



THE SOUND OF EXCLUSION

NPR and the Latinx Public

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HEAR EVERY VOICE





What was NPR meant to be?

What has it become over time?

How is it changing in response to a “public” that is become more racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse?

Whose Stories Get to be Told? Who Gets to Tell These Stories?



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LAW

Jeff Sessions Warns Illegal Border Crossers Of 'Zero Tolerance'

May 8, 2018 · 4:59 AM ET
Heard on [Morning Edition](#)



JOHN BURNETT



3-Minute Listen

+ PLAYLIST



Attorney General Sessions on Monday announced a tough policy on the southwest border. If you cross the border illegally, he said, you will be prosecuted and children will be separated from parents.

Transcript

STEVE INSKEEP, HOST:

Attorney General Jeff Sessions insists that from now on, it's zero tolerance. He says



OPINION

Q&A: Illegal Immigrants and the U.S. Economy

March 30, 2006 · 3:45 PM ET



ADAM DAVIDSON



Nearly 12 million illegal immigrants are estimated to be living in the United States. The vast majority work in low-skill, low-wage jobs. More than half work in construction, manufacturing or leisure and hospitality.

Advocates on both sides of the immigration debate predict dramatic change if illegal immigration is drastically curtailed. Supporters of a crackdown argue that the U.S. economy would benefit if illegal immigrants were to leave, because U.S. employers would be forced to raise wages to attract American workers. Critics of this approach say the loss of illegal immigrants would stall the U.S. economy, saying undocumented workers do many jobs few native-born Americans will do. NPR business correspondent Adam Davidson explores the issue.



A migrant worker picks oranges at a grove in Bradenton, Fla. Many of the agricultural products in the area are planted, harvested and processed by immigrants, both legal and illegal.

Photo by Phillippe Diederich/Getty Images

By the Numbers

• By increasing the labor supply between 1980

Why NPR?

Why Latinxs?

THE HIDDEN MEDIUM: EDUCATIONAL RADIO

A Status Report

prepared for
National Educational Radio,
a division of
The National Association of Educational Broadcasters,
with the aid of a grant from
The Ford Foundation

ED02S151

HERMAN W. LAND ASSOCIATES, INC., NEW YORK

ARAnet

From the ARAnet On-Line Library
of Public Radio Research

AUDIENCE 88 Issues and Implications

by Thomas J. Thomas and Theresa R. Clifford
(42 pages)

Originally published as:

Thomas, Thomas J. and Clifford, Theresa R. "Issues and Implications." *Audience 88*
Washington, DC: Corporation for Public Broadcasting, 1988.



aranet.com

The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967

- Creates a Corporation for Public Broadcasting headed by a Tripartite Board of Trustees to be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate.
- Authorizes \$9 million for the Corporation to spend on grants to local noncommercial television and radio stations, with the funds to remain available and used and a fund of \$250,000 to carry out any one project.
- Extends for 3 years the construction program which built 92 new noncommercial television stations, increasing the potential viewing audience about 50 percent to 155 million people.
- Increases the Federal share of broadcast station construction from 20 to 25 percent, and approves, for the first time, Federal support for the construction of noncommercial radio as well as television facilities.
- Authorizes, subject to appropriation, \$10.5 million in construction funds for fiscal 1968, \$12.5 million for fiscal 1969, and \$15 million for fiscal 1970.
- Authorizes \$300,000 for a comprehensive study of school uses of television, radio, and audio-tape instructional media. The study is to be conducted by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare and is to be presented to Congress by June 30, 1969.

There are now 181 noncommercial television stations on the air, with 38 more under construction, and there are 136 noncommercial radio stations in existence. Four out of five of the television stations received help under the 1962 Act. By 1969, there will be an estimated 277 noncommercial television stations in operation reaching an estimated 91 percent of the people.

John W. Gardner
John W. Gardner, Secretary,
Health, Education, and Welfare.

The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967

Carnegie Commission on
"the future of public
broadcasting"

A PUBLIC TRUST

The Report
of the
Carnegie Commission
on the
Future of Public Broadcasting

NPR'S STRATEGIC ASPIRATION

We will be the model for high quality journalism in the 21st century, strengthening the cultural, civic and social fabric of our democracy.

We will build on our heritage as reporters and storytellers, on our intimate relationship with audiences, and on our capacity for innovation in order to create a space where audiences congregate, connect and contribute to a shared understanding of the wider world.

We strive to feed the mind and satisfy the soul.

NPR'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To realize our strategic aspiration, we have established four strategic priorities. They are of equal weight and priority.

- Create exceptional content.** We must enhance core news programs and distinctive topic coverage. NPR's investment in journalism over the past 40 years has fueled the growth in its audience and led it to become a preeminent source of news and cultural programming. NPR intends to build on this strong heritage - offering context, sparking conversation, and satisfying listeners' curiosity.
- Expand, diversify and engage our** public radio's purpose and its public radio must create news and public radio must generate renewed grants from that audience. For NPR it must therefore maintain its core 4-audience and engage its users.
- Collaborate.** We must play a lead public radio network through collaborative management. As a public network by leveraging their collective assets work. In the face of external constraints must take full advantage of its core digital investments, brands, affiliated network cannot exist without a strong working in partnership to ensure relevant service to their community.
- Grow net revenues.** We must invest in order to ensure a sustainable financial radio. For the system to remain viable net revenues, both at NPR and at likely to come through a combination of stronger collaboration with partners, and the creative use of the approaches in these areas, combine must be embraced.

A FORMULA FOR CHANGE

Trans. # 700243
Title: A formula for change: the report of the Task Force on Minorities in Public Broadcasting
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**A REPORT OF THE
TASK FORCE ON MINORITIES IN
PUBLIC BROADCASTING**

Carnegie | Carnegie Commission on Educational Television, 1967 | Current

Current | <https://curm.org/670204/ange0/>

Carnegie I: Carnegie Commission on Educational Television, 1967

By | January 26, 1967

A 15-member commission created in 1965 by a major foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, released its report, *Public Television: A Program for Action*, on Jan. 26, 1967, popularizing the phrase "public television" and assisting the legislative campaign for federal aid to the field. (Public radio was added later by Congress.) See also the list of commission members and the Preface and Introductory Note of the report (Pp.1-2795). The report's summary of recommendations:

A Proposal to Extend and Strengthen Educational Television: A Summary of the Commission's Report

The Carnegie Commission on Educational Television has reached the conclusion that a well-financed and well-directed educational television system, substantially larger and far more pervasive and effective than that which now exists in the United States, must be brought into being if the full needs of the American public are to be served. This is the central conclusion of the Commission and all of its recommendations are designed accordingly.

Although our Report deals primarily with what the Commission has chosen to call Public Television rather than with instructional television, we believe it to be urgent in the public interest that both categories be extended and strengthened. We concentrate on Public Television in the conviction that this sector both requires and is ready for immediate action. Instructional television, which we consider no less significant, needs intensive further study in the total context of the educational enterprise, and is the subject of a major recommendation to that end.

The program we conceive to be the essence of Public Television are its general and excellent for commercial sponsorship, we are not designed for the occasional use of millions. No such system now exists to serve as a model, and hence we have been obliged to develop a viable new arrangement to bring this kind of television to the country. The Commission's proposal deals primarily with that new arrangement.

NATIONAL PUBLIC MEDIA Audience Platforms Products Services

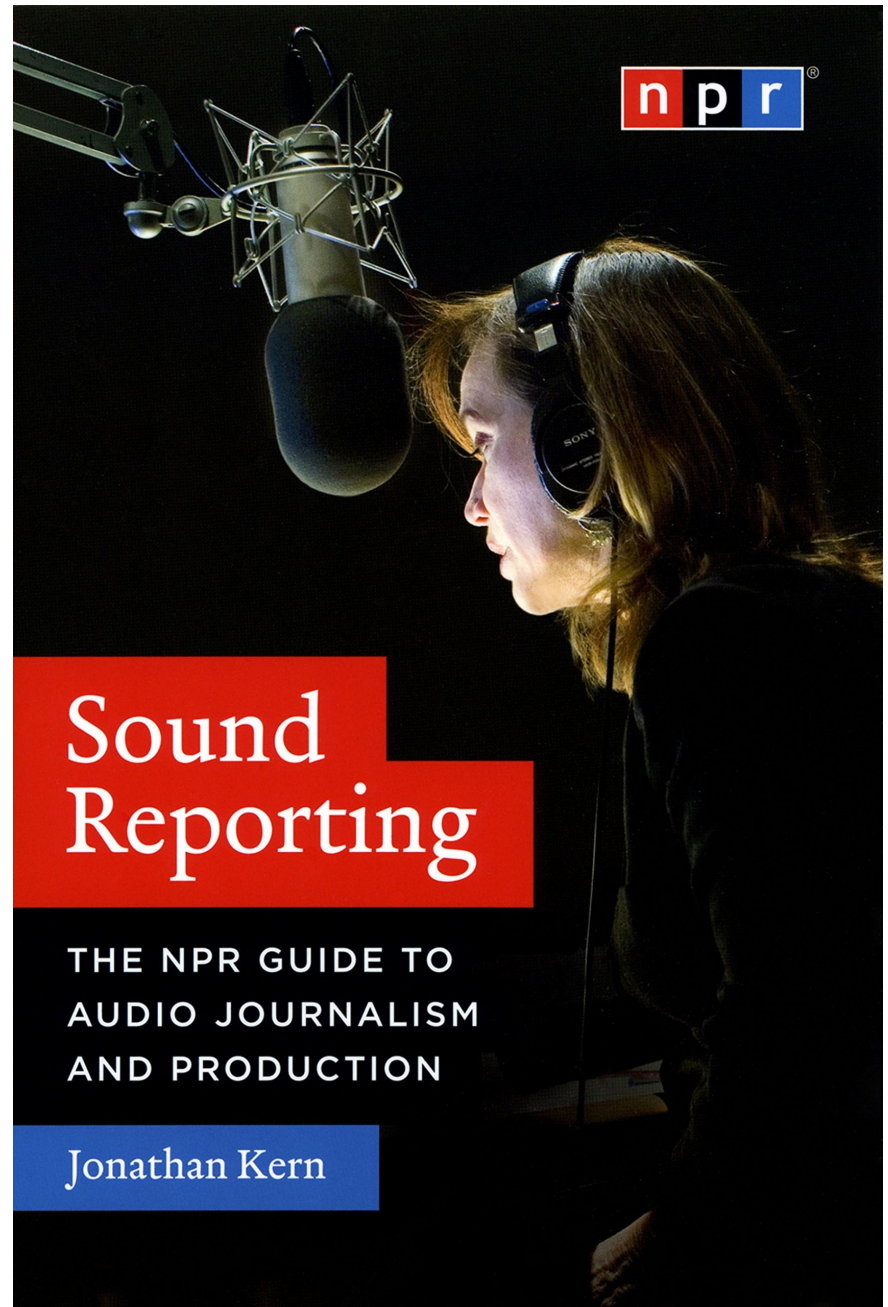
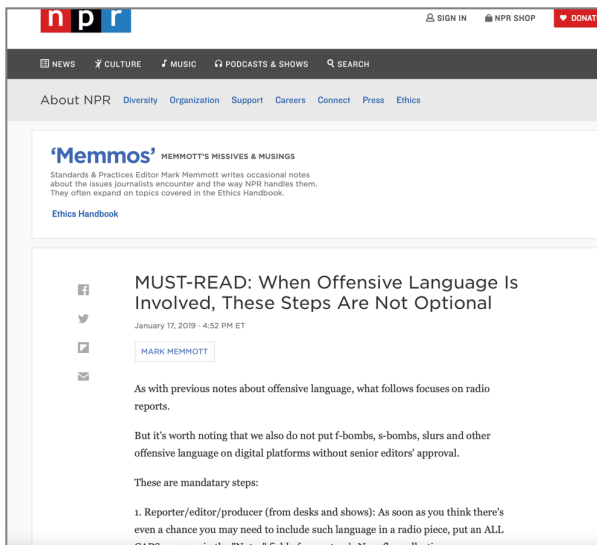
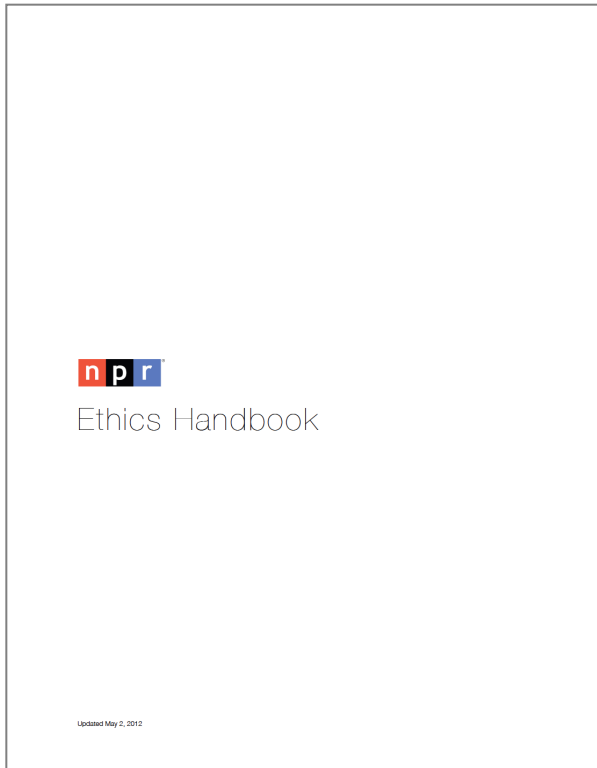
Delivering impact, delivering engagement.

80% of NPR listeners consider NPR "generally important" to them	82% of NPR listeners take action in response to something heard on NPR
73% of NPR listeners hold a more positive opinion of companies that support NPR	70% of NPR listeners prefer to do business with companies that support NPR

Source: Audio, NPR News of Sustainable Media, April 2021

Cultured
The NPR audience seeks out cultural experiences.

112% more likely to have attended an art gallery or show in the past year	87% more likely to have visited a museum in the past year	90% NPR and NPR are providing or more likely to be the 2022-23 season's most likely to visit a museum in the past year
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Part One:

Who is the “Public” in Public Radio?

A Lofty Vision



"National Public Radio will serve the individual; it will promote personal growth; it will regard the individual differences among men with respect and joy rather than derision and hate; it will celebrate the human experience as infinitely varied rather than vacuous and banal; it will encourage a sense of active constructive participation, rather than apathetic helplessness."

BILL SIEMERING, 1970

Public Radio's Two Mandates

- Public radio would serve a broader, more inclusive, definition of the public
- Public radio would engage listeners in public life

Off to a Rocky Start

- Almost immediately, it becomes apparent that NPR is not serving listeners of color
- Carnegie Commission blue ribbon panels identifies Public Media's lack of diversity as a problem
- By 1977, the Task Force for Minorities in Public Broadcasting issues a scathing report titled "A Formula for Change," describing public media as "asleep at the transmitter."
- NPR establishes Department of Specialized Audiences (albeit briefly)

Then Come the Financial Pressures

Programming is a lot like bait. What we catch depends on what we set out. Honey draws bees, worms lure fish, and a hunk of liver will bring stray cats to your door... In the same way, certain kinds of listeners are attracted to certain kinds of programming. So, when we choose what we air, we select who will listen – and also who won't.

– David Giovannoni, NPR researcher

Public Media Begins to Adopt Commercial Practices



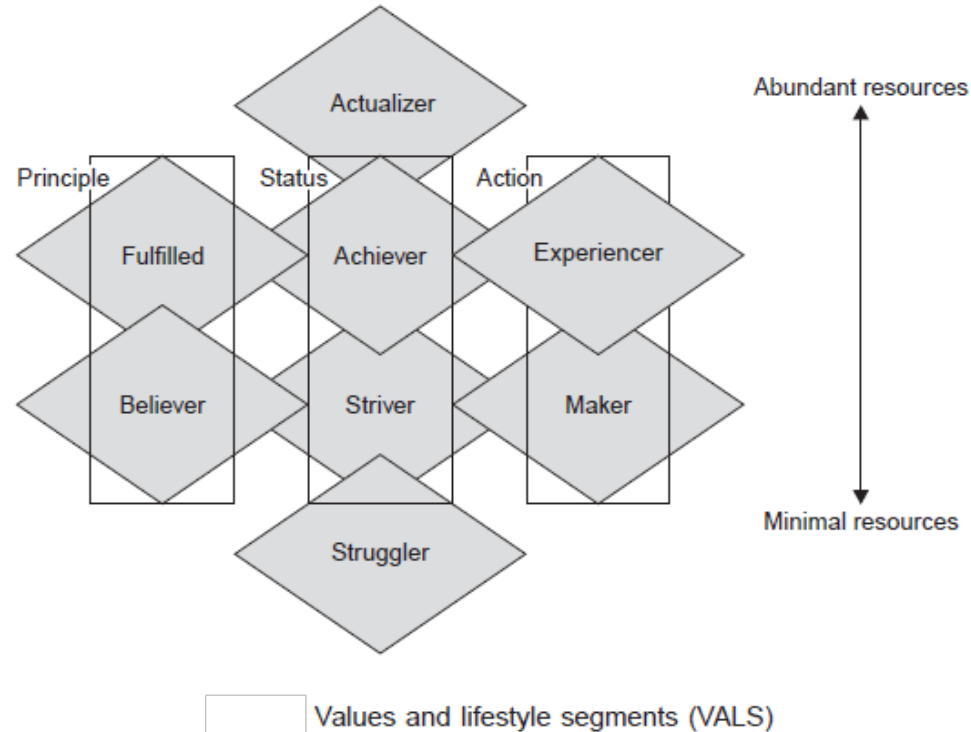
Step 1: Justify the Need to Segment Your Audience

For much of their history, public radio stations defined their mission in terms that were highly idealistic, broadly inclusive, frequently paternalistic, and often naive with respect to the opportunities and limits of radio broadcasting. Most stations' missions were, at bottom, only vague directives for actual operations, seldom translated into measurable standards suitable for performance evaluation. As audience researcher Tom Church put it, many stations could fulfill their mission without so much as a single person ever listening

– Audience 88 Report

Step 2: Identify Your Ideal Listener

“Listeners who have more money can give more money” ARA 1998



Step 3: Take a Colorblind Approach

NPR framed it as a *Strategy of Targeting* vs. a *Strategy of Transcendence*

“The strategy to transcend racial heritage and the strategy to target it are at direct philosophical odds. The targeting strategy emphasizes differences in our racial and cultural backgrounds. The transcendence strategy emphasizes similarities in our characters.”

“Driven by the strategy to transcend, the single most defining characteristic of public radio’s audience today is its college education. If it remains so into the future, public radio can expect to serve even more minority listeners tomorrow. As the number of well-educated minority citizens grows, so grows public radio’s minority audience.”

When the Sound is Silence



I realized that, as I was speaking aloud, I was also imagining someone else's voice saying my piece. The voice I was hearing and gradually beginning to imitate was something in-between the voice of Roman Mars and Sarah Koenig. Those two very different voices have many complex and wonderful qualities. They also sound like white people. My natural voice—the voice that I use most often when I am most comfortable—doesn't sound like that.

Chenjarai Kuminyika
(*Transom*, 2015)



We now have a certain type, or rather a carefully chosen band of types of English, broadcast over the length and breadth of our country, so that although many listeners hear daily a type of speech with which they are familiar, and which they habitually use, many others hear a type that is different from that which they usually hear and use. This is, in itself, enough to ensure abundant criticism.

– Arthur Lloyd James (1926)

Early on, NPR Reflected a Wider Range of Voices



NPR's Broadcast Voice Has, Over Time, Become More Restricted

- NPR has cultivated in idealized dialect, one that is intended to mimic spontaneous conversation, but which is, in fact, highly scripted
- NPR on-air speaking style is one that is generally devoid of regional and ethnic accent, what sociolinguists refer to as Standard American English (SAE)
- This, in turn, has shut out speakers of “stigmatized varieties”
“The standard of popular perception is what is left behind when all the non-standard varieties spoken by disparaged persons such as Valley Girls, Hillbillies, Southerners, New Yorkers, African Americans, Asians, Mexican Americans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans are set aside” (Milroy, 2001)

How Language is Policed

- Informal mechanisms
 - Linguistic habitus
 - Self-correction
 - Listener feedback
- Formal mechanisms
 - Style guides
 - Voice coaches
 - Editors/producers
 - Time limitations

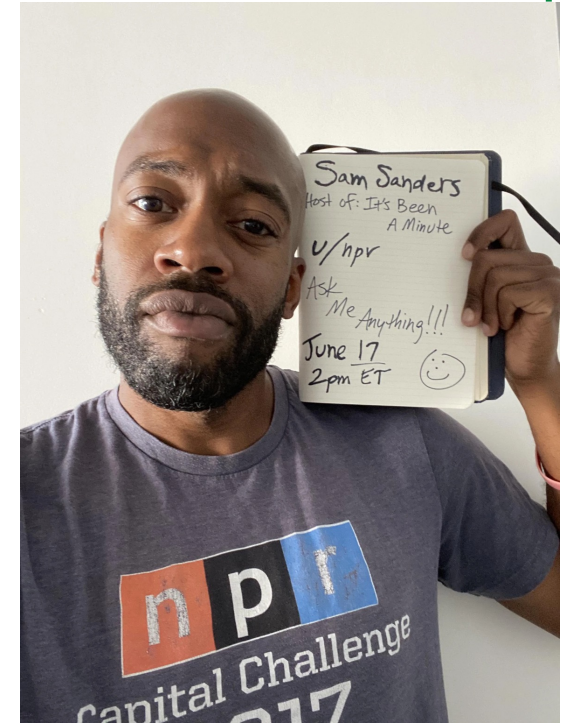
Part Three: By Us for Us



Key Takeaways

- Each of these programs demonstrates the ways in which Latinx cultural producers have negotiated NPR's system to their advantage
- Each has embraced commercial practices
- And at times, taken advantage of technological and political changes in the media marketplace

Post-Script



Questions?
