
Newton Minow, chair of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) during John Kennedy's presidency, considered his plan for the organization of international television—one that gave a new priority to broadcasting without fundamentally altering the legal framework of regulation—as one of the major accomplishments of his tenure. Yet historians researching FCC policy during the 1960s have paid little attention to Minow's fascination with international broadcasting. Developments in global politics and the communications industry (such as the perceived threat of international Communist takeover, and the development of communications satellites) raised concerns about a policy gap in this area. Minow attempted to develop such policy by articulating a link between the public interest and the national interest. Richard Neustadt's model of presidential power shows how Minow's efforts were closely tied to the Kennedy administration as part of a larger campaign to bring together disparate and often conflicting interests behind a coherent policy for international television. To influence public thinking and forge alliances among powerful societal groups, Minow focused on three major areas: the public at large; Democratic party circles; and the broadcasting industry. By providing this historical context for Minow's maneuvers, researchers can better understand how and why he succeeded in forming a plan for international television.

(Seventy-three footnotes are appended.) (MM)
NEWTON MINOW'S GLOBAL VIEW: TELEVISION AND THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Michael Curtin

Department of Communication Arts
University of Wisconsin
821 University Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

(608) 263-3996
233-4709
Minow's plan for international television has been overlooked by historians researching FCC policy during the 1960s. This paper shows that developments in global politics and the communications industry raised concerns about a policy gap in this area. Minow strove to frame such policy by articulating a link between the "public interest" and the "national interest". Using Richard Neustadt's model of Presidential power, the paper shows how Minow's efforts were closely linked to the Kennedy administration and it examines Minow's discursive campaign in three areas: the public at large, the Democratic Party, and the broadcast industry. This campaign was designed to forge an alliance between disparate and often conflicting interests within industry and government. The paper concludes that by providing an historical context for Minow's discursive maneuvers, researchers can better understand how and why he succeeded at forging a plan for international television.

Michael Curtin is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Communication Arts, University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is completing his dissertation on documentary television in the U.S. during the early 1960s.
NEWTON MINOW'S GLOBAL VIEW: TELEVISION AND THE NATIONAL INTEREST

It has been said that FCC Commissioners often reflect the personality of the President who appoints them. Therefore, it is interesting that those who have studied the Newton Minow years at the FCC have paid little attention to Minow's fascination with international broadcasting despite the fact that foreign policy was the major preoccupation of the Kennedy government. Much research has been done on the commission's relations with the networks, on Minow's attack on the "vast wasteland," and on the efficacy of the commission as a regulatory agency [1]. However, no researcher has systematically examined the policy process related to what Minow himself referred to as one of his major accomplishments as FCC Chair: "the organization of a plan for international television."

Like John Kennedy, Minow was powerfully attracted to the notion of exercising the powers of his office within the international arena. This fascination was clearly outlined in a note Minow wrote to RCA Chair David Sarnoff shortly after Sarnoff gave a speech at the University of Detroit expounding on the future of satellite communication. "I was much intrigued with the accounts in the press the other day on your speech about international television," wrote Minow. "I agree that international television is probably the most exciting part of the New Frontier, and I would very much like to talk with you about it sometime" [2].

Minow's fascination with international television was not quite the same as David Sarnoff's. His interests in large part reflected the concerns of Cold War liberals in the Democratic Party, while Sarnoff's interests are best understood when situated among the activities of major corporations in the
communications industry. However Minow, who often fell short in his attempts
to regulate the domestic television industry, proved to be quite successful
at bringing together government and corporate interests within the field of
international television. The most important tools he used to forge this
alliance were neither statutory nor judicial; they were not the traditional
tools of broadcasting regulation. Instead Minow invested a tremendous amount
of energy trying to change the way that people talked about television. In a
collection of his speeches published after he left the FCC Minow noted:

Very early I decided that of all the routes I might take to the best
performance of my job, the most effective and the wisest road in the long run
was to speak out in the hope of influencing public opinion about television.
I knew that the people were generally unaware that broadcasting was a public
trust, and most of them did not know the extent of their rights to this public
resource. I felt that many broadcasters, who naturally had a vested interest
in the medium, had, in the flush of enormous financial success, too quickly
grown complacent and closed their eyes to their responsibilities and trust. I
decided to disturb their sleep -- and to encourage these trustees to entertain
and yet to inform, to make us laugh but also to make us think. [3]

As a result Minow is often remembered as the FCC's great public orator,
the commission chair who added a poetic if not visionary dimension to the
phrase "the public interest, convenience and necessity." However Minow was
interested in more than poetry. It is important to pay attention to the
terrain of public discourse that Minow confronted when he first became chair
of the FCC and to pay particular heed to the manner in which he attempted to
shift the contours of that terrain. Minow quite actively campaigned to link
the "public interest" in the broadcasting sphere with the "national interest"
in foreign affairs. He sought to shape the very context in which a plan for
international television would be conceived.

Minow's campaign to alter the terms of public discussion was not limited
to speech-making, nor was this campaign merely an effort to sway public
opinion. Minow was extremely active behind the scenes coddling, cajoling and
conferring with those who could influence the very manner in which broadcasting issues were conceived and discussed. Such activities were part of a larger campaign by the Kennedy government to bring together disparate and often conflicting interests behind a coherent policy for international television. There are three major areas where Minow focussed his energies: 1) the public at large, 2) Democratic Party circles, and 3) the broadcasting industry. By carefully examining these areas it will become clear that such an aggressive drive to shape the manner in which public issues are discussed is not merely an attempt to influence public thinking, but an attempt to forge alliances among powerful societal groups. However, before embarking on this closer analysis of Newton Minow’s activities, it is important to place them within the historical context of major trends in the telecommunications industry and the larger strategy of the Kennedy administration.

INDUSTRY TRENDS

As for trends in the industry, it is important to note that during the latter part of the 1950s the early development of satellite communications was a major concern of companies like AT&T, Western Union, and General Electric. At the same time, all three television broadcasting networks were becoming increasingly interested in overseas markets [4]. Therefore, when David Sarnoff expounded on the wonders of global television to his Detroit audience, he was not merely engaging in the prognostications of an elder statesman in the communications industry, he was stumping for RCA’s new product line. Whatever went into orbit, whether government or corporate, RCA wanted to have a piece of the action. At the time of Sarnoff’s speech it was far from clear which corporations would play a major role in the new era of satellite communications and all the major players were actively jockeying for position.
So far as RCA's corporate subsidiary was concerned, NBC also had a growing interest in international markets both as an outlet for programming and as a potential arena for new station investment. But here once again expansion was competitive and dependent on the drift of U.S. foreign policy. Markets like Latin America held little potential for the networks unless they were secure from Castro-like revolutions. Huge corporate empires had millions of dollars already invested in the growing global market and billions of dollars in potential revenues at stake [5].

However, during the Eisenhower years, the government took a rather relaxed attitude where these matters were concerned. Network movement into overseas markets was encouraged as a natural economic phenomenon, as merely another way to increase American exports. As for the programs themselves, the notion of consumer sovereignty had taken hold among television executives by the middle of the 1950s and it held sway in the international marketing of American telefilm as well. "Consumer democracy" had displaced the early pretensions of the medium. There was too much money at stake in the domestic advertising market for programmers to give up a few ratings points for high-brow cultural programming or controversial news and public affairs shows. Viewers were "voting" with their TV dials and television executives endorsed a sort of economic populism which argued that what the viewers want is more important than any particular minority's notion of what they should get. The effect of this viewpoint on foreign markets was that buyers could only select from those items which the American viewers had already "elected". Hollywood syndicators had no intention of producing programs exclusively for the international market especially when overseas sales of standard American fare was expanding the profit margin on domestic programs. Thus, Hollywood-produced telefilm was marketed with little consideration as to its political
or cultural impact and government intervention was limited to providing the same sort of basic logistical support that it offered to overseas peddlers of any American product [6]. In essence, there was no coherent government policy regarding the content or marketing of telefilm exports.

In the satellite field the President took a similarly detached stance arguing that the development of a global communications system should be left in the hands of private industry so long as it did not violate trade, anti-trust or FCC regulations. However, shortly after the Sputnik launch, Soviet competition emerged as a major political issue and it became increasingly clear that U.S. communications satellites could not compete without federal investment in space launch vehicles and government regulation of the incredibly fierce competition among high technology corporations [7]. While Eisenhower had given ATT approval to use NASA boosters for launching prototypes of its first telecommunications satellites, his administration failed to forge any sort of coherent policy in this area and other corporations, such as RCA, were strongly protesting that the government was subsidizing the expansion of the ATT communications monopoly into outer space.

THE KENNEDY STRATEGY

Enter the Kennedy administration which quickly announced the AT&T deal was to be reconsidered in light of the national interest and that such experiments would proceed only after more careful government planning [8]. Of particular concern to Kennedy was the role that satellite television would play in the new global communications web. Several months later the President's new FCC Chair clarified the administration's notion of the what national interest entailed in the field of broadcasting.
In today’s world, with chaos in Laos and the Congo aflame, with Communist tyranny on our Caribbean doorstep and relentless pressure on our Atlantic alliance, with social and economic problems at home of the gravest nature ... in a time of peril and opportunity, the old complacent, unbalanced fare of action-adventure and situation comedies is simply not good enough. [9]

In what is now known as the "vast wasteland" speech, Minow argued that Hollywood telefilm already posed problems domestically, but as the industry began to expand overseas the problem was becoming international.

What will the people of other countries think of us when they see our Western badmen and good men punching each other in the jaw in between the shooting? What will the Latin American or African child learn of America from our great communications industry? We cannot permit television in its present form to be our voice overseas. [10]

Here we can see Minow engaging the crisis rhetoric of the Kennedy government in an effort to link the concerns of the administration to the long-term interests and the short-term profit goals of the industry [11]. Concerns about the stability of international markets are linked to concerns about television content and a foreign policy crisis is invoked as justification for government activism. Television, not merely a cultural matter, it is a political matter of global dimensions.

Indeed this foreign policy "crisis" was not completely chimerical. The United States inherited a tremendous amount of influence in the power vacuum that followed World War II. The colonial empires of Europe had crumbled and American policy became increasingly important as a means to battle the popularity of the Communist parties in Western Europe (e.g., the Marshall Plan) and the growing number of national liberation movements in the developing world (e.g., U.S. interventions in the Congo, Cuba, and Laos) [12]. By the time Kennedy entered office, American influence around the globe was at its zenith and the young President was fighting desperately to stabilize the boundaries of the "Free World" [13]. The Bay of Pigs invasion one month before the Minow speech had exacerbated the sense of crisis by undermining the
young President's credibility in the face of the "Communist threat". Thus, from the very beginning, Kennedy committed his administration to an all out competition with the Soviets, and Minow's attempt to characterize television policy issues within the context of global politics conformed to the larger strategy of the Kennedy government [14].

On the other hand, the broadcast industry did not see this era of "crisis" in quite the same way and Minow's "vast wasteland" speech drew intense opposition from broadcast executives. Much of this opposition was linked to the shifting economic fortunes of the industry. Flush with profits from an era of almost uninterrupted expansion, television networks and affiliates were just beginning to experience some of their first "soft" years in advertising sales. There was talk of market saturation in the U.S. for the first time and Minow's call for a greater commitment to public affairs and elite cultural programming added an additional challenge to the high profit margins that were already being threatened by economic forces. Key industry executives read Minow's call to arms as a veiled threat of censorship and quickly rallied their forces to scuttle a presidential plan then before Congress to reorganize the FCC by cutting red tape and increasing the power of the Chair [15]. The industry lobby wanted to make sure the commission would garner no new powers so long as the author of the vast wasteland was at the helm.

The controversy which erupted in the wake of the Minow speech left the appearance that the Kennedy government was diametrically opposed to industry interests. And yet the two groups needed each other. The networks and the electronics manufacturers needed the government in order to get their satellites boosted into high orbit and in order to protect their growing overseas markets. On the domestic front, broadcasters needed government
licensing and regulation of the airwaves to maintain order and profitability in local markets. As for the Kennedy administration, it needed the communications industry because of its pervasive influence in the international market for cultural products. American program exports were both popular and influential with audiences around the world. The Kennedy government reasoned that this combination could be a powerful force on behalf of American foreign policy. Therefore, even though the two groups appeared to be at odds, they needed to stake out some common ground if they were to protect their respective interests. As a result, it is important to look at the FCC policy process during this period since the commission was largely responsible for forging agreements that satisfied these competing needs and interests [16].

Furthermore, the attention that the Kennedy administration lavished on broadcasting should not be underestimated. It was well known throughout his time in office that Kennedy had an ongoing love affair with the medium and that he would often refer to television as his favorite propaganda weapon. Unlike other periods in the history of the FCC, the President took an abiding and personal interest in the commission's activities. At the time he made his third FCC appointment, it was widely reported in the press that Kennedy was trying to take over the commission before the 1964 election [18]. The President seemed acutely aware of the centrality of broadcast policy to his broader political strategy.

Sitting at the head of the commission, was a chair with personal ties to the President. Minow would later write that he enjoyed an important advantage over most of his predecessors, "Because of my active participation in three presidential campaigns, I [went] into office on easy, personal terms with President Kennedy and many other members of the administration" [19]. In
fact, Bobby Kennedy was fond of noting to reporters that he felt partially responsible for Minow taking the job, and throughout Minow's term both Kennedy brothers consistently defended the FCC Chair [20].

Therefore it is not surprising that shortly after the FCC reorganization plan was killed in Congress, few seasoned observers really expected it to "clip the wings" of the fledgling regulator. As Variety's Jay Lewis noted, Minow could still wield a great deal of influence through the statutory powers already on the books and through his close links to the President. " Actually, such a modus operandi [sic] would entail nothing new for the Kennedy Administration," wrote Lewis. "A pattern is already apparent in the JFK regime of taking the route of direct administrative or legal action rather than engaging in dubious battle with Congress over new statutory weapons" [21].

The blueprint for this strategy of direct administrative action was drawn by Richard E. Neustadt, a Harvard professor and Special Consultant to the President during his transition to office. Neustadt was author of the book Presidential Power: The Politics of Leadership, which was on the required reading list for anyone taking a job in the Kennedy government [22]. Neustadt's book is a primer on the exercise of personal power by occupants of the White House. In essence, he argues that the influence of a Presidential administration is not limited by statute or even by Congress but by the way it uses the vast power and influence that are implicit in the office of the President. For Neustadt, going outside of channels is not seen so much as an attempt to overstep the boundaries of the Presidency as it is an attempt to get something without squandering a great deal of political capital in negotiation. It is easy to see why Kennedy, a president elected by a majority, would be so attracted to this strategy and it is a
strategy which is central to understanding the policy process during the Kennedy years.

To briefly describe Neustadt's position, he argues that the crux of presidential power rests on three things: the President's power to persuade, his professional reputation, and his public prestige. As for persuasion, Neustadt contends that because of the separateness of institutions and the sharing of authority, "The essence of a President's persuasive task is to convince [key institutional leaders] that what the White House wants of them is what they ought to do for their own sake and on their own authority" [23]. Certainly charm and reasoned argument have their place here, but more importantly Neustadt sees the use of fear and favor as central to the persuasive power of a President. In order to effectively execute such a strategy, a President must take care to enhance his professional reputation. "The men [a President] would persuade must be convinced in their own minds that he has skill and will enough to use his advantages," writes Neustadt [24]. Furthermore, such a concept of the President's professional reputation is intimately tied to notions of public prestige, for Neustadt contends that the Washington community is constantly trying to assess a President's popularity in order to evaluate the costs or benefits of forging alliances with the White House [25].

Keeping Neustadt's assessment of presidential power in mind we will see that Minow did not advance his plan for international television in the traditional manner of an FCC chair. He repeatedly complained about red tape and the heavy demands placed on the commission by technical and often trivial matters associated with communications [26]. Instead Minow wanted to pay attention to the broad contours of the policy process and here he was not so interested in altering the FCC's existing statutory power as he was interested
in influencing the very manner in which issues were conceived and discussed. As noted earlier, he focussed his energies on 1) the public at large, 2) Democratic Party circles, and 3) the broadcast industry. An examination of these areas will show how Minow repeatedly applied the techniques laid down by Neustadt for the Kennedy government as a whole. Despite the independent status of the commission, Minow was the classic Kennedy team player who was attempting to bring together various factions behind a plan for international television. A key aspect of this campaign was Minow's attempt to articulate a linkage between broadcasting and the national interest.

THE PURSUIT OF PUBLIC OPINION

Much attention has been paid to the public speeches that Minow delivered as the Chair of the FCC and there seems to be little need to analyze the texts of those speeches except as they bear upon particular issues. However, it is important to note that public opinion is of key importance within the Neustadt design for the Kennedy administration. With Minow there is no doubt that he attempted to expand his powers to persuade through his access to public attention. What follows is a quote from an extended memo by Minow's personal secretary, Gloria Coe, in which she evaluates the draft of a speech to be delivered to the Radio and Television Executives Society in September of 1961.

You will be addressing the cream of the broadcasting industry in what will generally be regarded as a follow-up to your Vast Wasteland speech. You will have available the best coverage in the country and they will want hard news. If we have an advance copy even one day ahead of time we can put it in the hands of TV columnists across the country who are anxious to help you: In San Francisco, Terrence O'Flaherty; in Los Angeles, Cecil Smith or the Examiner guy; in Denver, Del Carnes; in Chicago, Terry Turner, et al; in New York, Jack Gould, Dick Doan and a lot of others.

How did the Vast Wasteland speech become a classic?
1. It shocked.
2. It spoke truth.
3. It held out some hope of action and results.

The "image" created by that speech was that of a public protector who took his job seriously; who was not afraid to challenge vested interests, however powerful; who had the strength and youthful vigor and courage to believe something could be done. That's what scares the broadcaster. And what excites the public. To protect that image you must keep the broadcasters off balance and stay one step ahead of their thinking. This means using daring, imagination and drama. [27]

Neustadt could not have weighed the strategic implications more clearly than Gloria Coe does in this memo. Public standing is characterized here as a source of influence. But more than that, it is the industry's perception of Minow's public standing which was of crucial importance in this assessment. Although his words were intended for wider public consumption, the purpose of the speech was to chide broadcasting executives by invoking the image of a public official linked to an emerging societal consensus. One could argue that Minow was trying to bolster the perceived strength of his faction in order to make it appear as an attractive partner for a negotiated alliance with the broadcasting industry. Or as Neustadt might argue, Minow was searching for common ground on which to share authority with broadcast executives.

Furthermore, notice the manner in which the young FCC Chair is characterized as protecting the public interest versus the broadcasters' vested interest. Here the terms of the contest revolve around the public body's ability to channel the activities of a few in the interests of the many. As noted earlier, Minow was seeking to remind his audience that ultimately broadcasting is a resource over which the public exercises certain rights and that broadcasters are legally constituted as trustees rather than owners of the airwaves. From here it is not much of a leap towards equating the constitutionally defined public interest with the national interest, a
national interest which, as we shall see, is defined in terms liberal, Cold War politics.

Finally, it is important to note, in the passage above, the manner in which the press is involved in shaping the industry’s perception of Minow’s FCC. From the moment he took office Minow courted the attention of newspaper columnists. He established a quick and lasting relationship with Jack Gould of the New York Times and soon found himself lunching with the editors of that paper to informally discuss the major issues facing television [28]. Other newspaper columnists received Minow’s attention as well and the FCC Chair made sure that the print media was conscientiously scanned and clipped on a daily basis. In fact, FCC field bureaus around the country would regularly route copies of any local press mention of the commission to the headquarters in Washington. One of the columnists whose writings crossed Minow’s desk was Del Carnes of the Denver Post. His columns were forwarded to Minow by Andrew Bahlay, the Engineer in Charge of the Denver bureau [29]. Accompanying one clipping was Bahlay’s comment, "I saw Del Carnes at lunch the other day and he remarked how pleased he was to receive a personalized note from Chairman Minow re a previous column pertaining to the Commission which we had clipped from the Denver Post and forwarded to the Chief" [30].

Broadcasting Magazine sourly complained about Minow’s personal contact with such influential opinion-makers and Carnes responded to this criticism by noting that he received more mail from Minow than from any of the station executives in the Denver market, yet he did not think that his columns about TV were generally less than complimentary. Wrote Carnes, "It would seem like a good idea if Frank Stanton, Bob Sarnoff, and Leonard Goldenson would follow Minow’s lead and send letters off to radio-tv editors" [31].

Columnists like Carnes and Gould, whose professional careers were
dependent on their close ties to the television industry, were part of a group of writers who felt that television was not matching up to its potential. They were not opposed to profits or private ownership but they did share some notion of television as an important cultural force, as more than a commodity. They campaigned actively to restore what they saw as the vitality of television's earlier, more experimental years [32].

Other newspaper commentators agreed that a campaign to "save" television was necessary but held a somewhat different view as to its particular aim. When columnist Drew Pearson commented on Minow's "vast wasteland" speech, he contended that Minow had not gone far enough. Although the new FCC Chair had noted the importance of television within a global framework, Pearson argued that the speech "did not call attention to TV's dereliction in helping the United States drift downward toward the status of a second class power." Pearson wrote that Minow should have concluded his speech by challenging the broadcasters in the following way, "When and if the United States slips to a second class nation, forced to turn the other cheek to its Marxist rivals, examine the role, gentlemen, which television has played in putting profits ahead of patriotism" [33]. The apparent goal of Minow's press campaign was to dovetail this Cold War liberal critique of television with the cultural critique of writers like Gould. The aim was to build an activist alliance capable of confronting a worldwide "Communist threat."

This position received wide support throughout the print medium. Even at one of the industry's favorite tabloids, Minow could count on support. A Christmas card to Minow from Variety's Washington correspondent Jay Lewis summarized the feelings of the staff. "Dropped in at Variety in New York last week," he wrote. "I believe Minow has friends" [34].

Of course one must be careful not to argue that press response to Minow's
campaign was uniform. Certainly there was powerful opposition which was usually expressed in editorials as opposition to Minow's "elitism," "censorship," and imposition of "minority tastes" on the viewing public [35]. Despite such pockets of press opposition, it is important to notice how the FCC Chair mobilized and courted his press support in an organized manner [36]. As a result, he generated the impression among those in the broadcasting industry that there might be more public support out there for Minow's position than they had anticipated.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY CIRCLES

Another important area where Minow focussed his efforts was in the sphere of Democratic Party politics. We have already seen that Minow's performance and purpose as Chair of the FCC were intimately linked to the administration of John Kennedy. However it is important not to assume that Minow's vision for broadcasting was somehow imposed on him by the Kennedy circle. In fact, Minow was something of a bridging figure between two competing factions in the Democratic Party.

Minow first became involved with party politics as a member of the Adlai Stevenson gubernatorial campaign while he was a law student at Northwestern University. Stevenson was elected governor of Illinois in 1948 and Minow quickly found himself moving into the inner circle of advisors. By the time Stevenson became the Democratic Party's presidential candidate in 1952, Minow, at the age of 26 had been pegged as an indispensible member of Stevenson's staff. It was not until Stevenson's second bid for the Presidency that Minow became friendly with Bobby Kennedy and his father Joseph. His ties to Jack Kennedy grew stronger when Minow, as part of Stevenson's inner circle, pushed hard at the 1956 party convention to get JFK on the ticket as Stevenson's...
vice-presidential candidate [37]. The attempt failed, but in 1960 Minow was on the Kennedy presidential bandwagon early and his fascination with television and its power as an educational and political tool was well known by those in the campaign [38]. When Kennedy won, Minow let Bobby know that the only government job he coveted was Chair of the FCC. There was no reluctance to grant this request from either Kennedy. Both had had long discussions with Minow about television and their respective views about what needed to be done [39]. As mentioned earlier, Minow not only shared a certain point of view, but he was also on easy personal terms with the President and his brother. Unlike most FCC Chairs who preceded him, Minow saw the job as first choice and pressed hard to secure it.

However Minow's close ties to both Stevenson and Kennedy positioned him between two powerful factions in the Democratic Party. Stevenson was widely perceived as an "egghead," an intellectual whose commitment to liberal ideals was never questioned, but whose ability to act on those ideals pragmatically and decisively was somewhat in doubt. At least within the Kennedy circle, there was a certain amount of disdain for Stevenson's adherence to principle and his reluctance to wield power authoritatively [40]. Though Stevenson was appointed Kennedy's ambassador to the United Nations, he was never accepted as part of the inner circle of foreign policy advisors. Rumors persisted throughout his tenure at the UN that he resisted Kennedy's bold foreign policy initiatives like the Cuban Missile Crisis and that he did not fit the Kennedy mold [41].

While there was a bit of the young turk in Minow, he maintained extremely close ties to Stevenson. And although Minow was bound to the President's notion of unremitting global competition with the Soviets, Minow characterized that competition as cultural, educational, and economic. Minow's personal
correspondence during his FCC tenure indicates that many of his thoughts on broadcasting issues were bandied about with members of the Stevenson circle rather than members of the Kennedy-McNamara-Sorenson circle.

Among those who Minow consulted regularly was William Benton, doyen of the Chicago liberal establishment and publisher of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. Benton, who began his career in advertising as founder of the firm Benton & Bowles, served as Assistant Secretary of State from 1945 to 1947 and as Senator from Connecticut after leaving the Truman administration. Minow was introduced to Benton while practicing law with Stevenson in Chicago during the mid-1950s. The Stevenson firm handled the legal affairs for Britannica and Minow performed much of the work for that particular client. Benton openly admired Minow's abilities and the two men became close friends. When Minow finally decided to leave the FCC, Benton had little trouble luring him back to Chicago as special counsel to Encyclopaedia Britannica [42].

Although there is no record of the exact content of personal conversations between them during the early sixties, Benton's position on international broadcasting issues might best be extrapolated from a series of articles he wrote for the New York World-Telegram shortly after returning from an extended tour of the Soviet Union in 1962. The four articles, run on consecutive days, were offset by banner headlines: "Big Red Threat: Education," "Soviets Skip Food for Learning," "Siberia Closed City is Academic Eden," and "TV Takes Classroom to Ivan" [43]. Benton's major concern as expressed in these articles was not so much a missile gap as an education gap. He was convinced that head-on competition with the Soviets had to mean an all-out campaign to improve the United States' educational and technological base. This involved not only improving the quality of education, but re-evaluating the very nature of the educational process.
Soviet education is, of course, not education as we understand it. The U.S. objective is to train our young people for individual development and fulfillment -- for the best use of their highest powers in the pursuit of a happy and useful life. The Soviet objective is simpler. It is merely to train young people for maximum value to the state. [44]

Cold War liberals like Benton were reluctant to argue that the American education system should be geared toward maximizing the student's value to the state; however they were growing increasingly concerned that the educational system in the United States was not tied closely enough to the national interest. Further, Benton raised a warning flag concerning a gap between the two countries regarding the application of television and radio to the fields of education and technical training. Soviet broadcasting, argued Benton, was serving both as a propaganda medium and as an appendage of the educational system. "As I hope this series of articles has demonstrated," concluded Benton, "America would be foolish not to recognize the educational challenge flung at us by the U.S.S.R. -- and we shall be foolhardy if we fail to do more about meeting it" [45].

This Soviet challenge troubled Minow as well as Benton. When Minow left the FCC, he cited his efforts toward establishing an educational broadcasting network in the U.S. as one of his major accomplishments in addition to establishing a plan for international broadcasting [46].

Minow's conception of broadcasting posited that the medium has an educational multiplier effect which could be realized domestically and internationally. It could have political benefits as well. Another one of Minow's correspondents and close confidants was Harry Ashmore, former Pulitzer Prize-winning editor of the Arkansas Gazette and then Editor-in-Chief of Britannica. During much of Minow's time in Washington, Ashmore was in residence as a fellow at the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara, California [47]. In early 1963, Ashmore wrote Minow a five
thousand word memo detailing a plan for using radio in an effort to speed development in the Dominican Republic and stabilize a turbulent political situation. Without going into details, the plan was not unlike the thinking which characterized much of the development planning during this period of time. Like Daniel Lerner (often characterized as the "father" of the dominant paradigm in development communications) or Wilbur Schramm (a key American figure in UNESCO at this time) or even Walt Rostow (who was then a high official in the Kennedy foreign policy circle), Ashmore placed a tremendous amount of faith in broadcasting's ability to spur development and democratize the politics of Third World countries [48]. After reading Ashmore's epistle, M'now responded, "That's a brilliant memorandum which I read twice with great fascination and admiration" [49].

The FCC Chair was not the only member of the Stevenson circle or the Kennedy government who responded positively to this kind of foreign policy approach. USIA Director Edward R. Murrow was consistently advocating the introduction of broadcasting in Third World countries [50]. While over at the Agency for International Development (US AID), the chief of communications resources, Dr. Gerald F. Winfield, pressed for funding to put television sets in Third World villages. He wanted to place 1000 television sets in 5 test-site villages in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The idea was to use the sets to instruct farmers in modern agricultural techniques. One wag writing for the Chicago Tribune commented, "we are not informed whether canned beer and TV dinners will be supplied [along with the television sets]" [51]. However, Winfield was quite serious about the proposal, aiming ultimately to place 200,000 sets in over a thousand villages throughout the developing world. Such proposals represented a coming together of the Stevenson and Kennedy wings of the party. Although there was often some dispute among them as to
technique, there was little difference when it came to matters of intent: The object of foreign policy was to secure the frontiers of the "Free World".

This consensus is perhaps best underscored by examining an extended memo written by Minow's administrative assistant Tedson Meyers in the spring of 1962. The memo was circulated among selected members of Kennedy's foreign policy circle and the report introduces itself by noting that "The Kennedy Administration holds office at the precise moment when the United States can begin to exploit the potential power of international television and radio broadcasting in our national interest" [52]. Meyers advocated a centralized body within the State Department or the White House that would coordinate international broadcasting policy in order to: 1) assist in the development of foreign broadcast systems so that even underdeveloped countries could be linked into the U.S. global communications network, 2) encourage American investment overseas, 3) insure access to foreign markets for U.S. programming, 4) stimulate the production of American programming which serves foreign policy objectives, and 5) establish government criteria for the content of programs targeted for international distribution. Though the report is followed by a disclaimer that it did not reflect the FCC's official position, it had been "conducted with the knowledge and encouragement of Chairman Minow" [53]. Not only did the report draw on Minow's thoughts, it also resulted from a series of consultations with top officials at the White House, State Department, CIA, USIA, US AID, National Association of Broadcasters, Ford Foundation, and European Broadcasting Union. In sum, it was a major research and lobbying effort to rally the troops in the foreign policy community.

Shortly after the final draft of the report reached the White House, it was leaked to the press. Whether the leak was intended as a trial balloon or
was the action of a disgruntled member of the administration is unclear. Nevertheless it generated a howl of protest from the broadcasting industry which feared increasing pressure from the White House on matters that they argued should be protected by adherence to a free market of goods and ideas [54]. No further public action was taken on the Meyers report. However the report does in many ways synthesize the consensus that Minow was striving to forge within the Kennedy government: that the national interest is central to the formulation of communications policy and vice versa. The FCC Chair's attempts to forge such a consensus within the Kennedy administration between the hawkish pragmatists and the Stevensonian idealists fits securely within Richard Neustadt's notion that the separateness of institutions and the sharing of authority within the government require that anyone who is striving to persuade must make others who wield power believe that they too have a stake in pursuing these same objectives. Thus Minow's campaign was an effort to fashion an alliance between competing factions within the Democratic Party and within the foreign policy community. Furthermore, we see an attempt to secure world markets in the interests of the corporate community. Although intense protest from the broadcast industry forestalled any further lobbying efforts on behalf of the Meyers report, Minow repeatedly strove to advance the principles of the report in his relationships with broadcast executives. As we shall see, Minow may have lost the battle over the Meyers report, but he scored significant victories in his campaign to reshape industry conceptions of its role in the international sphere.

THE INDUSTRY AND THE NATIONAL INTEREST

The industry backlash against the Meyers report was only one of several encounters that Minow had during his term of office in which it became clear
that any attempt to formulate explicit policy to tighten regulation of the industry was going to require time, patience, and endurance. In such cases, Minow had to call on all of Neustadt's strategies in an effort to make the industry come around to the government's point of view. He had to threaten the industry and convince it that he had "the skill and the will" to use his powers. He also had to draw public attention to the broadcasting arena, not simply to shame the industry but to generate a reaction that would make industry executives pause to consider Minow's standing with the public. Finally, he had to persuade, to charm, and to reason with industry insiders, but as Neustadt notes, "these [were] not the whole of his resources." The Chair had to use both fear and favor as means to induce others to see the advantages of sharing his sense of purpose. In other words, he wanted those seeking favors from the FCC and those fearing FCC action to take into account Newton Minow's point of view.

In order to execute this strategy, Minow lavished a great deal of personal attention on network executives and producers. He favored those with whom he could find some common ground and supported their efforts to move their networks in what Minow considered a positive direction. In this way, Minow not only influenced the thinking of these particular executives, but also affected their standing within their organizations. His ties to these industry insiders helped to boost their prestige with their employers and put Minow's case on the agenda within the decision-making circles of the industry itself.

This use of fear and favor is most explicitly detailed in documentation of the relationship between Minow and the American Broadcasting Corporation. For example, in the Newton Minow files, there is a copy of ABC News Chief James Hagerty's testimony before an FCC hearing which was called to investi-
gate excessive amounts of violence in ABC’s prime time programming [55]. During the hearing, Hagerty had nothing to say about programs such as The Untouchables (then one of the most violent and popular programs on television), rather, in a twenty page statement with sixty pages of attached appendices, Hagerty detailed the network’s rapid expansion of its news division with particular attention to the growth in the number of its overseas bureaus. Furthermore, he pointed to the network’s recent coverage of President Kennedy’s visit to Caracas, courtesy of a cooperative arrangement with ABC’s new Venezuelan affiliate. In doing this, the network was apparently trying to remind the commission of the ABC’s attempts to address some of the government’s concerns regarding international and public service issues. Hagerty’s testimony was something of a pre-emptive strike against commission action on the issue of program violence [56]. In fact, throughout Minow’s tenure at the Commission, his files contain a steady stream of letters and promotional material from the network citing its advances in matters that were of key concern to the Chair [57]. Fear of FCC censure was quite prevalent at ABC.

As for favor, there are a series of letters between the FCC Chair and various ABC executives. The most cool and formal of these exchanges are between Minow and ABC President Oliver Treyz, an outspoken advocate of bullets and love on the evening schedule [58]. Treyz was fired by the network in 1962 and his replacement, Tom Moore had a much more cordial relationship with Minow [59]. But perhaps Minow’s closest contact at the network was Hagerty. The two men would exchange informal notes ("Dear Newt", "Dear Jim") and would schedule regular "chats" that would range over a wide variety of issues [60]. During Minow’s tenure at the FCC, Hagerty rose to the top of the ABC hierarchy ultimately being appointed to the four-member board of directors.
There is a similar pattern of contact between Minow and various officials at the other two networks as well. In Minow's files there is a group of promotional ads from NBC with most of them focusing on news and information programming, such as a special series on "Communism." The ads were forwarded to Minow by an NBC Vice-President and one ad refers to an episode about the "Death of Stalin", a program which, said the ad, "supported the NBC thesis that television documentaries needn't be dull" [61]. The same file also contains a personal note from Minow to producer Irving Gitlin saying, "you should be very proud of the series you are doing on Communism. It's an extraordinary achievement. As a citizen I wish everybody could see it and that it would be rerun often" [62]. Such correspondence left little doubt among NBC executives as to the FCC Chair's agenda for American television.

When Minow resigned, Gitlin wrote to the departing Chair to express personal appreciation for his efforts. "Just let me say, as a program producer, that your support and pressure have been tangible assets in the pursuit of my work, and that in a field where standards are very hard to come by, your public support and official statements and actions have in fact made for improvement" [63].

There were also close contacts between Minow and CBS' Fred Friendly. Howard K. Smith, another producer who started the Minow era at CBS, ended up at ABC after a policy dispute with CBS program executives over on-camera analysis of controversial issues in the news. Minow, who supported Smith, received a letter of thanks which noted, "I don't know whether you need the assurance or not but let me tell you, you still have numberless friends for you and for your viewpoint inside the television industry" [65].

This courtship of individuals at various levels of the industry hierarchy was unlike anything done by Minow's predecessors. It enhanced the status and
boosted the morale of those who shared his point of view. It also meant that industry decision-making was sure to include some consideration of the Minow perspective. Finally, it advanced the possibility that even those who disagreed with the Chair might see some advantage to sharing his viewpoint.

Under the pressure of Minow's campaign all three networks boosted their output of news and information programming, with a particular emphasis on issues related to the international threat of Communist takeover [66]. At the same time, syndicators of overseas programming beefed up their program catalogues with substantial additions of informational and educational fare [67]. NBC even went so far as to offer 125 hours of free public affairs programming to countries in the early stage of developing a television broadcasting system. "Operation Documentary," as it was called, had the dual advantage of assisting new stations where "programming poses economic problems," while at the same time tying the new station into the interests of NBC and the U.S. government [68]. Thus despite the taboo boundary of censorship, Minow was able to articulate the linkage between broadcast programming and the national interest. This articulation served a variety of factions whose common economic and political interests lay in fortified boundaries along the frontiers of the "Free World". In this de facto manner, Minow was able to influence the content of program exports and achieve some of the key objectives of the Meyers Report.

As for the establishment of a global satellite communications network, Minow confronted an even more complex pattern of industry resistance since he had to deal not only with broadcasters, but with electronics and telecommunications executives as well. However, despite this opposition, Minow had a more tangible wealth of authority with which to negotiate a compromise. There was no way that satellite coverage of the globe would
become a reality without the use of NASA boosters to get the privately financed satellites into orbit. Thus Minow and the Kennedy government were in the position to do some hard bidding. Neustadt’s notion could be applied here, "If they share his authority, he has some share in theirs." In exchange for NASA’s cooperation Minow exacted concessions. He demanded that the industry initiate a crash program of corporate cooperation and development in order to beat the Soviets into the era of satellite communications. Further, he pressed for a satellite system that could handle television program transmissions as well as telephone and telegraph communications. Finally, Minow insisted on global coverage to insure that developing countries could be linked into the system as well as the more profitable North Atlantic communication routes [69].

After the guidelines had been established for setting up the system, the sticky issue of content regulation asserted itself. News reporters and industry executives wanted to know if the FCC planned to regulate the kinds of programs that would be carried on the satellites. At first Minow seemed to argue that, yes, the FCC would keep an eye on satellite programming [70]. But ultimately First Amendment issues forced him back to the more flexible position that he was maintaining vis a vis industry programming in general. It appeared Minow’s concern for free speech made him reconsider the notion of explicit content guidelines [71]. However, I would also argue that Minow was aware that written regulation would have no necessary advantage. He understood that power and politics were played out on a constantly shifting terrain and although he might have wanted certain regulatory and statutory revisions, he must have understood that the revisions themselves would only allow for possibilities of change, but would not necessarily guarantee performance. This realization was central to the Kennedy government’s
conception of power and policy: It is better to negotiate areas of agreement rather than legislate restrictions which might not prove efficacious. Minow's courtship of the communication executives in the areas of content regulation and satellite policy was a key element of this strategy.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this paper Richard Neustadt's work has been invoked as a vehicle to explain the manner in which Newton Minow dealt with the problems confronting the FCC during the early 1960s. It shows Minow actively in pursuit of public opinion, party unity, and industry support. Further, it helps to explain how and why Minow engaged in a certain brand of discursive politics, a brand which fit neatly within the larger project of the Kennedy administration. However there is a limitation to the usefulness of this analysis and that is a matter of scope: Neustadt fails to contextualize his model within broader historical and societal power relationships.

Therefore this paper seeks to locate Minow's activities within a broader framework and tries to show the manner in which his campaign to shift the way people talked about television was part of a larger effort to bring together disparate factions in the interests of maintaining a position of dominance for the forces of American empire in a period of change and uncertainty. Throughout we can see Minow attempting to unify a bloc of social forces behind a conception of broadcasting as central to the project of delimiting a "Free World". By articulating a link between television and the national interest, the Minow Commission was able to usher in a new priority for broadcasting without fundamentally altering the legal framework of regulation.

However the success of Minow's campaign in this area of broadcast policy should be compared to other areas where he is known for rhetorical
ambitiousness and political failure [72]. Such comparisons will make clear that it is the conjuncture of historical forces and not simply the power of regulatory discourse which propels the development of FCC policy [73]. Minow's discursive campaign for an international broadcast policy succeeded largely because it unified a group of disparate tendencies behind shared interests and concerns.

There is nothing inevitable about this conjunctural process. Although transnational corporations and the Kennedy government had certain overlapping interests in the international sphere, and although these interests were powerful, driving forces in the history of the post-War period, whether and how these interests could be brought together was open to question throughout the period. In this sense, people like Newton Minow did make choices and did influence the shape of history, however their activities must be analyzed in the larger context of conflicting social forces. For it is this dialectic between the world that human beings are given and the world that they construct which explains power within society and change throughout history.

Correspondence: Michael Curtin, Department of Communication Arts, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, Wisconsin 53706, USA.

NOTES

The following abbreviation is used in the notes below:
NMP: Newton Minow Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

[1] For example, see James F. Baughman (1985) Television's Guardians: The FCC and the Politics of Programming, 1958-1967 (Knoxville, TN); or Barry


[5] In the area of satellite communication alone, it was estimated that gross revenues within the next fifteen years would average 100 billion dollars annually, Wall Street Journal, 6 June 1961.


[11] One of the issues of serious concern before the FCC during the 1950s was the amount of violence on television. Yet, in the 50s, violent programming was discussed as an issue with domestic rather than international implications. Even after Minow's "vast wasteland" speech, most of the 3500 letters of support that Minow received did not mention the issue of international television. 581 writers complained of too much liquor, crime, violence, and sex on TV; 426 cited the adverse effect on children; and 356 were worried about the effect on public morality, according to the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 4 June 1961. Thus Minow's speech appears to be an attempt to fuse one widespread public concern (violence on TV) with an issue that was of greater interest to the Kennedy government and the industry (American television in overseas markets).


[13] BARNET, pp. 194-233; AMBROSE, pp. 245-270; and HODGSON.
However, it is important to point out that the focus of this analysis is not on Newton Minow the individual, but on Newton Minow as a historical figure working within a particular historical context. I am not trying to argue that Newton Minow, the individual, was solely or even largely responsible for bringing together these great conflicting interests through his idiosyncratic skills of persuasion. Certainly Minow was quite gifted as an orator and as a negotiator, and he made choices within a given historical framework. Thus it is much more illuminating to look at the policy process within this period from Minow's perspective while at the same time understanding that he is operating within a matrix of economic, political, and ideological forces. In other words, any reference to Newton Minow should not be understood solely on the level of an individual human being operating in relationship to other individuals, but also as a historical figure operating within an overdetermined field of social activity.

Variety, 7 March 1962; also see David Halberstam (1977) The Powers That Be (New York) p. 544: "The door to Kennedy's office was always open, a surprisingly large number of people could drop in and chat with the President of the United States. But when the Huntley-Brinkley or the Cronkite show was on, everything stopped. No one was to disturb him. He could be disturbed if Walter Heller or Ambassador Dobrynin or Senator John Stennis were in the room, but not when the nightly news was on. It was sacred. He put, aides noticed, more concentration into watching the news than into almost anything else, you could watch with him but you could not talk. He felt that what went on these shows was terribly important. Perhaps it was not reality and perhaps it was not even good journalism, but it was what the country perceived as reality and thus in a way was closer to reality than reality itself."

Denver Post, 11 September 1962.

MINOW, p. 3.


Variety, 31 May 1961, in this article Lewis notes, as did many others at the time that this is the same formula that the Kennedy forces used to work around the powerful boogeyevil Democrats when dealing with race issues in the South. The southern wing the party had been a serious detriment to Kennedy's election campaign in 1960 and the President's only chance of capturing more support there was to register and mobilize black voters. However, previous efforts to accomplish that through federal legislation had been frustrated by a solid bloc of white Democratic Congressmembers. Any attempt to deal with racial issues in Congress met filibuster and
frustration. To get around this obstacle, Robert Kennedy's Justice Department invoked laws from the Reconstruction era to execute the administration's agenda on civil rights and to register black voters. In essence, the Kennedy government was attempting to move beyond the traditional relationship between President and Congress.


[23] Neustadt, p. 34.


[27] Memo from Gloria Coe to Newton Minow re: "Speech to Radio & Television Executive Society, New York City, September 22," NMP.

[28] Jack Gould file, box 17, NMP.


[34] Xerox of back of Christmas card, undated, box 54, NMP.

[35] For example, see Television Magazine, June and October 1961; Cincinnati Enquirer 23 May 1961.

[36] Courtship of the press was, of course, part of the larger strategy of the Kennedy government. An interesting example of this found in the Minow Papers was a two-day confidential media conference hosted by the State Department in October 1962. As Under Secretary of State Robert Manning characterized it, "This Conference will provide background material for editorials, news stories and radio-TV programs throughout the United States for the next several months." In addition to Minow, who was slated to speak on "the distortion of the American image" overseas, the speakers list included every top official in the State Department, the Pentagon, and the White House. JFK was the closing speaker and the theme of the conference was "Five Goals of U.S. Foreign Policy." See box 41, NMP.


[40] Wills, p. 8.


[47] Ashmore biographical information on published pamphlet of interview with Jack Gould with closing comment by Harry Ashmore put out by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in 1961, box 17, NMP.

[48] Letter with attached memo from Harry Ashmore to Newton Minow, 3 May 1963, box 12, NMP.

[49] Minow to Ashmore, 7 May 1963, box 12, NMP.

[50] Clipping from USIA Correspondent, April 1963, box 28, NMP.


[52] Tedson Meyers to Ralph Dungan, Special Assistant to the President, 24 May 1962, box 18, NMP.


[55] Box 2, NMP.

[56] Statement by James Hagerty before the FCC, 5 February 1962, box 2, NMP.

[57] Curtin, pp. 71-77.
[58] Letters between Oliver Treyz and Newton Minow, box 2, NMP.

[59] Thomas Moore to Newton Minow, 3 May 1963, box 2, NMP.

[60] Letters between James Hagerty and Newton Minow, box 2, NMP.


[62] Minow to Irving Gitlin, 5 February 1963, box 31, NMP.

[63] Gitlin to Minow, 12 June 1963, box 31, NMP.

[64] Minow to Fred Friendly, 16 October 1961, box 9, NMP.

[65] Howard K. Smith to Minow, 20 June 1961, box 9, NMP.

[66] Curtin, pp. 94-130.

[67] Curtin, pp. 63-77.


[70] Transcript from NBC Meet the Press, 22 July 1962, box 46, NMP

[71] Minow to Harry Ashmore, 4 September 1962, box 12, NMP.

[72] For example, see Baughman (1985).

[73] Clearly such an analytical framework draws heavily on the work of writers such as Gramsci and Volosinov, but an especially important model is the the conjunctural analysis offered by Stuart Hall, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts (1978) Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order (New York).