A Reconstruction of the Discourse of South Dakota Public Broadcasting Managers and Producers: A Cultural Analysis Using Universal Pragmatics

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Abstract

This article is the final of three in a series providing analysis of the discursive activity and speech act behavior of South Dakota Public Broadcasting (SDPB) managers and producers. Applying Habermas' theory of universal pragmatics to the discourse and conversations detailed previously in IJHCS 2(3), 2015, pp. 729-765, this work will consider whether that discourse is being conducted according the assumptions and rules of communicative action and rationality or according to the goal directedness of instrumental rationality.

In United States, Public Broadcasting was founded upon the ideals of diversity and alternative programming (Carnegie I, 14). Such ideals should be influential in the construction of meaning for cultural producers. However, as already discussed in previous chapters, capitalist steering mechanisms such as power and money have the potential to distort communication and essentially disable the consensus forming process, shape the lives of the citizenry, and work to construct meaning, knowledge and cultural production through action which is contradictory to the democratic process.

This article will apply the rules and speech act elements of the ideal speech situation to the discursive behavior of South Dakota Public Broadcasting managers and producers and it will provide evidence of either distorted communication and instrumental rationality or communicative action and democratic participation.

The discourse and speech acts discussed in Schlenker, IJHCS 2(3) will be considered in working toward an understanding of interaction at South Dakota Public Broadcasting during 1992 and early 1993, which involved the resignation and replacement of the Executive Director. This analysis will provide an understanding of the structural influences on the communicative patterns within the SDPB organization.

This analysis is divided into three segments including (1) a six-month period following the resignation of the Executive Director, (2) the arrival of the new Executive Director, and (3) a three-month period following the arrival of the new Executive Director.

Keywords: Habermas, Universal Pragmatics, Ideal Speech Situation, Public Sphere, Culture, Democracy.
Communicative Action in Practice

The rules of communicative action provide for consensus building speech patterns that epitomize democratic participation while instrumental rationality tends toward systematic distortion, which merely maintains an appearance of openness, honesty and democratic participation. The first article in this series detailed the structure of the ideal speech situation that necessarily contains four primary speech act elements including communicatives, representatives, regulatives and constatives (Schlenker, IJHCS 1(4). Associated with each of these are their four respective validity claims including comprehensibility, truthfulness, appropriateness and truth.

Habermas maintains that the ideal speech situation "is a critical standard against which every actually realized consensus can be called into question and checked" (Kemp, 188, 1988). Genuine consensus can only legitimately be reached through "the force of a better argument." To do this we can analyze the discourse that took place in terms of the four major requirements of the ideal speech situation, all of which must be met if the consensus that emerges from a practical discourse is to be genuine (190).

Schlenker, IJHCS 2(3), for example included numerous examples wherein individuals and entities associated with SDPB, from the Educational Telecommunications Board (ETB) to the Executive Director gave the appearance of "openness and honesty" in relation to the establishing of consensus for decisions regarding policy for South Dakota Public Broadcasting. Universal pragmatics and the elements, which make up the ideal speech situation thus work as a practical tool in determining whether the consensus which was established concerning various issues was legitimate or only apparent.

These decisions included a variety of issues and situations from the Portrait of a Marriage controversy to network reorganization. Following the assumptions of theorists like Nicholas Garnham who place a great deal of importance on the concept of public service broadcasting as "an embodiment of the principles of the public sphere" (Garnham, 1990, 109), it becomes important to determine how closely discourse which contributes to determining policy for public sphere entities like Public Broadcasting resembles the ideal speech situation.

This link between the lifeworld discursive activity and programming policy is important because if Public Broadcasting is to be a viable public sphere entity, relevant to citizen participation in democracy, then the programming which its producers develop must be capable of adding to public debate and giving a voice to the voiceless rather than merely adding to the politics of consumerism.
Following Garnham and Habermas, it is logical to assume that if Public Broadcasting's managers and producers work within a culture which is not conducive to communicative action and democratic participation, then it is unlikely that the programming which they develop, produce and schedule will be compatible with those ideals.

**Communicative Speech Acts: Comprehensibility**

The Executive Director's resignation in April of 1992 appeared to mean different things to different people associated with the network. Dave Leonard's last few months had been tumultuous at best. His tireless battle against House Bill 1123, while successful, appeared to have alienated him from the Educational Telecommunications Board (ETB). Thus he actually ended up losing a great deal on both a personal and professional level. Speaking of the Department of Educational and Cultural Affairs (DECA) Secretary, whom Leonard described as one of the more powerful ETB members, he said, "I got into a pissing match with a skunk."

South Dakota Public Broadcasting employees, who had watched the battle, expressed mixed feelings. Some producers for example, said it was advantageous that Dave Leonard was gone, saying that his management style was not conducive to empathizing with the "foot soldiers" and "peons."

Middle managers, including the Deputy Executive Director and the Director of Television Programming however, were in a much different situation, now having to run the network while it was "under a microscope" and being scrutinized by the legislature, DECA and ETB. Their conservative programming decisions throughout the remainder of the year, drew a great deal of criticism from statewide press and the public.

The entire time period including the resignation of the Executive Director, and the arrival and work of the new Executive Director helps to define the culture of South Dakota Public Broadcasting including the relationships between DECA, ETB, producers, managers and the public.

The *Portrait of a Marriage* decision, for example, was so controversial that the Educational Telecommunications Board could not avoid discussion of it and finally allowed public comment during three of its meetings during the fall of 1992.

Producers and managers also had mixed perspectives about what should have been done with 'Portrait', whether Leonard's leaving was advantageous or not, what to expect from the new Executive Director and what directions the organization should be taking.
Were discourse participants during this time period able to engage in communicative speech acts? Were they able to initiate and perpetuate discourse and make their arguments understood? Were they restricted from doing so politically, economically or socially? These are all questions directly related to the first ingredient composing the ideal speech situation: the communicative speech act.

It is apparent that the network's middle managers were struggling to make meaning for themselves following the Executive Director's resignation. Their programming decisions, while an attempt to regain some sense of network control, nevertheless erupted in a highly visible controversy.

In dealing with the dilemma, the ETB gave the impression that it approved of the decision, when it refused during three Fall 1992 meetings, to publicly comment on *Portrait of a Marriage*. ETB itself seems to have set a discursive pattern at this time. It allowed a number of people to comment on the situation. Individuals who did so clearly articulated their perspectives in an open forum calling for SDPB to "be free of undue state control" (Roberts, October 16, 1992).

However, while giving the impression that members of the public could come and clearly articulate their viewpoints on the matter, ETB virtually ignored all speakers by not even commenting or debating the issues, which participants raised.

This minimized the arguments of individuals who expressed dissatisfaction with the decision not to air the program. Essentially the ETB had changed the rules of engagement and simply refused to acknowledge other perspectives.

This gave both the Deputy Executive Director, now working in the capacity of the Acting Executive Director, and the Director of Television Programming, confidence that their decision had been the appropriate one. Ironically, soon after the new Executive Director came on board, both the Deputy Executive Director and the Director of Television programming were fired. Speculation existed that the root-cause of their demise was the 'Portrait' controversy.

That appears to have been at least a portion of their problem; however, not because the Board disagreed with their decision. The new Executive Director for example, in speaking of the 'Portrait' problem said, "The Board doesn't care so much about what we do, it just doesn't want any negative publicity generated."

Communicative speech acts also need to be considered in relation to the producer/manager relationship at SDPB. Upon his arrival, the new Executive Director strongly encouraged people to talk with him openly because he encouraged "openness and honesty."

However, when the network reorganizational plan was being discussed before the ETB,
producers could only attend the meeting if they asked for personal leave time off from work. This was a questionable tactic, since the ETB was discussing a plan, which would have direct impact on the lives of producers. Consequently, only one producer attended the meeting and no effort was made to seek out his perspectives from either the ETB or the Management Team members.

This is a direct and obvious contradiction of the communicative speech act ideal, which insists that all partners to participation have the opportunity to express themselves clearly and comprehensibly.

Similar discrepancies exist within the confines of the "Management Team" structure. A number of Vermillion producers expressed frustration during the Sioux Falls meeting for example, over the fact that no one from Vermillion production was a part of the Management Team. The Management Team argued that Vermillion producers were represented because all members of the Management Team had their best interests at heart. While that is a subjective observation, the clear and obvious realization is that no Vermillion producers have been appointed to the Management Team and this also is a clear violation of the first guideline of the ideal speech situation.

Perhaps the primary point to remember in analyzing the rigor of communicative speech acts at South Dakota Public Broadcasting is that distortion has occurred at essentially every level of the organization and appears to have permeated the system.

Both the former Executive Director and the Deputy Executive Director have confirmed the fact that the Co-chair of the South Dakota Joint Appropriations Committee had begun having secret meetings with SDPB employees over a conflict with management as early as the spring of 1992.

No member of SDPB's management was a participant in those discussions, which made it even more difficult for network management to deal with organizational problems including producers who felt they had no access to the Executive Director. Rather it is likely that such meetings widened the rift between managers and producers and further promoted the confusion about who was in control of the network.

Thus, barriers to employment of communicative speech acts at South Dakota Public Broadcasting have affected the entire network structure, from the legislature's Appropriations Committee to network producers.

The communicative speech act requirement is frequently not a major problem when participants come from similar cultural backgrounds since the underlying validity claim is simply that participants are understandable and comprehensible (Habermas, 1979, 3). On occasion however, barriers to the employment of communicative speech acts come from the lack of opportunity to engage in discourse, the inability to question other participants, structural
constraints, which do not allow access to all discursive situations, and on occasion economic
disadvantages which do not allow all participants equal opportunity.

As mentioned earlier, other constraints can also exist including outright deception on the
part of more knowledgeable participants, who are able to change the rules of engagement and thus
minimize the effectiveness of other arguments whether or not they are better.

This seems to be the situation at South Dakota Public Broadcasting from top to bottom. On
numerous occasions, ETB had invited the Co-Chair of the Joint Appropriations Committee to
attend its bi-monthly meetings but without success. Speaking of management's inability to
communicatively engage the Co-Chair, managers acknowledged frustration.

This has been undermining the authority of the licensee (the ETB) and it
undermines the authority of the senior management of the network and thus there may
well be a sense at the producer level that what they do or don't do may somehow be measured
or graded or positively or negatively received, and they may be thinking more about the
legislator or group of legislators than their audience.

I think therefore, there is a sense of frustration that all of us have, over that is in
charge and that has been voiced verbally at our last Board meeting. We had a
staff meeting ahead of the Board meeting and the Board came in and met with
the staff at that last meeting and several of the staff came in and said, "Who is in
charge?" (Acting Executive Director, January 14, 1993).

While management realized that legislative intrusion was capable of having a debilitating
effect upon producers and production, they generally denied that a direct link existed and felt they
could act as a buffer. However their own conservative programming decisions after the Executive
Director resigned acted as a series of warnings to producers.

We have tried not to let things like Portrait of a Marriage affect us and we have
developed pretty tough shells in the last couple of years. But you kind of question whether
what you do will be perceived as going too far. There's always that tension and concern
over offending somebody. I don't think we have really touched on any areas that are too
far out there. I think we could get a little braver, but management doesn't support us. So,
why should we take that step off, for no good reason?
But around here no one ever confers with anyone else. And, management acts as if it is afraid of the legislature. I have watched management as they are meeting with legislators and they are uncomfortable, there is no positive relationship there and to me that sets a tone for everything. To me, I don't understand what people are afraid of with the truth. They are letting fear control them. I've seen fear control employees around here. There's no reason for it. And that's the way they manage, with threats, intimidation and fear.

And that trickles down because it affects each supervisor at each level and it really starts to get you down. It affects producers just as much as it affects everyone else (SDPB Producer #2, January 20, 1993).

This type of communicative distortion, which is accomplished primarily by not allowing participants, the opportunity to clearly initiate and perpetuate discourse was acknowledged by managers as well. The perception that "no one ever confers with anyone else," and "management acts as if it is afraid of the legislature" show clearly that the elements of control, which have emanated from the legislature and DECA seem to have been filtered through the ETB and have been internalized by both producers and managers of the network.

Politics interfere. Politics are getting in the way of doing business. It ought not to be that way but it is. The bureaucracy has taken on a life of its own and that can be kind of nasty. Dave Leonard is not here because he got crossways politically with the wrong people, I might not be here in six months because I got crossways with the wrong people.

The real test of an Executive Director's success is in keeping the politics away from the producer level, it should never get out and permeate the staff people, and they should always be removed from it.

As long as you have politicians who are elected and therefore appoint boards to control entities there needs to be some kind of removal of control outside the political arena. We have to go before the Appropriations Committee to have our budget approved. If we do not make them happy, we could be in trouble.

It's control and accountability, and by having control of the purse strings you can control it. I don't know if it is politics per se, but it is the power that goes with the politics. Because of the way the system is set up, you are not in charge of your own destiny (Director of Television Programming, January 11, 1993).
The irony here, is that while the former Executive Director fought for SDPB autonomy in strenuously opposing HB-1123, for example, and apparently worked to buffer producers from political control, just the opposite seems to have been the result. The former management structure utilized the Deputy Executive Director who acted as a Chief Operations Officer and supervised division heads in day-to-day activity. This structure offered a level of insulation for producers from the legislature and DECA, since it was the former Executive Director who dealt with state officials in his capacity as Chief Executive Officer of the network.

Without direct access to producers, the DECA Secretary and Co-Chair of the Joint Appropriations Committee simply circumvented both the ETB and management in holding secret meetings with producers. This contributed to the development of HB-1123, which the Co-Chair sponsored with the blessing of the DECA Secretary, who insisted that "these are state employees and therefore DECA needs to have control" (ETB Meeting, December 9, 1992).

Management members who opposed this legislation including the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director and Director of Television Programming resigned under duress and with ETB endorsement. Following these patterns of control provides evidence that communicative distortion has affected South Dakota Public Broadcasting from the Executive Director to producer positions. It becomes apparent as this study progresses that other speech act elements have also suffered due to manipulation, control and distortion.

Representative Speech Acts: Sincerity

Representative speech acts are the second category of speech acts to be considered in the context of the ideal speech situation. Representative speech acts incorporate sincerity or truthfulness as a validity claim. It is important that participants be able to express themselves sincerely in order that they might fully represent their opinions and attitudes regarding issues which affect them in the life world.

As with communicative speech act, various constraints can work to keep participants from articulating their arguments. Constraints can be either external or internal. External constraints can include political and economic interests and may be powerful enough to circumvent general public interest in favor of a specialized interest.

Internal constraints can be equally debilitating and may affect institutional cultures like South Dakota Public Broadcasting, which are committed to certain policies without regard for
rational arguments from other parties. Expressions of false concern and hidden motives are typically utilized in an attempt to minimize the effectiveness of positions, which may be contrary to that of the status quo agenda.

Members of the Educational Telecommunications Board, for example often listened quietly and politely to members of the public, who on occasion, attended Board meetings and wished to comment either on Board policy or SDPB programming choices. On several occasions in the last year however, the Board simply ignored these public comments and went on to other business barely acknowledging either the individuals or their arguments.

After one particularly intense meeting in Sioux Falls on December 19, 1992 for example, the Board once again neglected to acknowledge comment until the afternoon session when most members of the public were gone. Board members then offered some opinions.

If these people who were in here complaining so much this morning want minority programming, tell them to get out their billfolds. And besides, I have the Program Guide right here and here's a Native American program on Monday the 14th. And he was crying about no minority programming (ETB Meeting, December 9, 1992).

During that particular Board meeting, the morning discussion had centered on the necessity for more minority programming; however, the minority programming being discussed was in relation to not having scheduled Portrait of a Marriage earlier that year. Apparently, "minority programming" to this Board member, meant only Native American programming and his answer was simple. "If people want minority programming, tell them to get out their billfolds."

One SDPB producer expressed frustration with the make-up of the ETB membership and its apparent inability to display support for alternative programming and minority viewpoints. However, it was clear to this producer why the Board often appears insensitive.

One thing we could change for instance would be with the ET Board. It would be nice if it were representative of South Dakotans. I know they are people who have names and power and money, but they are not representative of South Dakotans. They generally want to stay above the fray and generally end up not doing their job either. They just want to meet and have some glory. They don't deal with conflict very well at all. They should be made up of different people who should be involved. And you look at the Board and it's made up of white men who have to have control. They should be people who care
rather than people who are appointed as a political favor. Maybe that is what makes the world go around, but that can change (SDPB Producer #2, January 20, 1993).

This producer articulated an important point. Whereas the Board consistently gives public endorsement to serving the underserved (a concern mentioned by many in public broadcasting), its concern appears less than genuine when its members virtually belittle a sincerely expressed viewpoint by essentially brushing it aside unless people "get out their billfolds." The fact of the matter is, that in speaking with individuals who had been courageous enough to address the Board, it was discovered that they had already opened "their billfolds" and were "Friends," that is, financially supporting members of South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

While the above examples fall under the category of external constraints and stem from a particular attitude on the part of ETB members; internal constraints also exist at SDPB in the form of particular expressions and policy directions which are forged and formulated in such a way that contrary opinions and arguments are minimized as if not sincere or genuine. This leads to insinuations that these contrary and critical arguments are really not to be taken seriously.

The lecture, which the new Executive Director gave at the first general staff meeting he conducted is an example. One of the primary things he first mentioned (and which became part of his "stump speech") was "the look."

ED: I have produced and directed a lot of things, and I have executive produced and I'm a real stickler for "look." That's all we have, is our look. People decide who we are ... you know ... people ... the average ... everybody out there in TV land that watches, they don't care about us. I mean you got to think about that, us personally, and I don't mean to sound cynical, but they could care less about what's happening inside this building. All they care about is that when they turn on the TV, what is there is what they said is going to be there and that it is the highest quality we can present. And in today's world, viewers are very sophisticated. That is something that we never used to think about. People used to be amazed with snowy pictures and all of that, but today people don't stand for that. So my efforts have always been to try and create a situation where the organization that we belong to can become a standard, so that people begin to look at that and go, "Wow, those guys know their stuff, they look great." So our "on-air" is totally critical to me, I'll be watching. I think there is some room for improvement in our on-air look, our breaks, how we use our breaks, all of those things (SDPB Staff Meeting. April
The concern over "the look" is related to the obsession over "professional standards" which has plagued public broadcasting since commercial broadcasting and its over emphasis on entertainment became the virtual standard for broadcasting in general. Historically SDPB has similarly been pressured to meet standards imposed by the entertainment oriented "look." In the 1950's, proponents who believed that "entertainment" should be the standard against which educational programming should be measured were not subtle.

It must be borne in mind that a radio station, like any advertising medium, subsists on entertainment rather than education. There must be some of course, but people look to radio for relaxation, not education. It is often the mistake of many persons to indignantly demand that radio do much educating, much public service, and strive hard to increase the mental stature of the general public. But educational writers and sponsors of experimental theaters know too well, this approach is not conducive to mass audience. Education costs money. Radio is at the disposal of those who wish to help defray the expenses, and they take a dim view of being philanthropic but poor (Schweikher, 1953, 41).

The new Executive Director's pitches regarding "the look" are strikingly similar in nature. They designate a standard and impose an expectation that this standard epitomizes the ultimate goal. He said authoritatively, "I will be watching." In addition, he articulated a 1990's equivalent for television, which was imposed for radio in the 1950's.

Folks, we have to be concerned about the image of this network. We need hotter programming. I look at some of our stuff and I say, "I know we could do better than that." We need people to know good television; the look is what is important. The audience won't watch if you don't have a consistent look.

We need a better on air-look, so how do we get it? We need a Nickelodeon style. Channels like that are our competition. We need to be snappy and moving along and if we don't have that now and have to change some people to get it, let's do it.

These people need to know that they have to be team players and that there are rules to play by. And what we have to decide is if we want to simply get rid of them or tell them they are moving and hope they choose to leave instead (SDPB Management Team Meeting, April 14, 1993).
It did not take long for producers to catch on to the "game" which the Executive director was "playing." The April 1st, 1993, Sioux Falls meeting for example, was another intense session with network reorganization on the agenda in the morning and programming goals discussed in the afternoon.

After the Minority Affairs producer clearly pointed out the importance of serving minority audiences and producing programs with strong social content, another producer took issue with him and used as a rationale this version of "the look" speech.

The thing is, it's trendy right now to talk about social issues and things like what a jerk Christopher Columbus was. And we're talking about all of these social issues. Well the CPB sits down and says, "Well we have all of this stuff for kids and education," and you look at the PBS rundown and you see Nature and you see Nova and you see Mystery and you see Masterpiece Theatre and you see all of these other programs and every once in a while they'll throw in a show about some social issue.

And we're sitting, talking about doing shows about all of these social changes and we're talking about trying to get viewers. Well, you're not going to get viewers to watch by running programs about alcoholism. You might be able to get some people to watch but in general the Executive Director is saying that he wants to have an audience (SDPB Staff Meeting, April 1, 1993).

"The look" speech generally seems to center around the necessity for entertainment value in programming and production so that viewers will watch. The assumption is that today's viewers are so "sophisticated" that they will watch very little that is not entertainment oriented. Generally, on PBS "you see Nature and you see Nova and you see Mystery and you see Masterpiece Theatre ... and every once in a while they'll throw in some show about a social issue."

On this occasion, such discourse had the effect of minimizing the credence of the previous argument since it sounded so rational, logical, and it was supported by the Executive Director himself. Thus, no matter how sincerely the contrary point was articulated, its credibility had already suffered.

Other internal constraints have affected the discussion over programming and the ability of producers to sincerely offer their perspectives on programming direction. Recently, for example
the new Executive Director issued SDPB's programming guidelines which closely paralleled the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's (CPB) "1993 Statement of Programming Objectives for Public Television."

This document originated out of the controversy during the yearly congressional budget hearings wherein PBS was severely criticized for programming described as liberally biased. Its specific goal is "strict adherence to objectivity and balance in all programs or series of programs of a controversial nature (Public Telecommunications Act, 1992). However, its statement of programming objectives (SPO's) defines programming in terms of eight themes including education, health, culture, children, America's international roles, government and history.

The new Executive Director suggested that SDPB utilize three of these themes including Education, Children and Community, on which to focus its programming goals (Third Organizational Meeting Minutes, March 28, 1993). Use of these themes as objectives, works well to define South Dakota Public Broadcasting as a programming source for educational material and as an extension of educational institutions in the state. This is a perspective long maintained by the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs (DECA) which has strongly suggested that SDPB define its programming goals accordingly.

Our strategic planning consultants reported their evaluation of the service and suggested some things to review. The consultants noted that SDPB had been taking a rather inactive role in educational programming and urged us to adopt an active posture in educational services by strengthening working relationships with the various partners involved: Division of Education, Regents, public and private colleges, K-12 schools, Technology in Education, and various education organizations and agencies in the state (DECA Memo, August 10, 1990).

Producers voiced concern that "educational programming" defined in terms of K-12 and educational institutions in general were much too narrow a definition.

P4: For instance when I talked one-on-one with the Executive Director he defined "education" much more narrowly than I would. He defined it more along the lines of K through 12, which is basically the way DECA looks at it. And that is not unlike the ETB chair's definition of "educational TV". He's getting his definition from the Chair of the House Appropriations
Committee, he's getting it from DECA, he's getting it from the Board, he's getting it from the governor's office ...

P1: But the thing about it is that we're losing focus again, and we're allowing people in leadership positions of state government to say, "Here's what should be." But I can guarantee that if we go out into the community and get a grass roots perspective, it will be totally different as to what they want to see from us as compared with what these people at the top want to see from us. Because basically you got people at the top in charge like the DECA secretary and the Chair of the Appropriations Committee who is also a high school principal, all defining "education" in terms of K through 12 and very narrowly (SDPB TV Production Meeting, March 17, 1993).

These perspectives were articulated with a great deal of commitment and sincerity on March 17, 1993. They defined the necessity of "educational programming" but in much broader terms regarding diversity and democracy rather than merely as an extension of the K through 12 educational structure. However after the Third Organizational Meeting (March 28, Minutes) wherein the three SPO's for 1993, were explained by the Executive Director, no producer expressed a contrary viewpoint as strongly.

Much the same thing took place regarding perspectives on programming like Statehouse. Such programming became popular on SDPB after the station licenses were transferred to the ETB with closer state supervision that was described in chapter six. In particular, producers from Vermillion who were responsible for Minority Affairs, Cultural Affairs and ITV programming have been particularly critical of programs like Statehouse, claiming that it really does nothing to serve underserved people. However, at the April 1 meeting in Sioux Falls, the Executive Director worked hard to keep these viewpoints from being sincerely expressed.

We have to realize the politics involved in all of this. What if we all decide that we should be doing Statehouse, that we shouldn't be doing something else. If we sit here like a group of adults and professionals and say, "That show is really not doing much for us," we've all agreed now that we are going to take those resources and produce THIS show which we think will have a bigger impact on the state of South Dakota ... what's going to happen reality wise? We're probably going to lose funding (SDPB Staff Meeting, April 1, 1993).
Consequently, no one voiced a perspective in contradiction of this. Discussion essentially came to a halt and no one challenged the Executive Director's position.

As these examples show, both internal and external constraints have worked to curb the use of representative speech acts related to viewpoints expressed with conviction and sincerity at South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

Regulative Speech Acts: Rightness

Regulative speech acts are concerned with rightness or appropriateness as a validity claim. They indicate the existence of a normative relationship in conjunction with the societal domain and development of interpersonal relationships (Habermas, 1979, 68).

Thus normatively regulated action (speech) is the result. However as part of the ideal speech situation, all participants in discourse must have the opportunity to affect such regulations as to who should be allowed to speak. In addition all participants should be allowed to recommend, command, warn, request, excuse and advise (McCarthy, 1985, 285).

Regulative speech acts can be useful in identifying important clues about the normative contexts of particular cultures such as that of an organization like South Dakota Public Broadcasting. This is because speakers incorporate various clues into the content of their speech acts that indicate a great deal about the interpersonal relations, traditions, values and power relations of a particular societal domain.

On the basis of a specific culture's normative standards, speakers as actors may be judged as legitimate or illegitimate. Thus they may or may not feel free to claim legitimacy to participate. A speaker therefore may be cut off from participation in debate due to structural imperatives or power arrangements within a given culture that work to distort communication through normative control.

In order for genuine consensus to be achievable, all participants must be able to "order and resist order, to permit and forbid, to make and extract promises, and to be responsible for one's conduct and demand that others are as well" (White, 1990, 57). This means that distortion is immanent if one side is in a privileged position and has been able to set the ground rules and norms for deciding how or what discussion can be restricted, permitted or allowed to proceed.

With his first all-staff meeting at South Dakota Public Broadcasting, the new Executive Director established a number of ground rules and norms to which, as it became obvious in the months ahead, he expected adherence. Concerning regulative speech acts, while he expressed a
commitment to openness, it became apparent that there was a limit to his appreciation for openness. His formulation of these normative standards began with his reconstruction of his own experiences with management while he was a producer, and what he had learned from them.

Then one day I decided I didn't like the way things were getting done, so I started fighting with management and began to realize that the only way I might affect some change in management was to become one of them. And I thought that was a pretty good idea. In fact what happened was my boss told me, "Shut up, if you don't like the way things are being run, get one of your own and run it yourself" (SDPB Staff Meeting, January 28, 1993).

This particular meeting was conducted with good humor and many people expressed appreciation for the new Executive Director's approach and "style." He expressed a deep commitment to openness and honesty.

I'm very open to communication. I am a real big believer in trust and in honesty. Those are the two major things I've learned in the 45 years I've been on this planet, to work hard at trying to establish. So I'm going to be up front with everybody, and you can count on that, that I'm not going to pull any strings and I probably ... oh I don't know ... I may say things that not everyone agrees upon. But hey, isn't that what public broadcasting is all about? I mean, think about all of those programs we run which are not the most comfortable situations, but we do it anyway.

So hopefully I'll be able to set up some kind of communication with everybody so there's lots of input, I like input. We're all in this together. That's always been my vision. And as far as organizational charts go and all of that, they're necessities and yeah, you live with them, and job descriptions are important, and all of that's wonderful, but I come from an "up the organization" school of management. I don't feel I am any better than anyone else, I'm just the leader of a group right now, and have been fortunate enough to have moved into this position for whatever the reason.

Staff members appeared to be particularly interested in elements of his lecture dealing with open communication and accessibility, since a number of producers in particular, had become
frustrated with what they perceived to be management's inaccessibility. They interpreted his expressed commitment to an "open-door-policy" as just what the organization needed and an opportunity for their concerns to be heard. Hallway talk among various producers (P1, 2, 3) following the meeting enthusiastically endorsed this approach.

P1: When is the last time anything like that has taken place in a staff meeting?

P2: Communication is what it is all about, and unless management is willing to talk with staff and make them part of the decision making process, it just isn't going to work.

P3: That is exactly what the problem has been for the last 10 years; no one has been willing to listen.

P1: I'm telling you, openness and communication are what it's going to take to get this organization back on track as far as ETB and DECA are concerned too, and I think this is the guy to do it.

Yet, it quickly became apparent that the new Executive Director was apt to set definite limits as to what was acceptable for discussion, as he did when asked about concerns at SDPB over producers who were frustrated with the system.

My question for those people who are not happy here is, "What are you doing here?" I mean, if you are so dissatisfied with the way things are going maybe you should look around and see if there isn't something else you could be doing. I wouldn't stay somewhere I wasn't happy (SDPB Executive Director Interview, January 28, 1993).

This type of regulative speech act suggests serious consequences concerning communicative action and the potential for the ideal speech situation. It suggests a normative dimension regarding what is right or appropriate for discussion. However, this perspective further developed over time at SDPB, and by March and April of 1993, it had evolved into a philosophy which was not only applied to individuals who had concerns about the organizational relationships,
but was also applied to individuals who disagreed with programming policy and network reorganization.

At the April 1, Sioux Falls meeting for instance, a Vermillion producer challenged the network reorganization plan with some questions about its validity. The Network Production Manager (NPM) responded with his own version of the Executive Director's "change or leave" speech.

P4: How long a term are these changes for? You're saying, "We'll determine what programming we need to do and then we'll move people to accommodate that." What happens next year when and if your priorities change? How permanent is this structural change?

NPM: I've come to the realization in the last three weeks, and I think the rest of the management team has that nothing is permanent anymore.

P4: So we can look forward to selling houses and moving every year?

NPM: I've come to the realization that whatever ... something may happen next year that will totally change my life and I have to either accept it or move away and do something else.

The suggestion, that people who were not happy with the way things were progressing, ought to consider finding other work, was first articulated by the Executive Director and appears to have been internalized by Management Team members (MTM).

On this occasion, the producer refused to accept this for an answer, further challenged the fact that Vermillion producers had not been adequately represented on the Management Team, and suggested that neither had they been allowed to offer input to either the Executive Director or the Management Team.

The Executive Director responded with what appears to be a sermon about "life's choices" and adult responsibility in discipline and other "hard decisions."
ED: I think it's important that we understand that this hasn't been comfortable for anybody on the staff. If you think that as Executive Director this is a comfortable situation ... you're wrong. I'm charged with making changes, setting direction and trying to do that. This isn't easy. It's April Fools maybe we should call the old Executive Director and have him come in and give us some counseling. Come on guys, something has to be done and I'm trying to do it. It may not be the most comfortable approach, but I believe it’s going to work. I can't please everybody.

When I have to sit down with any employee and tell them that, "Due to these circumstances you're no longer needed," that's not fun. You want to do that. When we have to sit down and make hard decisions you have to make hard decisions too. But it's life choices. That's what it gets into ... life choices.

This also was a regulative speech act designed to establish a normative standard for what was and what was not acceptable argument. It also worked to set the standard for issues which were considered legitimate for discussion. His plea, "Come on guys, something has to be done and I'm trying to do it," has no real relationship to network reorganization, which was the issue at hand, but at the same time it essentially worked to cut off debate, for shortly thereafter, the discussion ended.

It must be remembered that Vermillion producers philosophically disagreed with this plan for network reorganization, claiming it would materially affect the quality of their program productions.

However, regulative speech acts by the Executive Director and Management Team members, constructed individuals who disagreed with policy, as either disgruntled employees whose arguments were not valid and need to consider where the real problem lies ("I wouldn't stay somewhere I wasn't happy"), as not being pragmatic ("I have to either accept it or move away and do something else"), or essentially as people who just don't seem to have either the capacity or desire to understand "(Come on guys, something has to be done and I'm trying to do it")

In this situation however, distortion existed because producers were not able to employ regulative speech acts of their own. Consequently, producers who had expressed strong opinions related to the inflated status of such departments as Public Information (PI), and of the political strength that programs produced in Brookings enjoyed, did not even raise these concerns at the Sioux Falls meeting.

Just two weeks prior they had discussed the necessity for planning a strategy to use for the April 1, Sioux Falls meeting, related to their department's role in the SDPB system.
P3: But as the Vermillion staff, that's one of the things that we're going to be fighting against at this meeting.

P4: Well, if at the meeting it goes ... "Ok, we're cutting back to five producers over the network, who's going to take the hit?" Nobody's going to say ... "Oh, well, go ahead, I'll leave." So everybody's going to be justifying what they do. I mean they can justify *South Dakota Outdoor Guide* by saying, "Well, we have lots of viewers."

Ok, but is that justification enough? Then they'll say, "Well it's kind of educational," or "We can make it educational!"

*On-line*, is the same way. *Midwest Market Analysis*, is all but handed to them on a platter, why do they need a full-time producer designated for it?

P1: Agr(iculture) Extension is who produces it. We should get completely out of agriculture.

P4: Except, here comes the political battle again because as soon as you say, "We're eliminating the Ag producer from the South Dakota Public Television network," you have the number one industry in the state saying, "Like hell you will! You will not eliminate it."

You have the Ag university up there (in Brookings, SD) and their president and the whole of Ag Extension and everybody else saying, "You're not going to eliminate that."

P1: But these are questions we need to be ready with.

P4: We also need to be ready to defend our positions in arts, cultural and minority affairs.

PM: That's what is going to happen at this meeting on the first. We're going to
have to sit down and take a real hard look at everything, and everybody's going to have to be there to justify why they're there and what they're doing. And so we have to really try to step outside our positions in an objective sense and say, "Well if you look at Midwest Market Analysis, as a prime example, let the extension people do it, you don't need to be doing it, we don't need to be doing it, let them take care of it." That's one prime example.

P1: Then we better sit down and decide what our plan of attack is going to be, how we as a production unit in Vermillion (SD) are going to justify keeping our positions even if Brookings (SD) takes a hit (SDPB TV Production Meeting, Vermillion, SD, March 17, 1993).

The contrast between the Vermillion, South Dakota Production department meeting on March 17 and the Sioux Falls, South Dakota meeting on April 1 is quite revealing. In the context of the Production department meeting, Vermillion producers freely and openly discussed their perspectives while at the Sioux Falls meeting they were much more guarded to the point that many of these issues were not even brought up.

Regulative speech acts and their accompanying validity claims, appropriateness or rightness, act to set normative standards by which participants can "command and oppose, permit and forbid arguments" (Kemp, 1988, 194).

In addition, regulative speech acts, which are normative in nature, are related to the "social world as the totality of all normatively regulated interpersonal relations that count as legitimate in a given society" (Habermas, 1979, 67). It becomes apparent in comparing the two meetings that discourse differed between the two.

What was considered legitimate in one environment was not considered legitimate in the other. Yet both included employees from South Dakota Public Broadcasting, who ideally were to have similar goals regarding programming as a service to the community.

Since a speech act is considered an action, "it actualizes an already-established pattern of relations" (Habermas, 1979, 54). The differing pattern of relations between the Vermillion Production department meeting and the general staff meeting in Sioux Falls therefore becomes more obvious and significant. Consensus building patterns should not privilege one group over another. Yet that is exactly what appears to have happened in analyzing the difference between the two meetings and environments.
Whereas, when discussing departmental strategy, producers felt free to command, admonish, prohibit and refuse (Habermas, 1979, 54); in the Sioux Falls meeting their freedom to regulate was curtailed by both Management Team members and the Executive Director.

This points to the impact, which the steering mechanisms of power and money have upon communicative action and the ideal speech situation.

The transfer of action coordination from language over to steering media means an uncoupling of interaction from lifeworld contexts. Media such as money and power attach to empirical ties; they encode a purposive-rational attitude toward calculable amounts of value and make it possible to exert generalized, strategic influence on the decisions of other participants while bypassing processes of consensus-oriented communication, Inasmuch as they do not merely simplify linguistic communication, but replace it with a symbolic generalization of rewards and punishments, the lifeworld contexts in which processes of reaching understanding are always embedded are devalued in favor of media-steered interaction; the lifeworld is no longer needed for the coordination of action (Habermas, 1989, 183).

The relationship between SDPB, ETB and DECA fit this pattern. SDPB is far from an autonomous organization and as this series of articles has shown many times, both on a historical level and a political level, power and money have had a significant impact. However, while such relationships can be shown to exist at a structural level, it is revealing to see them operational in the form of personal interrelationships at the level of language in the lifeworld.

Thus when the Executive Director of South Dakota Public Broadcasting talks about change and the necessity for people to keep an open mind, he appeals not to rationality and consensus building approaches, but rather to the logic of power, money and purposive rationality, which then are used to regulate norms for discussion about network direction.

Now there are a lot of different factors involved in this. Obviously some of the factors are state government and state funding. Two hundred and twenty five thousand dollars is being cut out of the 1994 budget. Can we get it back for fiscal year ’95? Possibly. I talked to people in Pierre (the state capital) and they say that once we get reorganized and everything is functioning well, we might be able to make the case to see that funding come back, who knows (SDPB Staff Meeting, April 1, 1993)?

Against this type of statement, thematized as a regulative speech act, the Vermillion
producers experienced a great deal of constraint, and constraint is not conducive to "rationally motivated" consensus (Habermas, 1984, xxxvii).

Consensus must "result simply of the force of the better argument and not of accidental or systematic constraints on communication" (McCarthy, 1985, 306) such as existed here with the "non-symmetrical" or unbalanced employment of regulative speech acts.

**Constative Speech Acts: Truth**

Constative speech acts allow participants in discourse the opportunity to offer statements about the objective world.

Constative speech acts contain the offer to recur if necessary to the experiential source from which the speaker draws the certainty that his statement is true. If this immediate grounding does not dispel an ad hoc doubt, the persistently problematic truth claim can become the subject of a theoretical discourse (Habermas, 1979, 64).

If all participants are not allowed either equal opportunity to information or to provide information about the external world according to their experiences and understanding, communicative action is not possible (White, 1990, 56). In addition, participants must be able to "criticize statements, explanations, interpretations and justifications so that in the long run no one view is exempt from consideration and criticism" (Kemp, 1988, 195).

This involves the realm of external nature. Whereas regulative speech acts concern the social world and representative speech acts concern the inner world; constative speech acts concern the external world (Habermas, 1979, 67). Communicative action insists that all three worlds be represented and available for discussion and critical argument.

Since constative speech acts concern truthful grounding of arguments about the objective world, it is important that no information be either exempt or misrepresented in discourse. In reviewing the discursive activity of South Dakota Public Broadcasting managers and producers, however, it is apparent that not all participants have had the equal opportunity to do so.

During the Sioux Falls meeting on April 1, for example, the Minority Affairs producer articulated a strong opinion about the importance of Native American programming on the network and for South Dakota.

You've got to look at the things that are going to affect the world, our world ... the
things that are critical. Water is critical, you have to live. Peace of mind is critical; we can't be at each other's throats. I would propose two issues of very high priority. One is racism and the other is natural resources, especially water.

Because when you look at South Dakota, North Dakota and Montana, some of you have listened to this story, I'll lay it out again. What happens? How come water development hasn't happened? (It's) because of money, from D.C. for big time projects. When New York and Chicago began to use their water up and the numbers began to make a difference then the money will be there.

What we have to do is to educate our society about regionalism because that's what it's all going to be about. People sit here and think that the ideals of America will temper things like are going on in Bosnia and various other places around the world. It's not. It won't. It's just a matter of time.

Like I said before, I've been talking to tribal elders for a long time, people who I believe have insight and connection to what's going on. And what they're saying is that the number one issue, the number one issue, not only in the Indian community, but community wide is that we have to learn respect for each other, and respect for the mother earth. And unless we begin to adopt those sorts of principles and begin to adopt those sort of ideals and begin to work towards those ideals, it's inevitable that we're going to end up on the rocks.

We can go one course or another, but we've got to make a determination and that's where we come in. I've got my ideas about what is important. For me, self-esteem and alcoholism are the two critical issues in the community. How do you build up self-esteem, make them believe in themselves, make them feel some self worth in what they do in the culture, their language, their spirituality?

And you have to get them to understand the ramifications. That's why a program like Buffalo Nation Journal is so effective because I'm taking PhD's from the Indian community and people who are doctors, lawyers, professional people from the Indian community and giving them a voice and letting people see what the Indian community is all about. People begin to see that Indians are not all welfare drunks and that's what it's all about (SDPB Staff Meeting, April 1, 1993).

This was an impassioned speech, which certainly could be described as being "thematic" of an expressive or representative speech act since it included the internal attitudes and opinions of
this producer. However it also can be described as being thematic of a constative speech act since it articulated an understanding of the objective world according to this producer’s experiences.

Distortion enveloped the situation however, because the argument regarding the necessity for this kind of minority programming was challenged by both another producer and the Executive Director, not on the basis of the validity of the argument itself, but on the basis of whether or not it would attract viewers and legislative funding.

It was compared with Statehouse, which the Executive Director insisted was necessary because the legislature saw validity in funding a program, which allows the legislature to be more visible. At a normative level, the regulative speech act invalidated the appropriateness of the argument, which the Minority Affairs producer was making.

We have to realize the politics involved in all of this. What if we all decide that we shouldn't be doing Statehouse, that we should be doing something else. If we sit here like a group of adults and professionals and say, "That show is really not doing much for us," we've all agreed now that we are going to take those resources and produce THIS show which we think will have a bigger impact on the state of South Dakota ... what's going to happen reality wise? We're probably going to lose funding (SDPB Staff Meeting, April 1, 1993).

It is clear from this exchange that the normative construction of the situation as developed by the Executive Director did not allow the constative speech act or "existing state of affairs" as understood by the Minority Affairs producer to continue. The meeting ended. Debate was cut off. No open discussion ensued relative to the merit of what Minority Affairs producer had said or whether his analysis of the objective world was accurate and needed to be considered as having programming potential.

Two weeks later however, the content of what the Minority Affairs producer had said during this meeting, came up again during a Management Team meeting on April 14, 1993. Management Team members (MTM's) expressed concern, bordering on alarm, at what the Minority Affairs producer had said. This meeting had a great deal of significance in relation to the ideal speech situation because the Minority Affairs producer was not present to defend his statements or interpretations about the external world. He was therefore not able to engage in constative speech acts necessary to the development of genuine consensus.

The MTM's, however, who had remained silent during the time he talked in Sioux Falls, now had a great deal to say about him, his perspectives and his program choices. In addition, this meeting followed the ETB endorsement of the network reorganization plan, which would move all
Vermillion producers, including Minority Affairs, to Brookings.

The network reorganization plan, which had been couched in terms of efficiency and necessity before the ETB and staff members at the Sioux Falls meeting, was now described as a tool to rid the network of personnel and programming which MTM's did not appreciate.

MTM6: Well the Minority Affairs producer and the ITV producer are our biggest problems. What if they don't leave. I mean ... I know this sounds hard nosed but if I had someone like that in my area they'd be out the door.

Because frankly some of the Minority Affairs producer's ideas scare me. Like that stuff he was talking about up in Sioux Falls, that stuff was apocalyptic. We don't need that on South Dakota Public Television. That isn't going to do us any good and it's not going to do those people any good.

MTM3: Yeah that kind of stuff is advocacy and to me, we shouldn't be advocating anything, we should be exposing. Public TV is not a club, I mean there are even Indians who don't like him.

MTM4: Then tell him that he has to decide his production choices based upon certain suggestions other wise he's gone.

MTM2: Well he gets off on telling people how great it is, that he's the only Indian Minority Affairs producer in the country.

ED: But we do need a commitment to Indian programming, we just need somebody who will be a team player and follow the rules or get out.

MTM2: So, do we tell them to get out or that they are moving and hope they leave instead? Because if they move and we still have the same problems then we're right back where we started.

MTM1: I know this sounds like I'm being soft, but let's tell them the way it's going to be and get them moved and if it doesn't work out, if they don't want to play by the rules, then tell them they're out of here. Hey after all it's only money. It's only
Consensus about network direction, reorganization and program production was achieved at this meeting. However, due to the violation of the constative speech act, the consensus that was achieved cannot be defined as valid according to the rules of universal pragmatics.

As discussed previously (Schlenker, IJHCS, 2(3), 2015), Management Team policy with regards to program production and the status of producers in the network continued to develop. The Management Team decided that in addition to moving all Vermillion producers to Brookings, producers would all be defined as "generalists" having no specific programming categories. Thus, producer categories such as "Minority Affairs" and "Cultural Affairs" no longer existed.

The Minority Affairs producer perhaps best represents the frustration felt with the new network direction in saying that, "It's another example of non-Indian people making decisions on what they are going to give them." This epitomizes the consequences of distortion in discursive activity. It also exemplifies the differences between communicative rationality and instrumental rationality.

**Communicative Rationality vs. Instrumental Rationality at SDPB**

In this moment, communicative distortion influenced the reorganization of South Dakota Public Broadcasting. Distortion had the potential to affect the direction of future program production, which in limiting minority voices within the network itself, also potentially meant the limiting of minority voices in programming.

It is evident that the existing organizational structure from DECA to the ETB to the Management Team demanded that producers be "team players and follow the rules or get out." The rules that were "played by" however were not those of communicative rationality and genuine consensus. Rather, they were those of instrumental rationality and rational-purposive action.

Communicative action appears to have been violated at all levels of the ideal speech situation in network meetings from the top of SDPB's organization to the bottom. The fact that communicative distortion was so evident in an organization that was dedicated to diversity and democratic principles is paradoxical. Yet in analyzing the historical and structural development of South Dakota Public Broadcasting it may not be surprising, considering what Golembiewski says about an organization's structure and its relationship to democracy.
Organizational members can learn some awkward lessons from bureaucratic structures, and those powerful learnings may be transferred to feelings about personal potency, political efficacy, and social participation in broader social/political spheres (221) ... Our broader life-experiences powerfully influence political behavior. Moreover, a hardy representative democratic consciousness is poorly served by incongruent organizational practices. Organizations are powerful molders and reinforcers of attitudes and behaviors -- arguably the most persisting and powerful. Hence the growing paradox of conceptually pairing representative democracy with organizational structures and practices that are neutral to, if not negative about, the consciousness required for representative democracy (Golembiewski, 495).

It is apparent that the organizational structure at South Dakota Public Broadcasting was either "neutral to, if not negative about, the consciousness required for representative democracy." In order for such a consciousness to be possible however, communicatively achieved agreement must be possible.

Following Habermas, communicatively achieved agreement can only take place when actors come to an understanding about an issue in the context of measuring their agreement and understanding against three validity claims including constative speech acts, expressive or representative speech acts, and regulative speech acts.

Communicatively achieved agreement is measured against exactly three criticizable validity claims; in coming to an understanding about something with one another and thus making themselves understandable, actors cannot avoid embedding their speech acts in precisely three world-relations and claiming validity for them under these aspects (Habermas, 1984, 308).

What is absolutely essential however, is that all participants to interaction have the same opportunity to employ speech acts, embed them in the context of internal, external and social worlds and to raise claims of validity. As this study has shown, this does not appear to have been the case for either managers or producers at South Dakota Public Broadcasting, with producers being particularly affected.

The pressure of the steering mechanisms of power and money forced the SDPB system, including managers and producers into modes of interaction guided by instrumental rationality rather than communicative rationality. Instrumental rationality seeks understanding of production relationships, is means-end oriented and focuses upon decision making based on technical and
economic efficiency. On the other hand, communicative rationality seeks consensus building through self-reflection and focuses upon decision-making based upon participation in democratic discourse.

Instrumental rationality...carries with it connotations of successful self-maintenance made possible by informed disposition over, and intelligent adaptation to, conditions of a contingent environment. On the other hand ... communicative rationality carries with it connotations based ultimately on the central experience of the unconstrained, unifying, consensus bringing force of argumentative speech, in which different participants overcome their merely subjective views and, owing to the mutuality of rationally motivated conviction, assure themselves of both the unity of the objective world and the intersubjectivity of their lifeworld (Habermas, 1984, 10).

Instrumental rationality incorporates a subject/object dichotomy, which relinquishes any hope for intersubjective understanding. In this context, concerning a public broadcasting network, programming becomes less an avenue for open communication and discourse and more a tool for manipulation and institutional survival.

Discourse in such an environment constructs the reproduction of the institution or system itself as all-important. According to Ang, the conditions of institutional reproduction become more important than the conditions of consensus building through communicative rationality (1991, 17).

At South Dakota Public Broadcasting for example, various genre of minority, cultural and educational programming have been limited primarily because management deemed them either dangerous to securing income from the legislature or not including enough elements of "the look" to attract viewers who might become financial supporters.

This also is an example of how power and money, as steering mechanisms, increase pressure on a system. In cutting $225,000 from the 1994 SDPB budget, a "message" was sent that the network needs to "clean up its act." Thus, power wielded by such officials as the Co-chair of the Joint Appropriations Committee worked to control the network from external sources.

Consequently, knowledge and meaning, for SDPB personnel, came to be constructed under distorted conditions that affected programming and program production. As analysis of discursive activity, using the ideal speech situation as a "yardstick" has revealed, the distortion was significant enough to control the shape and direction of discussion on numerous issues.

Communicative distortion works to construct meaning for individuals and is evident through a number of practices in addition to circumventing the ideal speech situation as discussed above. Board meetings, informal conversation, interviews, and discussion about program ideas,
scheduling principles, policy statements and strategic planning meetings have all been affected.

In addition, hallways and bulletin boards can display clues about how reality and knowledge are constructed for managers and producers at South Dakota Public Broadcasting under these conditions. A letter from a South Dakota state legislator for example, praised SDPB for its Statehouse program, its "wonderful complement," its help and advice, and expressed hope that someday the legislator could "return the favor" (Lawler, 1993).

Such symbols do not go un-noticed by producers in a cultural system. They soon learn that institutional reproduction is more important than reproduction of democratic discourse either in their lifeworld or in their programming.

When the network refused to schedule Portrait of a Marriage, it received numerous letters both for and against the decision. However, on bulletin boards in SDPB's hallways, only the letters that articulated favor with the decision not to show the program were posted.

In March of 1993, the Governor of South Dakota took a number of Republican legislators and business leaders to Panama to "review" South Dakota National Guard troops stationed there. Democrats and many members of the news media criticized it.

In April, the Lieutenant Governor also took a similar group to Panama. However, this time, members of the news media were invited to attend, with travel expenses paid for by the federal government. SDPB's Online producer was invited to participate. While at least one SDPB reporter, for a network affiliate station, protested the trip on the basis of conflict of interest, the Executive Director heartily endorsed the idea claiming it would help to "build bridges with other state agencies."

Upon return, the Online producer was interviewed by various state newspapers and wrote an opinion column for one newspaper articulating a perspective which was anything but critical of U.S. policy.

The U.S. is trying to teach the Panamanian government officials about democracy. The U.S. is trying to teach the Panamanian police not to beat up their fellow citizens. The U.S. is trying to get the Panamanian economy in order. And that is where the S.D. National Guard seems to come into play ... Is it wrong for our state's leaders to have a better idea about what's going on in a part of the world that is teetering between constructive change or continued chaos (Epp, T. Brookings Register, April 16, 1993)?

This column among other favorable articles about the trip also was displayed on SDPB bulletin boards. While many critical opinion articles appeared in state newspapers, none were posted in the halls of SDPB. On the other hand, the affiliate station reporter who had questioned the
legitimacy of trip has found herself in a dilemma. Her position is currently funded through a grant from the "Friends of South Dakota Public Broadcasting" and thus is in an autonomous position in relation to other reporters and producers since she is not a "state" employee and not directly supervised by SDPB management.

However, since the Panama trip, the Executive Director has suggested that "Friends" funding for her position be used elsewhere in the network, and that her position become a "state" employee position thus bringing her under direct control of DECA, ETB and SDPB.

These many examples represent the work of instrumental rationality, which promotes institutional reproduction devoid of communicative action and genuine consensus. They show evidence of struggle within the network over attention to production methods and programming policies which focus upon economic goals and distribution of power, rather than the "transmission of ideas, values and tastes" involving cultural politics (Ang, 103).

At many levels of the SDPB structure, the circumvention of the ideal speech situation became evident. Whether in the context of ETB meetings, DECA memos, Management Team sessions, strategic planning, program scheduling and planning, hallway talk or bulletin boards, it became apparent that the primary elements of the ideal speech situation including use of language, constative speech acts, regulative speech acts or representative speech acts were invoked in a one-sided fashion by those wielding money and power.

Summary

This work has analyzed the discursive activity and behavior of managers and producers of South Dakota Public Broadcasting. It has applied the theories and methods of universal pragmatics as developed by Jurgen Habermas in order to determine the existence of either communicative action, which allows the development of democratic debate and discourse, or distorted communication due to the presence of steering mechanisms and one-sided invocation of speech acts and validity claims.

It has discovered that while the four speech act elements have been present in developing meaning and knowledge for SDPB employees, they have been utilized in one-sided applications in order to control discourse and debate. This has allowed the construction of a reality in the network which values institutional reproduction and economic survival over programming which values minority voices to speak with equal opportunity whether in the board room or in the production room.
This work has analyzed numerous exchanges wherein the speech act elements including language, representative speech acts, regulative speech acts and constative speech acts have been incorporated in a distorted fashion thus causing conflict and confusion in the lifeworld contexts of these individuals.

In addition, it has shown a pattern of control which threads its way through a complex state system, with a particular political economic structure, and works its way into the everyday life of these participants and manifests itself in their daily discursive activity. This discourse has come to celebrate elements such as "the look" and "professionalism" defined in terms of a "Nickelodeon style" with "players" who must "play by the rules or get out."

In this world, the producer is defined as a "professional" who should be concerned more about product quality rather than about audience needs. If the producer learns to be a "player" and to "play hard", he or she will soon see a pay-off in the form of "the money coming back" to "the team."

In this atmosphere, producers who disagree with network direction and philosophy find their interaction subject to one-sided regulation through the thematization of various speech acts which they are powerless to counteract due to threats to their jobs and careers. It is in this atmosphere that programming for alternative voices is expected to develop. It is in this atmosphere that the "force of a better argument" is expected to prevail.

This analysis has shown that discourse participants at South Dakota Public Broadcasting have frequently not been able to engage in communicative, regulative, representative or constative speech acts. They have not been able to initiate or perpetuate discourse or to make their arguments understood.

They have not been able to express themselves with sincerity regarding issues affecting their lifeworld. They have not been given an equal chance to regulate normative activity by forbidding, commanding and opposing arguments. They have often not been invited to meetings and discussions in order to provide explanations or interpretations so that "no one view is exempt from consideration or criticism" (Kemp, 195). They have been subject to distorted communication.
References


SDPB Management Team Meeting. April 14, 1993.

SDPB Producer #2. Interview, January 20, 1993.


SDPB Staff Meeting. April 1, 1993.