with United Paramount Theatre, the network stabilized and survived.[41] The structure of the industry had been established by the late 1950s: over 90% of American television stations were either affiliated with or owned and operated by one of the three national networks.[42†]

The networks' influence over television programming increased when television's funding structure changed from the sponsorship model used for radio, in which an advertiser funded and produced an entire program, to a magazine model in which networks provided programs and sold commercial spots to advertisers. Mara Einstein described two possible reasons often used to explain this shift.[43] First, production became more expensive, and advertisers could no longer support the costs of an entire show. Second, advertisers realized that they could reach more potential customers if they bought advertising spots across the schedule, rather than concentrating their money on one timeslot. Eric Barnouw recounts another story to explain the shift. According to Barnouw, in 1953, newly installed NBC president Sylvester L ("Pat") Weaver pushed for commercial spots instead of the sponsorship model because he wanted the network to have more control over programming than the advertisers did.[44] Muriel G. Cantor and Joel M. Cantor echoed Barnouw's story about Pat Weaver, and added that CBS President William Paley also wanted a different funding structure for television than the network had for radio.[45]

The magazine model funding structure shifted the financial risk from the advertisers to the networks. In the magazine model, a network paid a license fee for the right to broadcast a series and then it was responsible for finding advertisers to pay it for the commercial slots.[46] The networks had no guarantee that they would sell all of the

[†] These stations are referred to as affiliates and O&Os, for owned and operated.

commercial slots. In exchange for taking this risk, the Big Three required that independent producers allow them to have a financial interest in the programs they licensed. This put independent producers in a difficult situation. As Einstein explained, the new funding structure ensured a limited number of venues through which producers could access a national audience.[47] If independent producers wanted to get their shows on television across the U.S., they would have to sign over some of their ownership rights to one of the networks. As Cantor and Cantor explained, the networks profited from the series through selling commercial slots during the original broadcast and then again through syndication sales.[48] Syndicated programs are those which are sold to individual television stations on a market to market basis.[49‡] By the late 1960s, the networks demanded syndication rights for any series they broadcast.[50]

In obtaining syndication rights, the networks not only derived income from later broadcasts of their programs, they also obtained control over when and where their programs would be rebroadcast. They could even keep series off the syndication market altogether to prevent their competitors from profiting from their successful shows. CBS employed this practice, called "warehousing," with their long running series *Hawaii 5-0*. The network insisted that series creator Leonard Freeman sign the show's syndication rights over to CBS if he wanted it to broadcast *Hawaii 5-0*.[51] CBS broadcast thirteen seasons of the series, but kept it from the syndication market and competing stations. Through "warehousing," the Big Three not only determined what series were broadcast on the majority of stations across the country, but what happened to the series afterwards.

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‡ There are two kinds of syndicated programs: first run, which are produced for the syndication market, and off network (or off net), which are first broadcast on a network and then available for syndication. (Perebinossoff, Gross, and Gross, *Programming for TV, Radio & The Internet*).

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, ABC, CBS, and NBC became the primary sources of television content at both the network and local levels. Local television stations relied heavily on syndicated programs during non-network timeslots.[52] By the mid-1960s, the television industry had produced and recorded enough programs to create a substantial library for off network syndication.[53] Through off network syndication sales, the networks became the major source of programming for local and independent stations in non-network timeslots.[54] According to one FCC report, “the percentage of [entertainment] shows controlled or produced by the networks rose from about 64 per cent in 1957 to more than 96 per cent in 1968.”[55]

Although there was an increase in the number of independent television stations from the 1950s onwards, nearly 500 of the 621 television stations across America were either network affiliates or O&Os by 1970.[56] In other words, the three networks dominated 80% of television stations. According to the chief of the Department of Justice’s antitrust division, “the networks’ control over television programming, which appears to have arisen primarily because of their effective control over access to the nationwide television audience, raises serious questions under the antitrust laws...”[57] With the networks controlling 80% of the television stations and 96% of entertainment programming, there was little room for local and independent television production. John H. Conlin, a representative of the FCC explained, “the networks’ “tremendous domination” of programming made the development of other sources desirable. There were not many available slots for non-network prime time programming on stations across the United States.”[58]

The rising power of the Big Three concerned both the FCC and the Department of Justice as early as the 1950s. The FCC investigated network influence over network/affiliate relationships in 1955.[59] The Department of Justice investigated the Big Three's monopoly practices in the 1960s.[60] It determined that the networks' increasing role as television producers, in concert with their role as primary distributers of television products, gave them an unfair advantage over independent producers. The Department of Justice's findings overlapped with those of the FCC investigation that culminated in the two 1970 regulations: FinSyn and PTAR. With these measures, the FCC attempted to break up the growing network monopolies and encourage non-network television production.

There were two main elements to FinSyn. First, the networks could not own the rights to the series they broadcast. In other words, they could not financially benefit from related merchandising or spin off sales.[61] This was the "financial interest" portion of the rule. Second, they could no longer syndicate any programs in the United States.[62] They could only license a program from an external producer for a set number of broadcasts.[63] According to Einstein, Finsyn "caused an increase in the number of program suppliers."[64]

A related regulation that is much more pertinent to the temporal structure of television was the PTAR. In early May 1970, the FCC passed the Prime Time Access Rule.[65] This regulation stipulated that, as of September 1971, the television networks could only provide three hours of programming a night between 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. in the fifty largest markets.[66] With PTAR, the federal regulator worked to maintain some prime time presence for local and independent producers.

Independent production house Westinghouse Broadcasting Company encouraged the FCC to implement PTAR. Westinghouse president Donald H. McGannon argued that the limited timeslots for independently produced programs stunted quality: "Growing network control over key viewing hours...has led to growing reliance on "proven" formats, on playing the programming game as safe as possible."[67] Westinghouse's stake in independent production likely influenced their position on the matter. The company was in the syndication business and stood to reap the rewards of increased non-network program timeslots. McGannon's argument that prime time television suffers because the networks control too much of it speaks directly to the form that PTAR took: a reduction in the amount of network programming within these hours.

NBC and CBS criticized the regulation from the start. The top two networks argued that the rule would unduly affect their bottom line, claiming that PTAR would reduce "Hollywood's TV-film production revenues by $60 million to $70 million a year."[68] CBS was more specific about what its company stood to lose. CBS-TV president, Robert D. Wood argued that PTAR would "cut CBS' pre-tax profits by $5-million to $15-million."[69] CBS went so far as to launch a court appeal to have PTAR overturned. CBS' lawyer, Lloyd N. Cutler, argued that PTAR "denies licensees freedom of choice and networks freedom to compete, in violation of the Constitution."[70] However, as one of the presiding judges asserted, the television networks do not have First Amendment rights to protect.[71] Cutler then accused the FCC of misrepresenting the purpose of the rule, and enacting it because the federal regulator was unhappy with the quality of television programs.[72] Between its claims of potentially lost revenue, the rule's constitutionality, and the FCC's intentions, CBS apparently chose the "kitchen sink" method of fighting regulation.

ABC did not challenge the FCC ruling alongside CBS and NBC. *Variety* reporter Les Brown listed the ways in which PTAR would benefit ABC, then struggling as the third place network:

> the reduction of program inventory at a substantial saving of dollars in [a] bad year for business, the forced shedding of a flock of losers which is bound to help in the rating averages... the likelihood of ABC enjoying the spillover sales its rivals may not be able to accommodate.[73]

Some of the reasons from Brown's above list could explain why NBC and CBS eventually reversed their position and supported PTAR.

In the months following the FCC's introduction of the Prime Time Access Rule and CBS' court case, the television industry faced an additional challenge. The FCC's ban on cigarette advertising on television took effect in 1970, cutting a significant revenue stream.[74] A *Business Week* columnist cited the loss of cigarette advertising as one of the reasons that NBC and CBS changed their position on PTAR's impact.[75] Even though the networks stood to lose $164-million a year on cigarette ads, they would save $87 million on production costs for the three and a half hours they no longer had to produce.[76] In addition, the networks could cancel unsuccessful shows without having to replace them.[77]

The trade papers and mainstream publications consistently credit the confluence of PTAR and CBS' desire to change their image and audience demographic.[78] This was part of a general shift at the networks in the 1970s from targeting the largest aggregate audience with an eye on the most affluent to targeting demographic groups, particularly

18-49 years old: the group most likely to change brands.[79] The press reported that PTAR was an opportunity for CBS to rebrand itself, trading in its rural line-up for a young, urban image. When CBS cancelled *Green Acres* and *Beverly Hillbillies* that year, *Variety*'s Bill Greeley and *New York Times*' Fred Ferretti both cited the network's focus on new audience demographics as the reason for these cancellations.[80]

Eric Barnouw offered a possible explanation for CBS' PTAR reversal. He described a general push for "relevance" in television after the tumultuous late 1960s.[81] As Barnouw explained, the networks had replaced most of their series from their 1968-1969 schedule by the early 1970s.[§] Following this logic, we could attribute CBS' rebranding to the Big Three's drive for relevant programming at the dawn of the 1970s.

The networks' loss of three and a half hours of prime time per week was transformed from business crisis to opportunity. The Big Three found flexibility in their schedules to cancel unsuccessful or undesirable series without investing in replacements, thereby reducing costs to make up for lost cigarette advertising revenue. CBS' and NBC's about face, in concert with ABC's initial acceptance of PTAR, indicate that the networks have varying priorities and agendas that can change over time.

Even with the television networks supporting the FCC regulation, local stations continued to express concern over PTAR's impact on their business. The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) argued that the Prime Time Access Rule had the greatest negative effect on small market affiliates.[82] Although the regulation stipulated that the networks were only required to reduce programming in the top fifty markets,

[§] It appears that the push for relevance was short lived, at least at ABC. In early 1971, ABC's eastern program vice president Ed Vane assured network affiliates that "the network had purged itself of 'relevancy' this season and that it would return to entertainment basics next fall, playing down the dope, abortion and other problem themes." ("ABC and Affils", 34).

that stipulation was somewhat misleading. It suggested that the networks would continue their full programming schedule for the smaller markets. However, if the Big Three continued to produce original programming for the smaller markets, the significant drop in viewership would translate into lost advertising dollars. This greatly reduced revenue did not justify the cost of continuing such production for the smaller markets. Rather than produce unprofitable programs for the smaller markets, ABC, CBS, and NBC chose to reduce their prime time offerings across the country.[83] This left all local stations with open prime time slots on their schedules.

It was within this context that a survey of station managers from local television stations found that three-quarters of respondents opposed the Prime Time Access Rule.[84] They expressed concern about increased costs and smaller audiences.[85] *Variety*'s Bob Knight reported that "[i]n general, these execs felt that the rule would not encourage more original and diversified programming."[86] Furthermore, they voiced fear that PTAR would lead to a decrease in the quality of programs in a prime time slot. As John J. O'Connor of *The New York Times* detailed,

> The station managers also professed to be concerned about a possible deterioration of program quality. Talent and facilities at the local level are not broad enough, they contended, to produce programs of consistently high quality. Furthermore, they said, neither local stations nor first-run syndication producers can afford to invest the resources necessary for the "production values" viewers have become accustomed to on the networks.[87]

The local stations faced several barriers to producing quality television. They did not have the resources, financial and otherwise, to create programs that would look like network television. Because PTAR did not specify which evening hours the networks should program, there was a possibility that local stations would have to schedule inferior programs against superior network programs. They would be unable to compete, further eroding their advertising revenues.

Even though the FCC had purportedly implemented the Prime Time Access Rule to support local production by providing the local stations with the timeslots on the prime time schedule free from network control, the local stations had the most to lose from this "supportive" measure. The networks, on the other hand, eventually welcomed this restriction to their prime time reach. These competing interests continued to struggle over defining prime time until the rule was officially implemented in the fall of 1971.

Fine Tuning Prime Time

Once the FCC confirmed that it would proceed with the Prime Time Access Rule, the Big Three had to decide which timeslots they would hand over to the local stations. Would network time run 7:30-10:30 p.m. or 8:00-11:00 p.m.? The networks had to juggle a number of concerns: audience numbers, pressure from affiliates, the particular nature of the stations situated in the Central and Mountain Time zones, and FCC input, in addition to their established programming blocks.

In late 1970 and early 1971, ABC, CBS, and NBC went back and forth over when to start their nightly prime time programming. Trade papers such as *Broadcasting* proposed competing logics of how the network schedules should unfold. In November 1970, a *Broadcasting* reporter wrote: "There has been considerable speculation that at least one network would adopt a schedule different from the others, if only to insure that its own programs would have less network competition in some periods."[88] A few months later, *Broadcasting* reported a contradictory prediction that was popular at the

National Association of Television Program Executives' (NATPE) annual meeting. Programmers at the NATPE meeting contended that the networks "would probably have to program in the same three-hour time periods next fall, to prevent any one network from reaping the advantage of a head start in the evening."[89] As is evident in these two predictions, knowledgeable professionals can consider the same information and propose disparate logical conclusions for the best network scheduling option. Both of these competing scheduling strategies re-emerged as the networks planned their prime time schedules for the fall of 1971.

At first glance, the 8:00-11:00 p.m. program block is the obvious prime time choice for the networks and their affiliates. These timeslots had the highest audience numbers and, in turn, advertising revenue.[90] *Variety* reported that "one network study has shown that 8-11 p.m. prime time can produce up to $20,000,000 in additional revenue compared to a schedule pegged to a 7:30 start."[91] If the networks programmed the same prime time block, there was a larger pool of viewers to split between the networks from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. than from 7:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. Network prime time from 8:00 p.m.to 11:00 p.m. seemed to be the best course of action for all three networks.

The affiliates had their own reasons for preferring that the networks begin programming at 8:00 p.m. instead of 7:30 p.m. If the programmers' prediction was accurate, and all three networks programmed the same three hour block, the affiliates would be responsible for programming 7:30-8:00 p.m. or 10:30-11:00 p.m. These timeslots had different audiences. According to a *Variety* columnist, "[a]udience composition at 7:30 dictates all-family or juvenile-oriented programs; at 10:30 more sophisticated fare."[92] The columnist then explained that it was easier for the local stations to program for the younger 7:30 p.m. audience.[93] In addition, the affiliates' advertising revenues were tied, in part, to the ratings for their local news at 11:00 p.m. Expensively produced network programming at 10:30 p.m. would attract more viewers than their cheaply made local programming, and therefore act as a better lead-in to their nightly news.[94] A locally produced lead-in would hurt the nightly news ratings. The affiliates, as well as the Big Three, would benefit from 8:00-11:00 p.m. prime time programming from the networks.

Affiliate stations situated in the Midwest had a unique interest in the timing of prime time. First, the networks broadcast their shows based on clock time in the Eastern Time zone. Then they rebroadcast the shows three hours later in temporal coordination with the Pacific Time zone. These are called the East Coast and West Coast feeds. Stations located in the Central and Mountain Time zones received the East Coast feed. If the networks scheduled their prime time shows for 8:00-11:00 p.m., the stations in the Central and Mountain Time zones would broadcast these shows at 7:00-10:00 p.m. local time, which "spans the hours of greatest viewer density."[95] However, if the networks ran their prime time programming at 7:30-10:30 p.m., stations in the mid-west would lose the network feed at 9:30 p.m., around the time when most viewers were watching. In short, these stations had an additional stake in the networks programming prime time from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. on the East and West Coasts.

NBC was the first network to announce the timing of its reduced prime time hours. It decided to program 8:00-11:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 7:30-10:30 p.m. on Sunday.[96] ABC soon followed with a similar decision: it would provide its affiliates and O&O stations with prime time programming from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. seven nights a week.[97] In addition to the larger audience size after 8:00 p.m. and satisfying the concerns of local network affiliates and O&Os, the trade papers reported that each of these networks had individual reasons for choosing their prime time programming blocks.

Variety's Les Brown suggested that NBC's decision might be based on "the peculiar character and appeal of its evening schedule."[98] A *Broadcasting* reporter's summary of NBC's reasoning expands on Brown's point:

> Aside from Flip Wilson at 7:30-8:30 on Thursdays, most of NBC's strong shows start after 8 p.m.; it is easier to schedule movies and run-overs past 11 p.m.; 8-11 p.m. programming protects NBC's late-news and *Tonight* shows and also seems more appropriate for the scheduling of entertainment and event specials.[99]

This brief description proposes scheduling logic beyond audience size. NBC did not have many successful shows in the 7:30 p.m. timeslot. Removing its programming from that timeslot altogether was easier than cancelling unsuccessful series, developing new shows to replace them, and then trying to entice viewers to tune in to network programs earlier than it had before. Furthermore, NBC's interests aligned with their local stations when it came to providing a strong lead-in for the nightly news, which would in turn provide a strong lead-in for the network's late night programs. NBC's failing shows and interest in strong transitions between network and local night time shows simplified its conversion to three hours of prime time programming.

The *Broadcasting* reporter's remaining point – that scheduling network prime time from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. allowed the network to run movies and specials longer than three hours without breaking the Prime Time Access Rule – paralleled the logic ascribed to ABC's schedule announcement. *Variety*'s Les Brown argued that NFL Football influenced ABC's prime time selection. If the network's prime time programming block began at 7:30 p.m., it risked overstepping PTAR limits any time an NFL game broadcast on ABC took longer than the scheduled three hours. According Brown, NFL games frequently ran forty-five minutes into overtime.[100] Commercial revenue during NFL games was particularly profitable, even in the late night hours when the network charged up to $45,000 a minute after 11:00 p.m.[101] By selecting 8:00-11:00 p.m. for its prime time block, ABC protected the company from breaking PTAR time limit and maintained its earnings from a highly profitable revenue source.

Industry analysts from *Variety* and *Broadcasting* argued that ABC and NBC considered existing shows, audience flow between national and local broadcasts, and fluctuations in program length when selecting three hours for their network prime time line-ups. According to industry logic, the inclusion of these variables, in addition to the networks' previously discussed programming preferences, led NBC and ABC to the same conclusion: 8:00-11:00 p.m. was the best choice for network prime time.

Despite two of the Big Three selecting an 8:00 p.m. prime time start and the aforementioned scheduling logics supporting the ABC and NBC decisions, network prime time almost began at 7:30 p.m. Soon after ABC and NBC selected three hours for network prime time, CBS announced that its prime time programming would begin at 7:30 p.m. every night of the week.[102] *Variety*'s Les Brown explained that CBS "has charted 7:30 to 10:30, because it has always been long on family shows and comedies, and they tend to fare best earlier in the evening."[103] Even though the general viewership was greater in the 8:00-11:00 p.m. period, CBS' particular line-up suited the earlier start. However, that was not the only assessment of CBS' move.

Broadcasting summarized the scattered competition thusly, "CBS and NBC would program competitively 7:30-10:30 p.m. on Sunday; ABC and NBC 8-11 on the other nights. All three networks consequently would be on a fully competitive footing 8-10:30 every night of the week."[104] This gave CBS a scheduling advantage six nights a week. As one *Variety* columnist observed, "[a] network that gets a half-hour jump on its rivals every evening will have terrific momentum, and if CBS scheduled hourlong shows to open the evening (which it surely would do) the rival webs could never get started at 8 o'clock."[105] When one network starts its program block before the competition, it is implementing one form of a scheduling strategy called "bridging."[106] According to Perebinossoff et al., this scheduling strategy is based on the theory that "[t]he less opportunity the audience has to sample your adversary's program, the better chance you have for success."[107] If ABC and NBC maintained their 8:00-11:00 p.m. prime time schedule while CBS began its programming at 7:30 p.m., viewers would be halfway through watching a show on CBS when the other networks' prime time programming started. There was a chance that viewers would continue watching CBS throughout the evening and never tune in to the competing ABC and NBC line-ups.

This turn of events ran counter to the interests of all involved parties for the reasons detailed at the top of this section. As a *Variety* columnist explained:

> The fact is, however, that all three networks – even CBS – would prefer to program the three hours of greatest viewer density which is 8-11. But as long as the option remains open to begin earlier and seize a lead-in advantage, one network or another is going to grab it. And when one does, the others will follow in self-defense.[108]

It appears that CBS could not resist the temptation to start its prime time line-up ahead of its competition and "bridge" its programs. Les Brown speculated that competition between the Big Three would trump the numerous other reasons for selecting later prime time hours, and predicted that ABC and NBC would fold to the pressure and restructure their prime time hours to match CBS.[109]

Network affiliates, particularly those in the Midwest, were concerned about the earlier network prime time schedule.[110] Midwest affiliates requested permission to delay broadcast of the network feed so it would better match the timing of their audience's viewing habits. At an ABC network-affiliate meeting, Eastern Programming Vice President Ed Vane quickly dismissed this request. He informed the ABC affiliates that when it came to the timing of the network's prime time programming, they could "take it it [*sic*] as it comes down the line, or leave it."[111] There were no exceptions for Midwest markets during the crucial prime time hours, even though the policy for daytime delayed broadcast was less rigid.[112] The ABC executives' response indicates that the network had a particular stake in controlling the timing of their prime time television.

A *Variety* columnist assessed the situation and concluded that staggered prime time hours contradicted the purpose of PTAR. The columnist wrote, "[i]f the commission majority really hopes to open premium television time for independent producers, it has to carry the three-hour rule one step further and establish that all three networks go head-to-head in the choicest hours of the evening, 8-11."[113] Staggered network prime time schedules meant that local programming would have to compete against network programming. The lower profiles and smaller marketing budgets of the affiliates would put them at a disadvantage. Network affiliates requested that the FCC regulate the timing of networks' prime time block, and the federal regulator responded by sending a letter to the three networks encouraging them to coordinate their prime time programming and choose the 8:00-11:00 p.m. time period.[114]

Even though the FCC responded to business concerns of the network affiliates, its letter emphasized the public interest as this excerpt shows:

> Specifically, the commission believes that the selection of an 8-11 p.m. time period would better serve the public interest as a general matter. We have so concluded, based on our present understanding of the apparent plans of independent producers and individual stations directed to the scheduling of non-network programs in primetime as contemplated by our rule. In addition to those included in the rule, there are also other public interest considerations militating for adoption of the 8-11p.m. time period (e.g. impact on particular time zones such as the CST).[115]

In this letter, the FCC equated the public interest with the local stations and independent producers, and blended the concerns of these latter two groups. The letter highlights the FCC's apparent assumption that supporting local stations in prime time would lead to increased independent production.

Although the FCC could only suggest, rather than direct, the networks to coordinate their prime time programming between 8:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m., ABC, CBS, and NBC all heeded the FCC's recommendation in part. [116] The Big Three scheduled their prime time network programming for the same three hour block (8:00-11:00 p.m.) on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. However, the rest of their weekly prime time schedules were rife with irregularities. The networks' 1971-1972 prime time schedules (Table 2.1) returned to some of the inconsistencies typical of schedules in previous decades. Prime time start and end times varied by network and night of the week. Local affiliates were pitted against rival network programming. On Monday

1971-1972 SCHEDULE

MONDAY

	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
ABC	Local	Nanny & Prof.	Local	NFL Football			
CBS	Local	Gunsmoke		Here's Lucy	Doris Day	Arnie	All in the Family
NBC	Local	Rowan & Martin Laugh-In		Movies			

TUESDAY

	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
ABC	Mod Squad		Movie of the Week			Marcus Welby, M. D.	
CBS	Glen Campbell		Hawaii Five-O		Cannon		Local
NBC	Ironside		Sarge		The Funny Side		Local

WEDNESDAY

	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
ABC	Local	Bewitched	Eddie's Father	Smith Family	Shirley's World	The Man & The City	
CBS	Local	Carol Burnett		Medical Center		Mannix	
NBC	Local	Adam-12	Mystery Movie			Night Gallery	

THURSDAY

	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
ABC	Local	Alias Smith & Jones		Longstreet		Owen Marshall: Counselor at Law	
CBS	Local	BEARCATS!		Movies (CBS Reports on every 4th Thursday)			
NBC	Local	Flip Wilson		Nichols		Dean Martin	

FRIDAY

	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
ABC	Local	Brady Bunch	Partridge Family	Room 222	Odd Couple	Love American Style	
CBS	Local	CHI Teddy Bears	O'Hara, U.S. Treasury		New Friday Night Movies		
NBC	Local	The D.A.	World Premiere Movies (Chronolog on 4th Friday of each month)				Local

SATURDAY

	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
ABC	Local	Getting Together	Move of the Weekend			The Persuaders	
CBS	Local	My 3 Sons	Funny Face	Dick Van Dyke	Mary Tyler Moore	Mission Impossible	
NBC	Local	Partners	The Good Life	Movies			

SUNDAY

	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
ABC	Local	The FBI		Movies			
CBS	Movies				Cade's County		Local
NBC	World of Disney		James Stewart	Bonanza		The Bold Ones	

Table 2.1 1971-1972 Season Schedule[117]

nights, ABC scheduled local programming in the middle of the network prime time schedule. All three networks started their prime time programming at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, instead of 8:00 p.m. On Sundays, NBC and CBS began their prime time programming in the 7:30 p.m. slot. The way these exceptions came into being tells a story about network response to temporal challenges.

NBC was the first of the Big Three to request a waiver of PTAR restriction. The network proposed to broadcast three and half hours of prime time television on Sunday and reduce its programming to two and a half hours another night of the week.[118] NBC's position was that "for years the Sunday evening schedule has been carefully constructed so as to provide a gradual transition from programs of particular appeal to young people to programs of progressively more adult appeal."[119] This argument is based on the timing of programming over an evening. NBC had found a schedule that constructed a successful narrative for its audience, and it argued that it wanted to keep it that way.

A *Variety* reporter noted an additional reason for this particular waiver request: "Sunday represents the biggest revenue night, most sets-in-use, best demographics etc. If it obtained the waiver, NBC would likely be giving back the extra half hour on a weaker money night, such as Friday – the worst night."[120] According to this reporter, NBC was not only interested in keeping its programming block together; it also wanted to broadcast as many hours as it could on a more valuable night.

Once the FCC approved NBC's waiver, the federal regulator reframed the network prime time extension. According to *Variety*, the FCC "noted with approval that by allowing the network to feed three and one-half hours next fall it would help preserve family-oriented programming."[121] With this argument the FCC shifted focus from

NBC's financial impetus towards the public interest and positioned itself as a defender of that interest. Such an argument allowed the commission to rule counter to its previous contention that the public interest was best served by increased local programming.

These multiple logics of scheduling unfolded in a way that was not explicitly about time, but influenced the timing of the Sunday night schedule. These various positions about audience flow, the public interest, and the particular value of Sunday evening television are not necessarily contradictory, but they indicate the numerous factors that influence the timing of television. Even if we consider one or more of these arguments as industry spin or half-truth, they were presented and taken as reasoned positions, and carried legitimacy.

Once NBC had obtained its waiver, the other networks adjusted its Sunday evening schedules. NBC's Sunday prime time programming began at 7:30 p.m. and ran until 11:00 p.m. CBS shifted its Sunday prime time programming to a 7:30 p.m. start, counter-programming NBC's *Wonderful World of Disney*.[122] However, in order to stay within PTAR limits, the network finished broadcasting at 10:30 p.m. ABC maintained its 8:00-11:00 p.m. line-up and counter-programmed CBS' line-up. A *Variety* reporter explained that

> On Sunday nights, ABC figures to benefit with the 8 p.m. start of the popular "FBI" because of CBS' swing to an early movie. Despite the late start against the movie, ABC points out that such scheduling of features (before 8:30) has never pulled more than a 29 share, and such programming has little appeal for the old Sullivan audience.[123]

According to this analysis, ABC's decision was a direct response to CBS instead of NBC, the first to move to the earlier spot on Sunday evenings. This logic suggests that the timing of television genres may trump the scheduling technique of "bridging."

According to industry logic, the various interests of ABC, CBS, NBC, and the FCC shaped the landscape of Sunday night television. The trade papers attributed NBC's requested waiver of PTAR restriction to the network's desire to maintain a successful program block on a valuable evening. The FCC's mandate to rule in the public interest informed its decision, or at least its public explanation of said decision, to permit NBC's waiver. Television critics argued that CBS tinkered with its line-up so the network would not be "bridged" out of the Sunday night television game. ABC offered counterprogramming to CBS. These decisions culminated in an earlier night of network prime time programming than most other days of the week, and staggered network programming on the Big Three.

Once the FCC granted NBC a PTAR waiver, ABC soon followed with its request for one extended night of programming in exchange for a shortened prime time window another night of the week.[124] ABC argued that it should be able to extend its Tuesday broadcast beyond PTAR limit in order to maintain its ratings success on that night.[125] Les Brown observed that "ABC is dominating Tuesday nights in a way no network has ruled a single night in years."[126] Like NBC, ABC was concerned about constructing audience flow. As a reporter from *Broadcasting* detailed,

> ABC currently programs *Mod Squad* from 7:30 to 8:30, made-for-television *Movie of the Week* from 8:30 to 10 and *Marcus Welby, M.D.*, from 10 to 11, each Tuesday evening. To break up the continuity of interest and audience flow from younger viewers to a mature audience

> would compromise the sequence of programming and disrupt the pattern of audience interest, ABC said.[127]

Similar to NBC's explanation of its waiver request, ABC argued that it had a fine-tuned block of programming and removing thirty minutes would jeopardize the network's success throughout that night. ABC positioned itself as an economically disadvantaged network and more deserving of a waiver than NBC.[128] Once the FCC granted ABC's request, NBC and CBS shifted their Tuesday schedules to the earlier 7:30 p.m. timeslot. CBS' move, in concert with ABC's waiver, led to an earlier network prime time schedule on a single mid-week night.

ABC then made another unique scheduling decision. When selecting a thirty minute slot to return to the local stations in exchange for the extended Tuesday night line-up, the network chose half an hour in the middle of its Monday night prime time block. In the fall of 1971, ABC broadcast from 8:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and 9:00-11:00 p.m., and the local ABC affiliates and O&Os took over the 7:30-8:00 p.m. and 8:30-9:00 p.m. timeslots. The network's explanation for such a move echoes the trade papers' description of why the Big Three preferred to give up the 7:30 p.m. spots most nights. As *Variety* reported, "for the past four years ABC has been unable to make a dent in the Monday night competition at that time of the evening."[129] Monday Night Football, scheduled to follow the 8:30-9:00 p.m. local programming, was enough of a draw that, for ABC, it outweighed the value of carrying viewers throughout the entire evening's schedule. Furthermore, it was a boon to local affiliates and O&Os many of whom told *Variety* that they considered filling the spot with a syndicated sports show that would compliment football at 9:00 p.m.[130] The best interests of the networks, their O&O's and affiliates came together in this unusual scheduling decision.

PTAR waivers were good for one year, and the FCC refused to extend them further.[131] In their 1972-1973 television schedules, each of the Big Three programmed three hours of prime time between 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. By the fall of 1973, the networks began their prime time broadcasts at 8:00 p.m. every night of the week, except for Sundays when their prime time block started at 7:30 p.m.

In the midst of the Big Three's PTAR scheduling shuffle, Les Brown predicted that programs broadcast prior to 8:00 p.m. would cease to be part of prime time.[132] Local stations were allowed to sell more advertising time per hour than the networks.[133] Brown warned that the increase in commercials during the 7:30 p.m. local program slots would "aggravate the crisis in over-commercialization when stations go to the local limit in selling time to wring the maximum revenues from their program investments; that mistreatment by stations of the returned time may ultimately turn what today is a half hour of prime-time into a version of the late fringe time."[134] According to Brown's assessment, local stations' need for increased advertising revenue shaped the timing of prime time television.

The Prime Time Access Rule did not instigate much local program production. Instead, syndicated programs filled most of the evening hours that PTAR opened up.[135] Brown's prediction was correct. The 7:30-8:00 p.m. timeslot is no longer considered part of prime time from Monday through Saturday.[136] Even though the FCC rescinded PTAR in 1996, its influence on the temporal structure of prime time television remains.

Conclusion

The industry discord following the FCC's announcement of the Prime Time Access Rule reveals scheduling logics beyond Ellis' "trial and error."[137] These revelations highlight why it is more accurate to discuss scheduling "logics" than scheduling "logic." According to the trade papers, the Big Three networks' individual program line-ups were as influential, if not more so, in determining the timing of prime time as was their shared interest in attracting the largest possible audience. Although ABC, CBS, and NBC were all working towards the same end, getting the highest ratings, their routes to this end differed. The networks each worked with a unique set of variables and priorities and they came to diverse logical conclusions. Furthermore, the logics within a network's structure vary between levels. The temporal priorities at the network level can differ from, and even clash with, those at the local affiliate level. Finally, industry professionals can come to a variety of conclusions after considering the same information. More than mere guesswork, they can offer logical and reasoned, yet conflicting, analyses. Scheduling logics are not universal across networks, within the network/affiliate structure, or between industry analysts.

In addition to these scheduling logics, the industry activity around the Prime Time Access Rule illuminates how the networks deal with challenges to television's temporality. CBS and NBC immediately resisted any reduction in the amount of time they could program during the highest profile "daypart." ABC did not, but its immediate acceptance of the prime time restriction was understood by television columnists to be the result of its struggle as the third place network. Once all three networks agreed to reduce their prime time schedules to three hours, each weighed its specific interests and priorities against what the others were doing. Although there were many reasons for each network to begin its prime time broadcast at 8:00 p.m., CBS decided to start a half hour earlier. CBS' early start could have "bridged" out the competition. According to the trade papers, part of CBS' logic was based on its attempts to attract a younger demographic with youth oriented series. ABC and NBC appear to have prioritized their competition with CBS over their individual network and affiliate interests and did not want to start their prime time programming later than CBS did. In addition, the trades contended that competition trumped audience size for ABC and NBC. The FCC's recommendation that the networks begin their prime time programming at 8:00 p.m. instead of 7:30 p.m. gave the networks' permission to move their prime time schedule to the three hour block that worked best for them. Once this was settled, another response emerged. Even though the Big Three acquiesced to PTAR and agreed on prime time hours, they attempted to defer PTAR's effects with waivers. In other words, the networks' responses to the FCC's influence on the timing of television were marked by resistance, deferral and dithering.

My focus on trade papers and their columnists' reports provides insight into television industry logics. The corporate executives, NAB representatives, and others speaking to reporters in an official capacity may have repeated the public position of their organization, rather than the actual reasoning expressed behind closed doors. However, their comments were based on a set of logics that was accepted by, then further circulated in, the trades and among other industry figures. The FCC, the television networks, and other industry agencies contributed to television industry logics by their behaviours and by their explanations of their behaviours. The trade papers contributed to these logics by their interpretations of these behaviours and statements.

The FCC's Prime Time Access Rule forced ABC, CBS, and NBC to alter the timing of prime time television. Even though the television schedule as a whole was constructed around the audience's presumed work and leisure routines, and the broadcast day was divided into "dayparts" to coincide with the timing of potential viewers' everyday lives, these considerations were not publicly discussed in the context of prime time's reconfiguration. The networks initially adjusted prime time at a micro level, making minor changes night by night. Any consideration of the best way to reconfigure prime time's overall temporal structure was completely absent from the public discourse. As described in the previous chapter, Roger Silverstone argued that people negotiate structural orders in their everyday lives, and by going along with them or challenging them individuals can effect change to those structures. My close analysis of minor schedule adjustments and the industry talk that surrounded them reveals parallel negotiations in the refining or restructuring of television's sociotemporal order. The timing of the highest profile "daypart" is the end result of FCC regulation, network tinkering, and infighting between networks, affiliates, and independent producers.

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Chapter Three
Cable Competition: Tossing out the temporal rule book

Community Antenna Television (CATV), the early iteration of what we now call cable TV, appeared almost simultaneously in several communities across the United States, Canada, and Britain in the 1940s.[1] CATV could improve reception and extend television signals to previously underserved communities.[2] The particular geographic and regulatory makeup of the U.S. influenced its early development in America. [3] The FCC's television license freeze from 1948 to 1952 left numerous cities and towns without local stations or nearby broadcasters.[4] Communities in mountainous regions faced an additional limitation from the surrounding mountain ridges that blocked broadcast signals.[5] American entrepreneurs set up Community Antenna Television systems to boost broadcast signals in these underserved communities.[6] A local businessman would install a tall receiver to amplify a weak signal, and run coaxial cables to customers' homes.[7]

At first, broadcasters appreciated CATV as a potentially profitable extension of their services. CATV introduced network television and independent station signals to a larger number of viewers.[8] UHF stations reached a wider audience when the community antennas boosted their otherwise weak signals.[9] CATV opened up new regions of the country to broadcasters who now faced the possibility of reaching vast new portions of the population. This larger audience would increase ratings and, in turn, draw greater advertising revenues.

The broadcasters reassessed the situation in the 1960s.[10] Producers and station owners became concerned about copyright. They were unhappy that cable owners picked up their free signals over the air, then sold them to cable subscribers without sharing the profits with the creators or broadcasters.[11*] Independent stations became wary of the imported signals vying for the local audience's attention.[12] The networks recognized the increased competition they faced with the distant independent and UHF stations imported via CATV, and saw the emergent technology as a threat.[13] These various concerns informed FCC regulation as ABC, CBS, and NBC used their influence on the FCC to slow CATV's growth.[14]

According to Stuart M. De Luca, "cable television has been subjected to heavier regulation than just about any other nascent technology."[15] Citing concern for the public interest, the FCC denied Carter Mountain Transmission Corp.'s 1962 application to install microwave relay systems.[16] A few years later, the FCC stipulated that CATV systems were required to carry local stations "so that the community would not be cut off from the over-the-air broadcastings."[17] In 1968, the FCC imposed a freeze on importing distant signals.[18]

Considering these regulations in light of the above mentioned concerns, it appears that the FCC protected broadcasters' interests. However, this was not necessarily the result of undue corporate influence. According to Thomas P. Southwick, Federal Communication Commissioner Kenneth Cox ruled from his assumption that protecting broadcasters from cable would "ensure more diversity in programming and universal access to television service, particularly local news and public affairs."[19] In this instance, when it came to CATV, the networks' interests coincided with those of local stations.

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[*] The FCC addressed this issue in the 1992 Cable Television Consumer Protection and Competition Act which determined that television stations could charge cable distributors a fee for carrying their signal (Hilliard and Keith, *The Broadcast Century and Beyond*). Broadcasters and cable providers continue to battle over these retransmission fees.

According to Thomas Streeter, the discourse began to shift in the late 1960s and early 1970s from CATV as a pariah to cable TV as a revolutionary component of the television industry. Streeter cited as evidence a number of research reports from the Rand Corporation and The Commission on Cable Communications as well as mass market publications.[20] As he explained, "[c]able had captured the imagination, not just of those traditionally concerned with television regulation, but of what seemed to be an entire cross-section of the U.S. policy making community."[21]

In 1972 the FCC relaxed its 1968 ruling on importing distant signals.[22] The federal regulator stipulated that CATV systems must carry local stations, provide space on the dial for government, educational, and public access channels free of charge, and set out which stations they were permitted to and required to import into a region.[23] In addition, the new regulations indicated a minimum number of channels that cable systems were required to carry in large markets.[24] At the time, these regulations were considered a compromise between broadcasters and cable companies.[25] Later analysis reframes this regulation as continuing to favour broadcasters and stifling cable's growth.[26] However, the 1972 regulations marked the beginning of a shift in the FCC's approach to cable television.

In 1978, the FCC loosened the restrictions it had imposed in 1972, allowing cable providers to include as many distant signals in their service as they wanted.[27] In addition, the federal regulator granted permission to a local station to transmit its signal by satellite.[28] Federal regulations were further scaled back in 1980 when the FCC removed the cap on the number of signals cable providers could carry.[29] This trend continued throughout the 1980s as the FCC transformed from federal regulator to federal deregulator.

The development of cable programming paralleled that of cable providers. Pay-cable channels began appearing as early as the 1960s.[30†] However, they did not find success until satellite distribution was introduced. In 1975, RCA launched a satellite for television signals and "the cable industry took off."[31] Home Box Office (HBO) was the first cable channel to distribute its signal by satellite.[32] Although it began cablecasting in 1972, the switch to satellite distribution expanded its coverage across the country.

Early cablecasters distributed their signals solely across cables, rather than over the air.[33] Satellite distribution allowed cablecasters to sidestep the expense of maintaining the integrity of the long distance cable. Instead, the local cable provider picked up the satellite signal and distributed it from its central location to its customers. Satellite distribution provided cablecasters greater geographic reach with fewer dispersed maintenance costs than their previous cable distribution system.

The FCC's shift to deregulation, as well as RCA's telecommunications satellite, played a significant role in cable television's development. According to the then president of cable company Warner Amex, "[t]he flowering of cable is directly related to deregulation."[34] The regulators' decision on importing satellite signals set the stage for Superstations, local channels distributed nationally by satellite.[35] Four cable channels launched between 1972 and the year prior to the FCC's 1978 ruling: HBO, The Star Channel, Showtime, and the Superstation WTBS.[36] That number climbed every year after the ruling. By the end of 1979, there were an additional eight cable channels,

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[†] Basic cable channels are those that are available when a cable provider connects their cables to a subscriber's television via a set top box. Pay cable channels remain scrambled until a subscriber pays an additional fee.

including Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network (C-SPAN), Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN), and Nickelodeon.[37] Another four joined the cable line-up in 1980 and four more debuted in 1981.[38] These twenty cable channels may seem like a small selection compared to today's cable and satellite offerings. However, after decades of stability with three national networks dominating the American television landscape, the number of nationally broadcast channels had increased over 600% in less than ten years.

The increase in cablecasters paralleled the increasing number of cable subscribers. *Variety* breathlessly reported cable's growth year after year.[39] A *Variety* columnist reported that 1979 "pre-tax profits soared a whopping 45% over the previous year while paycable revenues climbed by an incredible 85%."[40] As remarkable as this increase would be in any context, it is even more so when we consider that it occurred in the midst of the decade's second economic recession and after years of inflation. Still, cable's expansion continued.[41] By the 1981, over 20% of American households subscribed to a cable service.[42]

A New (Broadcast) Day

John Ellis identified cable television's growth as a central aspect of the shift from television's "era of scarcity" to its "era of availability."[43] According to Ellis, the era of scarcity "is characterized by a few channels broadcasting for part of the day only" and the era of availability is one in which "several channels broadcasting continuously jostled for attention, often with more competition in the shape of cable or satellite services."[44] In the era of scarcity, the networks scheduled their programs within a fairly standardized temporal structure. They developed scheduling strategies based on this coordination of a limited number of competitors. CATV's increased reach along with the proliferation of cable channels provided a growing number of viewers with alternatives to network programming. That in itself could have undermined network scheduling strategies. To make matters worse for the Big Three, cable introduced alternative temporalities. Cable channels ignored industry standards such as length of the broadcast day, "dayparting" patterns, and the flow between programs and commercials. It was unclear how network scheduling strategies would work against non-standard timing on television.

To briefly review, "dayparting" is a scheduling technique based on the theory that "people's needs, activities, and moods change throughout the day."[45] Networks try to provide programming to match the needs, activities, and moods of their presumed audience. "Dayparting" encapsulates Ellis' contention that "television moulded itself to the patterns of everyday life and in doing so defined and standardized them."[46] Television schedules simplify the numerous, varied routines of potential viewers into one. "Dayparting" is marked by assumptions about viewers, their routines and their lifestyles. Certain people, interests, and work and leisure routines are inevitably excluded. If viewers wanted to watch television in the era of scarcity, most could only choose between the three networks that provided the same kind of programs at the same times throughout the day.[‡]

In the mid-1970s, ABC, CBS, and NBC broadcast programming throughout the day and well into the night, seven days a week.[47] All three networks began their

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[‡] Viewers living in areas that could receive local stations unaffiliated with one of the Big Three had more options, but not many.

weekday programming at 7:00 a.m. with news and information series. The networks provided their local stations with programs intermittently throughout the day. Network daytime schedules were filled with a mix of game shows, sitcom reruns and soap operas. After their dinnertime newscasts, the networks aired their highest profile original series in prime time. These were primarily comedies and dramas, with a few movies or sporting events thrown into the mix. From 1975 until 1977, broadcasters set aside the 7:00-9:00 p.m. timeslots (6:00-8:00 p.m. in the Midwest) for family friendly programs, and scheduled more adult fare from 9:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. (8:00-10:00 p.m. in the Midwest).[§] As prime time concluded, the local stations broadcast their news programs, and then the networks broadcast late night talk shows and movies until 1:00 a.m. or 2:00 a.m. As discussed in the last chapter, the networks developed this standardized schedule around the presumed routines of middle-class, traditional families. Many potential viewers fell outside this description.

Cable television provided alternative programming for all viewers, including those previously excluded from network scheduling practices. Basic- and pay-cable channels provided program options outside the standard network broadcast day. In 1980, movie channel Showtime announced around-the-clock programming throughout the weekend, the heaviest viewing time for pay-cable.[48] Soon after, cable channels such as HBO and MTV began broadcasting twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.[49] These moves lengthened the broadcast day set out by the Big Three. For the first time, people working late into the night could unwind in front of the television when they returned

[§] For an extensive examination of Family Viewing Hours see Geoffrey Cowan, *See No Evil: The Backstage Battle Over Sex and Violence on Television* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978).

home and choose from selection of broadcasts. People who were up all night for any reason could watch cable programming to pass the late night hours.

In addition, cable channels provided specialized programming that did not follow the networks' standardized "daypart" schedule. HBO and Showtime provided movies at all times of the day and night. As Showtime's president Mike Weinblatt explained to *Variety*, the network's "primary aim is to give subscribers a distinct alternative to the traditional late night and early morning fare of broadcast television."[50] Potential viewers did not have to wait until prime time to watch a movie on network television. They could tune in to pay-cable whenever they wanted to watch a film.

Local and UHF stations had long provided alternatives to network programming, but cable channels could do so at a national level. As such, they had a larger advertising or subscriber base to fund production or program purchasing. The quality of cable programming, while often not quite up to the level of network television, had the potential to be a significant improvement over local and UHF stations.

Cable channels provided alternative programming options to the networks' standardized broadcast day and "dayparting." In doing so, they revealed other possible temporal structures for television. Viewers were no longer constrained by network temporal structures if they wanted to watch TV. Cable threatened to chip away at network audience shares if viewers sought out these alternatives.

Variegated Flows

The proliferation of cable channels and alternative program sources in the 1970s also disrupted the standard network flow between programs and commercials. The increasing options that cable television, the growing number of independent stations, and VCRs offered viewers meant that the context in which people watched television changed. These options and VCR viewing functions (pause, fast forward, rewind) are linked to an increase in the popularity of Remote Control Devices (RCDS).[51]

In the era of scarcity, broadcasters developed scheduling strategies to lure viewers to their programming earlier in the evening and maintain a flow to encourage them to continue watching all evening. Perebinossoff, Gross, and Gross touched on this in their description of the purpose of scheduling techniques: “Ideally, programmers seek a large audience with the leadoff show and structure the programs that follow so that the audience will watch continuously throughout the schedule.”[52] This structure goes beyond the programs and includes opening and closing credits for each series, commercials, and network promotions. The flow that they create attempts to transform the viewing experience into “watching television” instead of watching a particular program.

Raymond Williams’ flow model covers similar ground, but emphasizes the viewing experience instead of the broadcasters’ intentions. Williams’ model depends on a viewer watching a single channel over an extended period of time. As he explained, “[w]hat is being offered is not, in older terms, a programme of discrete units with particular insertions, but a planned flow, in which the true series is not the published sequence of programme items but this sequence transformed by the inclusion of another kind of sequence, so that these sequences together compose... the real ‘broadcasting’.”[53] In this model, the individual programs are only relevant or hold meaning in the context of the other elements of the broadcast: the commercials, the network promotions and the series that are broadcast before and after. The individual pieces (e.g. a commercial, a scene in a program, or an entire program) are less relevant than is the overall flow of the viewing experience. With the option of selecting non-network programs and an easy way to do so without walking across the room to the television, Raymond Williams' concept of flow was complicated within a decade of its creation.

Recently, William Uricchio updated Williams' notion of flow. Uricchio repositioned flow as a marker of television broadcasting in the specific historical moment in which Williams created it while visiting the United States during television's era of scarcity. According to Uricchio, the remote control device "signaled a shift from Williams' idea of flow to flow as a set of choices and actions initiated by the viewer."[54] Klaus Bruhn Jensen proposed the phrase "viewer flow" to describe this more flexible kind of viewing. Viewers can create their own version of flow as they jump from channel to channel over the course of watching television. To use Jensen's terminology, viewers jump from channel flow to channel flow.[55] According to Jensen, the combined "channel flows" and "viewer flow" is the "Super-flow."[56] Figure 3.1 illustrates how these flows work together.

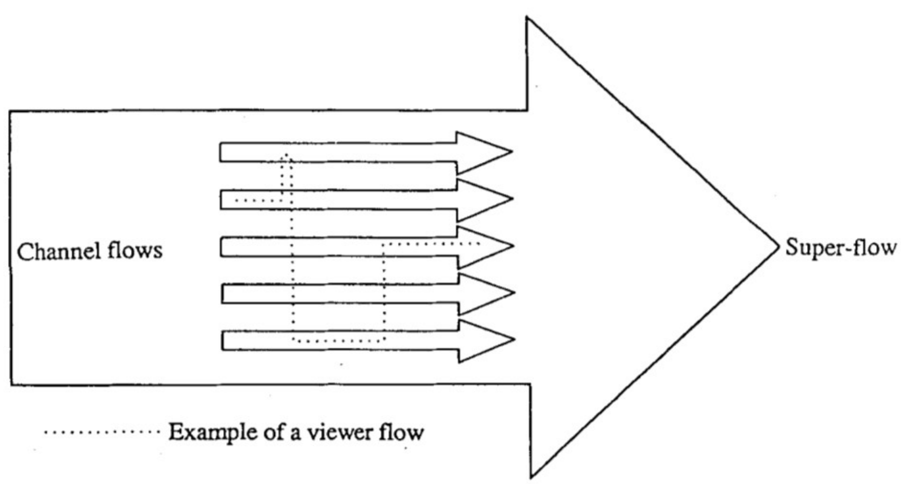

Figure 3.1 Klaus Bruhn Jensen's Television Flow Model[57]

Williams' version of flow was institutionally determined, as are the broadcasters' televisual flows. According to Uricchio and Jensen, the viewer's ongoing selections defined superflow. This shift from institutionally directed flow to Uricchio's and Jensen's viewer directed models illustrates how RCDs complicated network programming strategies.

In the era of scarcity, the Big Three worked with similar temporalities to one another. Shows began and ended on the hour or half hour. The networks had approximately the same number of commercial minutes in each hour of programming. The pacing of sitcoms and dramas matched the commercial breaks, with each break marking a significant moment in the story or the end of an act.

As television moved into the era of availability, RCDs made it easier for viewers to turn the channel or mute commercials, thus breaking up the broadcaster's planned televisual flow. The increased competition and varied programming practices of cable contributed additional variables unaccounted for by network scheduling strategies developed in the era of scarcity. The pacing of programming on some cable channels presented an alternative temporality to the networks. Cable channels specializing in movies, news, or music twenty-four hours a day offered those genres outside of the networks' "dayparting" schedule. Furthermore, the length of programs diverged from network standards. As *Variety* reporter Morrie Gelman explained, pay-cable has "fewer time constraints. A show can run for the exact number of minutes that it requires."[58] The staggered program endings may have caused problems for the networks. Prior to cable's proliferation, the networks tried to keep viewers tuned in to their channel throughout the evening or daytime schedule. However, their coordinated start and end times provided viewers with an opportunity to switch from any network to any other network between programs. The networks competed for such viewers on an equal footing. There was no such give and take with the staggered timing of cable programming. For example, when an HBO film ended, broadcast television programs were mid-way through. Viewers would be less likely to switch to a program in progress.

Ad-free television flow was part of pay-cable's bid to convince people to pay for what they had previously considered a free service when received over-the-air. HBO's general counsel Peter A. Gross described the featured role this ad-free draw played in the cablecaster's business model when he told *Business Week* "[w]e are convinced that a consumer will pay more for a service without commercials than an advertiser would ever be willing to pay to reach those consumers."[59] According to Gross, commercial-free television was more attractive to viewers than the ad-supported programs on the networks.

In addition, ad-free shows altered televisual flow. Pay-cable channels broadcast films without cutting them down to fit in commercials or echo the limitations of standardized network timeslots. Gelman observed, "there will be no necessity to alter a program's pace or introduce artificial climaxes because of commercial breaks."[60] This gave the channels creative freedom in their original productions. HBO chairman Gerald M. Levin wrote, "[w]e are exploring new formats utilizing a tempo and pacing impossible in programs which are interrupted every few minutes for a commercial message."[61] Levin's and Gelman's comments emphasize how the timing of network flow between program and commercial restricts both the content of a show and the ways in which producers can tell a story. However, the absence of commercial breaks on pay-cable posed a potential problem for broadcast network flow. These intermittent breaks were another point of possible entry for new viewers. In the era of scarcity, people could move from one network to the next at each commercial break. That viewer exchange became unbalanced between the commercial networks and the ad-free pay-cable channels. Viewers would drift only one way, from the networks during their commercials break to the ad-free pay-cable channels.

The length and timing of commercials changed across the dial over this period. The basic-cable channels relied on commercial revenue, but did not stick within the network commercial parameters. Some cable channels permitted their advertisers to experiment with the length and content of ads. For example, CBS Inc. subsidiary CBS Cable allowed advertisers to create commercials of 30 seconds, 80 seconds, 106 seconds, 3 minute, or 4 minutes.[62] Varied commercial lengths altered the rhythms between program and commercial, veering away from network television.

Cable channels could experiment in such a way because they were not expected to follow the National Association of Broadcasters' (NAB) advertising guidelines.[**] The NAB regulated the "amount and character" of advertising on commercial broadcasting since it first instituted the Radio Code in 1928.[63] Such guidelines are a way for broadcasters to avoid FCC mandates via self-regulation.[64] By the early 1970s, there was a renewed concern that television commercials cluttered the airwaves and the NAB revisited its guidelines. By the time cable television started experimenting with the length of commercials, the NAB guidelines stipulated that networks could include up to "9.5 minutes of non-programming time per hour in prime time for either commercials or promotional spots for future shows."[65] Although there were no official repercussions for

[**] The NAB is an industry-wide, self-regulatory association.

breaking NAB codes, broadcasters were encouraged to follow NAB regulation through pressure from other members.[66]

The changing nature of television advertising on broadcast networks and basic-cable, as well as the temporal flexibility on pay- and basic-cable, introduced new flows to the television landscape. Viewers could create their own flow from a wider selection of channels with variations in tempo. The Big Three networks faced unprecedented competition for viewers' attention, both in the number of competitors and in the temporality of television.

Television scheduling techniques such as "dayparting" are intended to carry the viewer through a broadcast day. During the era of scarcity, potential viewers had little choice but to watch television within the temporal structures of the Big Three or to opt out of television viewing altogether. When cable channels extended the broadcast day and televised programs outside of their standardized "dayparts," viewers suddenly had other options. In this era of availability, the timing of their viewing was no longer limited by the networks' temporal structures. Television schedules were most effective as a tool of social coordination if other temporal options for the same activity were limited. Cable television's alternative temporalities threatened to reduce the effectiveness of the networks' schedules as a sociotemporal order. Once the temporal structure sprung leaks in the form of other viewing options, the "audience" became less manageable.

Net Adjustments

Identifying the networks' responses to this one industry shift is an ill-advised endeavour. The television industry underwent so many changes throughout this era that it is impossible and unproductive to try to pin any of the networks' decisions on a single change. Any adjustments to their practices (scheduling and otherwise) may have been in response to the general industry shifts of the era and to the overall increase in competition.

The networks' responses to increased competition from cable must be considered in light of the television industry's historical context in the 1970s. Advertisers became interested in targeting specific demographic groups, rather than simply the largest possible number of people.[67] This was one of many elements that inspired significant schedule upheavals at the start of the decade. According to *Life*'s Thomas Thompson, advertisers' increased interest in an urban audience, rather than a rural one, inspired CBS to refocus its prime time line-up early in the decade.[68] The network cancelled rural sitcoms such as *Green Acres* and *Beverly Hillbillies* in favour of city-centred fare.[69] Advertisers continued to seek out narrower demographics throughout the decade and beyond.[70] Emerging specialized basic- and pay-cable channels that targeted specific demographic groups fed into advertisers' interest in a more clearly defined audience. For example, Nickelodeon, Black Entertainment Television (BET), and MTV all launched between 1979 and 1981, providing programming specifically targeted at children, African Americans, and young people, respectively.[71]

As cable television developed from a heavily regulated wired distribution service to relatively less regulated cable channels distributed through a combination of satellite transmission and cables, the Big Three experienced soaring ratings and advertising revenue. In the mid-1970s, after the first recession of the decade, advertisers began pouring money into television. All three networks saw record breaking ratings. It was within this context that cable television offered alternative temporal structures in its schedules, providing new competition to the networks and threatening to chip away at their audience shares.

Building a television schedule is neither art nor science. As one *Time* journalist bluntly put it, programming "owes more to water divining than logical analysis."[72] This lack of certainty is evident in the small schedule adjustments and tweaks that the networks have always made throughout the television seasons. When publicly addressing schedule changes, the broadcasters focused primarily on content rather than timing. The television industry trade papers were full of scheduling announcements that simply listed the shows that the networks moved and their new timeslots.[73] We should not assume that the programmers ignored the temporality when they made these schedule adjustments. However, the public discussion of these changes focused on the series and their new timeslots, rather than on any temporal logic.

When the Big Three television networks did address competition in the 1970s, they were primarily focused on each other.[74] One major story was ABC's surge ahead of the other networks for the first time its history.[75] The activity surrounding this momentous event highlights the deployment of various scheduling strategies, as well as the insular focus of the networks. CBS and NBC employed "stunting" in response to ABC's jump to the number one spot.[76] "Stunting" refers to the practice of integrating atypical series elements (e.g. high profile guest stars, unusual formats) or temporarily replacing a series with a special programming event (e.g. a mini-series) to gain a short term ratings boost.[77] In 1978, CBS and NBC relied on the latter practice.[78] Critics pondered whether this inconsistent scheduling undermined habitual viewing, resulting in a drop in audience shares immediately after the networks' record breaking ratings in the 1976-1977 TV season.[79] According to one critic, "[n]o word is more important in TV than 'habit,' and these days it's likely more and more are kicking the habit."[80]

Over the course of the 1970s, Silverman worked in the programming departments of all three networks.[81] Many attributed ABC's success to Fred Silverman's use of the "tent pole" theory of scheduling.[82] This scheduling strategy entails "slotting a network's strongest shows in the 9 p.m. period in the hope that they will lure viewers to new shows running before and after them."[83] Although it may have succeeded for ABC, Silverman's attempt at a repeat performance over at NBC met with scepticism in 1979. The NBC affiliates were unhappy with the focus on a strong 9:00 p.m. "tent pole" because it left them with a weaker series in the 10:00 p.m. slot to lead into their nightly newscast.[84] The response to ABC's surge in the ratings and Silverman's use of "tent poling" at both ABC and NBC illustrate the uncertainty of scheduling practices and the sometimes conflicting interests of the networks and their affiliates.

One theory connected the increased advertising dollar to the general economic climate. Both the networks and advertisers had scaled back their financial obligations during the recession of the early 1970s.[85] By 1976, money was eagerly spent once the first recession of the decade had passed.[86] However, advertisers continued to pour money into television during the decade's second recession, regardless of the networks' unstable audience shares throughout the 1970s. *Variety* proclaimed, "[t]he American television networks are entering the 1980s on a high note and armed with the knowledge that they are the most effective and profitable advertising medium in the world having cracked the $4-billion barrier for the first time."[87] As more advertisers bought commercial time on the networks, the demand drove up ad rates.[88]

Perhaps bolstered by their growing advertising revenue, the networks dismissed cable as insignificant competition. According to *Business Week*, NBC president and CEO Fred Silverman pointed to "a corporate planning study [that] indicated that the three networks have little to fear from new forces competing for time on the TV screen."[89] Even with a reduced share of the viewing audience, the networks would continue to have more viewers than any single cable channel.

By 1981, TV critics began to blame cable for the networks' dwindling audience shares. A *Variety* writer declared that the growth of cable was eating away at network shares.[90] Yet, the networks' overall ratings were up from previous years. Another *Variety* columnist attributed this apparent inconsistency to an increasingly "stay at home culture" as well as the growth of cable television.[91] As *Variety*'s John Dempsey explained, "more people are watching television as cable expands the number of channels and as independent stations put on programs of wider appeal – but the three networks are getting less of a percentage of this increased viewership than they're accustomed to."[92] Network ratings were up, but a smaller portion of viewers watched the networks.

As their audience shares declined, the Big Three continued to publicly focus on each other, discussing the network rankings without mentioning alternative television.[93] The networks emphasized their increased ratings rather than their decreased shares.

Advertising rates were charged per 1000 viewers, so the increase in ratings still meant financial success, if not boasting rights. A *Newsweek* article described the position taken by Gene Jankowski, president of CBS Broadcast Group: "the percentage of viewers who defect to cable will be more than offset by a substantial increase in the total TV audience."[94] Yet, Nielsen reported that certain pay-cable specials attracted more viewers than top-rated network shows.[95] Cracks began to form in the Big Three networks' reign over television.

According to Sterling and Kittross, by 1982, cable penetration reached the 30% threshold that "national advertisers seem to feel is the point at which they'll take a definitive look at CATV as a viable competitor to over-the-air television."[96] *Newsweek*'s Harry F. Waters declared the emergent television technology "an economically viable mass medium."[97] *Business Week* reported that advertisers started "suddenly scrambling to take advantage of [cable television's] increasing impact, low cost, and flexibility."[98] Advertisers, already keen on more specific demographic groups, began looking into cable because it was cheaper and offered more targeted viewer demographics.[99] As one *Business Week* writer explained, "[w]hile these channels command smaller audiences than network TV, most advertisers believe that the narrow subject matter means that they will capture the right audiences for their products."[100] However, even the president of the National Cable Television Association agreed with the networks when he told *Newsweek* "[t]here will always be a place for broadcasting...It will still be a very efficient way of reaching a mass audience with general-interest programming and advertising."[101] Cable might siphon off some advertisers interested in reaching specific demographics of the television market, but the networks would consistently reach a larger audience.

Even so, the networks' scheduling strategies remained somewhat focused on maintaining the status quo well into the 1980s. In 1979, some critics complained that television programs were too similar across the networks and recommended that the Big Three employ creative scheduling to make a show stand out.[102] *Variety*'s Dave Kaufman argued that "[a] basic error at the [networks] is the what's-worked-before-will-work-again credo, a philosophy with more holes than a golf course."[103] Lee Rich, president of Lorimar Productions, echoed this approach when he said "[i]n this business, you don't mess around with success."[104]

Each network had its own approach to building audiences. For example, in 1980, one *Time* reporter compared ABC's and CBS' strategies when building a schedule for the new season when he wrote:

> Following the pattern that made it the No. 1 network for two decades until 1976, CBS tended to keep this season's programs in the same time slots, despite fluctuating ratings, until they built a loyal audience. ABC, by contrast, tried to spread its strength around and pick up new viewers by splintering the solid blocks of sitcoms that had allowed it to dominate Tuesday and Thursday nights and seeking comedy beach-heads on nights when other networks were strong.[105]

Both approaches were predicated on assumptions about audience behaviour. According to the above analysis, CBS based its strategy on supporting series it believed in and trusting audiences to find them. ABC used established hits to draw viewers to its network throughout the week. These two strategies assume viewers seek out the best entertainment or that which they will most enjoy.

Paul Klein, an NBC programmer prior to starting the Playboy Channel in 1982, preferred his “Theory of Least Objectionable Program.” James Traub recounted Klein’s theory in 1983,

> First, he pointed out, television seems to be about programming, but it’s not. Its product is the viewer’s time and attention, and its customers are advertisers. Second, viewers are not watching programs, anyway, they’re watching television. McLuhan was on to this. The same number of sets are tuned to prime-time television at a given hour every night, no matter how dreadful the programs are. Third, the programs *are* dreadful, and the programmers know it – they “like most of the stuff they put on as much as you do.” Fourth – and here’s the heart of darkness – viewers don’t watch what they like. They may not like anything, but they’re still parked in front of those sets. No, viewers “watch that program among all those offered at a given time which can be endured with the least amount of pain and suffering.”[106]

Klein’s focus on content rather than temporality was typical for these discussions of programming and television schedules. Although he did not explicitly mention the schedule, his temporal logics may have been informed by his apparent disdain for the programs he puts on his schedule grid and the audience. Aiming to schedule the least objectionable program in any timeslot appears to be a far cry from the approaches at ABC and CBS described above. However, the approaches of all three networks seem fairly staid in the midst of the industry upheaval.

Network executives did discuss one key temporal structure in the television schedules that remained consistent before and after cable’s initial growth. The Big Three essentially launched three seasons every year. The most significant season launch was in the fall, typically September. According to Fred Silverman, programming director for CBS, ABC, and then NBC over a ten year period, a strong fall start was crucial to the success of a network's year.[107] After network programmers got an idea of how audiences responded to their slate of shows, they altered the schedule, cancelled poor-performing series and launch replacements. This usually occurred in December after the November sweeps results were in. This launch was unofficially considered television's second season.[108] Even though this was standard practice, mid-season replacements did not necessarily resolve network Nielsen concerns. *Variety*'s Bob Knight considered the second season a risky move: "Nine weeks into the season is a little late for whim switches of viewer interest, as viewer patterns tend to become solidified by this juncture – unless the viewers are not overly happy with where they have been."[109] Yet, mid-season replacements remain network staples. A similar adjustment period followed February sweeps, and a third season was launched in March.[110] In this case, the seasonal temporal structure of television appears to have developed out of A.C. Nielsen's sweeps schedule.

The Big Three networks did alter their business practices during this era of industry upheaval, but the alternatives were outside the realm of television's temporality. The networks approached cable television as an opportunity to expand their business. ABC and CBS announced new film production departments in 1979 with the intention of selling their products to cable stations.[111] In addition, both of these networks launched cultural cable channels.[112] RCA, NBC's parent company, started up The Entertainment Channel.[113] Many of these ventures failed, but that did not stop the networks from continuing to pursue success in the cable business.

In order to develop these additional revenue streams, the broadcasters needed the FCC to scale back its ownership rules. Realizing that reruns of network series could find a second life on cable, the networks revitalized their campaign to dismantle the Financial Interest and Syndication (FinSyn) regulations. To review, FinSyn regulations were implemented along with the Prime Time Access Rule (PTAR).[114] Like PTAR, FinSyn stemmed from the FCC's attempt to increase program diversity.[115] In this case, it did so by creating a wall between producers and networks. The FinSyn rule stipulated that television networks could not hold the rights (including the syndication rights) to the series they broadcast.[116] In arguing for the repeal of FinSyn, the networks cited their loss of audience shares to cable.[117] They claimed that "they no longer control the airwaves" and the rule "[kept] them from competing with new technologies such as cable, pay-TV, and videocassettes."[118] When it suited their purposes, the networks had no qualms about acknowledging the threat that cable posed.

In the 1980s, the FCC ruled that the networks could once again retain syndication rights. This enabled the Big Three to profit from cable programming.[††] As *Channels* writer John S. Reidy explained,

> Despite cable's growth, the commercial networks are assured a dominant position, if not necessarily in distribution then certainly in programming. Today, in areas where cable's penetration is great, the most popular channels remain those carrying network programs. No new company in any of the new media can afford to finance, schedule, and distribute for free the full menu of weekly series that the networks provide.[119]

Cable television had provided ABC, CBS, and NBC with an excuse to pressure the FCC into revoking regulations that restricted the Big Three's potential revenue streams. By returning to the syndication business, the broadcasters assured their continued relevance in a cabled nation.

[††] Although the FCC scaled back FinSyn in the 1980s, a form of the rule remained in place until the federal regulator rescinded it in 1995.

Conclusion

Of all the challenges that the television networks faced in the 1970s and 1980s, cable television arguably caused the greatest upset. Cable TV introduced unprecedented competition for the networks and provided audiences with more television viewing options than ever before. Furthermore, cable channels' experimentation with the temporality of television had the potential to undermine network scheduling strategies. The networks were losing control of television's sociotemporal order.

The networks had never been the sole determinants of the television schedule's structure. Among others, the FCC and network affiliates influenced television's temporality. During the era of scarcity, the Big Three established scheduling conventions (including start and end times, length and number of commercial breaks, and "dayparting") that coordinated their programming. There were only three options for national commercial television and all three maintained similar temporal structures. Moving into the era of availability, cable television presented other possible temporal structures and viewers were no longer restricted by the networks' schedules. This undermined the networks' key tool to lead viewers through their programming, and, in turn, their advertising.

The trade papers credited cable channels with chipping away at the networks' audience shares, but the Big Three were resilient. Even as their audience shares declined, their total viewership increased and their revenues soared. They managed to publicly position themselves as impervious to competing television outlets, while arguing for FCC regulatory protection from those very outlets. The Big Three disregarded cable competition and the temporal restructuring it instigated. Instead, they focused on one another and maintaining television's temporal status quo, while expanding their businesses to turn their competitors into buyers.

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Chapter Four
VCRs: Challenging the Dominant Temporal Order

The early history of home video recorders is best characterized by William Boddy's contention that a matrix of interrelated "historical and cultural determinations" influences the impact and reception of any emergent technology.[1] Max Dawson investigated the specific cultural frames that shaped popular understandings of home video technologies, and identified a distinction between the introduction of VCRs in the 1970s and their predecessors in the 1960s.[2] Dawson connected the introduction of video technologies in the 1960s to discourses about television from the 1950s. He argued that influential cultural critics who accused television of "stupefying the audiences, warping the minds of children, eroding traditional values, reducing popular tastes to a lowest common denominator, and diminishing America's standing abroad" popularized the notion of television as low culture.[3] This discourse was reinforced by the quiz show scandal of the late 1950s. In 1958 and 1959, a quiz show contestant's complaint, a New York newspaper investigation, and a grand jury revealed that some quiz show producers influenced their contests' outcomes for dramatic effect. The deceit caused an uproar by viewers who felt "duped" and Congress launched hearings on the matter.[4] This scandal delegitimized the accuracy of television portrayals and solidified television's position as a low form of culture. The quiz show scandal was soon followed by Newton Minow's 1961 challenge to broadcasters at a NAB conference when he told attendees, "I invite you to sit down in front of your television set when your station goes on the air and stay without a book, magazine, newspaper, profit-and-loss sheet, or rating book to distract you – and keep your eyes glued to that set until the station signs off. I can assure you that you will observe a vast wasteland."[5]

It was in this context of television as a maligned and scandal ridden technology that a number of companies introduced video recording devices to the home market in the 1960s. Ampex launched a $30,000 model in 1963, and a cheaper one for $1,095 two years later.[6] Cartrivision entered the market in 1969.[7] Dawson argued that popular notions of television as low culture influenced the way that critics and manufacturers discussed the new technology. The social position of television at that historical moment influenced the way that manufacturers and distributers marketed these home video recorders and critics discussed them. Promotional materials positioned these home video technologies as alternatives to broadcast television programming that could play prerecorded video of mainstream and hard to get cultural products.[8] Home video recorders provided an alternative to the critically reviled broadcast television. By the time Sony introduced Betamax in the mid-1970s, this context had changed. Dawson argued that the networks' emphasis on "quality" and "relevance" in their prime time programs and elitist critics' lessening influence redeemed television from its position as low culture.[9]

Mark R. Levy and Edward L. Fink's work could also explain the phenomenon that Dawson identified. Levy and Fink described broadcasts as transient prior to the days of video recorders.[10] They referred to this as the "catch-it-or-miss-it nature of television broadcasts."[11] Once a show was broadcast, viewers could not see it again until it was rebroadcast. Levy and Fink indicated that this transience have may contributed to the medium's position as low culture.[12] Home video recorders provided viewers with a means for repeat viewing or later viewing, altering television's transience. Following

Levy and Fink's logic, perhaps television programs became more valuable once they found some endurance on video tape.

Ien Ang explained that in 1976, self-described "couch potatoes" launched "a mock-serious grassroots viewers' movement that promoted the view that watching television is at least as good as, and perhaps even better than, many other ways of spending leisure time."[13] This celebration of television coincided with Dawson, Levy, and Fink's research arcs. These redemption narratives lend context both to the video collectors who amassed great libraries of videotaped television and to the way scholars wrote about them.[14] Watching and enjoying television could be considered a worthwhile pastime. However, television's redemption was always partial and tenuous. "Couch potato" soon became a derisive term suggesting passive viewers.

VCRs countered "couch potatoes'" supposed passivity by providing viewers with the means to take a more active role in determining when and how they watched television. VCRs' recording and playback functions inspired scholars to investigate active television viewers/VCR users, and television critics to celebrate a newfound freedom from network schedules. The press and scholars alike connected this technology with choice and control, frequently describing it as a direct challenge to the television industry. The language often became hyperbolic.

In 1977, a year after Sony launched Betamax in the United States, *Newsweek*'s S. Terry Atlas and Alan M. Field wrote that "Sony has liberated [the viewer] from the tyranny of television programming."[15] This particular construction of the VCR underscores the struggle between viewers and broadcasters over television's temporality, and the value placed on defining one's own schedule. The melodramatic language receded from the mainstream media coverage once VCRs were firmly established in people's home, but the sentiments remained. In the early 1980s, *Newsweek*'s Harry F. Waters related an advertising executive's assessment that VCR users are "assuming more control over their TV sets."[16] *Time*'s Richard Zoglin reported that "VCR devotees are savouring a new sense of control over their TV viewing. Network schedules be damned! goes the rallying cry; now we can watch what we want, when we want."[17] The extent to which audience members could control their viewing experience was limited to the time at which they watched television shows and the option of selecting prerecorded material instead of TV broadcasts. Even so, VCRs did present more viewing options and increased control over viewing than audience members had had previously.

Scholarship on VCRs echoes mainstream media's interest in active audiences. Carolyn A. Lin expressed similar sentiments, defining the dynamic between choice and control. She explained that VCRs are one of the developments in the 1970s that provided "TV viewers with expanded viewing options and increased technical controls over their viewing process."[18] According to Lin, VCRs offer viewers an opportunity to take control of their viewing. She later expanded on this connection.

> Specifically, the reason that the VCR plays a significant role in our home video environment is because it is the very first video communication medium that allows us to "take control" of when, where, how, and what to watch on television or via a television monitor. In essence, VCR use reflects audience choice behaviour when it comes to constructing a video-programming environment that one desires at home. Such control and choice are not alien to the audience's nature, albeit it can only be exercised as permitted by the capability of human technology.[19]

In this statement, Lin clarified that when she wrote about taking control over television, she was referring to the timing of viewing. VCR users can time-shift. In other words, they record television programs to watch at a time of their convenience. Lin further explained that VCR use is an extension of viewers' desire to control their time, and that the technology allows them to act on this desire. Lin refrained from overstating the extent to which the VCR unsettled the power dynamic between viewer and broadcaster.

Lin's extensive work on VCRs took this a step further when she wrote that "the introduction of the VCR emancipated the TV audience from being a *passive* viewer to an *active user*."[20] A number of other scholars reiterated this construction of the VCR as instrumental in the shift from passive to active viewer. Kimberly K. Massey and Stanley J. Baran argued that VCRs changed television viewing. "Instead of slouching in front of the screen, passing time, viewers are now participants in the creation of the television viewing experience."[21] Levy's work consistently focused on this connection between VCRs and active audiences.[22] This formation of the active user is highly problematic in that it reduces audience activity to selecting from a predetermined list of options, most of which are produced or distributed by the broadcasters or their parent companies, and it ignores the activity involved in interpreting and discussing texts. Although this definition of audience activity is an oversimplification, the fact that an extensive body of literature focused on time-shifting as control indicates an established "common wisdom" about the role that VCRs play in the television viewing experience.

Some scholarly work leaned towards the hyperbolic when discussing VCRs. For example, Brian Winston wrote "[the VCR] offers a real add-on advantage to the television since it breaks the tyranny of the programme scheduler, allowing for time shifting and personalised archiving."[23] Sean Cubitt described VCRs "freeing viewers from the tyranny of the network schedules."[24] Lin argued that "the VCR liberates the audience from being bound to the rigid television program schedule."[25] The use of words such as "liberates" and "tyranny" in the above contexts makes it clear that these scholars considered watching television outside of network schedules a shift in power.

The connection between videotape, time, and unsettling broadcasters' reach predates these critics. In fact, the idea that VCRs provide television viewers with the means to control their time and unsettle the networks' dominance over broadcasting repeats throughout the history of the technology, from its conception through its development and marketing campaigns.

VCR: The Early Days

Early television pioneers in America and Japan expressed disdain for the way in which television had become a commercial venture controlled by a few networks with little input from, or recourse for, the viewing public.[26] Inventor Kenjiro Takayanagi envisioned television as "an individual medium, one that not only provided its user with a vast array of program choices but one in which the user could actually make his own television images."[27] Takayanagi's dream influenced the development of JVC's VHS videocassette recorder. According to Margaret B. W. Graham, RCA's David Sarnoff sought to "free television viewers from commercial broadcasting, the part of the entertainment electronics industry he himself had helped to create but had long despised."[28] Sarnoff foresaw home video as a way for television audiences to gain control over their viewing.[29] RCA was the first to distribute JVC's VHS videocassette recorder in the United States. Sony's Akio Morita also drew inspiration for what eventually became the Betamax machine from his frustration with the television networks' control over the timing of television viewing.[30] In his autobiography, Morita wrote

> In the fifties and sixties, popular programs in the United States and later in Japan caused people to change their schedules. People would hate to miss their favorite shows. I noticed how the networks had total control over people's lives, and I felt that people should have the option of seeing a program when they chose.[31]

Takayanagi, Sarnoff, and Morita, key figures in the development of home video recording, all questioned the dominance of the networks in the American commercial television industry. Their scepticism influenced the functions and features of these time-shifting machines. Choice, control, and time were central to these pioneers' visions, and became recurring themes in the discourse surrounding VCRs.

A difference of opinion on the topic of time triggered the format war between Sony's Betamax and JVC's VHS machines. Previously, Sony, JVC, and Matsushita signed an agreement to share research and development on the videotape system they were each working on.[32] Together they produced the U-Matic video system which became popular in the television industry and educational institutions.[33] As Sony and JVC proceeded with their home videocassette systems, there was some question as to whether or not they would continue their collaborative effort. Sony's work on Betamax was well ahead of JVC's development team.[34] Sony invited JVC to peek at their prototype with the possibility of continuing the development as a joint venture. Little did they know that time in the form of tape-length would turn these collaborators into competitors.

Prior to this meeting, JVC engineers had been working on their own prototype. Driven to realize Kenjiro Takayanagi's dream of viewer control, the specificities of the recording function were a high priority.[35] After consulting the television schedule, the JVC team determined that they would create a machine with the ability to tape two hours of material so viewers could record their favourite movies broadcast on television.[36] When engineers from JVC met with the Betamax team, they found that Sony was set on a one hour recording time.[37] That was the end of a possible collaboration and compatible VCR systems. As JVC saw it, the Sony team was in such a rush to launch their system that they did not think through how those using this key feature would want it to function.[38]

Tape length also came into play in RCA's decision to distribute VHS. RCA executives met with Sony, but passed on their system due to financial and labelling issues.[39] When RCA met with JVC engineers, the VHS tapes ran two hours in length. RCA executives requested a three hour tape so American consumers could record their beloved football games.[40] The JVC engineers figured out how to double the recording time of their tapes using a Sony innovation.[41] By the time RCA introduced VHS to the American market, the tapes could record for two or four hours.

These decisions about tape length were based on educated guesswork as to how consumers would use the technology and what they would want to record. JVC engineers based their initial design on the broadcast running time of a film. RCA based their request for four hour video tapes on the idea that a football game would be a better selling point for the American market. Sony engineers reportedly assumed that one hour tapes would fulfill consumers recording needs.[42] Viewers could record an hour long program, and pop in a second tape if they needed to record for a longer period. This incorrect guess put them at a disadvantage once VHS' longer tapes entered the marketplace. Even when Sony doubled the recording time of its Betamax tapes, its one or two hour tapes were still half as long as VHS' two or four hour tapes.[43]

Sony launched its Betamax videocassette recorder in the U.S. in February 1976.[44] Eighteen months later, RCA launched JVC's VHS videocassette recorder.[45] Betamax and VHS had similar features, but were incompatible systems. Videotapes for one model would not work with the other model. Thus began an epic battle for market share.

A few other video recording and playback systems entered the U.S. market in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. Cartrivision, Selectavision, and Discovision, to name a few, all failed where VHS and Betamax succeeded.[46] Secunda argued that Discovision and Selectavision offered superior image quality to the VCR, but its inability to record as well as play video doomed the videodisc technology.[47] Cartrivision entered the market with both recording and playback functionality well before Sony's American Betamax launch.[48] However, according to Stuart M. De Luca, Sony's single-minded advertising campaign touting the time-shifting function of Betamax was the key to its success.[49] There are many economic, social, industrial and political reasons that technologies succeed or fail at the time that they do. The VCR's recording and time-shifting functions, and Sony's marketing campaign based on those features, tapped into television's redemption in the 1970s, in part due to the emphasis on relevance at the turn of the decade.[50]

Betamax: "Watch Whatever, Whenever"

Sony's Betamax campaign is legendary. As Eugene Secunda explained, "Sony's Betamax advertising was clearly promoting the concept that viewers owning Betamax

VCRs were capable of choosing the time they watched their favourite television shows."[51] The entire campaign centred on time-shifting, as shown in Figure 4.1, a 1976 Betamax advertisement from the *New York Times*. It exhorts the reader to "Make Your Own TV Schedule" and the copy explains how Betamax can help a VCR owner do so.

Such ads call to mind Lynn Spigel's work on the domestication of television. Spigel examined magazine advertisements from the 1940s and 1950s and discovered how "the idea of television and its place in the home was circulated to the public."[52] The images and text provided potential viewers with ideas of how to integrate the emergent technology into their home lives. As Spigel explained, advertisements such as these "reveal a general set of discursive rules that were formed for thinking about television in its early period."[53] Much like the advertisements for television sets that Spigel described, the copy in numerous Betamax ads instructed potential consumers how use VCRs in their everyday lives.

This ad (Figure 4.1) explains in bold typeface that "Sony's Betamax can automatically videotape your favourite show for you to play back anytime you want." What follows is a series of features and their functions. The ad explains that the machine connects to any television, that the recording function can be set to a timer, that it uses re-recordable one hour tapes, and that the VCR owner can watch one show while recording another one. To emphasize the freedom and control that Betamax offers, these instructions begin with "Now you can watch anything you want to watch anytime you want to watch it" and concludes with the exclamation "What power!" This advertisement is exemplary of the promotions Frederick Wasser referred to when he

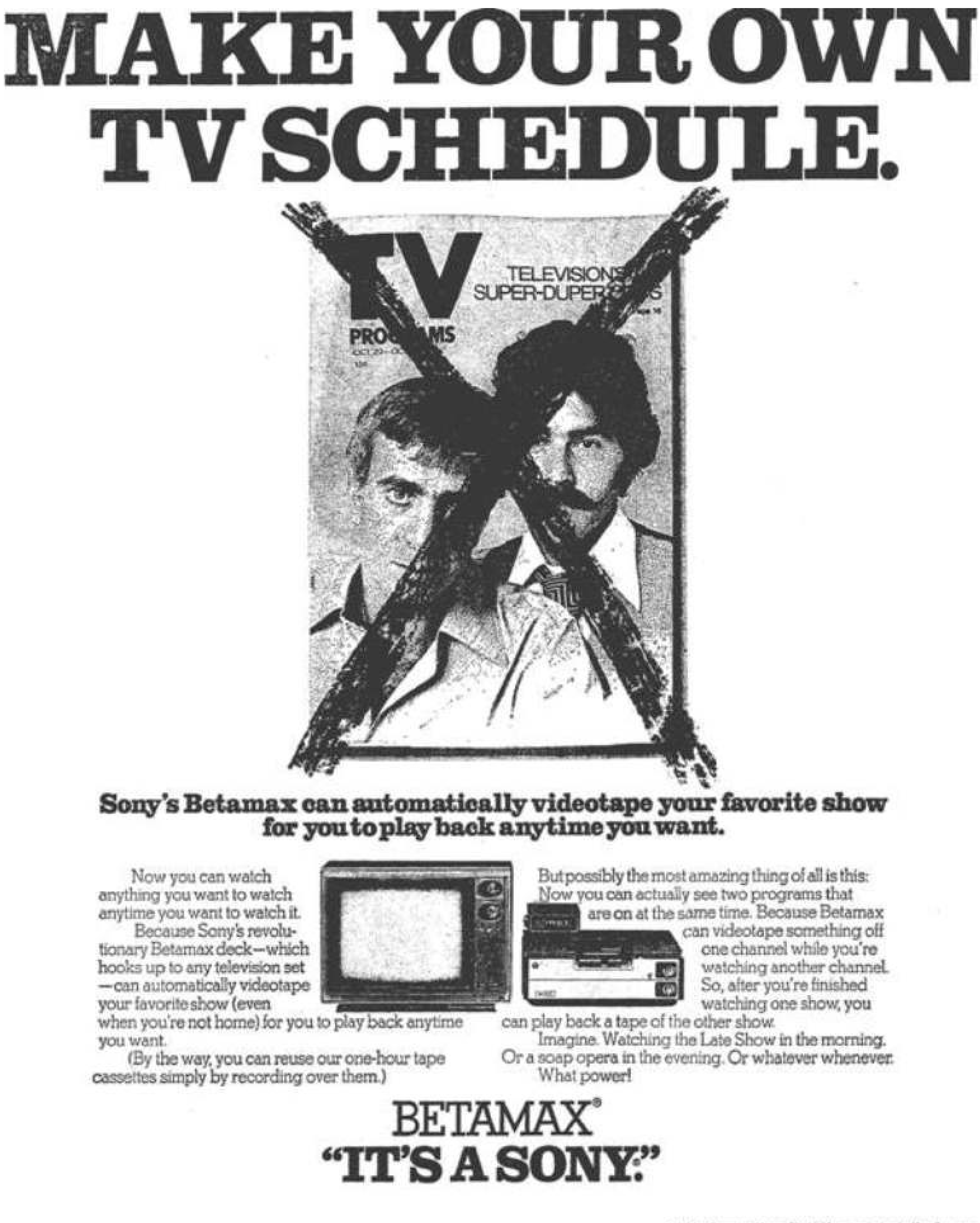


Figure 4.1 1976 Betamax ad[54]

wrote “Sony’s advertising agency, Doyle, Dane, and Bernback (DD&B), fulfilled Morita’s desire to promote the Betamax as a ‘subversive’ machine that would take control away from the programmers and give it back to the consumers.”[55] This ad directly challenges the television schedule, and makes explicit the connection between the television schedule and power. If the ad copy was not clear enough, the large “X” over the faux-*TV Guide* in this ad drives the point home. In the ad’s concluding exclamation “What power!,” Sony emphasizes the significance of controlling one’s own time.

Betamax ads frequently pitched the notion of watching tonight’s broadcast tomorrow, whether it was the football game or the *Tonight Show,* such as in Figure 4.2. This print ad was part of a larger campaign that included television commercials in a similar vein. James Lardner described two of these ads in which Dracula and a taxi driver plan to watch the previous evening’s television programs at the end of their nightshifts.[56] These print and television advertisements explained to potential customers how to utilize the new technology. The commercial featuring the taxi driver also addressed the class bias of television schedules which are based on the daily routines of those working regular nine to five jobs, such as office workers. It suggested that the VCR would make prime time television available to shift workers. The Betamax was advertised as democratizing television, and in this way it was. Market research from the late 1970s determined that “a large percentage of buyers [of videocassette recorders] are people with odd-hour jobs, such as nurses, janitors, and airline pilots.”[57] However, when this ad campaign ran, the machines still cost over $1000.[58] This promised democratisation of television was limited to those who could afford it.

As Wasser explained, these advertising campaigns "pitched the VCR as a corrective to the rigid schedules of television and challenged the status quo."[59] This approach echoes the concerns about choice and control expressed by Sony's Morita, RCA's David Sarnoff, and JVC's Kenjiro Takayanagi. These are not simply ideals Sony purported to offer with the Betamax; rather, it discursively constructed the technology as though it was in direct competition with the schedule.

Figure 4.2 1976 Betamax ad[60]

<u>Broadcasters and Business</u>

Betamax's New York advertising agency sent an ad mock up to MCA/Universal president Sidney Sheinberg for his approval.[61] The copy read "Now you don't have to miss Kojak because you're watching Columbo (or vice versa)."[62] Universal Pictures produced both television series, but they were broadcast at the same time on different networks. The ad offered Betamax's recording function as a solution to the conundrum viewers faced if they wanted to watch both of these popular series. Clearly, the advertising agency considered this beneficial for both the production company and the viewing public. The fact that the advertising team sent the ad to Sheinberg for his approval indicates that they distinguished the challenge time-shifting posed to the television networks' schedule from the potential business boon for the producers. Sheinberg thought otherwise, and questioned whether or not Sony should be allowed to sell such a machine.[63] He expressed concern that if people recorded their favourite movies from their television broadcasts and stored those recordings, they would not watch later broadcasts of the films or theatrical rereleases.[64] MCA/Universal saw the Betamax's recording function as a threat to their bottom-line.

In the fall of 1976, MCA subsidiary Universal City Studios Inc. along with Walt Disney Productions filed a lawsuit against Sony over copyright infringement.[65] The central argument was over whether time-shifting should be classified as fair use of copyrighted material or as copyright violation. Sheinberg argued that what those who time-shift "are saying is our product is not entitled to copyright protection."[66] Sony countered that "for MCA to say that we can't sell people something to use in their own homes is like somebody saying that General Motors can't sell cars because people will drive them too fast."[67] Sony initially won, but MCA/Universal and Disney appealed the court's ruling. The case went all the way to the Supreme Court which ruled in Sony's favour in January 1984.[68] There were two key findings in the Supreme Court's final opinion. The Court ruled that "home videotaping of television programs for private use is not a violation of copyright law."[69] Furthermore, the ruling determined that time-shifting "was a 'non-commercial, nonprofit' activity with 'no demonstrable effect on the potential market for, or the value of, the copyrighted work.'"[70]

In the midst of this prolonged legal dispute, Sony took out ads in newspapers across the country proclaiming that "throughout history, man has continuously fought the battle against the dictates and restraints of time" and Betamax was a tool in this battle.[71] (See Figure 4.3.) These ads capitalized on the ongoing legal dispute with Universal and Disney, redirecting that struggle from copyright to time. They specifically challenged the networks' role in determining television's temporal structure. Even though the television networks did not participate in the Betamax case, Sony's campaign made this connection between the case and television network schedules, then positioned itself as the little guy fighting for the right to define one's own time.

The broadcasters did not respond to Sony's challenge. According to Marlow and Secunda, "[t]here is no indication the networks' senior executives had any realistic appreciation at that time about the ways in which the VCR would ultimately impact on their industry."[72] Throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s, the broadcasters were mostly silent on the topic of VCRs. When network executives did make any statements about this emergent technology, they downplayed its importance to the industry. This is evident in the stories that began to circulate in the 1980s about senior network executives' early responses to VCRs, such as this one from *Channels* writer David Lachenbruch:

> In 1975, when Sony introduced Betamax, the first practical home video-cassette recorder (VCR) at a consumer price, a top programming executive at each of the three commercial networks was asked about the implications of this new contraption...Two of the network men shrugged off the Betamax as a novelty that would have absolutely

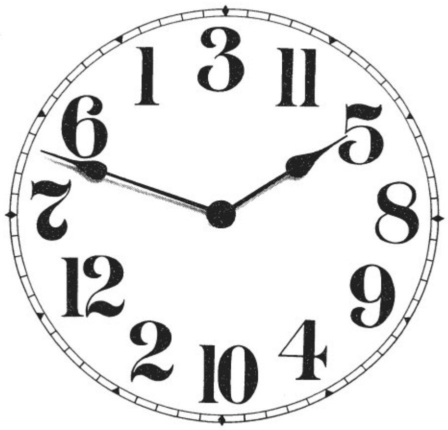
pg. B5

What time is it?

That depends on how you look at it.

Throughout history, man has continuously fought the battle against the dictates and restraints of time.

It is, at once, both the enemy and ally of civilization.



You can also buy or rent many different kinds of prerecorded programs to view whenever you wish.

The Betamax enables you to have access to information and entertainment that might otherwise be missed.

The improvement of the human condition is a direct result of the creative management of time.

The benefits have been time to think, create, invent, and discover.

But time to think, create, invent, and discover has led to a world that is increasingly more complex and varied than ever before.

Time itself must be rearranged.

And that is no longer an option, but a necessity.

Twenty-five years ago, a tool was created to rearrange time—the Video Tape Recorder.

It was the beginning of a new industry, and a new age.

Then, in 1965, Sony introduced the first Home Video Tape Recorder.

It allowed you not to be penalized if the schedule of your life didn't happen to coincide with the schedule of broadcast programming.

The Home Video Tape Recorder rearranged time to fit your schedule.

It evolved in 1975, to the Sony Betamax Home Video Cassette Recorder.

And as the world became more complex, the Betamax became more indispensable as a tool for the control and rearrangement of time.

The Betamax enables you to record television programming off the air, and play it back at your convenience.

Linked with a portable video color camera, you can even create your own library of family documentaries and memorable moments.

Now, your freedom to use this tool is being threatened.

Recently, the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a trial court decision, and stated that the taping of television programs off the public airwaves, for personal, noncommercial use, is an infringement of the copyright laws.

In essence, the appeals court is saying that the many millions of people who are recording off the air are breaking the law.

Nothing is so powerful as an idea whose time has come.

And the Home Video Cassette Recorder is such an idea.

It enables people to have a mastery of time.

It gives them an invaluable tool that truly enriches their lives.

Sony Corporation of America will continue to defend in court the consumer's right to use these machines and enjoy this marvelous technological innovation.

What time is it?

It's time to make the most of time.

It's time to understand and reap the benefits of a new and wondrous technology.

It's time to voice your opinion.

What time is it?

What time do you want it to be?

Sony Corporation of America

9 West 57th Street, New York, New York 10019

Figure 4.3 1981 Sony Corporation of America ad[73]

> no effect. The third speculated that it would be 20 years before a significant percentage of American homes had VCRs, and said "By then I'll be retired, and somebody else will have to worry about it." But at the end of 1984, the executive hadn't retired yet and at least 19 percent of American homes, nearly one in five, had VCRs.[74]

Television Digest's Editorial Director put forth a possible explanation for this when he said that the network programming heads thought of the VCR as an appliance "like a toaster."[75] The networks' dismissive attitudes towards VCRs countered the dominant logic of the time. This analogy of the VCR as just another "appliance" in the face of the Betamax case and Sony's advertising campaign betrays either the arrogance or naïveté of the networks. Treating a time-shifting machine as equivalent to a toaster was potentially perilous to an industry in which scheduling strategies were a central component of their business model.

Commercial television networks make profits by selling time to advertisers, and advertisers buy access to the viewers watching their commercial spots. Advertising rates are based on predictions, educated guesses, of the number of viewers that will watch the program and presumably the commercials. These predictions are based on previous viewing numbers. The networks have developed a range of scheduling strategies to entice viewers to tune in to their network and stay there throughout the viewing block.[76] VCRs disrupt this model at two points. Time-shifters can record a segment of a network's program schedule and watch it out of its intended order, thus bypassing the programmed flow the broadcaster relies upon for extended viewing. For example, a network may "hammock" a weak show between two popular series expecting that viewer who tunes in to one of the popular shows will either continue watching after the first one or tune in early before the later one. This boosts the ratings of the middle, weaker series, and, therefore, its ad revenue. However, time-shifters may only record their preferred programs and the weak series will not benefit from the popular series' viewership. In other words, these well developed scheduling strategies may no longer work to boost ratings and advertising revenue if the audience is recording only their preferred series.

Furthermore, viewers can avoid commercials by zipping or zapping them. "Zipping" refers to the act of using the fast forward function to speed past certain segments of a recorded videotape. "Zapping," in this context, refers to the act of temporarily pausing a tape while recording something so that segment does not end up on the videotape.[*] Both acts undermine the entire basis of the broadcasters' business model. Scheduling strategies and ratings are meaningless if viewers are zipping and zapping commercials. Viewers could miss commercials prior to the introduction of the VCR by leaving the room, participating in another activity or changing the channel. However, the television and advertising industries ignored this wrench in their business model. VCRs simply made this ad skipping explicit.[77] Even though VCRs undermined the television industry's agreed upon myth that there was a multitude of avid commercial watchers, network executives often ignored or dismissed the implications of zipping and zapping.

The broadcasters were not the only ones with this blind spot. The television industry trade papers and mainstream magazines covered technological advances, followed the Betamax case, talked about the problems VCRs posed to Nielsen ratings, addressed piracy concerns around the world, and discussed the blossoming pre-recorded

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[*] "Zapping" can also refer to using a Remote Control Device to change channels, typically during a commercial break. However, the articles discussed above ignore this usage of the word.

videotape industry. These sources along with the advertising journals speculated about how VCRs would impact television commercials. Yet, there was little talk about VCRs' impact on the television networks' business model and no mention of the effect that time-shifting might have on television schedules.

The broadcasters' initial responses, or lack thereof, are understandable. Sony launched Betamax in the U.S. shortly after the networks celebrated their second highest rated season ever. ABC, CBS, and NBC enjoyed a combined prime time share of 93% in the 1975-1976 television season.[78] By the end of 1977, ratings dropped during both daytime and prime time television on all three networks.[79] However, there was not necessarily a causal relationship between the introduction of Betamax and VHS to the American market and the decline of network ratings. At that point, fewer than 200,000 households in the U.S. owned a VCR.[80] There was little talk of the VCR's impact on commercial television in the trade papers or mainstream publications at the time. However, the networks' numbers continued to erode as the cable industry grew and home videotape recorders entered the market.[81]

By 1978, *Newsweek* did pick up on the problem VCRs posed for Nielsen ratings. In the mid-1970s, the ratings company A.C. Nielsen did not have a method to tally programs that viewers recorded and watched at a later time. The ratings company relied on a combination of diaries for participants to record their demographic data and "Audimeters" that, when connected to a television set, could record the channel to which that television was tuned.[82] Harry F. Waters reported,

> As more and more families start behaving as their own programmers, the entire TV industry could be thrown into confusion about what America is really watching. A.C. Nielsen's Audimeters are able to detect when a videotape

> recorder is operating, but they only rate those programs being watched at the same time they are being transmitted. If the VTR is recording a show while its owner is turned to another channel, or otherwise engaged, that show receives no Nielsen credit – even though it will be viewed at a later time.[83]

Although VCR households were still less than 1% of the nation, *Newsweek*'s observation was an early glimmer of recognition that the VCR could change the television industry.[84] Within a year, A.C. Nielsen adjusted their data gathering practices to incorporate time-shifted viewing.[85] This is further evidence that knowledgeable industry insiders picked up on something the networks had ignored. As VCR sales increased, industry insiders began to acknowledge the VCR's potential influence on viewing practices.

The networks dismissed the VCR as just another "appliance," but they took action in another way. As Larry Michie explained, "the industry as a whole, including the networks, seems to have recognized the fact that new technologies don't have to be blindly opposed. They can be manipulated to everyone's benefit."[86] There are many ways to respond to emergent technologies. While ignoring the VCR's challenge to the network schedules, the broadcasters expanded their business in ways that would take advantage of this new "appliance." To this end, ABC and CBS opened production studios in 1979 to produce feature films and videos. It may not have been a direct response to the rising popularity of the VCR, but journalists and those within the industry connected the dots between the networks new enterprise and emergent television technologies.[87] Gustave M. Hauser, the co-chairman, president, and chief executive of Warner Communications Inc. and American Express, put his finger on the popular industry wisdom: "It's obvious that they're thinking about selling those movies someday to pay-cable, cassettes, or discs."[88] The networks could frame this move as a proactive measure, instead of a reactive one. ABC Television President Frederick S. Pierce did just that in his *Variety* article about broadcasting in the 1980s. He began,

> The present strength of the commercial television system is the base for the future, although more people will watch more television in different ways in the 1980s and beyond. It is our philosophy that through refinements in technology, such as home video devices, cable television and informational systems, television will evolve into a multipurpose home information-entertainment center. Our planning is directed toward this expanded use of the medium.[89]

This approach complements the notion that the VCR is like any other "appliance." If a VCR is just a distribution venue, it becomes a supplement to television viewing rather than a challenge to it.

Time-Shifting Gaps and Blind Spots

Several industry organizations published studies on VCR use in 1980 and 1981. They all found that time-shifting was the principle reason people bought VCRs and it was their primary use.[90] Two of these studies reported that approximately three quarters of VCR owners used them mostly for time-shifting.[91] The Field Research Corp. survey determined that

> [t]hree-quarters of the people who own VCRs use them to record programs off the air and watch them at a later time. Then they re-use the tape, thus erasing the program and undercutting the dire conjectures of the movie companies that VCR owners would stockpile films at home and stop going to the neighbourhood Bijou. Some 75% of the VCR owners questioned did admit they had tape libraries, but most meant 15 tapes or fewer. Only 23% said they were building substantial cassette libraries.[92]

Although producers were quick to respond to the perceived threat VCRs posed to their profits, early VCR adopters followed Sony's lead. These viewers posed the exact challenge to the networks that Sony had championed in their Betamax ad campaign.

As VCR sales rose, their primary use as time-shifters was consistent.[93] The percentage of VCR households nearly quadrupled in two years, from 5.5% in 1982 to 20.8% 1984.[94] Sales took off even before the Supreme Court made their decision on the Betamax case. VCR sales in 1983 doubled those in 1982.[95] Study after study found that an increasing number of viewers used VCRs to watch television on their own timetable instead of by the networks' schedules. These findings support claims that the VCR is a liberating tool rather than merely another "appliance."

By the mid-1980s, journalists and those involved in the television industry began to address the VCR's challenge to network television. However, they usually did not make the connection between new viewing activities and the industry's commercial business model. Ex-FCC commissioner Nicholas Johnson expressed grave concern about the VCR's impact on television. *Variety* reported that Johnson said, "What the VCR does...is to destroy tv-habits which have developed over decades....The VCR owner tapes a show, goes into the office, chats with friends, gets the good or bad word on a program, and frequently records over the show without even seeing it."[96] The concern here seems to be that people would stop watching television. It framed television viewing as a habit that can be broken if other options are available. Even though Johnson did not mention television schedules or scheduling strategies, his framing suggests that they direct an audience to watch television.

A 1985 annual report in trade paper *Channels* acknowledged the impact VCRs could have on viewing habits when staff writer David Lachenbruch mentioned that the VCR "lets the formerly captive audiences watch somebody else's pre-recorded programs instead of network offerings, and even lets them zap commercials out of the network shows."[97] Even though Lachenbruch did not mention the television schedule by name, his framing supports the "liberation" discourse that VCRs sometimes inspired. He constructed the business of television as a question of whether people will choose to watch or not. Lachenbruch suggested that, if people had viewing options other than network television and network commercials, they would choose those options. He was correct in that this would pose problems for the networks, but the reporter ignored time-shifting and the more complex issues that the VCR posed for commercial television.

In one instance in which a trade paper did acknowledge that VCRs could unsettle the industry's business model, the writer quickly swept aside that possibility. *Variety*'s Tony Seideman, wrote "[a]dvertisers put up the bucks that support the broadcasting biz on the premise that viewers will watch their commercials. The VCR makes that belief a lie. Consumers fast forward through commercials or skip them when recording."[98] Although he did not write much more than the report in *Variety*, Seideman connected zipped and zapped ads to the business of television. He then played down the threat of VCRs to the networks, suggesting that there were too few machines in the U.S. to make a difference.[99] This seems like an odd conclusion considering Seideman himself had commented on 1983's dramatic rise in VCR sales just three weeks prior.[100] Furthermore, the very title of Seideman's article, "See VCR Reshaping Video Media; Affect Distrib, Pricing, Habits," betrays this dismissal.

Lachenbruch's and Seideman's reports also missed links between VCR time-shifting and network ratings. Industry studies found that VCR owners were as likely to time-shift daytime series than prime time shows, if not more so.[101] By the mid-1980s, the ratings for network daytime soap operas dropped.[102] As Syd Silverman noted, "the daytime fall-off could be even more serious in terms of advertiser rebates, since daytime is as profitable as primetime and lost more viewers."[103] Although reports on VCR use identified daytime programming as significant, no one publicly connected this ratings drop to the VCR's growing popularity. Highlighting the VCR blind spot, Jack Loftus attributed the loss in viewers to cable and independent television stations, without even mentioning VCRs.[104] The trades reported all of the pieces to this puzzle, but did not put them together. The networks continued to publicly ignore evident ways that VCR use could damage their profits.

Unlike the television networks, the advertising industry was concerned about the VCR's impact on the value of commercial time.[105] From 1978 through the mid-1980s, advertisers expressed concern that commercial zapping was a potential problem.[106] They were also concerned that VCRs interfered with their ability to obtain accurate ratings data. Harvey and Rothe addressed the problems that both VCRs and cable posed to ratings systems: "Due to the inability to accurately measure the number of viewers and their demographic characteristics on cable and VCRs, advertisers can not accurately project the value of the advertising to their company."[107] By the mid-1980s, Nielsen had begun introducing "Peoplemeters" which recorded demographic data along with viewing selections to ensure more accurate data collection.[†] However, advertisers were still concerned about the VCR's effect on viewing habits and on the value of their commercials despite Nielsen's added measures.

Even though the networks stood to lose advertising dollars if a significant number of viewers time-shifted or zipped and zapped commercials, advertisers took it upon themselves to solve the problem. Television and advertising industry trade papers were rife with suggestions for more effective television ads. Their recommendations included incorporating ads into the programs, making the ads more entertaining and informative, making them shorter, and "visual inclusion" such as incorporating advertising into music videos and vice versa.[108] Even though advertising journals paid more attention to the potential consequences of home taping on VCRs than did television industry trade papers, they did not always connect the dots between the commercial television business model and ad zapping. In all cases, the onus to win back commercial viewers was solely on the advertisers. This was not considered a problem for the networks. In fact, network ad revenues soared throughout this period. In 1980, *Variety*'s Syd Silverman proclaimed, "[t]he American television networks are entering the 1980s on a high note and armed with the knowledge that they are the most effective and profitable advertising medium in the world having cracked the $4-billion barrier for the first time."[109] Ad sales continued to climb well into the 1980s.[110] These reports persisted even as network audience shares eroded.

People from both the advertising and television industries argued that time-shifting could be good for business. According to Massey and Baran, "broadcasters were

[†] Peoplemeters required each participant to push a button every fifteen minutes on a device registered with her or his demographic data when watching television. Viewers who did not push their buttons regularly, would not register in the system.

initially unconcerned about the use of VCRs. They did not care *when* people watched their shows as long as they *did* watch them."[111] De Luca wrote an almost identical depiction of the broadcasters' thoughts on VCRs and time-shifting, suggesting that it represented common wisdom about the industry.[112] According to De Luca's and Massey and Baran's descriptions, the networks completely ignored the purpose of ratings. Viewers who were not tallied in the Nielsen ratings were not making the networks any money. Even including time-shifters in the ratings count did not solve the problem. Strong ratings determine ad rates, but those rates are based on the assumption that viewers watched the commercials. Time-shifting viewers are less likely to watch commercials, and are, therefore, less valuable viewers.

It appears that the advertising industry did not take this into account either. According to an article in an advertising journal,

> Timeshifting results in greater reach and higher-volume taping of specific kinds of content such as network miniseries, regular network fare, and local news programs; but the tape-over rate for these programs will be high. Library-building results in lower-volume taping but longer shelf life for other types of content such as network news, cable and pay cable, and sports. Thus, advertisers can identify time slots which are likely to have longer shelf life and place ads whose content will have longevity of appeal for the target audience.[113]

Here, Henke and Donohue argued that commercial time in certain time-shifted programs would be more valuable than others. They completely overlooked commercial zipping and zapping during time-shifted programs. This seems to be another case of selective analysis.

Mingo put forth one possible reason that the networks and advertisers were not worried about time-shifters.

> Ironically, nobody watches a commercial more attentively than a VCR owner about to pounce on the "RECORD" button, waiting for the show to begin again...Still, that's nothing compared to what happens when we fast-scan commercials on tape. What happens is that we unwittingly do to ourselves what broadcasters' codes forbid advertisers to do: show us commercial messages so rapidly that they are picked up only by our unconscious mind, unfiltered by our consciousness.[114]

According to Mingo's analysis, time-shifters were more valuable viewers than those who watch television by the schedule. This argument addresses some of the trouble that VCRs could have caused the television industry. Viewers could subvert the television networks' temporal dominance while the industry continued to profit from ad sales. Viewers would see the commercials broadcast during the recorded programs, but scheduling techniques would be useless and their value lost. The networks, the critics, the analysts and the advertisers all continued to ignore exactly how the VCR's intended purpose and its initial use could undermine the networks' attempts to guide viewers through their programming.

By 1988, VCR users were more likely to watch pre-recorded tapes than time-shifted programs.[115] According to Lucas Hilderbrand and Joshua M. Greenberg, this shift occurred discursively in the media, VCR retail outlets, and video stores before VCR practices changed. Hilderbrand noted that public discussions about time-shifting faded away after the Supreme Court ruling on Sony v. Universal.[116] My findings in the trade papers support Hilderbrand's argument. Time-shifting disappeared from the pages of *Variety* as articles about video rentals increased. Yet, there was no discussion about changing VCR practices.

Greenberg argued that video distributors, store owners, and video store clerks acted as mediators between the manufacturers and new VCR owners, and shaped the meaning of VCRs as the video rental market developed in the late 1970s and early 1980s.[117] He described how store owners stopped selling VCRs as an extension of television and instead sold them as movie-playing machines; videotape distributors taught new video rental store owners how to promote their pre-recorded video selection; video store owners set up their storefronts to highlight movies rather than videocassettes; and video store clerks positioned themselves as movie experts making recommendations based on the store's stock, the latest film releases, and their regular customers' specific tastes. Videocassettes became the main attraction, instead of the accessory. According to Wasser, video rentals offered a temporally flexible leisure activity that fit within the VCR user's harried lifestyle just as time-shifting had.[118] Even though VCR users began to use their VCRs to view rented videos more than time-shifted television programs, they had already had a taste of watching television on their own time and continued to utilize the expanded television options that the VCR offered. VCR use continued to chip away at network ratings and the television audience was no longer held captive by the television networks' temporal order.[119]

Conclusion

The VCR enabled viewers to watch television programs whenever they wanted. It provided VCR users with the tools to remove themselves from television's sociotemporal order altogether. Viewers could now control what part of a network's televisual flow they would watch, and when they would watch it. They could pick an individual program out of a network's program flow, missing the series before and after it. Thus, the VCR put at risk the scheduling strategies that the networks had spent decades developing to manage the audience.

Prior to the VCR, television viewers could leave the room or turn to another channel during a commercial break, but they risked missing the beginning of a show's following segment. VCR users could zip through advertisements, skipping commercial breaks without missing a moment of the show. The emergent technology made commercial avoidance visible to audience researchers and more desirable for viewers, threatening television's commercial funding structure.

As we have seen in this chapter, the VCR was designed and marketed as a challenge to television's dominant temporal order. Journalists and scholars alike commented on its subversive use. Yet few acknowledged the extent of the threat that VCRs posed to the television industry's business model. For a decade, time-shifting was the most popular VCR activity. Despite the booming VCR market, falling network shares, and the consistent prevalence of time-shifting in VCR use studies, the television networks continued to dismiss the evidence while looking for ways to capitalize on this new home "appliance." It is ironic that this temporally tied technology inspired so little resistance by those whose bottom line depends on a strictly followed schedule.

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Chapter Five
News Time: Dinner Rituals and Never Ending Newscasts

The first television newscasts were experimental and irregular. As with all television broadcasts, news broadcasts predate the United States' involvement in World War II. NBC's newscast, *The Esso Television Reporter*, began as early as 1940.[1] However, it wasn't until after the war ended that New York received the first regularly scheduled television newscast when CBS broadcast *Douglas Edwards and the News* once a week in 1946.[2] By the 1947-1948 television season, both CBS and NBC broadcast 10 minute twice-weekly news programs.[3]

By most accounts, coverage of the 1948 Democratic convention marked a major breakthrough for television news.[4] According to CBS News' Sig Mickelson, this marked "the real birth of the television news era" when television had "its first real opportunity to prove to masses of Americans that it could deliver a service unlike anything that had ever been available."[5] Reuven Frank noted that this was the first time that any broadcaster, including radio, had provided "gavel-to-gavel" coverage of such an event.[6] With 500,000 televisions in circulation and an estimation of up to four viewers per television set, the event had the potential to be seen by 2 million viewers.[7] Although this was a much smaller audience than radio could expect at the time, it was a significant boost for the burgeoning medium.[8]

There is no data on the number of people who actually watched the 1948 convention on television. A.C. Nielsen did not start gathering television ratings data until two years later.[9] However, the large potential audience, the low cost of production (unlike entertainment shows, there was no need to pay performers), and the news departments' ability to provide a unique service was enough for the networks to deem the extended news coverage a success.[10] The 1948 convention coverage sparked interest in more frequent newscasts. Mickelson recalled that “CBS management decided that the medium had grown to the point where it could obtain advertiser support for a daily news program.”[11] By that fall, all of the networks included daily news shows on their schedules.[12]

As television news developed from extended convention coverage to regular newscasts, the FCC encouraged network news production in the name of the public interest. Mickelson offered a fairly cynical take on this:

> The Federal Communications Commission in granting station licenses had no legal mandate to prescribe that news be included in schedules, but made it clear that public service broadcasts, news among them, would be a critical fact in deciding among applicants for licenses and in granting license renewals.[13]

The FCC’s encouragement worked; television news grew, in part, because of the federal regulator’s public interest directive.

The first daily network newscasts of 1948 are notable for their length. These early news shows were only fifteen minutes long.[14] Daily news did not mean in-depth news. These newscasts were also notable for their timeslots. ABC, CBS, NBC, and Dumont scheduled these brief news programs for various times between 7:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday.[15] (See Table 5.1.) These staggered schedules meant that TV owners receiving these channels could watch up to forty-five minutes of news a night, and three different network news programs.

Fall 1948
Monday-Friday

	7:00 P.M.	7:15	7:30	7:45
ABC	**News and Views**	Local	Kiernan's Corner	
CBS	Local	Places, Please	**CBS News**	Face the Music
DUMONT	Doorway to Frame		**Camera Headlines**	Local
NBC	Kukla, Fran and Ollie		American Song	**Camel Newsreel**

Fall 1955
Monday-Friday

	6:45 P.M.	7:00	7:15	7:30	7:45
ABC	Local	Kukla, Fran and Ollie	**John Daly & The News**	Topper	
CBS	**CBS News**	Local		Robin Hood	
DUMONT	Local				
NBC	Local	Local		Tony Martin	**Camel News Caravan**

Fall 1963
Monday-Friday

	6:00 P.M.	6:15	6:30	6:45
ABC	**Ron Cochran with The News**	Local		
CBS	Local		**CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite**	
NBC	Local		**Huntley-Brinkley Report**	

Table 5.1. Network evening schedule grids from Fall 1948, Fall 1955, and Fall 1963[16]

By the fall of 1955, CBS shifted its newscast to an earlier slot in the schedule. At 6:45 p.m. *CBS News* was the first network news show every evening, while the competition was still on in the 7:15 p.m. and 7:45 p.m. slots. That these news broadcasts were staggered throughout the first hour of evening programs indicates that news did not yet mark a clear transition from one "daypart" to the next. Still, it is notable that all three networks chose early evening timeslots for their news programs.

As Robert Stanley pointed out, the problem with fifteen minute newscasts was that they "didn't allow for much in-depth reporting" and were "truly a headline medium."[17] According to Susan Buzenberg and Bill Buzenberg, when Richard Salant became the president of CBS News, one of his "first and most important innovations" was lengthening the evening newscast to 30 minutes.[18] *Newsweek*'s Harry F. Waters reported that CBS affiliates were concerned that the longer news would not hold viewers' attention, but that the ratings soon dispelled those fears.[19] Shortly after CBS introduced its 30 minute newscast in 1963, *CBS Evening News with Walter Cronkite*, NBC introduced an expanded *Huntley-Brinkley Report*.[20] (See Table 5.1) ABC would wait another four years to extend its evening news to 30 minutes.[21]

By the fall of 1963, all three television networks had scheduled their evening newscasts between 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.[22*] In these earlier timeslots, news became a marker of the transition from work to home life. According to John Ellis, broadcasters timed the news to coincide with the evening meal and watching the news became a dinnertime ritual for viewers.[23] Stig Hjarvard noted that news not only transitions viewers from work/public life to domestic/private life, but also provides them with the opportunity to be "*homo politicus* and [participate] symbolically in the exercise of a political sphere" within that transitional moment.[24] As such, viewers can find meaning in the timing and the content of the dinnertime news ritual.

Notions of a traditional family life are ingrained in the television schedule in general and the news in particular. [25] This includes assumptions about both class and a gendered division of labour. That the news schedule coincides with the modern, standardized workforce indicates that the networks timed their evening newscasts to fit

[*] DuMont was out of business by this time.

with the work and leisure routines of certain segments of the population. The underemployed, or those working at times other than the standard nine-to-five workday, were not making the transition from work to leisure at dinnertime. Neither were women in traditional families of the 1960s, when the networks established the timing of the news. The evening news was not scheduled to coincide with their daily routines. Instead, the networks scheduled the news around the presumed routines of primarily middle class men working from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. This was the "public" in whose interest network news directors would fight for longer news the following decade.

The networks considered further expanding the evening newscasts in the 1970s. Numerous network executives cited the public interest as the reason for such a move. CBS president William Sheehan argued that longer newscasts would satisfy "the public need for more information on complicated domestic and foreign issues."[26] CBS News president Richard S. Salant's pitch for expanding network news appealed to the public's interest in current events when he said "in this competitive world of ours, there is a gradual but steadily increasing public appetite for what we do, and that given the right circumstances, the right scheduling, the right faith and patience, and above all, the right journalistic teams, we can provide something more tangible than brownie points."[27] ABC-TV president Frederick Pierce and NBC News president Richard Wald both considered longer news inevitable.[28] NBC's Wald explained: "There is growing recognition all around us of the need and value of such an expansion in order to present reporting, analysis and features more effectively in a world of rapid change and increased public interest in the news."[29] In arguing for longer newscasts, the television network and network news presidents promoted their broadcasts as public service. To this end, they informed the trade papers that the public was interested in more news and that it was in the public interest to provide it.

These arguments are similar to Salant's pitch to shift from 15 minute to 30 minute news in 1963. They are based on the idea that it is in the public interest for people to be informed about the world and on the assumption that longer newscasts would mean a more informed public. However, it was never clear just how long a newscast was most desirable. In the 1960s, Salant argued for 30 minute newscasts. Once he achieved that, he almost immediately began working towards 60 minute newscasts.

The discussion heated up by the mid-1970s. Unlike the early days of network television when the FCC tied broadcast licenses to news programming, the federal regulator did not publicly pressure the networks to increase their commitment to public service. However, the networks faced increasing criticism in the late 1960s and early 1970s for their dominance over the television airwaves. It was during this period that the Department of Justice launched investigations into television network monopolies and the FCC created PTAR and FinySyn in the name of encouraging diverse voices on television. The networks' emphasis on the role their newscasts played in working for the public's interest may have been a response to this heightened government scrutiny. While government agencies challenged their monopoly over television, the networks promoted themselves as servants of the public interest.

Speculation and planning for lengthened newscasts reached a fever pitch in 1976 when all three networks appeared to make concrete plans for switching to hour-long evening news broadcasts. In the previous ten years, Americans had witnessed the moon landing, the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and an impeached president leave the White House, all from the comfort of their living rooms. Salant argued that the public was more interested in current events.[30] This social and political context provided fodder for the networks' position on extending their evening newscasts.

Affiliates of all the networks were resistant to extending the evening news.[31] They did not want to lose the time or revenue that expanded network news promised. The networks had increasingly encroached on the time set aside for local stations by pre-empting their regular broadcasts with special reports and sports programming.[32] According to Don McGannon of independent production company Group W, "the networks at the end of 1974 had pre-empted the highest percentage of program periods in history."[33] A *Broadcasting* columnist reported that the affiliate stations wanted to avoid losing the additional commercial slots, particularly as their ad revenue was on the rise.[34] The reporter further explained that network compensation would be about 15% of the lost advertising revenue.[35] According to a *Business Week* report, the affiliates had no problem with an increase in network news as long as it did not infringe on local time.[36]

The networks have always been competitive, but the stakes were raised in the mid-1970s. Advertising revenues were climbing as audience numbers rose. As *Variety*'s Larry Michie described, each of the networks wanted to be a "trailblazer."[37] None of them wanted to be the last one left with a 30 minutes newscast, but neither did they want to upset their affiliates who resisted expansion.

In 1976, ABC had just surged ahead of the other networks in the ratings. As Harry Waters explained, "the prime-time ratings race has become a three-way affair for the first time in recent memory."[38] ABC was the first network to concretely discuss expanding its evening newscast. That year, ABC added Barbara Walters to the anchor desk and the network publicly considered expanding *ABC Evening News* to 45 minutes.[39] *Broadcasting* columnists speculated that ABC News made this move in order to provide Walters with more time in which to conduct her signature in-depth interviews, but the network claimed that the move had long been in the works.[40] ABC-News president William Sheehan said that ABC wanted to lead the networks with longer news, rather than follow them.[41] In midst of its mid-1970s ascent to become the number one network, ABC had a lot to gain from being the first one out of the gate with expanded evening newscasts. It would add to the prestige of the newly competitive network. In addition, the network had won boasting rights for hiring the first female co-anchor and would do so for leading the charge to better inform the public.

In 1976, CBS and NBC agreed to extend their evening newscasts if one of their competitors did, but they did not want to do so without the support of their affiliates.[42] The key sticking points were the length and timing of an extended newscast. As mentioned, affiliated stations hoped the extended network news did not "infringe on station time."[43] CBS' soon announced it planned extended newscast from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.[44] ABC's proposal took up the least amount of affiliate time. ABC executives figured that the network and their affiliates would each add 15 minutes to their 30 minute evening newscasts, creating a 90 minute newsblock.[45] In this scenario, local stations would broadcast their newscasts from 6:00 p.m. to 6:45 p.m timeslot, followed by the network's extended news from 6:45 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.[46] ABC affiliates would only lose 15 minutes of broadcast time and the associated advertising revenue. However, this proposal also meant that the network was dictating an extra 30 minutes of programming time and the affiliates would be required to expand their own newscasts as well.

ABC's and CBS' proposals to expand their newscasts faced a scheduling problem.[47] Both plans placed network news in timeslots set aside for the FCC's Prime Time Access Rule (PTAR). The federal regulator made it clear that it was against the networks expanding into local time. Under PTAR, any network news scheduled for the 7:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. timeslot would have to be immediately preceded by an hour of local news.[48] Contrary to ABC's plan, its affiliates could not extend their newscasts by 15 minutes to help create the 90 minute evening news block. Those stations would have to produce an additional 30 minutes of news a night. If ABC stuck with its planned 6:45 p.m. newscast, affiliates would need to start their local news at 5:45 p.m., an "awkward starting time."[49] The problem with standardizing TV program start time to the hour and half hour is that viewers become used to this schedule, and are less likely to seek out new programming at the quarter hour. Until remote controls were popularized in the 1980s along with the growth of cable and VCRs, viewers could not channel surf easily and were unlikely to accidentally bump into a 5:45 p.m. newscast.

The affiliates were apprehensive about extending their local newscasts for an additional 30 minutes. Some affiliates claimed that there was not enough local news to fill a longer newscast.[50] Others argued that the extra local news would not hold viewers' attention.[51] This latter concern was exemplified by the experience of one local station in Omaha that extended it late night newscast to 45 minutes.[52] The station tracked the viewers throughout the newscast and found that the numbers dwindled at each 15 minute interval, with the most significant drop in the last 15 minutes.[53] Critics identified the scheduling conflict between the last 15 minutes of the local news program and start of NBC's *Tonight Show* as the main problem.[54] Viewers chose the start of a popular entertainment program instead of sticking around to watch the final 15 minutes of local news. The Omaha station decided cut its local news back to 30 minutes.[55]

In 1976, local stations in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago had better success with their extended local newscasts. ABC's Chicago station extended its newscasts to 90 minutes with lucrative results.[56] NBC's New York affiliate and ABC O&Os in Los Angeles and San Francisco found success with two hour evening news programs. [57] In the midst of audience fragmentation, local news was a unique way to distinguish one's own channel from the cable onslaught.[58] There could be many reasons for these differing outcomes and viewpoints, but we have to consider the size of these markets. Larger markets such as New York and Los Angeles may have supported longer news, but there were fewer events to cover in a smaller community.

Independent producers and syndicators were unhappy with the proposed infringement on PTAR slots for different reasons. Katrina Renouf, counsel for the National Association of Independent Television Producers and Distributors claimed that "[s]uch a programming change on a national basis would constitute a mortal blow to the entire prime-time access principle."[59] Expanding national and local news meant fewer entertainment slots for independently produced and syndicated programs. Fred Friendly countered this position when he argued that affiliates do not use the PTAR slots to create more local programming as the FCC originally intended, and extended local newscasts would be a more appropriate use for them than syndicated series.[60]

It seemed that everyone had a solution for the networks. Maureen Christopher of *Advertising Age* recommended that the networks "schedule network news in non-competitive periods, thereby giving history-in-the-making fans a chance to watch all three network newscasts."[61] Her advice was echoed in *Channels* when Reese Schonfeld suggested that the networks "tear up old rules of scheduling" and stagger newscasts on different networks in a "checkerboard fashion."[62] This would echo the early American television news schedules from 1948. According to these arguments, there was no need for each network to expand its news. Viewers interested in watching more news could watch all three network newscasts if they were staggered on the schedule grid. This, of course, presumes that the networks would cover different events on each of their newscasts.

Other recommendations included extending network news to other parts of the schedule, specifically prime time.[63] Don McGannon of the independent production company Group W appealed to network executives' egos when he tried to convince them that they "could improve TV's image and their own" by positioning news in network prime time schedule slots.[64] However, the networks ignored these suggestions in favour of overtaking time set aside for local stations.

All three networks began working towards hour-long evening newscasts.[65] The most frequently cited possible timeslots were 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. –

7:00 p.m.[66] Even though these potential timeslots were outside of the PTAR slot, there was still the problem of infringing on local time. The networks offered the affiliates compensation for the lost ad revenue from reduced commercial slots, but according to the trades, the affiliate board was sceptical that this was simply a tactic to get the extra time from local stations, and the deals would be negotiated in a less favourable way in the future.[67] *Broadcasting* reported that some affiliates even considered "dropping network news and setting up an independent news service of their own."[68]

By the end of 1976, all three networks had put their plans for extending their evening newscasts on hold.[69] Network news directors and network executives may have been genuinely concerned with the "public interest" when discussing lengthening their newscasts. Nevertheless, this struggle between the networks and their affiliates over the placement of news on the television schedule underscores that time is a commodity in television. Certain timeslots are more valuable than others. The struggle over time on television is actually about the struggle for the greatest revenue generating timeslots. Even though network executives argued that an increase in news was for the public interest, their attempts to expand into local time rather than prime time betrays their commercial pursuit.

Never Ending News Cycles

In November 1978, Ted Turner began to publicly discuss his plans for a 24-hour all-news channel.[70] With a typical Turner flourish, he called it the "most massive undertaking since the establishment of the networks" and "the most significant achievement in the annals of journalism."[71] He then positioned his news channel as a direct affront to the television networks. In a 1980 *Broadcasting* profile, he was quoted as saying:

> It's all breaking apart. The whole cartel is folding. Like Nazi Germany as it crumbled. The Third Reich top cheeses were taking off their uniforms, putting on civilian clothes and trying to sneak out of town to Argentina. Soon, all my enemies are going to take a powder and run because they're going to be so embarrassed...
>
> DDT was heralded as a wonderful, miracle substance when it was first developed, and we used it widely. Then after a long period of time, we learned it was going to kill us, and we stopped using it that way. TV only came on the scene 30 years ago, and television had tremendous potential for enlightenment, entertainment and information. And I think we've gotten the bare minimum out of it. Because of a lack of a sense of responsibility, I think television is the worst pollutant this country has ever seen because it's polluted our minds, our children's minds. It was not responsibly or intelligently used by people who ran it. We turned it over to three networks who care about nothing but wrenching the last nickel out of everything.[72]

This was Turner's melodramatic way of saying that the networks had not lived up to their potential to provide a service for the public. He positioned his Cable News Network (CNN) as the solution to the network problem.[73] *Channels*' James Traub extended this idea, borrowing Turner's florid language when he wrote "CNN combined the piratical joy of invading network territory – the news – with the evangelical joy of bringing not just entertainment, but truth, into millions of American households."[74] According to these arguments, CNN promised to carry television to its full public service potential in ways that the networks did not.

We saw a similar direct challenge to the networks' dominance over the medium with the early Sony Betamax campaign. In both cases, the networks were set up as straw-villains unduly influencing viewers. Sony had positioned the television networks as dominating the timing of people's lives when it had introduced a machine to free viewers from the television schedule. Yet, the television networks ignored this potential threat to their ad revenue. CNN similarly promised to free viewers from the constricting news schedule and superficial information. In this case, the networks took action.

Perhaps the differing responses had to do with the kind of challenges the two companies posed. Sony presented an alternative way for viewers to watch network programming. CNN changed the way that news was done. As a *Broadcasting* columnist explained, the news network had the opportunity to "break news and follow it without time constraints."[75] It was not restricted to only 22 minutes in an evening newscast as were the networks.[76] Rather than summarize the day's news as the networks did in their evening broadcasts, CNN could report the latest information.[77] CNN had the luxury of covering different stories and providing in-depth background on ongoing stories rather than summarizing the same events that the networks reported.[78] The news network had as much in common with all-news radio as it did with television news.[79] As Harry F.Waters wrote, "[l]ike all-news radio stations, CNN permits its viewers to plug into the state of the world at their own convenience, providing, in short, television's first news on demand."[80] This threatened the temporal structure of network news that shaped the everyday dinner ritual.

The cable news channel could undermine the networks' most prestigious departments and their coverage of world events. CNN threatened to do news better, more immediately, and at any time of the day or night. It would offer viewers information in ways the networks could not. Further challenging the networks, CNN would schedule two-hours of national and international news during prime time from 8:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.[81] News would become a counter-programming strategy, challenging the networks' most coveted timeslots.

CNN premiered on June 1, 1980.[82] The networks responded with what *Time*'s William A. Henry III has termed "Turneritis," a fear of CNN's potential long term threat.[83] NBC's parent company RCA considered the upstart cable channel such a threat that it tried to ban CNN from using its satellite for distribution.[84] ABC teamed up with Group W to create the Satellite News Channel (SNC) as a direct challenge to CNN.[85] Both of these attempts failed. RCA lost its legal bid to stop distributing CNN.[86] Turner eventually bought SNC and incorporated it into his growing television empire.[87]

Unlike the networks' responses to other industry upheavals of the era, ABC, CBS, and NBC faced the CNN threat by altering the temporal structure of news. The networks stepped up their news programming.[88] It helped that this practice coincided with their news departments' attempts to extend their news broadcasts. Although the networks pulled back on their plans to shift to hour-long evening newscasts, the idea of expanding news programming had not completely disappeared. CBS and ABC continued to push for longer news coverage in the evenings.[89] NBC planned to produce more news specials.[90] The affiliate stations continued to resist the network pressure to hand over local time for national news.[91]

In the latter half of 1982, the three television networks added 38 hours of news to their broadcast week.[92] A *Broadcasting* columnist described it as "the biggest network news explosion in memory."[93] Once Ted Turner's around-the-clock news coverage demonstrated its staying power, network news infiltrated just about every "daypart." According to *Time*'s William A. Henry III, the ratings revealed a "substantial and eager audience for news all the time, not just in the confined hours at the beginning and end of the workday."[94] CNN's 24-hour news format broadened viewing options, and a segment of the audience followed. When the networks had based their news programming around the standardized nine-to-five workday, the timing of news became part of an everyday routine. People who wanted to watch television news had to plan their schedules accordingly. As Harry F. Waters explained, it was the "dinner-hour ritual."[95] CNN provided viewers with an alternative to network news, in both content and timing.

ABC, CBS and NBC news departments began their long hoped for news expansion. However, it was not during their evening newscasts as originally planned. The networks launched news in different "dayparts" and embellished on existing news shows.[96] All three networks had well established morning news programs, which were already in the midst of changing. ABC's mid-1970s leap into the network big leagues included its *Good Morning America* launch in 1975.[97] Thus began the battle of the morning news shows, which drew in new viewers.[98] As *Time*'s Gerald Clarke described it, "[w]hat has happened is that all the energy crackling over the air waves at such an early hour has awakened new viewers to the fact that intelligent life exists before Walter Cronkite."[99] It was within the context of this ongoing a.m. battle, as well as the network response to CNN, that CBS and NBC both extended their morning shows in 1982.[100] Steve Friedman, executive producer of NBC's *Today* and *Early*

Today drew a connection between this extended morning news and CNN's temporality: "We want it to be all news all the time. We're trying to get the person who gets up in the morning and turns on all-news radio."[101] He mentioned radio, but NBC News' growth throughout the day occurred shortly after CNN launched a similar competing service. NBC met the challenge of open-ended news time of CNN by building out specific news programs in a number of timeslots.

The networks also expanded late night news after facing affiliate resistance to extending their evening newscasts.[102] CBS tried out an 11:30 p.m. show, but it quickly failed.[103] ABC had different results with its late night news endeavour. Building on the success of its late night news coverage of the Iran Crisis, ABC extended *Nightline* from 20 to 30 minutes, five nights a week.[104] This late night program could provide in-depth analysis of the major stories after the evening news provided an overview of the day's events.[105] Ostensibly, *Nightline* provided the public service that drove network discourse about news expansion without interfering with prime time line-ups or the affiliates' afternoon programming.

CNN influenced the length of the broadcast day when the 24-hour news channel uncovered an audience for television throughout the night.[106] Close to 5 million viewers tuned in to television after 2:00 a.m.[107] That figure was large enough to interest network executives and local station managers.[108] NBC News president Reuven Frank positioned this newfound audience as a newly created audience when he told *Time*, "[n]etworks must respond to the needs of people. If changing life-styles mean people are ready to watch at different times, we will do programs at different times."[109] This particular framing of the overnight audience overlooks how television schedules have historically reduced the varied everyday routines of potential audience members to a single schedule. Varied lifestyles had existed longer than television had, but the networks and local stations had overlooked viewers who did not fit in the presumed routine around which they built their schedules. Once CNN "discovered" this overnight audience, the networks began to court viewers they had previously ignored.

The affiliates became interested in overnight television viewers as well. Local stations traditionally went off the air after midnight, but their programmers now began to look for overnight content.[110] Ted Turner offered them a solution with Cable News Network 2 (CNN2). In 1982, Turner launched a second cable news channel, CNN2, as a headline news service to compete with ABC/Group W's SNC. He then offered CNN2 to local TV stations as well as cable operators.[111] This had the potential to further undermine the networks' role within the television industry. As CBS News Vice President and General Manager Anthony C. Malara explained, "[o]ur concern was that our affiliates would find it necessary to seek other sources of programming, which would then limit our own opportunities and add to the perception that the networks are not needed anymore."[112] In response, all three networks started overnight programming.

In 1982, CBS launched a four hour news show from 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.[113] ABC launched an hour long interview show from midnight to 1:00 a.m. several nights a week.[114] NBC's overnight program, *NBC News Overnight*, ran from 1:30 a.m. to 2:30 a.m.[115] The networks did not expect these overnight programs to draw that many viewers.[116] As one advertising executive put it, "[t]hey're not putting on these shows to make money. They just want to keep Ted Turner and his 24-hour Cable News Network from eroding their audiences."[117] Smaller advertisers who did not have the budget to place commercials during prime time television could look to this overnight programming. Commercial spots in these timeslots were cheaper than on entertainment programs at other times of the day.[118] Furthermore, the overnight audience was primarily 18-35 year old male college students and those returning home from shift-work, particularly appealing audience demographics for advertisers.[119] As *Channels*' Reese Schonfeld pointed out, by late 1983, "viewers could watch network news programs nine hours a day."[120] For those interested in watching more news, it was potentially a full time job.

At the same time that the networks were expanding their news coverage, trade paper *Channels* printed a series of cartoons lampooning the situation. Figures 5.1 through 5.3 connect expanded news coverage with sleep. Figure 5.1 focuses on an overtired anchorman presumably in the overnight portion of a 24-hour newscast. Figure 5.2 depicts a man viewing an extended news report until both he and the anchor have fallen asleep. In Figure 5.3, a man watches so much news throughout the day and evening that he dreams of being a news anchor. He cannot escape the news, even in his sleep.

This series of cartoons suggests that television suffered from too much news. Figures 5.1 and 5.2 indicate that late news and overnight news reports are difficult for news anchors. Yet, a number of anchors and news executives had long been clamouring for expanded news. Barbara Walters was front and center in encouraging ABC affiliates to accept a longer evening newscast from the network.[121]

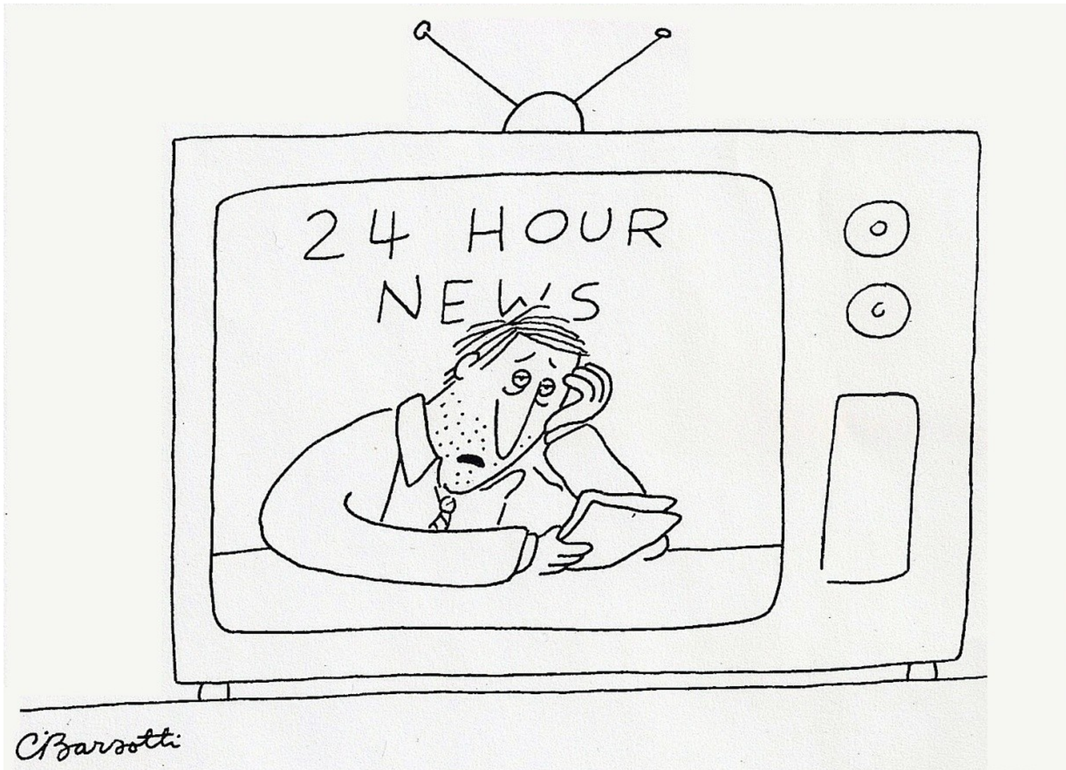

Figure 5.1[122]

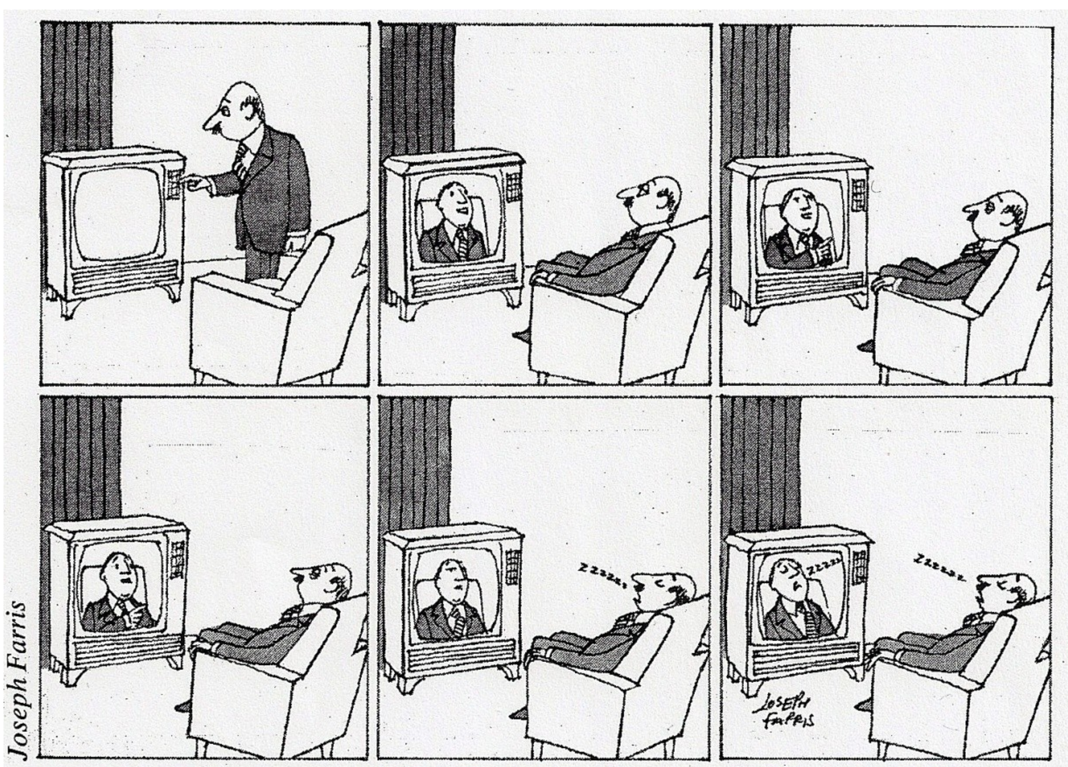

Figure 5.2[123]

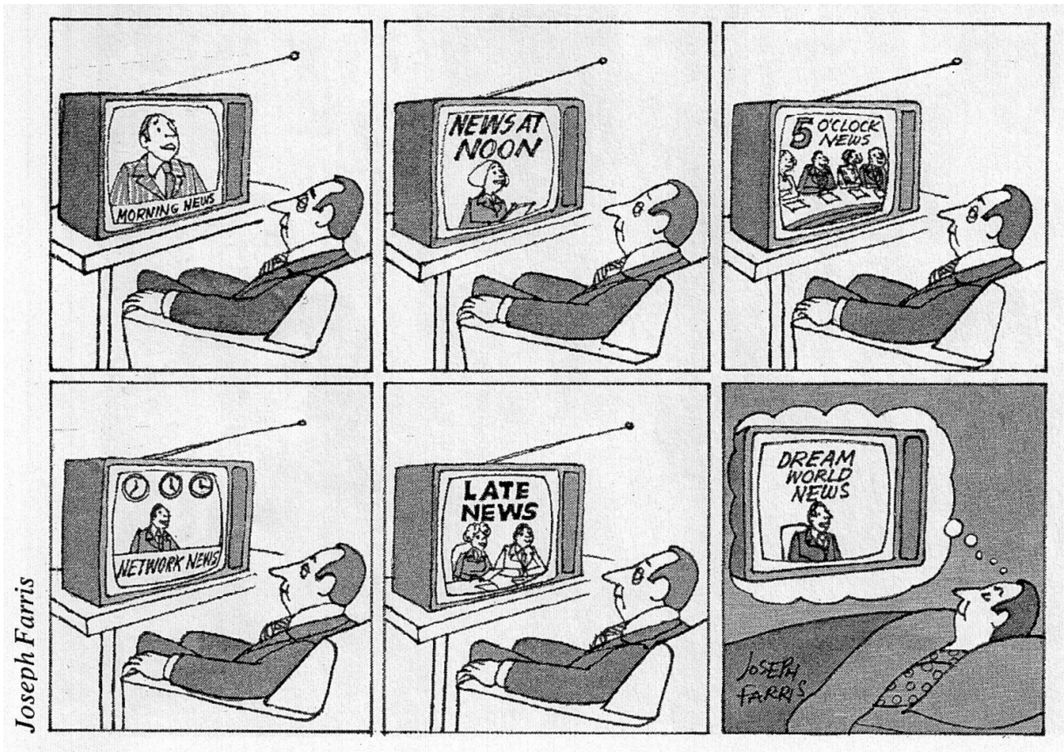

Figure 5.3[124]

Figures 5.1 and 5.2 suggest that the expansion of news means that viewers will try to watch all news programs, rather than watching news shows on demand. This discrepancy highlights the difference between older and newer approaches to television news. According to Steve Friedman, NBC, and presumably the other networks, tried to emulate the practice of tuning in and out of all-news radio at the viewer's convenience. Tuning in when it was convenient for the viewer's schedule as opposed to adjusting her or his routine for the television news schedule was a new way to think about television news.

Despite these benefits, the overnight news programming did not succeed. By the end of 1983, NBC dropped *NBC News Overnight*, ABC cancelled its overnight news and scaled back an extended 60-minute version of *Nightline,* and CBS cut its overnight programming from 4 hours to 2 hours.[125] Even with lowered ratings expectations, the newfound overnight audience was not large enough to sustain original network programming throughout the night.

For decades, network news executives argued in favour of expanding news for the benefit of the public good. At the same time, the networks realized that news could be a lucrative business.[126] When CNN's success provided the impetus to increase news programming, there was a parallel shift in the kind of news offered by the Big Three. Some traditional news programs altered their story-telling techniques to catch and hold viewers' attention.[127] The additional news content was primarily soft news. According to *Variety*'s Dick Hubert, the programs covered interesting or entertaining stories that "does little if anything to contribute to an informed electorate."[128] Television news expanded in time, but not in-depth. In a scathing commentary for *Channels*, news anchor Charles Kurault wrote:

> The ninety-second news story does not serve the people; neither do the thirty- and twenty-second stories, and that's where we're headed. Fast. With bells and graphics.
>
> In this sort of journalism there is something insulting to the viewer, the man or woman who sits down in front of the television set in the wistful hope of being informed. We are saying to this person, "You are a simpleton with a very short attention span," or, "You are too much in a hurry to care about the news anyway." Sooner or later, this viewer, who is *not* a simpleton and *not* too much in a hurry to care, will get the message and turn the dial.[129]

It soon became clear that more news did not necessarily lead to a more informed public.[130] The networks' commercial drive outstripped their news divisions' expressed intent to benefit the public good.

Conclusion

The struggle over the length and timing of television news is unique in that it triggered explicit, ongoing discussion about television schedules and scheduling practices in a way that numerous other industry upheavals had not. CNN upended the timing of television much more dramatically than had cable or the VCR. Unlike the timing of prime time, the timing of news was not the subject of federal regulation. By offering 24-hour news coverage, CNN changed how viewers could incorporate it into their everyday routines. According to Henke et al., the up-to-the-minute reporting offered by cable news altered the way that viewers obtained their news.[131] Cable subscribers no longer had to wait for the dinner hour to receive televised national news reports. They could tune in to CNN at their convenience for the latest news updates. This alternative television news source lessened the effectiveness of the evening news as a transition from daytime to prime time.

When faced with CNN's 24-hour news coverage, the Big Three expanded their news programs with varying degrees of success. The lengthened morning news shows thrived. Yet, the new overnight news programming in untested timeslots failed. Viewers did tune in to watch ABC's late night Iran Crisis coverage at a time when they had not been accustomed to watching newscasts. Furthermore, by the time the network gave its late night news contribution *Nightline* a permanent spot on the schedule, the show already had a steady viewer base. Although the networks' news expansions were not always successful, network news would never be the same. This news transformation was a product of the available technology, the socio-political context, the perceived audience interest in news, an expressed desire to benefit the public, a balance between network and local affiliate interests, and inter-network competition.

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Conclusion
Then and Now: Learning from the Past

This dissertation has followed two threads: television scheduling logics and the Big Three television networks' responses to the challenges they faced in the 1970s and early 1980s. One major contribution of the present study drew from and built on the theoretical contributions of John Ellis, Ien Ang, Todd Gitlin, Paddy Scannell, Roger Silverstone, and David Morley, as well as the literature on the television industry's scheduling practices and strategies. I began by building a case for why television schedules matter. I reviewed a number of theories explaining the role of sociotemporal orders, and television schedules in particular, in viewers' everyday lives. If schedules did not hold some significance for people, they would not adjust their everyday routines to fit within these temporal structures. I then examined the role of the television schedule as a sociotemporal order in the commercial television networks' business model and how the television industry deploys scheduling strategies to maximize advertising revenue.

In Chapters Two, Three, and Five, I looked at the temporal logics of television. I reviewed how early television schedules were developed by trial and error, borrowed from the temporal structures of radio, fit with the presumed work and leisure routines of traditional middle class families, and coordinated with sociotemporal orders developed in the industrial age. There were three key findings in this portion of my research. First, I found that knowledgeable, well-informed television insiders can take the same information and come to different conclusions about how to schedule television. We saw this in Chapter Two when critics presented different predictions about how the Big Three would schedule their reduced prime time hours. The critics had identical information, yet came to different conclusions, each of which was completely reasonable. We also saw this in Chapter Three's discussion of the networks' approaches to their schedules. CBS trusted that viewers would find their "quality" programs. ABC spread out its successful series to attract established viewers to other nights and shows. Under NBC president Paul Klein, the network worked with the "Theory of Least Objectionable Program." These three approaches are based on different ideas about what drives the audience to watch a particular show or program block, but they all demonstrate that scheduling decisions are based on content as much as timing. Over these two chapters, it became clear why it is more accurate to talk about "scheduling logics" than "scheduling logic."

Second, I found that the networks and their affiliates and O&Os had differing scheduling needs when it came to audience coordination. The networks wanted to create the strongest ratings for their programming blocks. The affiliates and O&Os were more concerned about the ratings of the network show leading in to their local programming. This led to different scheduling strategies for the networks and their local stations. We saw this when the networks tried to determine which three prime time hours they would claim for network time (Chapter Two), when NBC affiliates were unhappy with the network's "tent-pole" strategy (Chapter Three), and when the networks considered 45 minute newscasts (Chapter Five). Scheduling strategies differ for the networks and their local stations.

Third, given the importance of the television schedule as a social coordinator in the commercial television industry's business model, it was surprising to see that the temporal structure of television was not intentionally or thoughtfully developed and adjusted to maximize a sociotemporal order in each situation (Chapters Two, Three, and

Five). Numerous other priorities took precedence over the social coordination of viewers, such as the drive to be seen as innovative without taking too many chances, and the need to negotiate with affiliates and the FCC. Sometimes the drive to be the number one network in one timeslot overrode a solid overall schedule. Television's temporal structure is an end product of other conflicts, negotiations, and minor tweaking.

A second major contribution of this dissertation is a detailed history of the Big Three networks' response to the challenges they faced in the 1970s and 1980s. The 1970s and 1980s were a tumultuous time for the television industry. Changing regulatory practices at the FCC, unprecedented increased competition, and time-shifting technology challenged the Big Three networks' role as the primary providers of television content as well as television's well-established temporal conventions. As we saw in Chapters Three, Four, and Five, when the networks faced increased competition from VCRs and cable channels, including CNN, their most visible response was to broaden their business. They expanded their production companies so they could sell products on video or to cable channels. The networks finally acquiesced to their news directors' long-unheeded pleas to expand network newscasts. Network executives pressured the FCC to repeal FinSyn in order to further take advantage of cable channels as distribution outlets.

Even though the Big Three networks developed television scheduling strategies in television's era of scarcity, instead of adjusting those strategies when new competition entered the marketplace, they dismissed any potential threats to their business and deferred the consequences. In Chapter Two, we saw the Big Three fight the FCC's Prime Time Access Rule (PTAR) every step of the way. Even when it was clear that the networks would have to reduce their prime time offerings, they applied for waivers to defer the end result. Another, more bizarre, deferral popped up in Chapter Four when one network executive said that he was not worried about VCRs because he would be retired by the time they had any impact on his network. In Chapters Three and Four, we saw ABC, CBS, and NBC dismiss cable and VCRs as serious threats to their business. Even though the networks expanded their businesses in other areas to take advantage of the new distribution venues offered by VCRs and cable television, their public response remained a consistent denial as their audience shares dwindled. In Chapter Five we saw the one exception to the networks' responses to the changing television landscape. The Big Three did indeed expand their network newscasts in response to the threat that CNN posed in combination with ongoing pressure from their news departments to do so.

The most surprising finding was that, even though the television schedule is central to the Big Three's business model as a way to coordinate viewers and feed them through their programming and to their advertisers, the networks rarely responded to direct temporal challenges. In fact, ABC, CBS, and NBC rarely discussed the temporal structure of the television schedule. Instead, network executives focused on minute schedule adjustments and the competition they faced from one another.

From the early days of commercial television, the Big Three largely determined its temporal structure. By coordinating the length the broadcast day, the shift from one "daypart" to the next, the program start and end times, and even the commercial breaks, the networks ensured that viewers had little choice but to watch television according to a singular routine that the networks set out.

Cable channels, the VCR, and 24-hour newscasts provided viewers with alternative temporalities for their television viewing. The Big Three's scheduling strategies were less effective when the viewing options were not limited by the networks' control over the television schedule. The networks often did not recognize the threat of these alternative temporalities. At times they chose to ignore them. When the Big Three did respond, they did so with varying degrees of success. By the mid-1980s, the networks' control of television's sociotemporal order was clearly slipping.

Since the 1980s, the Big Three's situation has worsened dramatically. The Big Three are now The Big Five (including FOX and The CW). The ever growing number of cable and satellite channels have moved into producing expensive-looking original programming that directly competes with network shows in the ratings and the industry awards circuit. In the wake of several decades of FCC deregulation, the networks are now owned by conglomerates that also own many other media and non-media holdings. The networks do see some benefits to this. Shows pass from network to sister-cable channel and back. The networks own syndication rights and continue to profit from their productions. However, they still have to compete for viewers with sister outlets within the same corporate family.

More recently, the Big Five networks also face competition from other media. Downloading and streaming video are two popular ways to receive television over the internet. Viewers can download television series using BitTorrent, a global standard of peer-to-peer (P2P) file sharing. Portal websites such as surfthechannel.com and greatstufftv.com provide links to streamed television episodes on external websites with servers based outside of the U.S., such as Megavideo, youku, toudou, and many others.

The geographic location of these servers makes it difficult for American authorities to pursue copyright infringement cases against the websites. Streaming video of many network series is also available on YouTube. The internet is another venue for original productions, whether it is user produced content on YouTube or professionally produced material such as *Doctor Horrible's Sing-Along Blog* or *Children's Hospital*. There are now multiple outlets for television-like content produced outside of the network pipelines.

DVRs, sometimes called Personal Video Recorders (PVRs) or TiVo (the name of the American brand leader), pose a further challenge to the commercial television networks. These machines are essentially more sophisticated VCRs with additional features. Both VCRs and DVRs allow viewers to record television programs, and then watch them at a time of their own convenience. In addition, viewers can fast forward or "rewind" the recorded programs, including commercials, on both machines. DVRs have additional functions that may make this technology preferable to VCRs. The DVR is programmed via an electronic program guide, instead of by entering all of the data manually as one would when programming a VCR. The DVR's interface seems intuitive for those accustomed to the equipment, but may be less so for users who are not technologically savvy. Programs are recorded on a DVR's digital hard drive instead of on videotape. Users can record hours upon hours of television programs without needing to provide additional physical space for the storage medium in their home. The material is stored digitally, not on a linear tape. This allows viewers to skip from episode to episode without having to fast forward or rewind through a videotape in its entirety to find the desired recording. Finally, programs can be paused or “rewound” when viewed live, even if the viewer does not begin recording beforehand.

Viewers now have more options to watch television programs outside of the traditional network broadcasts than ever before. Recently emerging time-shifting technologies have inspired scholars to question the continued relevance of the television schedule.[1] Nielsen Media’s latest Three Screen Report highlights the quarter on quarter increase in DVR ownership, time-shifted television viewing, and online television viewing.[2] DVR ownership in the United States has now surpassed the 30% mark.[3] We cannot assume that time-shifting will increase on par with DVR ownership. When VCRs were at 30% ownership, time-shifting was their primary use. However, within ten years, VCRs were primarily used to watch pre-recorded tapes. If we have learned anything from television’s first time-shifter, it is that early practices are not predictive of later use. Furthermore, even though DVR ownership and time-shifting has increased, DVR owners consistently watch 45% of the commercials in their time-shifted viewing.[4]

Even if competition continues to increase and time-shifting becomes the primary way of viewing television, recent advertising research indicates that it may not mean the end of commercial television broadcasting. Nielsen reported that American television viewing continues to rise.[5] According to Sharp, Beal, and Collins, a third of the American population watches prime time at any given moment between 8:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m., and two thirds of the population watches television at some point over an evening of prime time.[6] They explained that “[l]arge channels achieve higher reach levels than smaller channels and are watched for much longer by a wider variety of people.”[7] In other words, the networks continue to get larger viewing audiences who watch for longer periods of time than the smaller cable channels. In 2008, Wilbur argued that network broadcasting was still the best way for advertisers to reach the largest television audience, and there was no evidence to suggest an alternative mass media was emerging that would replace broadcast television's reach.[8] According to these recent reports, increased competition is chipping away at network audience shares, but the television networks are still the best way for advertisers to reach the most people.

Sharp et al. and Wilbur both addressed the particular challenges of DVRs and commercial zipping. Sharp et al. proposed that television viewers tend to use new media in addition to watching television, rather than replacing one medium with another.[9] Furthermore, they suggested that commercial zipping on DVRs likely replaces other ad avoidance behaviours such as channel surfing, leaving the room, or having a conversation during commercial breaks.[10] Wilbur pointed out that there are a number of ways to incorporate advertising into programs that viewers cannot avoid, such as branding, product placement, and sponsoring series.[11] He concluded that emergent video media and commercial zipping means an "increasing scarcity of viewer attention" for advertisers, which, in turn, will mean higher value for access to this attention.[12] Following Wilbur's logic, the American commercial television networks may sell fewer commercial minutes or other advertising opportunities, but those ad sales will be as valuable as, if not more than, current commercial sales.

Nonetheless, the Big Five are responding to these emergent technologies and increasing competition in a number of ways. Echoing their responses to cable television and VCRs in the 1970s and early 1980s, the networks are expanding their modes of distribution. As I detailed in Chapters Three and Four, the television networks dealt with the challenges of cable television and VCRs by producing content for cable channels and for pre-recorded videocassette sales or rentals. Presently, all five commercial television networks are providing high quality video streaming of their series on their home websites or on Hulu.com. They are monetizing online venues by running commercials before the episodes or intermittently throughout. In other instances, ads are placed next to these video streams. In addition, many networks sell individual episodes of their series on Apple Inc.'s digital media player iTunes for a nominal fee, typically $1.99 per episode.

There is evidence that the networks are trying to limit the impact of DVRs on their bottom lines. Echoing the networks' expansion into cable channels, NBC was an early investor in TiVo. Recently, the networks announced that they would trigger a mechanism in DVRs that would prevent the machines from recording particular programs. Although the manufacturers promised to never use the mechanism they had embedded in the technology, the networks recently pled their case for special exceptions: first run movies. The threat of DVR time-shifting is severely limited if the broadcasters can prevent the machines from recording their programs.

As described in this dissertation's introductory chapter, the networks are responding to the new multi-media environment by adjusting the temporal structure of their television schedules. The Big Five are less consistent about starting and ending their programs on the hour and half-hour than they were previously, sometimes shifting them by a minute or two. The commercial broadcast networks now borrow scheduling practices from cable, repeating a new episode twice or more in one week. The most notable network change in television's temporality was NBC's 2009 attempt to replace five hours of prime time drama series with a "stripped" talk show.

NBC's recent late night debacle demonstrates the danger of overlooking the significance of television schedules. In 2004, NBC announced that Conan O'Brien would replace Jay Leno as host of *The Tonight Show* in five years.[13] As 2009 approached, *The Tonight Show*'s ratings were strong with Leno at its helm.[14] ABC, FOX, and Sony courted Leno to headline a new series that would compete with NBC's *The Tonight Show*.[15] In order to honour their deal with O'Brien and avoid changing Leno from an asset to a competitor, NBC created a new hour-long show for Leno scheduled at 10 p.m., five nights a week.[16] With this move, NBC kept both late night hosts on its schedule and took care of the network's long standing development problem. NBC had been having difficulty developing successful shows that matched the quality of its "Must See TV" Thursday night line up from the 1980s and 1990s. As its top rated series (*Seinfeld*, *Friends*, etc.) ended, the network had nothing of note with which to replace them. In his 2006 book *Desperate Networks*, Bill Carter predicted that NBC would one day have a dearth of programming for its prime time line-up.[17] By dedicating five hours of prime time television to Leno, NBC could side-step this problem and cancel a number of struggling series without having to replace them.

The official company spin was that the network made a daring, groundbreaking move to deal with the changing media environment.[18] Cover stories in both *Advertising Age* and *Time* pondered whether NBC's move was the future of television.[19] *Advertising Age*'s Brian Steinberg opined that dwindling ratings meant the networks could no longer afford to produce drama series that traditionally filled the 10 p.m. timeslot.[20] Leno's new show was so much cheaper to produce than network dramas that NBC stood to make a considerable profit even if the show came in third place in the ratings every night.[21]

The Jay Leno Show premiered on September 14, 2009 and attracted over 18 million viewers.[22] Once the other networks premiered their fall season the following week, and Leno had to compete with drama series, his ratings plummeted to just below his numbers on The *Tonight Show* at around 5 million viewers.[23] Even so, NBC was making a profit and network chairman Jeff Gaspin declared the prime time experiment to be going "fine."[24] NBC affiliates continued to support the lower rated lead-in to their nightly news until they saw the results of the November sweeps period.[25] Late night local news numbers were down across the board for local NBC stations. One NBC affiliate's late night news ratings dropped by a whopping 48%.[26] The lower local ratings filtered over to *The Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien*.[27] Once viewers tuned out from NBC, they did not tune back in for *The Tonight Show*. After a protracted public relations nightmare, Conan O'Brien left NBC and Jay Leno returned to *The Tonight Show*.

Although this story seems to be about egos and infighting, it tells us a lot about television schedules. In announcing his departure from *The Tonight Show*, Conan O'Brien identified what NBC could not. As he wrote in a public statement, "[s]ome people will make the argument that with DVRs and the Internet a time slot doesn't matter. But with the *Tonight Show*, I believe nothing could matter more."[28] Ratings expectations change by "daypart." Successful late night ratings were considered a failure in prime time. Despite declarations to the contrary, the television schedule is still a useful social coordinating tool to feed viewers through a programming block. NBC's mistake was focusing on profits from one series to the detriment of the local and network shows that followed it. Strong lead-ins are still important in the current television landscape.

The majority of this dissertation has focused on challenges to the networks' use of the television schedule to coordinate viewers through their program line-ups. Chapter Two examined how external forces such as independent producers, the FCC, and local O&Os and affiliates influenced the structure of network schedules. Chapters Three and Five focused on channels that offered alternative temporalities to the networks' standard "daypart" schedule. Chapter Four looked at a technology that provided viewers with the tools to remove programs from the schedule altogether. The dissertation's introduction and conclusion both reviewed the many ways in which these challenges have increased in the last twenty-five years. If the schedule was only relevant as a coercive structure for the television networks and the television industry, these other viewing options would likely eradicate the schedule altogether. Yet, as the NBC *Tonight Show* debacle demonstrated, we are not yet in a post-schedule era.

As DVR sales rise and television programs become more readily available online, fewer people may watch television by the television schedule. However, the evidence indicates the limitations of this supposition. According to a 2010 "Three Screen Report" from Nielsen Media documented, even the heaviest users of all time-shifting technologies (25-49 year olds) spend almost 80% of their viewing time watching traditional television.[29] Furthermore, a 2011 Nielsen Media report documented that only "21% of all viewing in DVR homes is DVR playback."[30] This data and NBC's experience with *The Tonight Show* indicate that the television schedule continues to be relevant for viewers.

Why might the TV schedule still matter? The television schedule is one of the many soothing structures of everyday life. It contains open-ended time which many people find unnerving, and it provides a cyclical structure that feeds a perpetual sense of anticipation for the next episode. Furthermore, the television schedule facilitates community building among audience members that requires some coordination of viewing. In Chapter One, I drew from the work of Paddy Scannell, Roger Silverstone, Jeremy Rifkin, James Carey, and Daniel Dayan, among others. As they argued, the television schedule is successful as a coordinating tool for the television networks because it serves several functions for viewers in addition to determining the timing of their TV viewing. Despite the ever-changing world of television, the television schedule continues to play a role in structuring many viewers' everyday lives.

Endnotes

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