Introduction

The domination of North American popular culture by the United States is not a new phenomenon. Even before the 1970s, the Canadian broadcasting industry experienced considerable competition from its American neighbors (Romanow 1975). In the late 1960s, for example, AM radio stations in Canada created their play lists from *Billboard* and *Cashbox*, both American publications. This situation meant that an aspiring Canadian artist had to become successful across the border before he or she could break into Canada’s radio market (Patch 1975, 58-60). Prior to the 1970s, the Canadian government officials felt that when Canada looked into its cultural mirror, the reflection they saw was that of the United States (Canadian Content and Culture Working Group 1995, 1). Even today, the Canadian government notes a significant American influence on Canadian culture (Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage 2003, 4-5).

Abstract

In light of the hegemonic influence of American popular culture on Canadian media, the Canadian government established the Canadian Content Regulations that set minimum quotas for the amount of Canadian material contained in radio, television, and film in Canada. This study examines the regulations as they apply to radio and explores the influence of these regulations on St. John’s, Newfoundland radio stations, a market that exists within a region with a strong local identity. Semi-structured interviews with station personnel in the St. John’s market reveal that although the regulations influence station personnel’s music selection, they are secondary to the importance that station personnel place on opportunities for cultural preservation through radio broadcasting.

Promoting and Preserving Cultural Identity Through Newfoundland Radio Music Broadcasts

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Growing cultural influence from the United States led the Canadian government on February 20, 1970 to announce its decision for plans to regulate the amount of domestic content broadcast on radio and television (Patch 1975, iii-1; Romanow 1975, i; Litvak 1987, 55). The Canadian Content Regulations soon followed the government’s announcement. This policy served as “an expressed national desire for a broadcasting system that is Canadian in all respects” (Romanow 1975, i).1

The policy examined in this study is the Canadian Content regulations for radio under the terms of the Broadcast Act of 1968 (crtc 1968), and the amendments to the regulations in 1971, 1972, 1985, 1991 and 1998, passed by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (crtc).2 While historical accounts of policy developments have already been written (Patch 1975; Romanow 1975; Litvak 1987), this study focuses on the present-day Canadian Content regulations and their impact on the radio market in St. John’s, Newfoundland. I wanted to see how a policy designed to foster a Canadian national identity played out in a region of Canada that has a strong local identity: St. John’s, Newfoundland. To this end, my research strives to answer the following question: How does Newfoundland music achieve airtime on Newfoundland radio stations and how do the Canadian Content regulations influence programming in the St. John’s radio market?

I chose the St. John’s radio market as a case study for the impact of the Canadian Content regulations for two main reasons. First, radio technologies have historically played a vital communication role in Newfoundland, especially in rural communities where installing the infrastructure for more advanced communications technologies was not always possible. It is not surprising, then, to find two of the oldest radio stations in North America in the St. John’s. Second, stations in the St. John’s radio market today dedicate a startling amount of airtime to the broadcast of “Newfoundland music,” a term that will be defined later in this paper. This characteristic of the St. John’s radio market is what inspired my research question.

To understand the broadcasting choices of station personnel in St. John’s, I interviewed station managers, program directors, DJs, and music librarians from 10 radio stations in the St. John’s market.3 Analysis revealed that while the Canadian Content regulations certainly influence music programming and broadcasting decisions in the St. John’s market, the regulations pale by comparison to the efforts by station personnel to promote and preserve Newfoundland culture through broadcasts of local music.

The broader goal of this paper is to provide a solid example of the importance of place and the link between music and place. Geographers traditionally examined place cartographically, as an area with defined boundaries and specific points. More recently, however, geographers have also considered place as an abstraction. Ideas expressed by my participants reinforce the importance of the latter approach. This research did not begin as a study of place, but the results from my extensive interviews with station
personnel demonstrated strong underlying connections between music and place, with radio as the medium. Thus, I use ideas about place in this paper to interpret participants’ comments. What makes this study unique is that the importance of place emerges through the combination of focus areas that have not previously been considered together: cultural media policy, radio broadcasting, and cultural identity.

To this end, I first describe the Canadian Content Regulations for radio, the Canadian federal policy that serves as the framework for this study. Next, I provide a brief overview of Newfoundland history, as the present-day study cannot be fully understood without considering its historical context. Results from this study are then revealed in two sections. First, I explore how station personnel define “Newfoundland music,” and then I explain how this definition and the regulations influence broadcasting decisions in the St. John’s radio market.

The Canadian Content Regulations for Radio

Canadian Content regulations fulfilled part of the Bureau of Broadcast Governors’ (bbg) mandate, and later the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commission’s (crtc) mandate that the purpose of the Canadian broadcasting system was to strengthen Canada as a country—culturally, economically, and politically—through the use of Canadian resources. Both the “brain drain” of musical talent from Canada to the United States, and Canada’s struggle to be recognized internationally as a separate entity from the United States, influenced the policy. Thus, the original radio regulations had two primary objectives: first, to provide Canadian artists access to, and exposure on, the Canadian airwaves, and second, to stimulate the Canadian music industry (crtc 1993, 1996, 1998a).

To meet these objectives, the crtc set minimum quotas for the amount of Canadian music broadcast on Canadian radio stations. Canadian Content regulations define a “Canadian” as someone who is legally a Canadian citizen, a permanent resident of Canada, or a person who had lived in Canada at least six months prior to the release of the musical composition, performance, or concert for which they wish to be recognized (crtc 1986 Section 135-13). Considering this definition of a “Canadian,” the crtc set criteria for determining whether or not a musical selection could be considered for Canadian Content. This system of criteria, perhaps in homage to the icon displayed on the Canadian flag, is now known as the mapl system as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The mapl System to Determine Canadian Content (Source: crtc 1998b)

- **Music:** the music is, or the lyrics are, composed entirely by a Canadian
- **Artist:** the music is, or the lyrics are, performed principally by a Canadian
- **Production:** the musical selection consists of a live performance that is recorded wholly in Canada, or performed wholly in Canada and broadcast live in Canada
- **Lyrics:** the lyrics are entirely written by a Canadian
An additional criterion added in 1993 encouraged collaboration between Canadian and foreign artists. At least two of the above criteria had to be met in order for a musical selection to be considered a “Canadian selection,” and thereby used to fulfill a radio station’s Canadian Content requirement (crtc 1986 Section 135-33, Amended 1993; crtc 1998b, Section 371-32).

Using the MAPL system, the crtc set Canadian Content requirements for each type of station. 35 percent of all music selections broadcast by commercial, community, public, and religious stations must meet at least two of the MAPL criteria (for an in-depth description of the regulations, see Keough 2007).

Broadcasters in the private sector strongly criticized the Canadian Content regulations. They felt that Canada did not have enough domestic material to meet the strong requirements, and that efforts to increase the amount of domestic material would lead to low-quality production (Litvak 1987, 59-60). Private broadcasters also feared that the proximity of Canada’s population to the U.S. border would result in a large loss in listenership once Canadian Content regulations went into effect. This loss, broadcasters felt, would be a result of the fact that consumers associated “Canadian” programs with those that were of poor quality and not very popular (Hindley et al. 1977, 90). Private broadcasters depend on audience size. Without imported (American) material being broadcast, private broadcasters anticipated they would lose their audience to the (already accessible) American radio market (Patch 1975, 2-3; Romanow 1975, 1-3).

Those who supported the Canadian Content ruling, however, had a vested interest in hearing (and seeing) more work by Canadians on the radio and on television. These constituents, including the Association of Canadian Television and Radio Artists, the National Music Publishers Association, the Canadian League of Composers, the Canadian Music Centre, and the Canadian Council of the Performing Arts Union, shared the opinion that the United States had too much influence over Canadian culture, that much of the U.S. influence infiltrated Canada through the broadcasting system, and that U.S. influence should be limited (Patch 1975, 2-3, 61, 92).

It is important to consider these reactions to the policy when examining the St. John’s radio market. While broadcasters across Canada were typically the biggest critics of the regulations on a national scale, station personnel in St. John’s reacted differently. St. John’s radio broadcasters viewed the regulations as not terribly influential in their programming decisions. Broadcasters in the St. John’s market rarely criticized the regulations because these regulations did not restrict them from broadcasting Newfoundland music, music that has always been an important means of cultural expression in Newfoundland. This reaction is not all that surprising when one considers the historical context within which the Newfoundland case study is placed.
**Brief Overview of Newfoundland Culture and History**

Newfoundland was initially a British colony. During the early colonial period its occupants were mostly English and Irish who came to the island as part of the seasonal fishery (Rowe 1980, 54-55; McCarthy 1999, 8; Prowse 2002; Pope 2004, 234-236; Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage 2009; also see Archbishop Howley 1891, 1897; J.P. Howley 1915). Through non-violent means Newfoundland obtained responsible government from Britain, similar to that given to Britain’s other North American colonies in 1855 (Neary 1988, 4; Rowe 1980, 259-278). Newfoundland was thus considered an independent country beginning in 1855.

Between 1855 and 1934, Newfoundland saw periods of relative prosperity intermixed with periods of severe economic and political hardship. The result of these circumstances was a devastating end to Responsible Government in Newfoundland. Newfoundland became the only country ever to give up its independence willingly to its former colonial power. England appointed a Commission of Government on February 14, 1934 to “reconstruct” Newfoundland financially and politically (Rowe 1980, 369-406; Neary 1988; Long 1999, 131). This decision to retract its dominion status would be felt in Newfoundland long after World War II (O’Flaherty 2005, 408).

World War II pulled Newfoundland out of its financial slump. During the war, Newfoundland’s strategic position in the North Atlantic made it a popular location for U.S. and Canadian military bases (Rowe 1980, 429-440; Neary 1988, 109). When the war ended and Newfoundland’s geographical location was no longer of strategic importance, the British Government organized an elected National Convention to abolish the Commission of Government on March 31, 1949, and, by vote of Newfoundlanders, establish confederation with Canada (Rowe 1980, 429-440). The vote for confederation passed 51 percent to 49 percent, the narrowest margin possible. As result, there were (and still are) Newfoundlanders who do not consider themselves Canadians because they lived before Newfoundland joined Canada, and Newfoundland has sought to establish itself as a region with a cultural identity and heritage distinct from the rest of Canada (Rowe 1980; Neary 1988, 338-345).

Despite confederation with Canada, Newfoundland continued to struggle against economic conditions and the resultant out-migration of its population (Rowe 1980, 491-493). One of the most significant periods of out-migration occurred following the 1992 cod fish moratorium when declining cod stocks in the North Atlantic caused the Canadian government to close the cod fishery, and thus the economic activity upon which a large majority of Newfoundland’s population depended.

Newfoundland’s decision to relinquish its independent status, the vote to join in confederation with Canada, and the Federal Government’s closure of the cod fishery help to explain the current movement in Newfoundland to preserve what Newfoundlanders feel is a distinct cultural heritage. Feelings of inferiority, coupled with resentment towards the Federal government, have fostered a Newfoundland “renaissance”: a renewed
focus on cultural expression. This emphasis on cultural preservation in Newfoundland is often expressed through music. Music about or produced in Newfoundland gets airtime on almost all of the radio stations in St. John's. As a result, the radio has become an important medium in this cultural renaissance. Stations in St. John's, however, are also subject to the Canadian Content regulations, which were designed to emphasize a larger Canadian identity.

The remainder of this article reveals how radio station personnel in the St. John's radio market negotiate between cultural policy at a national scale, and the personal and professional demands of their local listening audience. First, my participants discuss their definitions of "Newfoundland music." I then present the main themes that emerged from interviews: how station personnel promote and present aspects of Newfoundland culture through music radio broadcasts, and how broadcasting Newfoundland music is an act of cultural preservation on the part of station personnel.

**Defining Newfoundland Music**

There is not a simple commonly agreed-upon definition of Newfoundland music. Rather, the definition is highly personal and varies by individual. There were some commonalities, however, in the descriptions that station personnel provided. Some station personnel described Newfoundland music in relation to musical genres, sound, and instrumentation. Sam Whiffen, host of *Homebrew*, described Newfoundland music by saying,

> It’s not that commercialized radio sound where it’s there and it’s almost like it’s untouchable. I think the Homebrew [listeners] feel that they can reach out and touch it, and play around with it a little bit (Whiffen 2005, Personal Communication).

Connell and Gibson (2003, 10) discuss the idea that music “has been caught up in a process of convergence” as technological innovations allow for greater access of music varieties. Katie Norman, host of *Fresh Focus*, told me that Newfoundland music, too, is a result of blending musical genres.

> The Ennis Sisters...they’re trying to look pop, but sing traditional, so they blend the traditional with the pop [by] adding a little bit of a Newfoundland twist to it, or [some groups] if they’re traditional trying to add a little bit of pop to it to try and make it a little more marketable (Norman 2005, Personal Communication).

Katie’s definition implies Newfoundland music has been hybridized, which also adds to the music’s popularity.

> The presence of an accordion is often included in definitions of Newfoundland music (Hann 2005, Personal Communication; Jamieson 2005, Personal Communication). The accordion, these participants told me, helps to add a Newfoundland flavor to music. It helps turn a pop song into a more "Newfoundland-sounding" piece.
Participants had an interest in differentiating the Newfoundland sound from Irish music. David Williams (2005, Personal Communication) said that Newfoundland music was not just Irish music. “It’s not under one category by any means,” he told me. Another station manager agreed. “It’s not all jigs and reels, not all playing spoons on your knee or making sure there’s an accordion in it” (Magee 2005, Personal Communication). In other words, Newfoundland music is more than just Irish music. The process of defining Newfoundland music by what it is not implies that faulty assumptions regarding Newfoundland music have been made in the past. Defining Newfoundland music by the absence of a sound shows that station personnel are trying to correct a stereotype, possibly the stereotype that Newfoundland music only includes the Irish-traditional genre.

In other cases, residency of the performers defined Newfoundland music. To Glen Tilley, programmer at CBC Radio One, Newfoundland music is,

> Any piece of music written by a Newfoundlander...[The musicians] are all Newfoundlanders and came out of that tradition...There has to be a sensibility of the culture that he or she lives or lived in (Tilley 2005, Personal Communication).

Kevin Kelly agreed with him. In choosing music for his all-Newfoundland music show, he told me, “the only criteria would be that [music] would be 100 percent local artists or artists who were born in Newfoundland” (Kelly 2005, Personal Communication). Angela Antle, whose show features a variety of musical genres, said that the fact that musicians are working in Newfoundland makes those musicians interesting to the local community.

> I’ll play Mopaya, which is African and Newfoundland, and, you know, it’s Newfoundland music. They’re working here as musicians, so we’re interested in playing them and talking about them (Antle 2005, Personal Communication).

Angela also considers displaced Newfoundlanders still part of the local music scene. She gave an example of a singer who was from Newfoundland originally and now lives in Vancouver, “She’s still a Newfoundlander, as far as I’m concerned” (Antle 2005, Personal Communication). What underlies these definitions based on residency of the performers, however, is the feeling that being in Newfoundland either now or at some time in the past allows the musician to experience Newfoundland as a place, an experience which most station personnel felt essential to writing and performing Newfoundland music. Yi Fu Tuan (1977, 137) describes this experience of place as an “intimate association” with a new experience. Participants in this study considered time in Newfoundland essential to writing or performing Newfoundland music.
Lyrics are also an important aspect in defining Newfoundland music. For many station personnel, lyrics are important because they speak to the experience of living in Newfoundland. Tony Hann, DJ for the show *Jiggs and Reels* told me,

> I’m looking for stuff that is speaking to people, that’s identifying who we are as Newfoundlanders. I’m looking for anything that speaks to the whole Newfoundland experience, especially speaking to things like the moratorium, losing your job, hard, hard times, that type of thing...what it’s like to live here, what it’s like to leave, what it’s like to be in Toronto, you know, missing home (Hann 2005, Personal Communication).

In other words, Newfoundland music is music that tells a story (Norman 2005, Personal Communication; Jamieson 2005, Personal Communication). While many instrumental tunes exist that would be considered Newfoundland music by my participants, lyrics are an important aspect of the bulk of Newfoundland songs because they are essential for story telling. Paul Magee explained the importance of story telling in music.

> Newfoundlanders love stories. We have passed the time that way for years and years and years when there wasn’t the best in communications, newspapers, radio, television, any of those kind of things [sic]. And so stories got written into music, and they got sung. By nature we are a fishing community, and a shipping community...and that’s really part of our culture, I think, and that’s Newfoundland music to me (Magee 2005, Personal Communication).

Therefore, music and song became an important method from which to pass down information from generation to generation. Songs were used both to teach and entertain.

In many of the descriptions by station personnel, place was an important element in deciding whether or not a piece of music was “Newfoundland” music. Agnew (1987) describes place as space that has become a meaningful location. To Cresswell (2004), space becomes place when meaning is added. Association with Newfoundland outports (rural communities) is a characteristic that labels a piece of music as Newfoundland music. Outport-style music, as Katie Norman told me, is

> People talking about life in rural Newfoundland. A lot of it’s about hardships growing up in this place (Norman 2005, Personal Communication).

Her DJ partner Josh described it as “hangin’ out around the bay” (Jamieson 2005, Personal Communication). In these examples, place is described in very general terms. That may be because the *experience* of place is what drives many definitions of Newfoundland music. Brian O’Connell explained:

> It’s more than [a type of instrument]. I think a song reflects the province, the people, our culture, some of the day-to-day things that happen in our lives here, living next to the ocean, songs that talk about our past, songs that
talk about our family...all that is very much in the Newfoundland music when you talk about what makes up Newfoundland music. (O’Connell 2005, Personal Communication)

While O’Connell speaks of the experience of living in a place, some participants gave more specific locations that they associated with Newfoundland music. One of the most common places mentioned by station personnel was home. Newfoundland music is Newfoundland music because of “the way they talk about home, you know, mom and apple pie, that kind of thing” (Hann 2005, Personal Communication). Another participant agreed.

There’s something about a Newfoundland artist or Newfoundland music, as a Newfoundlander, that you listen to it and you’re home. I can’t describe it more than that. There’s just this total sense of home and of what it is to be a Newfoundlander when you hear it (Griffen 2005, Personal Communication).

Massey (1997) suggests that in the global era, places serve as routes, or the location of exchange and flows, rather than serving as roots or origins. Newfoundland music, however, still has roots in specific places. Such places help define Newfoundland music. Gary Tredwell, program director for Coast 101.1, defined Newfoundland music as that which gets played in pubs (Tredwell 2005, Personal Communication). This association between Newfoundland music and feelings of home was more specific in some cases. For example, “Newfoundland music is anything that I listened to since I was a kid that I can remember hearing in the kitchen” (McDonald 2005, Personal Communication). Here, the participant refers to a specific room in the house. The kitchen has traditionally been a very central location in Newfoundland households because it was the location of the main source of heat for the house. In many outport communities, the kitchen door was the main entrance to the home, at least for friends and family, and it was where most social aspects of life took place. Spontaneous music-making events in Newfoundland came to be called “kitchen parties” because of the location where they originated (Pocius 1991). The name has stuck, and these jam sessions are still called kitchen parties even if they do not take place in the kitchen. Thus, the use of location, such as the home or the kitchen, to define Newfoundland music makes sense because these places originally served as venues for music making.

Finally, some station personnel feel that music becomes that of Newfoundland when they can make an emotional connection with it. This emotional connection is an interesting example of what Tuan (1974) describes as “topophilia,” or the love of place. In other words, music that instills a love of Newfoundland in the listener is considered Newfoundland music. Another participant explained that Newfoundland music makes her feel an emotional attachment to the place.

Newfoundland music to me is music that’s got heart and soul. It’s got…a soul that just warms your heart (Griffen 2005, Personal Communication).
While my interviews revealed that more than one definition of Newfoundland music exists, and that each definition contains many elements, the importance of music as a central part of Newfoundland culture was clear. Regardless of who writes or performs the music, Newfoundland music is essential for creating connections to place among both station personnel and their listeners. The popularity of local music among residents of the island, though, and the fact that so much of the music talks about the experience of living in Newfoundland either today or in the past, makes the broadcast of local music an important way to promote and preserve aspects of Newfoundland culture.

**Radio Broadcasts as Cultural Presentation and Promotion**

Station personnel in the St. John's radio market who are involved in the broadcast of local content on the radio see this task as a way to promote and support local musicians, while at the same time disseminating Newfoundland’s musical culture to listeners. The fact that station personnel feel they can promote and present local talent through their roles in radio broadcasting is evidence that, as Nesbitt-Larking (2007) suggests, the audience is not a passive receptor to media, but rather they play an active role by influencing content.

One of the ways station personnel promote Newfoundland culture is simply by making a point to play music by local musicians. Radio stations in St. John’s invite and encourage local musicians to drop off their recordings. *OZ-FM* Program Director, Brian O’Connell told me that:

> We invite them in, we encourage them to come in, we talk to them, we ask them about their music, we support them, we try to feature them wherever possible because…that’s driven partly because we are a Newfoundland radio station and we support our own, and partly because the public demands that we support them (O’Connell 2005, Personal Communication).

In addition to the open-door policy that many stations have for local musicians, station personnel will sometimes offer their expertise to musicians. One DJ said that he offers musicians feedback on their recordings, in terms of radio quality.

> I encourage anybody that I talk to to bring anything up to the station, and ...worst case scenario, we can’t play your song, a lot of people are looking for positive criticism and stuff like that, and I’m more than willing to give it... (McDonald 2006, Personal Communication).

This statement shows that stations have a vested interest in local musicians producing quality music. Not only do better quality recordings benefit the musician, but recordings with good quality give the station more local music from which to feature on the air. “We feel like we’ve taken some ownership of that CD as well,” Brian O’Connell explained.
We’ve had an opinion on that so that really makes a difference. We want [the musicians] to succeed as much as they want to succeed, and we’ll do whatever we can to make that happen for them within the confines of the programming that’s been laid out for us (O’Connell 2005, Personal Communication).

Sometimes, stations serve as an intermediary between a budding musician and the recording industry. Sherry Griffen, Station Manager at voar, tries to connect musicians with recording companies.

I’ve sent [recording companies] copies of the artists’ [CDs]… if it’s really good I’ll say [to the artist] “would you mind giving me an extra one so I can send it to the record company?” We’ve tried to help promote as much as possible some of our local stuff (Griffen 2005, Personal Communication).

In promoting local music, station personnel feel they are helping musicians spread the word about their music. Christine Davies, the music librarian for cbc Radio in St. John’s told me what happens when she gets new Newfoundland music for the music library.

I make sure that many of the programmers here are aware of particularly the Newfoundland and Labrador recordings, as new ones come into the library. So, for example, I have a relationship with Angela Antle with Weekend [Arts Magazine]. On her program called Liner Notes, she features new artists or new recordings by artists. So when we acquire new recordings here I make sure she’s aware that they’re here so that she can consider them…she can audition the CDs and maybe invite them to participate in that feature. And the same goes with all the shows basically. If there’s new music coming out, I try to let them know. Often, that means that I’ll actually write a little introduction and I’ll dub a cut of music into our desktop editing system saying [to the show hosts] “by the way, you may want to play this” (Davies 2005, Personal Communication).

In this instance, the cbc is acting as a regional music library because Christine shares music with other cbc affiliate stations around the province and across the country.

Two DJs with whom I spoke host shows that feature non-traditional Newfoundland music. These DJs’ goal is to feature Newfoundland music from genres that do not get much airtime on regular radio broadcasts or traditional Newfoundland music shows. Kevin Kelly hosts a music show on the college station that focuses on music genres other than traditional. He told me,

I wanted to expand to new musical genres that may not have gotten radio attention, such as jazz artists, such as country artists, such as rock artists. And that’s basically why I started Upon this Rock a few years ago (Kelly 2005, Personal Communication).
Brad Martin and David Williams also host a non-traditional music show. Their show, *Newfound Underground*, fills a gap in local broadcasting because it features music produced in Newfoundland that is not part of the traditional genre.

There isn’t a particular show dedicated to the local, non-traditional scene. So, our main goal was to get the non-traditional scene exposure, ‘cause it’s such a large following that we wanted to expose it. It was just an untapped resource that wasn’t being used at all, as far as I know (Williams 2005, Personal Communication).

Through their radio programs, these DJs promote Newfoundland music that they feel occupies the periphery in the local music scene. This music includes genres like rap, metal, hip hop, jazz, and hard rock. They want to emphasize to the listening audience that there is more to Newfoundland music than just the traditional, Irish sound. Here, DJs are acting as agents in the presentation of non-traditional cultural material: the musical genres that do not get much attention. In this case, the radio becomes a means through which minority musical genres in Newfoundland are brought to the forefront, albeit if only for brief periods of time as these shows air only once a week.

In addition to acting as agents of cultural presentation, some station personnel felt that promoting local culture on the radio would help to keep Newfoundland culture on the island and off the mainland. While in actuality the experience of living away from Newfoundland is as much a part of Newfoundland culture as is living on the island, Angel Antle does what she can to give musicians an outlet at home so that they do not feel like they have to leave Newfoundland to make money.

If I hear about a gig, and I have a friend who’s a musician, and I know that friend is struggling to make a living to stay here, and doesn’t want to move to Toronto or Halifax or wherever, I’ll call that person up and say, “Hey do you know so and so’s looking for someone to play fiddle,” or “did you know so-and-so’s got this film on the go and looking for an animator?” That’s just the way this little community works, especially the arts community here. We all want to stay, we’ve all been away and come back, or we want to stay, and it’s not easy to make a living here, so everyone helps each other out (Antle 2005, Personal Communication).

This cooperation is one of the things that make the arts community, and specifically the music community in St. John’s, unique. Radio stations do not see other stations as competitors, but rather as fellow players in the radio market. Ernst Rollman at CHMR noted that after the college radio station started doing shows that featured Newfoundland music almost exclusively, another radio station in town started a similar program. In response to that, he told me,
We don’t get so much “Hey dude, you ripped me off.” It’s more like “Cool! Well, that’s pretty neat!”… That [the other station] decided that was something that they wanted to do (Rollman 2005, Personal Communication).

Not only is more than one station featuring an all-Newfoundland music show, but a few of the stations’ Newfoundland music shows overlap in genre and in the time period in which they are broadcast. I asked station personnel if they felt any competition from this circumstance. Sam Wiffen, whose traditional Newfoundland music show overlaps on Sunday mornings with the traditional Newfoundland music show on oz-fm told me,

The more that radio plays traditional music, the better it is for everybody. I think the more radio stations that play it, the better it is for the community, the better it is for promoting Newfoundland and Labrador music. That’s what it’s all about (Whiffen 2005, Personal Communication).

Other station personnel echoed Sam’s comments. In this respect, the St. John’s radio market is one that works collectively to promote Newfoundland music and culture. Station personnel in the St. John’s market are personally interested in seeing Newfoundland’s musical culture and music industry thrive.

Radio interviews are an additional important aspect of cultural presentation for Newfoundland radio stations. Many of the DJs who host shows dedicated to Newfoundland music bring artists into the studio during the show. Randy Parsons shared his philosophy on interviewing local musicians:

We do a lot of interviews with artists. Not just with the frontrunners, but some obscure [ones too]. If someone has talent, I like to give them a chance… I’m finding now that I’m seeking out interviews because I’ve been playing music by a certain artist or group, and I’m interested in them, and I’d like to talk to them and get to know more about them (Parsons 2005, Personal Communication).

Randy’s comment also speaks to the personal involvement DJs have with Newfoundland music. Not only does Randy think interviews with local musicians are interesting to the listening audience, he also has a personal interest in the artist as well. Angela Antle includes interviews with members of the local arts community during her Weekend Arts Magazine show. While the interviews she does are not limited to the local music community, she is confident that these interviews are what her listeners want to hear. “I know my audience is interested if [the interviewee] is a local performer,” she told me (Antle 2005, Personal Communication).

Cultural presentation and promotion is not only important to the professional DJs. Joshua Jamieson and Katie Norman, two college students at Memorial University of Newfoundland (the main provincial university, based in St. John’s) host Fresh Focus, a two hour show on Radio Newfoundland on Saturday afternoons that is dedicated to a
younger (teen years to mid twenties) listening audience. On their show, Josh and Katie mix Newfoundland music with music that is popular with the demographic to which they broadcast. They make an effort to go out and see different local acts playing in St. John’s and invite them into the studio for an interview during their show.

We always make a point to talk to Newfoundland artists…It’s kind of fun for me and Katie too because we kind of act as talent scouts in that respect, like in discovering these bands and giving them that first opportunity…If ever a Newfoundland artist is performing, then we’ll try to get out there and interview them (Jamieson 2005, Personal Communication).

Josh and Katie’s perspective is especially important because they represent a younger generation of cultural promoters. Their position as hosts of a show that focuses on a younger demographic segment shows that local music is important to that age group as well.

As DJs broadcast local music and thus promote local culture, they feel that this cultural presentation contributes in part to the success of Newfoundland musicians. In the Newfoundland music scene, musicians’ financial survival is based on live performances initially, and eventually on CD sales. Most groups spend time performing in the bar scene and at music festivals before recording their first CD. Once that recording is made, however, radio stations play an important role in the dissemination and promotion of these groups. Brenda Silk, programmer for Radio Newfoundland, tells me there are two benefits for musicians who get airtime. “It’s a thrill, first of all, for them if they get airplay, but also then for sales—it’s very important as well to have that out there” (Silk 2005, Personal Communication). In other words, radio is a means of disseminating local music, which, in turn, helps musicians become known. Sam Wiffen explains:

The artist relies on you and the radio station to promote the product because if it doesn’t get airplay, nobody will know it exists…The relationship is a benefit for both sides. If you put a CD out, it doesn’t get the same exposure as it does on the radio, of course, because radio is a medium. It’s broadcast far and wide and gets out to people who are tuning into your program. So, of course it helps CD sales. There’s no question about it. Always has, always will (Wiffen 2005, Personal Communication).

The nature of radio as a broadcasting medium and the range of its terrestrial and digital signal are seen here as assets for local musicians.

In addition to providing airtime to local musicians, stations in the St. John’s market direct some of their required Canadian Talent Development contributions to the local community. oz-fm, for example, recently produced a CD of local artists called “Rock of the Rock,” which included music from established musicians and musicians looking to achieve a larger audience. In addition, the station donates prize money to local talent
contests and it sponsors music festivals around the island in an effort to “promote talent
development in all music genres, including traditional Newfoundland music, among
the province’s youth” (O’Connell 2006, Personal Communication). While not all the
commercial radio stations in St. John’s provided information regarding the recipients
of their Canadian Talent Development contributions, the stations that did share that
information all focused their contributions on local and provincial organizations. Thus,
stations in St. John’s promote and present musical culture through monetary means as
well as broadcasting support.

Making money as a musician in St. John’s is difficult, and many musicians have
jobs in addition to playing music, a situation not necessarily unique to Newfoundland
musicians. My interviews with radio station personnel informed me that the stations
realize this hardship and see their relationship with the local music community as a
symbiotic one. When I asked station personnel what would happen if radio did not
broadcast Newfoundland music, they unanimously agreed that it would be difficult for
the radio stations’ survival because local content is what attracts listeners. The listening
audience demands Newfoundland music, so the radio stations need a constant supply
of local music to maintain a healthy listening audience. In turn, local musicians need
the radio stations to help promote their music, which ensures the survival of many local
bands. Yet, there is another element that makes broadcasts of local music important.
Broadcasts of local music are an important means of preserving local culture.

**Radio Broadcasts as Cultural Preservation**

Appadurai (1991) and O’Brien (1992) argue that globalization has resulted in a fusion
of cultures and traditions. This fusion has diminished the importance of the local in
favor of the global. Broadcasts of Newfoundland music on the radio, however, reinforce
the importance of the local. Not only do station personnel work together to ensure
a thriving music industry in Newfoundland, they also see their role in broadcasting
Newfoundland music as a way to help preserve particular aspects of Newfoundland
culture. Cultural preservation is an interesting issue, as constituencies argue over which
time period of the past should be preserved, and in what ways the past should be
preserved (Barthel 1989). Station personnel have less trouble with this issue, however,
as song-writers have already decided how to preserve Newfoundland culture in their
songs. Station personnel instead preserve Newfoundland culture by serving as the
disseminators of Newfoundland music.

Newfoundland music that falls into the traditional category was usually the genre
most associated with cultural preservation. “I personally feel it’s a very important genre,”
one DJ told me. “It’s important to keep and maintain, and it’s vital that we have radio…
that make that their focus” (Jamieson 2005, Personal Communication). Angela Antle
described it best when she called Newfoundland music “our glue to culture” (Antle
2005, Personal Communication). According to some station personnel, this “glue” is
very important for connecting younger people to their Newfoundland roots. Ernst Rollman, the program director at the college radio station gave me an example. One evening around Christmas time he was teaching a radio programming class to university students in the CHMR studios.

[We were] sitting in here doing our Christmas carol thing, you’ll have a bunch of people and their friends around here, and Ron Hynes [a well-known Newfoundland musician] walks in the door with his guitar and sits down and plays a couple of songs, one of which has not even been released yet. He just wrote it and he wanted to give it to us for our Christmas show. And you look around the table at these young volunteers who are just like “wow, this is pretty cool” (Rollman 2005, Personal Communication).

Here, the radio station served as a nexus between young Newfoundlanders and older ones (e.g. Ron Hynes) whose music speaks about Newfoundland culture. This is not to say that performers of traditional Newfoundland music are all of the older generations. One of the most interesting trends in Newfoundland music broadcasting is the wide age range of performers of traditional music. The genre is not only popular among the aging population on the island. Younger musicians are playing traditional music as well. Josh Jamieson, host of the radio show Fresh Focus, explained that “there are some people who are younger coming into that genre because they want to hold on to their own culture that’s been passed down to them from their parents” (Jamieson 2005, Personal Communication).

The story-telling element common in most traditional Newfoundland tunes is an extremely important aspect that affects cultural preservation. Songs tell stories that inform listeners what life was or is like in Newfoundland. This characteristic is one of the means through which Newfoundland culture is preserved; “[People] are singing these songs, they’re telling these stories that have a level of familiarity for the people in the province, or have some of the themes that people understand in the province” (Davies 2005, Personal Communication). In other words, Newfoundland songs mean something because the stories told through them describe situations with which people in Newfoundland can identify. According to VOWR’s station manager, station personnel at that station take on a story-telling role by playing music about Newfoundland. “I think it helps our culture,” he said (Tessier 2005, Personal Communication). Stories happen in places, so the broadcast of songs that tell stories further tie Newfoundlanders to the local.

Radio helps to ensure that there is always a place for Newfoundland music, and it helps bring Newfoundland music to the masses. Kevin Kelly described radio music broadcasting as “a modern way” of passing culture from one generation to the next (Kelly 2005, Personal Communication). One DJ explained that for Newfoundland music to survive, it has to be available to a wider audience; “If you don’t make an effort to bring [Newfoundland music] out of the kitchen party into the mainstream, it can
very easily be lost” (Jamieson 2005, Personal Communication). Josh’s comment refers to the fact that rural communities, traditionally the most common locations for kitchen parties, have been hollowing out as young people move to St. John’s or leave the island all together in search of employment. Tony Hann expanded on this idea.

I find that the younger people...they don't have as much of a cultural identity as we had when we were that age, and I think the music kind of helps keep that alive...It gives us a sense of place and a sense of who we are (Hann 2005, Personal Communication).

Coast 101.1 program director Gary Tredwell said that ensuring a place for Newfoundland music on the radio is part of the broadcasting philosophy in St. John’s.

What we try and do is we try and talk to the people that live here about what happens here and what relates to them here. That's sort of the attitude (Tredwell 2005, Personal Communication).

In St. John’s, station personnel use the radio as a means of preserving local culture. Because “Newfoundland music” by definition represents aspects of Newfoundland culture that both station personnel and listeners feel are important, playing the music on the radio means that the stories, sounds, and images of Newfoundland are available regardless of which station a listener chooses. In Newfoundland, radio has become important for cultural promotion and preservation. Considering this purpose that station personnel feel they serve, how do the Canadian Content regulations, then, designed to foster a Canadian national identity, influence broadcasting in St. John’s? The remainder of this article addresses this question.

St. John’s Radio Stations and Canadian Content: Do the Regulations Matter?

In light of ideas revealed by station personnel in St. John’s regarding their decision to broadcast Newfoundland music, it is necessary to come back to the Canadian Content Regulations and their influence on the St. John’s radio market. Generally speaking, local content has been present on Newfoundland radio stations from the inception of radio technology in the 1920s. When Canadian Content regulations came into being in the early 1970s, Newfoundland radio stations, like those in the rest of Canada, were required to play a specific percentage of Canadian music. No requirements concerning locally produced music existed. In most cases, Newfoundland music broadcast on St. John’s stations fulfills Canadian Content requirements. I asked station personnel what Canadian Content requirements meant for their station, what influence the requirements had, and what music was used to fulfill the requirements.

Many station personnel spoke favorably about Canadian Content, which is surprising considering that, historically, the biggest critics of Canadian Content for
radio were broadcasters. Station personnel in St. John's felt that Canadian Content requirements were good for the music community. The program director from the classic rock station offered the only negative comment that I heard. He explained that finding Canadian-produced classic rock is difficult because the Canadian Content regulations were not in effect during the classic rock era (Campbell 2005, Personal Communication; Tilley 2005, Personal Communication). Aside from this perspective, however, station personnel thought that Canadian Content regulations supported the local music scene. One DJ commented that not only were Canadian Content regulations important for local musicians, but that the regulations should be enhanced by adding a requirement to play a certain percentage of local music (Kelly 2005, Personal Communication). These comments imply that in Newfoundland, the fact that radio stations have to adhere to Canadian Content requirements has positive implications for local musicians because 45 percent of the stations in St. John's (not counting the cbc) play Newfoundland music to fulfill Canadian Content requirements. In most cases, these stations had a Newfoundland Music category in their music library or music database so that DJs could easily identify and access local music.

The amount of Newfoundland music used to fulfill the requirements varied from one station to the next. The station manager for voar estimated that at least half of the Canadian Content music played was Newfoundland music. In other stations, the amount was smaller. At Radio Newfoundland (cjyq), however, more than 80 percent of the music broadcast is Newfoundland music. The station self-imposed this target when the station came into existence.

Most station personnel, when speaking about Canadian Content, used the word “we” to refer to Newfoundlanders, usually when contrasting something about Newfoundland to mainland Canada. Brian O'Connell of oz-fm, however, thought that Canadian Content regulations were as important to Newfoundlanders as they were to the rest of Canada because the regulations gave all Canadians an edge over music from the United States (2005, Personal Communication). Throughout all of my interviews, participants usually positioned themselves as Newfoundlanders first, even as they spoke positively about Canada. This participant (O'Connell), however, saw that in terms of competing with the US commercial music market, Newfoundland and Canada could act together for mutual benefit.

Since the confederation debate in 1949, there have always been a group of vocal Newfoundlanders who felt that they would always be Newfoundlanders and not necessarily Canadians. When explaining why his station uses Newfoundland music to fulfill Canadian Content requirements, however, John Tessier of vwr justified his practice by saying that Newfoundland musicians are just as important as other Canadian musicians.

Our Newfoundland performers are there and they're legitimate Canadian artists... So we use Newfoundland performers more so than we do other
Canadian artists because...they're just as much Canadian Content as any other Canadian performers from other provinces (Tessier 2005, Personal Communication).

When it comes to Canadian Content, this participant felt that Newfoundland walks on equal ground with the rest of mainland Canada.

Fifty-five percent of the station personnel in my study said they do not play Newfoundland music purposely to fulfill Canadian Content requirements. However, the same stations told me that Newfoundland music is included in the Canadian music category and does get played. In other words, while Newfoundland music does count towards a station's Canadian Content quota, the regulations are not these stations' main motivation for playing Newfoundland music. According to Gary Tredwell of Coast 101.1, a station that combines Newfoundland and Canadian music in the same category, Newfoundland music has “an equal share with everybody else that's Canadian in that category” (Tredwell 2005, Personal Communication). While his motivations for equally sharing are slightly different from John Tessier's, Tredwell is essentially also putting Newfoundland artists on an equal footing with their mainland counterparts.

Canadian Content regulations affect the amount of local music that gets played on the radio. For the stations that do not purposely play local music to fulfill the requirements, the fact that local music gets played anyway implies that there is an effort by these stations to emphasize and promote local music, and the local music community helps these stations reach their requirements by producing music that the stations can play.

**Conclusion**

Music is an essential in Newfoundland culture. Radio has become an important medium for defining local music and determining the popularity of particular genres, promoting local music, and preserving Newfoundland culture. Underlying this trend of local music on the radio are the Canadian Content regulations. Station personnel in St. John's see the regulations as positive for two reasons. First, Canadian Content gives stations an excuse to play Canadian music, and many times this “Canadian” music is actually music from or about Newfoundland. Secondly, the regulations are seen as something distinctly Canadian, and their existence adds to the broad idea of what it means to be Canadian. As a result, station personnel in St. John's see Canadian Content as one of a few strong underlying forces behind the presence of Canadian music in the world market today.

Canadian Content regulations may influence the broadcasting choices of St. John's radio stations toward local content. In the case of the St. John's radio market, however, local content would be present on the radio even without the regulations. In this way, the St. John's radio market renegotiates hegemony. Prior to 1949, Newfoundland was independent and provided its own broadcasting. Local content, especially local music, existed on the radio then, and the local content survived Newfoundland's confederation
with Canada. If the CRTC withdrew Canadian Content regulations tomorrow, radio stations in St. John’s would most likely keep their collective emphasis on local programming. The local content in St. John’s radio broadcasts is not totally dependent on federal policies instituted at the national level. In a way, the inherent importance placed on local content in Newfoundland radio is one way that Newfoundland remains culturally independent from the rest of Canada.

Regional cultural variations exist within Newfoundland. Often rural (outport) culture is contrasted with urban (St. John’s) culture. The St. John’s radio market, however, is a fusion of regional cultural differences. Much of the traditional music on the radio speaks to life in rural Newfoundland, but the dissemination of this music is partially dependent upon the concentration of the province’s radio stations in St. John’s, and their collective dedication to broadcasting local music. In this way, music in St. John’s is both fixed and mobile (Connell and Gibson 2003). While the city of St. John’s is not necessarily representative of all of Newfoundland, the radio market of St. John’s is because music from both urban and rural areas is merged in radio broadcasts.

Connell and Gibson (2003) describe music as tied to place yet at the same time music is also about mobility. This description certainly applies to music broadcast on Newfoundland radio stations. Much of the music describes Newfoundland as a place, while at the same time this music, which is fixed to a place, is also mobile, as it is disseminated to the wider audience through radio technology. As a result of social and economic hardships in Newfoundland, especially since the 1992 cod moratorium, radio technology has allowed Newfoundland music to reach young, skilled Newfoundlanders who have migrated off the island (Brunton et al. 1994, 460). Not only is the internal conflict of leaving Newfoundland a subject of Newfoundland music, the aging population that remains on the island fears a loss of cultural heritage. On the other hand, this out-migration has created a consumer base for Newfoundland music off the island. Radio stations have responded to this demand by incorporating web broadcasts into their programming. Thus, the mobility of music is further exemplified as the physiogeographic constraints of island living are no longer barriers to the dissemination of Newfoundland music.

Radio scholar Jody Berland (1998, 131) describes the experience of music listening in a way to which I imagine many Newfoundlanders can relate. “Wherever [music] locates you, the music reminds you of your places. It speaks to the heart of where you are, and tells you something about what it means to live there.” Station personnel in the St. John’s radio market recognize this quality in Newfoundland music. Indeed, it is exactly this quality that makes the music and radio combination such a strong medium for cultural preservation in Newfoundland.

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Endnotes
1 The current Canadian Content policy applied in this study was not the first policy in Canada that regulated broadcasting content. Early policies governing radio broadcasting content included the Radiotelegraph Act (1905), policies of the Aird Commission (1929), regulations passed by the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC), recommendations from the Massey Commission (1951), the Broadcast Act (1952, 1958, and 1961 under the Board of Broadcast Governors-BBG), and the Arts, Letters and Science Requirements passed by the BBG on October 1, 1964 (Litvak 1987, 26-47).
2 The Canadian Content regulations went under review again by the CRBC in 2007, after this study was completed.
3 The only station not included was CBC Radio Two (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) because that public station plays only national programs and does not contain any local content.
4 An outport is a term that refers to “a coastal settlement other than the chief port of St. John’s” (Dictionary of Newfoundland English).
5 Canadian Talent Development (CTD) contributions are a CRBC requirement. A portion of the stations annual income must be donated to CTD agencies. A CTD agency or program to which a radio station might give money to would be an agency that offers grants to musicians to offset the costs of producing a CD that meets all of the MAPL requirements.
6 I heard this criticism of the younger generation expressed by the older generation in other interviews, especially interviews with listeners. However, I saw almost as many “young” performers at the folk music sessions at the Ship Inn in St. John’s as I did seasoned performers. So, there is interest in folk and traditional music by younger generations, but determining the extent and nature of this interest is beyond the scope of this research.

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