

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NETWORK  
NEWS VIEWING AND SUPPORT FOR THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		<u>Page</u>
1	STATEMENT OF THE TOPIC	1
2	PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY	3
3	FOCUS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW	5
4	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	7
	4.1 Propaganda, Reality and Democracy	7
	4.2 Mass Media, Government's Tools for Propaganda Dissemination	14
	4.2.1 The shaping of public opinion	14
	4.2.2 Unaware participation	17
	4.2.3 Summary	23
	4.3 The Power of Television	24
	4.3.1 The creation of political awareness	24
	4.3.2 Summary	29
5	RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS	32
	5.1 Research Question	32
	5.2 Theoretical Hypothesis	32

5.3	Research Hypothesis	32
6	METHODOLOGY AND EXPERIMENTATIONS	33
6.1	Introduction	33
6.2	Terms and Operational Definitions	33
6.3	Data Collection	35
6.4	Analysis Procedures	36
6.5	Limitations of the Study	37
7	RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	38
8	CONCLUSIONS	89
8.1	Analysis of Differences	89
8.2	Limitations of the Study	95
8.3	Recommendations for Future Research	96
8.4	Closing Statements	97
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	98

CHAPTER 1  
STATEMENT OF THE TOPIC

The intense political aspect of the mass media in the United States raises questions about the attempts of politicians, administration officials, and the President himself, to inform and persuade the audience through these mass media.

Generally, the power of mass media is underestimated by the mass media consumer. It is accurate to regard the mass media as full participants in the political system. Their potential and actual impact as influential factors should not be disregarded.

The literature review of this study analyzes the structure and techniques of propaganda used in the United States, demonstrating that the United States government utilizes highly sophisticated propaganda mechanisms to manipulate public opinion of its own citizens. Research in the field of propaganda indicates that indeed there are governmental and presidential attempts to "manage" the news or its diffusion.

Another issue that motivated this study was the widespread denial of news management on the part of the United States government. This topic has been studied previously,

yet it deserves renewed attention as the techniques of propaganda become more sophisticated all over the world, so too in this country.

The final portion of this thesis presents the results of a survey investigating whether there is a relationship between amount of network news viewing and support for the political system in this country.

## CHAPTER 2

## PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the differences between network news viewers who watch the news extensively and those who watch the news very little or not at all. The investigation will compare the reactions of these viewers; namely, it is anticipated that viewers who watch as much as 210 minutes of network news a week will be inclined to feel more positively towards government policies than those who do not watch the news more than 60 minutes a week.

The literature review will present prior research that has investigated processes at work in a democratic system. The literature review will examine the extent to which the audience is sensitive to the manipulative power of propaganda and if mass media plays a part so important that without the mass media, propaganda would not have its current impact. The literature review will describe what previous researchers have found with regard to the way the popular perspective of the political system in the United States of America, conceived by the general public as one of freedom, is subject to the will of the administration. Persuasion techniques are used in a democracy even though



the population tends not to accept the idea of news management or propaganda. Further, some tend to deny that the inherent nature of democracy requires propaganda, unlike any other system, to propagate itself.

While literature is available on the topic of propaganda, few studies have considered the effects of mass media exposure on the mass media consumer.

This research project will focus on government propaganda and its impact on the American audience. It will investigate the ways administrations use the mass media, specifically television, to persuade the audience of their ideas. It is impossible to include also international or foreign propaganda, for this sub-field is too encompassing. Therefore the focus will be on domestic propaganda.

A survey will be conducted on the topic that as yet has not been sufficiently been investigated: the difference, if any, in support for the political system by a high viewing group, a moderate viewing group and a low viewing group.

CHAPTER 3  
FOCUS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of this literature review is to investigate how the United States government uses mass media to influence and manipulate the mass media consumer or the audience in the United States.

The literature includes studies of the opinion making process, a major objective of propaganda. Particular attention was placed on the potential power television has on the audience, and the ways this electronic invention has been, and still is, used for propaganda purposes. Television was chosen to represent the mass media in general because since the 1950's it has become the most discussed, praised and criticized medium of mass communication [Melton 1980]. The major research efforts are discussed and a review of relevant literature pertaining to propaganda is presented.

Data were gathered from a variety of sources, including historical and political science works. Materials consulted included: The Atlantic, Aviation Week, Columbia Journalism Review, Commonwealth, Dissertation Abstracts, Editor and Publisher, Journal of Broadcasting, Journalism Abstracts, Journalism Index, Journalism Quarterly, Los Angeles Times, National Review, New Republic, New York

Times, Newsweek, Psychology Today, Psychological Abstracts,  
Psychological Index, Public Opinion Quarterly, Television  
Quarterly, Time Magazine, Topicator, TV Guide, USC News  
and World Report, USA Today, Variety, Vital Speeches,  
Washington Journalism Review, Washington Monthly, Washington  
Post.

Although social science researchers have reached no consensus on the way propaganda operates, they agree as to its purpose. In this literature review, as defined by the researcher, the purpose of internal propaganda is accepted as the attempt to influence the sentiments of the people and to encourage patriotic enthusiasm.

The first part of the literature review expounds the view that propaganda is inherent in any system that wants to survive. The second part will deal with the mass media and their usefulness in disseminating propaganda. Part three will trace the rise of the power of television.

CHAPTER 4  
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

4.1 Propaganda, Reality and Democracy

Researchers, such as Oliver Thomson in 1977 agree that propaganda is inherent in almost every kind of community, nation or government. In reality it is hard to find any piece of communication which is totally devoid of propaganda content or intention [Thomson 1977]. Yet other researchers such as Goulding in 1967, contend that propaganda doesn't exist.

In the United States, the word "propaganda" is considered bad. Richard Brown, an ex-propaganda officer of the United States Armed Forces wrote in 1971 that Americans tend to regard propaganda as evil and false. Thum and Thum in 1972 found that Americans choose not to acknowledge propaganda in the United States because it is viewed as something distasteful and underhanded. They found that influencing public attitudes has a more harmless sound to the American ear than propaganda [Thum and Thum 1972], thus the word propaganda is rarely used for American practices.

When propaganda is called "public information" and when it works towards a goal perceived as constructive, its implementation takes place without being condemned by those

who are subject to its influence, and consequently it will not be condemned [Brown 1971].

Propaganda and news management are not new in United States history; it has been used since the days of George Washington. Washington denied Congress information, to influence its attitude towards his foreign policy [Fielding 1972] and in the early 1800's, Thomas Jefferson used propaganda when he appointed an editor to a government position in order to publish a pro-Jefferson newspaper [Fielding, 1972].

Although in the past propaganda existed without the mass media, researchers such as Jaques Ellul in 1967 believe that propaganda could not exist today without the mass media.

A favorable public opinion is crucial to the political survival of an administration in a democracy, therefore, the right to preserve and secure approval of its citizens is a prerogative used by those in power. Consequently, the government needs to obtain the support of critical elements in its society; one method used to influence these elements is for the government to disseminate information in such a way as to show its actions in the best possible light.

Bartlett in 1954 stated that it is absolutely necessary for a democratic nation to have political propaganda. He explained that because totalitarian propaganda reaches

audiences in democratic countries, these democracies see it as their task to "protect" their own citizens against foreign propaganda [Katz 1954].

Francis Rourke stated that the average citizen assumes that the federal government is objective, impartial and fair in its information services. One accepts information that comes from the government as authoritative. While an individual might deny propaganda when it comes from other sources, he is likely to accept it when it comes through official channels in the guise of information [Rourke 1961].

Bryce in 1954, however, had deeper insight when he stated that the "difference between despotically governed and free countries lies in the fact that in the former the people instinctively obey a power which they do not know to be really of their own creation, whereas in the latter the people feel their supremacy and consciously treat their rulers as their agents while the rulers obey a power which they admit to have made and which they are able to unmake [Katz 1954].

The events leading to and surrounding the war in Vietnam threw new light upon the role of the government propaganda. Polls taken during 1974 show that for some time only 40 percent of the interviewees thought that television networks dealt fairly with all sides of the news, 42%

thought that the networks only showed the Administration's biased view.

Rourke in 1961 studied the power of government officials who control the flow of information to the public. He thought that the exercise of this power is already felt, especially in areas such as defense and foreign affairs. Rourke found that the government seriously constricts the availability of information about public affairs, with the result that the vitality of democracy is threatened [Rourke 1961].

Various researchers and social scientists in the field of propaganda hold the opinion that even though the First Amendment guarantees freedom of speech and press, actual protection is elusive [Lashner 1962]. Lashner contended that during the Nixon Administration an anti-media assault was initiated by the White House for the purpose of manipulating news coverage. The extent to which the White House was able to succeed in its goal was the central concern of Lashner's study. The correlational analysis Lashner conducted revealed that as the White House anti-media assault became more severe, television became less vigorous in commentary regarding the White House. Her findings were interpreted by researchers in the field as evidence of White House pressure on television political commentary.

Writing about objectivity in reporting, Wilhelmsen and Bret agree with Lashner that there can be no more

objectivity in a newscast than in a Broadway comedy [Bret and Wilhelmsen 1972].

Cronkite, as cited in [Rugabel 1971] said that the government has too much power over the press and as a result broadcast news is not free, because it is an industry that is beholden to government for its right to exist. Although there may be no explicit governmental coercion, the government's mere existence presents an intimidating and constraining threat [Rugabel 1971].

In his investigation of bias in television news, Howard found through the content analysis he conducted that the three American networks are private enterprises and that they are not responsible to any agency except the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Therefore minimal control is exercised. Howard defined bias which is one of the precursors of propaganda as a slanted presentation of the facts of a news story, reflecting a political prejudice of the reporter or network. Howard videotaped early evening newscasts of the three major networks during the period March 20-March 24, 1972. From all the news stories recorded 67 were selected. Each of these 67 stories presented an issue involving the federal government. Howard found that 47% of the stories were unbalanced, 40% of the stories were directional, favoring one side or another of an issue. All three networks were biased; NBC was the most balanced and ABC was the least balanced [Howard 1972].



Another researcher who believes the problem of government attempts to manage the news does not exist is Phil Goulding. In 1967, Goulding declared that the very suggestion that the government could conspire to withhold the news from the people and that the news media are so replete with irresponsibility that the people could be misled by a combination of deliberate government distortion and second-rate reportorial effort is ludicrous. The government makes available the information. The newsmen report the facts and the interpretations. The issues can be described and can be studied by those who seek perspective [Goulding 1967].

Thum and Thum do not agree with Goulding. They recognize the presence of propaganda, but they suggest that it is communication control and not propaganda itself that offers danger to the future. The television viewer will be exposed to what those in control will want the audience to be exposed to. Consequently, what the audience will learn will depend on who controls what they see and hear. Thum and Thum also added that propaganda need not to be disdained, when properly used; to disdain propaganda devices because men like Hitler used them is to disdain devices that men like George Washington have also used [Thum and Thum 1972].

In Variables in Government and Media Interaction, John Duncan examined the interaction of the United States government information officers with journalists. Duncan focused on government relations with the mass media and journalism in general. He investigated in particular the government's relationship with television, and the advantageous usage of this medium. Duncan found that both journalists and government information officers have ambivalent attitudes regarding free access to classified information, yet recognize that either way, a vital part of society's information process may be subverted. He recommended an increase in the flow of information about the government to the media and the public [Williams 1972].

Part one has found that researchers generally agree that opinion formation through news management is indigenous to every society or community. However, they have not reached a final consensus on the influences on the mass media consumer, society or community and their subsequent reactions.

Those researchers whose experiments have demonstrated that news management is present in American mass media agree that the occurrence of propaganda is not new to American society. Neither a propaganda, (considered as a form of

intensification of news management), nor news management itself, is seen as a negative condition for a democratic society. After all, public opinion is vital in a democracy. After the Watergate affair, the general media consumer and employee in the U.S. became more aware of the possibility of governmental interference with news diffusion.

Part two will review articles pertaining to mass media and their usefulness for propaganda dissemination.

#### 4.2 Mass Media, Government's Tools for Propaganda Dissemination

##### 4.2.1 The shaping of public opinion

Because of the increasing importance of public opinion, methods of holding the public's mind have grown in importance. Strength to form the public's opinion lies in the power of the mass media and with those who control it.

Mass media are the proper instruments for shaping attitudes and opinions and subsequently politics in a democracy. They are effective because they reach all fragmented groups in society. In fact, they are the main vehicles for reaching different audiences.

An important discovery among media researchers has been the new interest area of "political communication." Researchers have looked for additional effects to add to the

lists of attitude effects produced by the mass media. But these effects are difficult to measure for they vary across the subgroups within the population. Studies of media effects however, have shown differential attitude effects on the mass media consumer. Miller and his associates found that individuals who had no education beyond grade school were more susceptible to an erosion of trust in government [Miller 1974] after being exposed to critical accounts of the government, than individuals with an education beyond grade school. Comstock found that television is likely to have no impact on individuals with minor political interests. He suggested this is also the case for those media consumers who are undecided on political issues. For the more they are undecided, the easier it is to persuade them and consequently change their attitude [Key 1964].

In his dissertation, The Influence of Network Television News on Public Opinion (1978), Zucker suggested that media impact on public opinion is usually underestimated. Zucker found that the media influence society as a whole, reaching heavy and light users through information and opinion diffusion. He also found that the media have the same degree of influence on different sorts of issues.

The mass media are powerful because their role is "not merely to repeat like a tape recorder whatever someone in authority chooses to say in public. Newspapers, radio-TV,

and magazines scan the social horizon and make their own decisions about what is important, independent of officialdom. If the President chooses not to talk about issues, this doesn't mean that objective journalists are forbidden to describe and illuminate the issues [Bagdikian 1973].

Robert Howard in Bias in Television News (1972), analyzed the content of the three major network news shows and concluded that there was a bias in favor of the government on all stations. Howard recorded a total of 67 stories, selected because they presented an issue involving the federal government. The conclusion showed that 40% of the stories contained bias. The project didn't state whether the media were aware of this or whether bias was caused by government propaganda efforts.

In a democracy, the government influences the process of opinion formation, partly because the government itself is the source of much information on which the citizens must base their political opinions. Rubin wrote that if by freedom of the press it is signified that minimal governmental controls are exercised, then the American people are blessed. However, if such freedom implies truly adequate and responsible media coverage of events and processes, as well as publicly beneficial defenses of the media by governors and politicians, then the American people have cause to worry [Rubin 1977].

Rourke found that one of the dangers presented by the government's use of the mass media is the manipulation of official information to control public opinion. In fact Rourke claimed the government's ability to influence the mass media lies in the fact that those working in the communication's media are "hungry" for news about public affairs. This hunger can only be gratified by the government [Rourke 1961]. As is posited by Rourke and other researchers, propaganda implemented by the government and diffused by the mass media may be done with conscious collaboration of the disseminator. It also may be the case that mass media operators have no intention of being used or serving the purpose of the government. According to Rourke, the government has an enormous ability to mold public opinion and attitudes; it decides how, when and what information to release. The government releases only that information which it deems fit to be received publicly, and thus molds public opinion [Rourke 1961].

#### 4.2.2 Unaware participation

Richard M. Brown, an assistant professor of Journalism at Marquette University (1979) wrote in his thesis that the mass media are troubled by government interference. He wrote extensively about the CIA perversion of domestic news, especially the newspaper. He mentioned the fact that the

CIA deliberately feeds false and misleading information into domestic news channels, as to deceive public and Congressional perceptions for their own benefit. Even today available evidence indicates that the contamination of domestic information channels has been more than isolated instances and, far from being simply a by-product of CIA foreign propaganda campaigns, was a calculated and continuing perversion of domestic information flow in support of Agency goals. [Brown 1979].

According to Brown's findings, the CIA owns more than 50 newspapers, news services, radio stations, periodicals and other communication entities in the U.S. The agency denies any intent to feed disinformation, but, wrote Brown, "numerous recently uncovered incidents indicate that the feedback is sometimes deliberate." Stansfield Turner, in 1979 the director of the agency, admitted in a testimony before the Aspin subcommittee, that the CIA was feeding false material into public information channels and to Congress.

As noted earlier, some mass media employees have no knowledge of the fact that they are serving as propaganda tools. Brown mentioned that the CIA successfully played upon both the patriotism and venality of newsmen to exploit the press for its own purposes. In the 1950's there were well respected journalists who were misguided by "Cold War

fear and communist aggression." Brown mentioned Time reporter Barry Bingham, and Mark Etheridge of the Louisville Courier Journal, Arthur Page and Abott Washburn, all well known publicists as having been either on the CIA payroll or as having been subsidized by the CIA. He stated that there were also reporters who were actual CIA agents working in the media under cover, although this was found to be a small percentage. Other journalists were not on the payroll and were not being subsidized by the CIA, yet they received either payola or some sort of prestigious journalism award for services rendered such as blocking stories, or planting stories in the domestic press.

Les Aspin (D-Wis.) discussed that the problem existed in 1978. During a hearing before the subcommittee of the House Intelligence Committee, on January 5, he commented that the CIA was so powerful that it could arrange for a journalist of its choice to receive a Pulitzer Prize. Hal Hendrix and Charles Keely were cited as examples: in 1962, Hendrix, working for The Miami News on the Cuba story, won a Pulitzer Prize and the Raymond Clapper Memorial Award was awarded to Keely for stories on Soviet activities in Cuba. Both reporters got their information from the CIA [Brown 1979].

An example of how television may have an impact on the viewer, is demonstrated by James De Fronzo (1978). De Fronzo closely followed President Nixon's week-long visit to the



People's Republic of China. Television showed positive aspects of Communist Chinese society to the American audience. De Fronzo, showed how powerful television is by displaying the change from a negative stereotyped opinion of Red China held before Nixon's trip to a more favorable impression held by the media consumer after Nixon's televised coverage. Two hundred and twenty-two male and female undergraduates filled out questionnaires measuring the amount of exposure of televised coverage of the visit, level of increased favorability toward Communism and political orientation. Results showed that level of exposure to televised coverage was positively related to increased favorability toward Communism in China and Communism in general [De Fronzo 1978]. This means that if positive increased favorability is related to increase of network news viewing, the inverse could be related too. The more one is exposed to negative comments or statements about a certain political system, the more one is apt to acquire negative feelings about that certain system; this as a consequence of negative exposure.

Cheslik (1977) researched materials that illustrated the manipulation of news, information and censorship. He described the pressure by the Executive Branch, and reported ways it tries to control the media. His conclusions were that during the last twenty years, the Johnson and Nixon

Administrations engaged more than the Eisenhower, Kennedy and Ford Administrations in news management. The first two administrations attempted to censor and use their power to influence broadcast news and public affairs programming. Cheslik concluded by writing that the President of the United States is among those in a democracy who can and do use the prestige of their office to censor and disseminate information.

Gregory Scott Porter (1977) studied the relationship between the mass media and the development of support for the political system. His subjects were children and adolescents who answered questionnaires as to the amount of time spent watching television, the types of programs they watched, and the level of understanding and interest in the political system. Television was the most frequently cited media source for obtaining information and forming opinions.

Predictably, results showed a significant positive relationship between political knowledge and the viewing of public affairs programs. He also found that subjects who watched more television (total time) were less favorable toward the President and the Federal government. Porter suggested that this may be a result of the fact that the study was conducted during the revelations of Watergate. However, Porter's original hypothesis that heavy television

watchers would be less favorable to the government was rejected. It was found that as the age of viewers increases, their attitudes become less critical of the government and they tend to watch more television. No effort was made to suggest causality, although he found that television watchers, unlike newspaper readers, had almost no relationship with political support among the young children studied [Porter 1977].

While most sociologists and political scientists concerned with the media concentrate on political preference and voting behavior, psychologists studying the media focus on the effects of persuasive messages on attitudes of media consumers.

Thomas Kazee explored the effects of television news exposure in general and he investigated specifically the question of variation according to the level of political interest toward President Nixon during the 1972-74 Watergate period. Attitudes towards Nixon were measured in Fall 1972 and July 1974. The results of this study showed that television exposure influenced attitudes towards Nixon. Kazee found that the level of political interest did not have a direct impact on attitudes towards Nixon, but television exposure and political discussion were indirectly affected by political interest for those who were interested would watch more, and thus be more exposed [Kazee 1981].

Philip Palmgreen (1975) was concerned with the effects of mass media and the acquisition of knowledge of political affairs. Results of his experiments indicate that the mass media, through their ability to regulate the flow of information, have the power to activate political learning processes at both national and local levels by providing high levels of coverage on political issues [Palmgreen 1975].

Today the mass media so strongly influence basic social and political education that they can be viewed as the most dynamic agents in the world.

#### 4.2.3. Summary

Part two reviewed ways that public opinions are shaped. Researchers agreed that the mass media, especially television, can be used to shape public opinion, even though the effects on the audience are hard to measure.

One school of thought advocated that only those individuals who are politically involved will be influenced by the media. Another school held that also those individuals with no political interest may be affected.

Some researchers think that the degree of influence is negatively related with education. Others dispute this theory and claim that education is not a factor in mass media persuasion.

Researchers do agree that in a democracy public opinion is important. However, Rourke (1961) and Rubin (1977) posited that democracy is threatened by increasing White House interference, while Bartlett (1954) believed that it is absolutely necessary for a democracy to be exposed to governmental propaganda. Porter (1977) found that there is a relationship between political attitudes and television viewing in children and adolescents, but he didn't address the issue for adults.

In general, studies by sociologists and political scientists have tended to concentrate on political preferences and voting patterns. Psychologists have focused on the attitudes and reactions of media consumers.

Part three of this review will present the rise and subsequent importance of television to the government.

#### 4.3 The Power of Television

##### 4.3.1 The creation of political awareness

The mass media, particularly television, are responsible for peoples' ideas and beliefs and attitudes on many issues [Porter 1977]. The belief that people could readily be manipulated by television became widely accepted as television started to attract vast audiences [Cartwright 1954]. Television is involved in the political life of

this nation to "an extent never envisaged by the founding fathers." [Rubin 1977].

Robert Hoggart claimed that television is capable of reaching virtually the entire populations of a nation.

Robert Laing investigated and displayed in the analysis of the results in his dissertation that the mass media appeared to play an active role in creating awareness generally and thus in political matters specifically. However, more often awareness of an issue of importance was raised by contacts with other people or by personal experience.

Television has become the primary force determining how at least some people should eat, work, relax and behave. Recent studies indicate that the lives of some Americans are so deeply affected by television that everything from their selection of food to their choice of political leaders is a matter of what television emphasizes to be the right choice. Some researchers maintain that television is unfairly blamed and that its power is exaggerated.

However, even those severely criticizing television have found that watching may sometimes be beneficial. Philip Palmgreen found that television is a powerful force for informing the audience about politics. However, he has been troubled by the potential effects of television on a democratic government. Apparently, during a televised

debate between Nixon and John F. Kennedy, Nixon's sweat on his forehead may have been a contributing factor in his losing the Presidential elections. (U.S. News & World Report, 1982).

Michael Ryan (1961) wrote in Journalism Quarterly, that Elmo Roper and Associates released results of a nationwide survey, showing for the first time that television was perceived as more believable than the other media. Roper Studies, commissioned by the Television Information Office, show that television replaced newspapers as the main source of news in 1963. This coincided with the network news broadcast being expanded to 30 minutes. While television extended the time dedicated to news broadcasts, it improved its position in the consumer market as against the printed media. By 1977, Roper Surveys showed evidence that 64 percent of the people polled got most of their news from television. That same year, radio was named as the major source by only 19 percent, compared to seven percent of those reading magazines. In 1980, television continued to provide 64% of the news to the mass media consumer. Roper's release on credibility of various media showed television to be most credible, concerning different reports on the same news story. Various studies conducted between 1963 and 1977 regarded television as less biased and therefore more credible than other media; these studies show a "growing

trend in reliance of American public upon television as their major source of news information, surpassing newspapers, radio, magazines, etc." [Roper 1980]

The popular view emerged that television had become the primary source of information, and that television network news provided the audience with most of their knowledge about political issues.

Patterson and McClure (1976) denied this in The Unseeing Eye, and declared that "Television power is a myth." They described a study in which they conducted a content analysis of evening newscasts of the three networks and they concluded that nightly network newscasts are lacking substance. A 2000 person audience survey agreed with their content analysis, but it is unclear as to how they conclude that the potency of TV power is a myth. Reese (1980) demonstrated that television influences political attitudes of the audience. In his dissertation he investigated the effect of television news exposure on the holding and structure of political attitudes. Reese hypothesized that television news exposure was positively associated with attitude holding at low levels of ideological utility. Results showed that television news exposure was positively associated with attitude consistency. His results suggested that television news exposure helps viewers form opinions about political issues and structure



them in a meaningful way.

The media, especially television, played a crucial role in the Watergate conflict. All parties involved were aware of the presence of television, which served as a means of communication between the elites, public officials, public agencies, and the people. Whole sequences of events were played out on live television, both sides not only trying to convince each other, but at the same time inviting the audience at home to intervene on their behalf or in their favor. Experts on mass media effects maintain that television news has always been more capable of mobilizing sentiments, than of informing the public, as was the case at the time of Watergate.

Lang and Lang (1980), in their research project, stated that television acted "to subvert Nixon's strategy of defining the situation before the media could redefine it to his disadvantage, so as to move public response in the direction he wished it to go." [Lang and Lang 1980] According to Lang and Lang the power of television lies in the fact that in controversial political issues it has the ability to "create a by-stander public which, as a third party to the dispute, has constantly to be wooed by the other two. While the public has no voice of its own, the media, by projecting an interpretation of public opinion, provide the political actors with a 'looking-glass' image"

of how the audience or mass media consumer perceives them.

#### 4.3.2 Summary

Mass media researchers generally believe that television is powerful and may be responsible for the ideas of many political and non-political minded people.

However, the degree to which it is manipulative remains a matter of debate. One school of thought is convinced that in order for television to have an impact, the audience must not be politically minded; this is so as to make it easier for their minds to be swayed to either direction on the political spectrum. Another school of thought is that in order to be influenced by television news, or political programs, the viewer must already be familiar with the subjects. Television familiarizes people with the political process and exposes the structure of the Federal government and its myriad of agencies to the audience. Consequently researchers found that watching programs of political content, may well influence political attitudes of the viewer. The Watergate affair was one such example.

It has been established by researchers that today the most influential medium is television. Viewers who watch television, regardless of the program, will be influenced by what is being shown and said on the screen.

Researchers acknowledge that politicians have an advantage if they know how to handle the media. If they are well received by reporters, it is likely they will be positively portrayed on television and subsequently liked by the audience.

The literature review indicated that the mass media, television in particular, have the power to inform the consumer and to mold their attitudes about political systems, issues and their leaders. The strength and weaknesses of the mass media have also been examined. The support of television for the Democratic system and the condemning of other systems, contributes to endorsement by the mass media consumer. The literature review indicated that propaganda and the fight for "the mind of men" is effectively fought with the help of television.

A large portion of what we know about the world comes to us through television. The increasing dependence on the news media, places an intense stress on the mass communication process. Therefore the importance of television as a news source should not be disregarded. How influential is television news? To what degree does it influence the viewer? These questions have not been answered as yet. Researchers have been trying to evaluate the consequences of watching network news on television. To what degree is the television audience manipulated by the news, in order

to support and identify with government strategies, decisions and policies? These questions have not yet been answered in the realm of research on mass communication.

Therefore the researcher of this thesis decided to try and establish whether or not there is a relationship between the viewers of network news and their support for the political system. If such a relationship exists it can be assumed that viewers with many viewing hours will be under the influence of the news to such a degree that they will support government policies more than the group of viewers who watch less network news. It would also be assumed that there would be a significant difference between the high viewing group and the low viewing group, in terms of support for government policies.

CHAPTER 5  
RESEARCH QUESTION AND HYPOTHESIS

5.1 Research Question

"What is the relationship between network newscast viewing and the support for the political system in the United States of America?"

5.2 Theoretical Hypothesis

Intensity of support for United States government policies varies significantly from heavy network viewers to light network news viewers in such a way that increase of support is related to increase of viewing hours.

5.3 Research Hypothesis

Subjects exposed to network news from 180-210 minutes a week will manifest greater identification and approval for government policies than subjects watching less than 180 minutes a week.

CHAPTER 6  
METHODOLOGY AND EXPERIMENTATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to define terms, to describe procedures undertaken to collect the data for this research project, this chapter also explains data analysis techniques.

6.2 Terms and Operational Definitions

1. PROPAGANDA

The process of channeling information about events for the purpose of creating desired political and psychological effects. "Any information, ideas, doctrines or special persuasion in support of national objectives, designed to influence the opinion, emotions, attitudes or behavior of any specified group in order to benefit the sponsor either directly or indirectly." (A Modern Dictionary of Sociology-Theodorson, 1969).

2. NEWS MANAGEMENT

Governments' interference with dissemination of information. "Attempts by key official unit or individual in an area of authority, to influence the presentation of

the news. This can be done by suppression, concealment, distortion, and false weighing of the facts to which the public is entitled." (A Modern Dictionary of Sociology-Theodorson, 1969).

3. NETWORK NEWS

Half-hour news shows which are broadcast by every one of the three national networks: American Broadcasting Corporation, National Broadcasting Company, and Columbia Broadcasting System.

4. MASS MEDIA

Major information channels that reach large audiences. Radio, television, newspapers and news magazines.

5. MASS MEDIA CONSUMER

The individual who utilizes one mass medium or more to stay informed.

6. MEDIA USE

Measured through the number of viewing hours per week.

7. ENDORSEMENT OF UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Support for government policies or decisions.

8. HEAVY, MEDIUM, LIGHT NETWORK NEWS VIEWING

Heavy viewing - 180-120 minutes per week. Medium viewing - 60-180 minutes per week. Light viewing - 0-60

minutes viewing per week.

### 6.3 Data Collection

The primary aim of this study is to explore whether or not there is a significant relationship between endorsement of United States government policies and the number of network news viewing hours. A questionnaire was devised to gather data on the independent variable, the number of network news viewing minutes per week. The questionnaire also contained 17 questions on the dependent variable, with a value of five ordinal answers: strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, strongly disagree. The questionnaire was handed out by the researcher and five assistants. The researcher or assistant read the question to the respondent while the respondent was looking at the questionnaire. The respondent then told the researcher or assistant his or her choice from the five answers. Questionnaires were read to every fifth person descending from the escalator or stairs in the shopping malls.

Data came from three sample communities. The sites where the surveys were conducted were: Arco Plaza, situated in downtown Los Angeles; the Santa Monica Mall and the Glendale Galleria. These sites were selected in an attempt to draw a representative sample from different



social, socio-economic and ethnic strata in society, living in Greater Los Angeles.

Surveys were held between October 7 and October 17, 1983. A total of 300 interviews were conducted, one hundred in each mall. The surveys were conducted on different days of the week and different times of day, as to vary to the greatest extent possible.

#### 6.4 Analysis Procedures

The questionnaire produced ordinal answers. Question one yielded the number of viewing minutes per week. A chi-square test was performed, comparing the minutes of network news viewed and the strength of attitude, yielded by questions 3-12.

Subsequently a data analysis was performed to process this information utilizing the chi-square program in the SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner and Bent; 1975) computer package at the University of Southern California. The chi-square test was performed, and various questions yielded significant differences in their answers. In mass communication research the cut off level of significance is .10. All significance levels that yield .10 or less are considered to be significant in this study.

## 6.5 Limitations of the Study

In dealing with the abstract notion of 'influence by the news' the researcher was hampered by a variety of circumstances. Most important for the scholar to realize is that there is no cause and effect involved. This means that if the hypothesis is valid, the anticipated results are not necessarily caused by the difference in viewing hours.

Due to the non-parametric nature of the chi-square test, the information may not be generalized to the broader public. It is estimated that about 50 respondents refused to comply, and it should not be forgotten that those respondents who did take out the time to comply could represent viewers or non-viewers.

The next chapters will discuss the results of this survey and examine their importance and implications.

CHAPTER 7  
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

It was hypothesized that groups of viewers would characterize themselves by common similarities and common differences in hours and minutes of news watching and that this would manifest itself through intensity of endorsing United States government policies.

Respondents were grouped into three categories; members of group 1 watched the television network news between 0-60 minutes a week; members of group 2 watched television network news between 60-180 minutes a week; members of group 3 watched television network news between 180-210 minutes a week. Members of group 1 will be referred to in the next chapters as 'low viewers', members of group 2 will be referred to as 'moderate viewers', and members of group 3 will be referred to as 'high viewers'.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts: questions and statements from 1-12, and personal data from 13-17.

1. Hours of network news watching

Respondents were asked to fill out the number of network news watched over a period of a week, in order to determine whether they did belong to the low viewing group, the moderate viewing group or the high viewing group. Respondents were asked to answer question "About how much network news do you watch a week?" The respondent was able to reply in hours and minutes. A hundred and thirty six respondents watched news between 0-60 minutes a week, sixty-two respondents watched network news between 60-180 minutes a week, and 102 respondents watched network news from 180-210 minutes a week. Therefore the largest concentration was in the low viewing group (see Table 1).

Table 1. Hours of network news viewing per week

1) Low viewers (0-60).....	136 (45%)
2) Moderate viewers (60-180).....	62 (20.6%)
3) High viewers (180-210).....	102 (34%)

2. News sources

Respondents were asked to rank their sources of news in order to determine what their first and second most important source of news is. Respondents were asked to answer the following question: Please rank your sources of news. 1 = most important, 2 = second most important.

Results show that 1) 136 (45.3%) of the respondents ranked television as their most important source. 2) 91 (30%) of the respondents ranked newspapers as their most important source of news. 3) 65 (21.3%) of the respondents ranked radio as their most important news source and 4) 8 (2.3%) of the respondents ranked news magazines as their most important news source (see Table 2).

Table 2. News sources

1) Television.....	136 (45.3%)
2) Newspapers.....	91 (30%)
3) Radio.....	65 (21.3%)
4) News magazines.....	8 (2.3%)

### 3. Trustworthiness of the news

Respondents were asked to evaluate the trustworthiness of network news. They were asked to rate a statement "Network news is trustworthy," by responding 1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = no opinion, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree. Results show that 21 (7%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 161 (53%) of the respondents agreed, 41 (13%) had no opinion, 58 (19%) disagreed and 20 (6.5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, (see Table 3a). However, to facilitate data analysis, the five

possibilities were contracted to three; 1 = agree, 2 = no opinion, 3 = disagree.

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the three groups, the low, moderate and high viewers, a chi-square test was run, comparing the answers of members of all three groups. The results show that 50% or half of the low viewers agreed with the statement that network news is trustworthy, while about 35% of the low viewers disagreed. In the moderate viewing group nearly 75% of the respondents agreed and 20% disagreed. In the high viewing group almost 65% of the respondents agreed 16% disagreed and 19% had no opinion (see Table 3b, with a significance level of 0.001).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between high network viewers and low network viewers, an additional chi-square test was run, comparing the answers of the members of the two groups. The results show that low viewers tend to believe the network news less than the high viewers. Of the high viewers nearly 64% agree that network news is trustworthy (see Table 3c, significance level of 0.006).

#### 4. Political attitude influenced by news

Respondents were asked to evaluate the influence of network news on the viewer's attitude, whether or not they

Table 3a. Trustworthiness of the news of all respondents

Strongly agree.....	21 (7%)
Agree.....	161 (53.6%)
No opinion.....	41 (13.6%)
Disagree.....	58 (19.3%)
Strongly disagree.....	20 (6.6%)

Table 3b. Trustworthiness of the news of all respondents - chi-square results  
Chi-square = 17.08, DF = 4,  
Significance = 0.001

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 Agree	2 No opinion	3 Disagree	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	69 50.7 37.9 22.9	19 14.0 46.3 6.3	48 35.3 61.5 15.9	136 45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	59 72.8 32.4 19.6	6 7.4 14.6 2.0	16 19.8 20.5 5.3	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	54 64.3 29.7 17.9	16 19.0 39.0 5.3	14 16.7 17.9 4.7	84 27.9
Column Total	182 60.5	41 13.6	78 25.9	301 100.0

Figure 3c. Trustworthiness of the news of all respondents  
- Bar chart

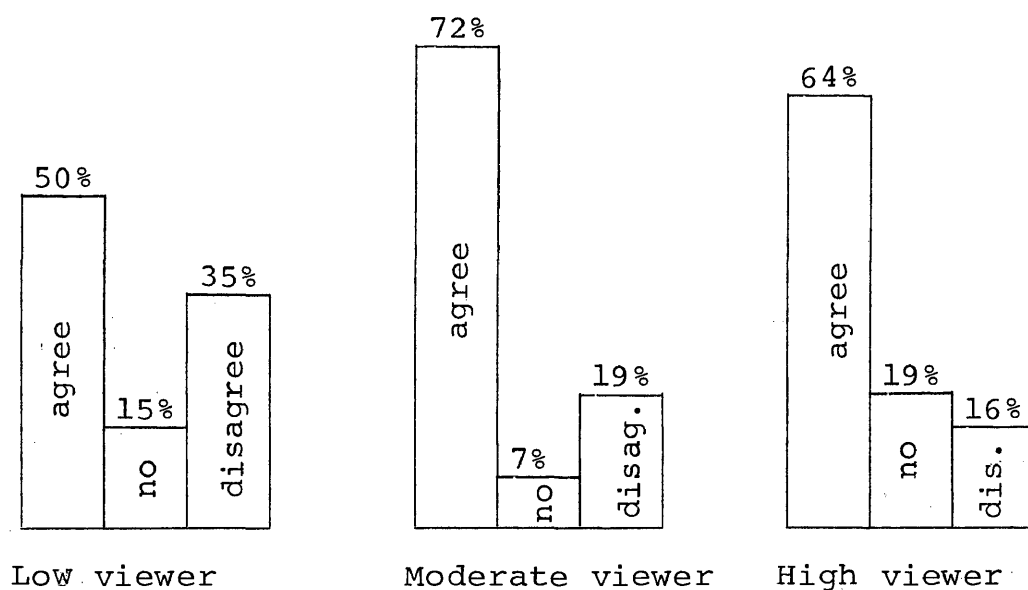


Table 3d. Trustworthiness of the news, high and low respondents  
Chi-square = 10.20, DF = 2,  
Significance = 0.006

	agree	no opinion	disagree
Low viewers	69 (14%)	19 (14%)	48 (35.3%)
High viewers	66 (64.7%)	19 (18.6%)	17 (16.7%)



believe that network news influences the viewer's attitude on political events. Respondents were asked to rate the following statement; "Network news influences the attitude of the viewer on political events".

Results show that 16 respondents strongly agreed, 128 respondents agreed 60 respondents had no opinion, 88 disagreed, and 9 strongly disagreed (see Table 4a).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the three groups, low, moderate and high viewers, a chi-square test was run, comparing the answers of members of all three groups. The results show that many more respondents of the low and moderate viewers agreed with the fact that news influences political attitude than did the respondents of the high viewers group. In the low viewing group, nearly 85% agreed and in moderate viewers, 88% agreed, while only 75% of high viewers agreed. The disagree column show a big difference between the low and high viewers; the low viewers only disagreed 8%, while the high viewers disagreed 20%. The moderate group tends to be close in their reactions to the low viewers, (see Table 4b, significance level = 0.03).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between high network news viewers and low network news viewers, a chi-square test was performed comparing the answers of members of the two groups.

Table 4a. Political attitude influenced by news -  
all respondents

Strongly agree.....	93 (31%)
Agree.....	157 (52.3%)
No opinion.....	17 (5.6%)
Disagree.....	31 (10.3%)
Strongly disagree.....	3 (1%)

Table 4b. Political attitude influenced by news of  
all respondents - chi-square results  
Chi-square = 10.65, DF = 4,  
Significance = 0.03

Col pct Tot pct	1 Agree	2 No opinion	3 Disagree	Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	115 84.6 46.0 38.2	10 7.4 58.8 3.3	11 8.1 32.4 3.7	136 45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	72 88.9 28.8 23.9	3 3.7 17.6 1.0	6 7.4 17.6 2.0	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	63 75.0 25.2 20.9	4 4.8 23.5 1.3	17 20.2 50.0 5.6	84 27.9
Column total	250 83.1	17 5.6	34 11.3	301 100.0

Figure 4c. Political attitude influenced by news of all respondents - bar chart

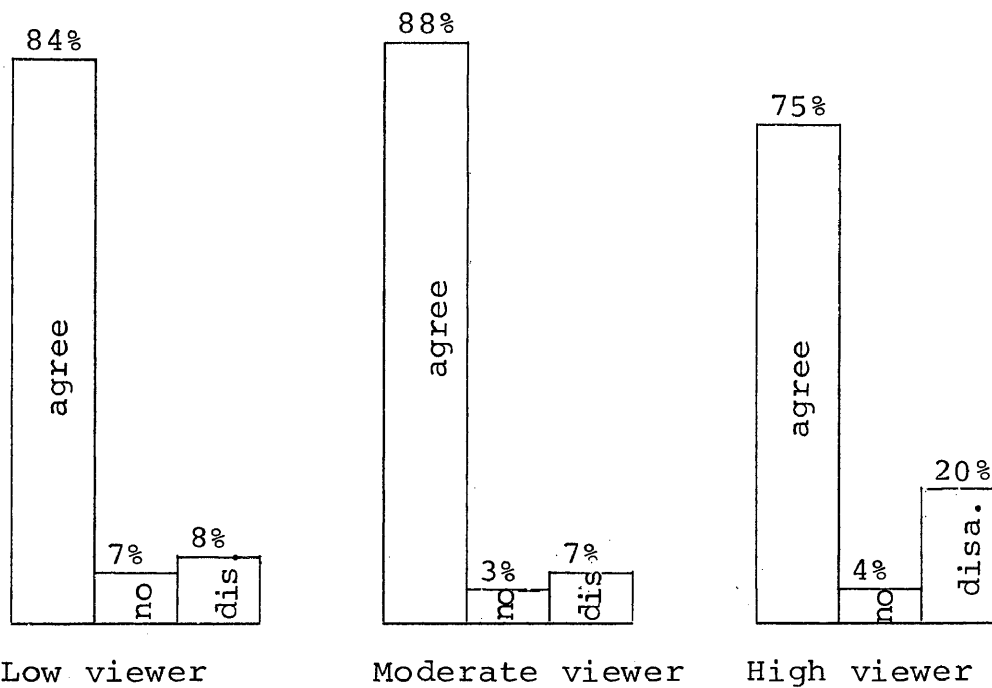


Table 4d. Political attitude influenced by news, high and low respondents  
 Chi-square = 6.16, DF = 2,  
 Significance = 0.04

	agree	no opinion	disagree
Low viewers	115 (84.6%)	10 (7.4%)	11 (8.1%)
High viewers	78 (76.5%)	5 (4.8%)	19 (18.6%)

The results show that low viewers disagree with the fact the political attitudes may be influenced by network news in a lesser degree than the high viewers. Within the low viewing group, only a little over 8% disagree with this statement, while a big difference can be observed within the high viewing group; over 18.5% of the high viewers do not believe that the network news influences the political attitude of the viewer.

5. Identification with government policies

Respondents were asked to evaluate identification of network news with government decisions or policies, in order to determine whether they believe the news agree with or supports government policies. Respondents were asked to rate statement "Network news identifies with government policies" by responding "strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, or strongly disagree."

Results show that 16 respondents or 48% of the sample population strongly agreed with the above statement, 128 respondents or 42.6% agreed, 60 respondents or 20% had no opinion, while 88 respondents, nearly 30%, disagreed and 9 persons interviewed, 3%, strongly disagreed (see Table 5a).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the three groups, low, moderate and high

viewers, a chi-square test was performed, comparing the answers of members of all three groups. The results show that a similar percentage in all three groups had no opinion, between 16% and 21%. Nearly 48% of the low viewers agreed that network news usually supports government policies, similar results are seen in the moderate column of agree, and in the high viewing group members tend to agree less, for only 43% agreed that the network news shows the view of the government. Answers were similar in the disagree column; of the low viewers, 31% disagreed with the statement network news identifies with government policies, the same in the moderate viewing group, while almost 36% in the low viewing group disagreed (see Table 5b, significance = 0.70).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between high network news viewers and low network news viewers, a chi-square test comparing the answers of members of both groups was performed. The test showed that there are no significant differences at the .10 level between the two groups, but the results show that in both groups the number of people who agree is slightly under half. The number of respondents who had no opinion is similar, and a little over 3% is the difference in the disagree column (see Table 5c).

Table 5a. Identification with government policies - all respondents

Strongly agree.....	16 (48%)
Agree.....	128 (42.6%)
No opinion.....	60 (20%)
Disagree.....	88 (30%)
Strongly disagree.....	9 (3%)

Table 5b. Identification with government policies - all respondents - chi-square results  
Chi-square = 2.18, DF = 4,  
Significance = 0.70

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 Agree	2 No opinion	3 Disagree	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	65 47.8 45.1 21.6	29 21.3 48.3 9.6	42 30.9 43.3 14.0	136 45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	43 53.1 29.9 14.3	13 16.0 21.7 4.3	25 30.9 25.8 8.3	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	36 42.9 25.0 12.0	18 21.4 30.0 6.0	30 35.7 30.9 10.0	84 27.9
Column total	144 47.8	60 19.9	97 32.2	301 100.0

Figure 5c. Identification with government policies for all respondents - bar chart

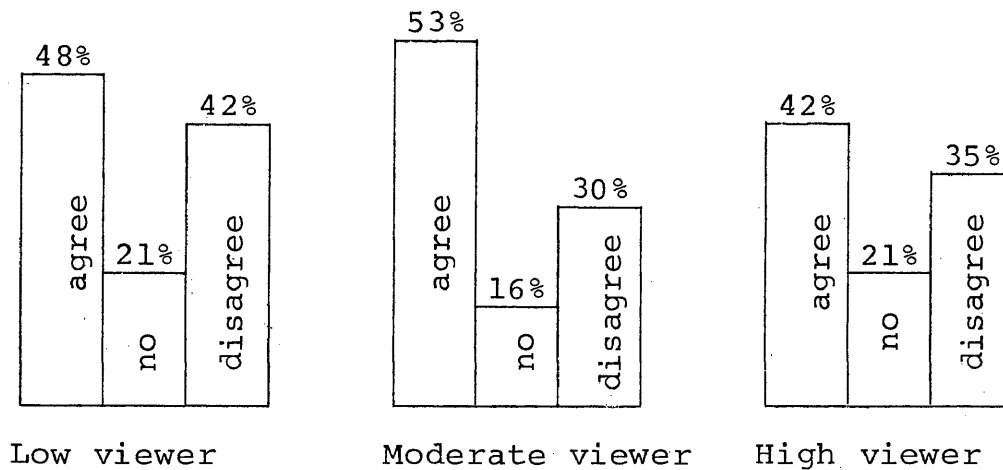


Table 5d. Identification with government policies, high and low respondents  
Chi-square = 0.32, DF = 2,  
Significance = 0.85

	agree	no opinion	disagree
Low viewers	65 (47.8%)	29 (2.13%)	42 (30.9%)
High viewers	49 (48.0%)	19 (.8.6%)	34 (33.3%)

6. Network news and government propaganda

Respondents were asked to evaluate the trustworthiness of network news, in order to determine whether or not they believe network news involves propaganda. Respondents were asked to rate statement "Network news displays government propaganda," by responding "strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree or strongly disagree."

Results show that 36 respondents or 12% strongly agreed, 130 respondents (43.3%) agreed, 48 or 16% had no opinion, 78 or 26% disagreed and 9 respondents or 3% strongly disagreed, (see Table 6a).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the three groups, low, moderate and high viewers, a chi-square test was run, comparing the answers of members of all three groups. The results show that half of both the low viewers and the moderate viewers agreed that network news displays propaganda, while a little less than that, 51.2% agrees in the high viewers group. The moderate viewers had the highest percentage of no opinion, 21%, while the disagree column showed that only 28% of the high viewers disagreed, 22% of the moderate viewers disagreed, and as anticipated, 37% of the high viewers disagree. Again, the moderate group tend to react more similar to the low viewers group, and the high viewers group tend to be more protective of the government (see



Table 6a. Network news and government propaganda - all respondents

Strongly agree.....	36	(12%)
Agree.....	130	(43.3%)
No opinion.....	48	(15%)
Disagree.....	78	(26%)
Strongly disagree.....	9	(3%)

Table 6b. Network news and government propaganda of all respondents - chi-square results  
Chi-square = 5.65, DF = 4,  
Significance = 0.22

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 Agree	2 No opinion	3 Disagree	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	77 56.6 46.4 25.6	21 15.4 43.8 7.0	38 27.9 43.7 12.6	136 45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	46 56.8 27.7 15.3	17 21.0 35.4 5.6	18 22.2 20.7 6.0	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	43 51.2 25.9 14.3	10 11.9 20.8 3.3	31 36.9 35.6 10.3	84 27.9

Figure 6c. Network news and government propaganda of all respondents - bar chart

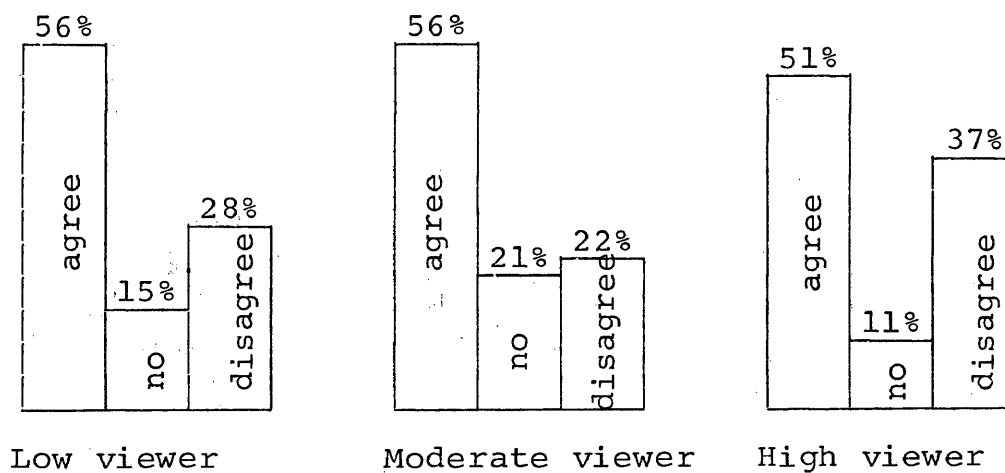


Table 6d. Network news and government propaganda of all respondents, high and low respondents  
 Chi-square = 1.21, DF = 2,  
 Significance = 0.54

	agree	no opinion	disagree
Low viewers	77 (56.6%)	21 (15.4%)	38 (27.9%)
High viewers	54 (52.9%)	13 (12.7%)	35 (34.3%)

Table 6b).

A chi-square test was also performed to compare the answers of members of the high and low network viewers. The test showed no significant differences between the two groups (see Table 6c). Unexpectedly a high percentage of high viewers agreed. However, as anticipated the high viewer has the largest disagree column, and the low viewer shares the largest agree column with the moderate viewers.

#### 7. Presidents and news management

Respondents were asked to evaluate the possibility of Presidents practicing news management, in order to determine whether or not they believe the President of the United States could engage in this practice. Respondents were asked to rate the statement "Do you believe that United States Presidents engage in practices that could be called news management?" by responding "strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree and strongly disagree."

Results show that 53 (17.6%) strongly agreed, 146 (48.6%) agreed, 39 had no opinion (13%), 57 (19%) disagreed and 6 (2%) strongly disagreed, (see Table 7a).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the three groups, low, moderate and high viewers, a chi-square test was performed, comparing the answers of members of all three groups. The results

Table 7a. Presidents and news management - all respondents

Strongly agree.....	53	(17.6%)
Agree.....	146	(48.6%)
No opinion.....	39	(13.0%)
Disagree.....	57	(19%)
Strongly disagree.....	6	(2%)

Table 7b. Presidents and news management of all respondents - chi-square results  
Chi-square = 7.8, DF = 4,  
Significance = 0.09

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 Agree	2 No opinion	3 Disagree	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	94 69.1 47.2 31.2	18 13.2 46.2 6.0	24 17.6 38.1 8.0	136 45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	55 67.9 27.6 18.3	13 16.0 33.3 4.3	13 16.0 20.6 4.3	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	50 59.5 25.1 16.6	8 9.5 20.5 2.7	26 31.0 41.5 8.6	84 27.9
Column total	199 66.1	39 13.0	63 20.9	301 100.0

Figure 7c. Presidents and news management of all respondents - bar chart

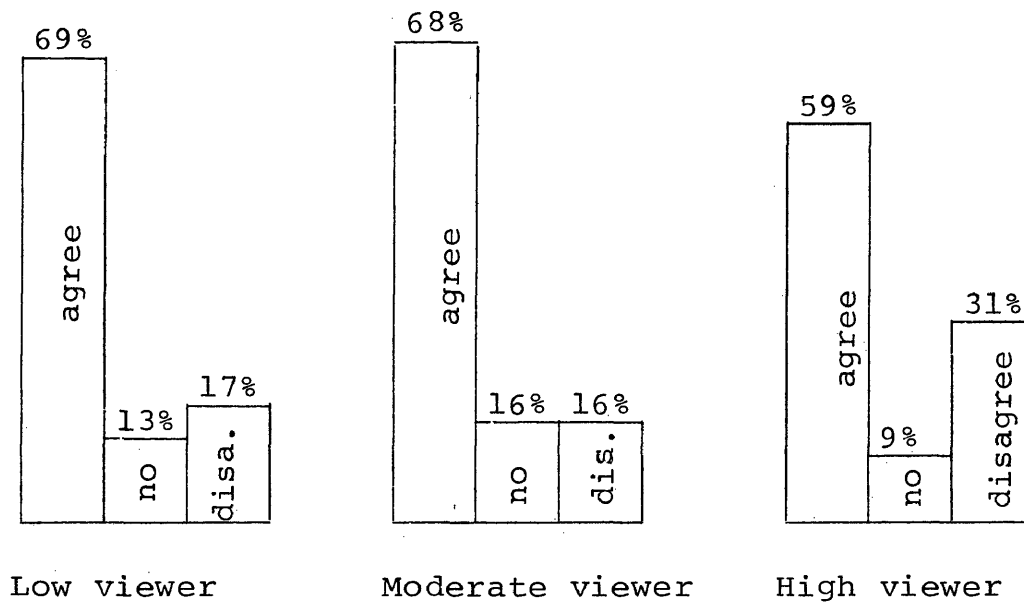


Table 7d. Presidents and new management of all respondents, High and low respondents  
 Chi-square = 3.32, DF = 2,  
 Significance = 0.18

	agree	no opinion	disagree
Low viewers	94 (69.1%)	18 (13.2%)	24 (17.6%)
High viewers	63 (61.8%)	11 (10.8%)	28 (27.5%)

show that the low and moderate viewers have similar reactions; about 68% in both these groups agree that United States presidents could engage in news management. Of the high viewers 59% believed so. The disagree column shows a difference between both the low and moderate viewers and the high viewers; the low and moderate viewers had only 17% of their respondents who disagreed, while nearly twice as many high viewers did not think that United States presidents could or would engage in news management (see Table 7b, significance = 0.9).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between high network news viewers and low network news viewers, a chi-square test was run, comparing the answers of members of these two groups. These results showed no significant difference between the two groups, but as was the case in some of the previous chi-square tests, the low viewers only disagreed 17%, while more high viewers disagreed with this statement (see Table 7c).

Even though the low viewing group has the highest percentage in the agree column, the high viewer has a much higher agree column than anticipated. However, their disagree column, as anticipated, has the highest percentage figures.

#### 8. Best political system

Respondents were asked to evaluate the political system in the United States, in order to determine whether they believe it is the best in the world. Respondents were asked to rate the statement "The United States political system is the best in the world," by responding "strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree and strongly disagree."

Results show that 66 respondents strongly agreed, this was 22%, 133 respondents or 44.3% agreed, 43 or 14.3% had no opinion, while 40 or 13.3% disagreed and 19 or 6.3% disagreed strongly (see Table 8a).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the three groups, low, moderate, and high viewers, a chi-square test was performed, comparing the answers of members of all three groups. The results show that all three groups reacted very different in the agree column; almost 59% of the low viewers agreed that the United States political system is the best in the world; while nearly 70% agreed in the moderate group, and the low viewers agreed with 75%. The no opinion column is very similar. In all groups, about 17% had no opinion. The low group had the highest percentage of disagree answers, 25%, while the moderate viewers disagreed only 13% and as anticipated, the high viewers disagreed the least.

Table 8a. Best political system - all respondents

Strongly agree.....	66 (22%)
Agree.....	133 (44.3%)
No opinion.....	43 (14.3%)
Disagree.....	40 (13.3%)
Strongly disagree.....	19 (6.3%)

Table 8b. Best political system - all respondents  
 - chi-square results  
 Chi-square = 9.03, DF = 4,  
 Significance = 0.06

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 Agree	2 No opinion	3 Disagree	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	80 58.8 40.2 26.6	22 16.2 51.2 7.3	34 25.0 57.6 11.3	136 45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	56 69.1 28.1 18.6	14 17.3 32.6 4.7	11 13.6 18.6 3.7	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	63 75.0 31.7 20.9	7 8.3 16.3 2.3	14 16.7 23.7 4.7	84 27.9
Column total	199 66.1	43 14.3	59 19.6	301 100.0



Figure 8c. Best political system - all respondents  
- bar graph

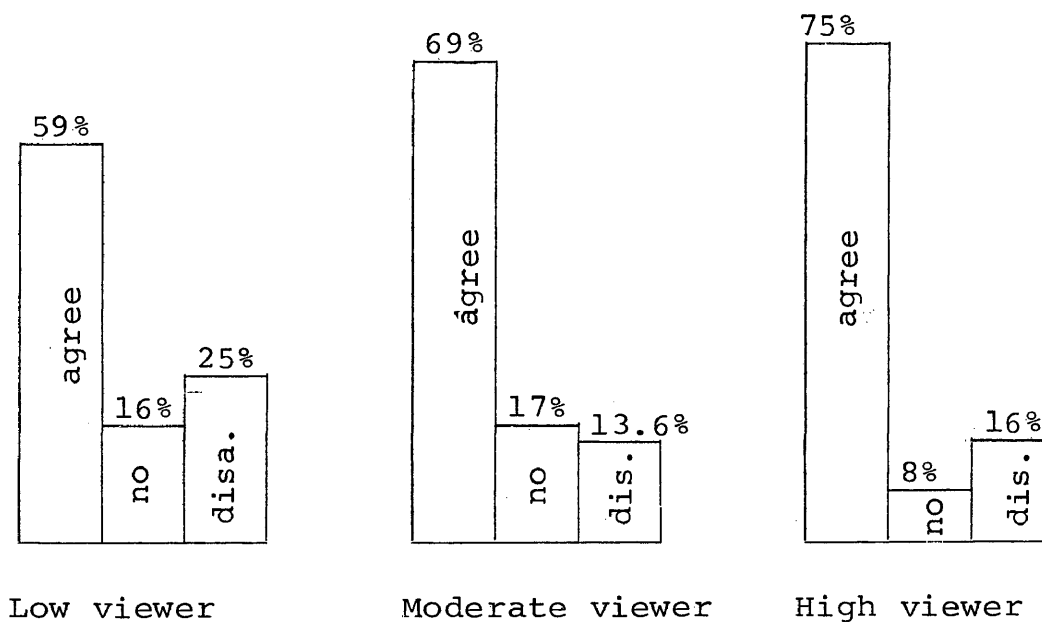


Table 8d. Best political system of all respondents,  
High and low respondents  
Chi-square = 6.84, DF = 2,  
Significance = 0.003

	agree	no opinion	disagree
Low viewers	80 (58.8%)	22 (16.2%)	34 (25%)
High viewers	76 (74.5%)	8 (7.8%)	18 (17.6%)

only 16% disagree (see Table 8b, Significance = 0.06).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between high network viewers, and low network viewers, a chi-square test was run to compare the answers of members of the two groups. The results show that high viewers view the political system in the United States more favorable than the low viewers, and as anticipated, the low viewer agrees less and the high viewer agrees more with the statement. The high viewer disagrees 17%, while the low viewer disagrees 25%. Again there seems to be tendency towards supporting evidence of the hypothesis.

9. Accurate portrayal of United States involvement

Respondents were asked to evaluate the trustworthiness of the government's portrayal of its policies, in order to determine whether or not they believe official government statements. Respondents were asked to rate a statement "The United States government accurately portrays United States involvement in Central America," by responding "strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, strongly disagree."

Results show that 7 respondents (2.3%) strongly agreed, while 69 (23%) agreed. Almost 20% (56) had no opinion and 130 respondents (43.3%) disagreed, while 39 respondents or 13% strongly disagreed (see Table 9a).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the three groups, low, moderate, and high viewers, a chi-square test was performed comparing the answers of members of all three groups. The results showed that there was no significant differences; in the agree column, answers were rather similar. Of the low viewers, only 23% agreed that the United States accurately portrays United States involvement in Central America, of the moderate viewers 27% agrees, and even the high viewers seem to be a little reluctant to agree, only 26% agreed. The no opinion column showed similar results, between 14% and 20%, and so did the disagree column, a little over half disagreed in the low viewers group, the same with the moderate viewers, and a little more, 59%, in the high viewers group disagreed with the statement that the United States portrays United States involvement accurately (see Table 9b, Significance = .77).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between high network news viewers and low network news viewers, a chi-square test was run, comparing the answers of the members of the two groups. The test showed no significant differences between the two groups. Results show that the percentage of disagreement is higher in both groups than the percentage of agreement in both groups (see Table 9c). As expected, the low viewers

Table 9a. Accurate portrayal of United States involvement - all respondents

Strongly agree.....	7	(2.3%)
Agree.....	69	(23%)
No opinion.....	56	(18.6%)
Disagree.....	130	(43.3%)
Strongly disagree.....	39	(13%)

Table 9b. Accurate portrayal of United States involvement - all respondents -  
Chi-square results  
Chi-square = 1.80, DF = 4.  
Significance = 0.77

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 Agree	2 No opinion	3 Disagree	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	32 23.5 42.1 10.6	28 20.6 50.0 9.3	76 55.9 45.0 25.2	136 45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	22 27.2 28.9 7.3	16 19.8 28.6 5.3	43 53.1 25.4 14.3	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	22 26.2 28.9 7.3	12 14.3 21.4 4.0	50 59.5 29.6 16.6	84 27.9
Column total	76 25.2	56 18.6	169 56.1	301 100.0

Figure 9c. Accurate portrayal of United States involvement  
- all respondents - bar graph

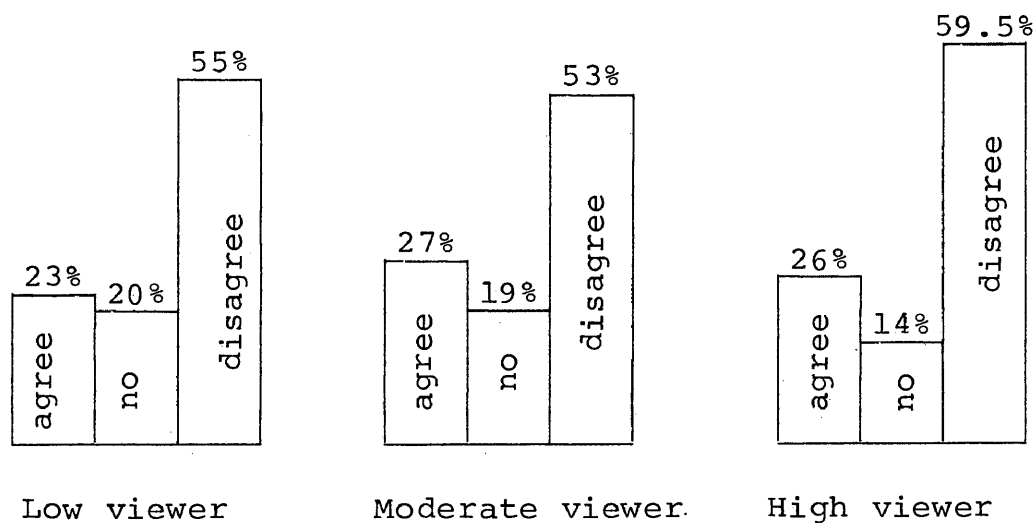


Table 9d. Accurate portrayal of United States involve-  
ment - High and low viewers  
Chi-square = 2.33, DF = 2,  
Significance = 0.31

	agree	no opinion	disagree
Low viewers	32 (23.5%)	28 (20.6%)	76 (55.9%)
High viewers	30 (29.4%)	14 (13.7%)	58 (56.9%)

have the smallest agree column, but unexpectedly they don't have the highest disagree column. The highest disagree column is in the high viewer group, even though it was anticipated that the high viewer's disagree column would be the smallest column (see Table 9c).

#### 10. Soviet Union threat

Respondents were asked to rate a statement "The Soviet Union is a threat to the United States," by responding "strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree, and strongly disagree."

Results show that 58 respondents (19.3%) strongly agreed, 154 (51.3%) agreed, 30 had no opinion (10%), and 52 respondents disagreed, while 7 or 2.3% strong disagreed (see Table 10a).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the three groups, low, moderate, and high viewers, a chi-square test was performed, comparing the answers of members of all three groups. The results showed that the moderate group agreed in the highest percentage, 80% with the high viewers following with 70%, and the low viewers agreed with 64% that the Soviet Union is a threat to the United States. The no opinion column showed similar figures; around 10% of all three groups had no opinion. The disagreement column showed a slight

Table 10a. Soviet Union threat to the United States -  
all respondents

Strongly agree.....	58 (19.3%)
Agree.....	154 (51.3%)
No opinion.....	30 (10%)
Disagree.....	52 (17.3%)
Strongly disagree.....	7 (2.3%)

Table 10b. Soviet Union threat to the United States -  
all respondents  
Chi-square = 9.50, DF = 4,  
Significance = 0.04

Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 Agree	2 No opinion	3 Disagree	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	88 64.7 41.5 29.2	12 8.8 40.0 4.0	36 26.5 61.0 12.0	136 45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	65 80.2 30.7 21.6	7 8.6 23.3 2.3	9 11.1 15.3 3.0	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	59 70.2 27.8 19.6	11 13.1 36.7 3.7	14 16.7 23.7 4.7	84 27.9
Column total	212 70.4	30 10.0	59 19.6	301 100.0

Figure 10c. Soviet Union threat to the United States - all respondents - bar chart

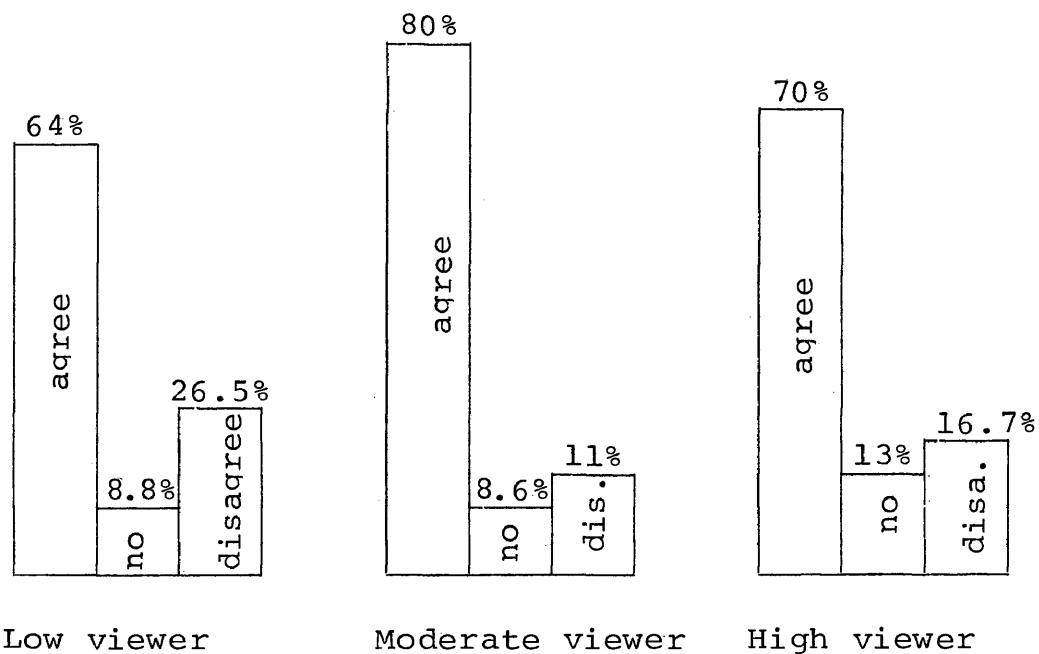


Table 10d. Soviet Union threat to the United States - High and lower viewers  
Chi-square = 5.45, DF = 2,  
Significance = 0.06

	agree	no opinion	disagree
Low viewers	88 (64.7%)	12 (8.8%)	36 (26.5%)
High viewers	73 (71.6%)	14 (13.7%)	15 (14.7%)



difference between the low viewers and the moderate. The low viewers disagreed with 26% while the low viewers disagreed with only 16%. The moderates were in between the two groups with 11% disagreements (see Table 10b, significance = 0.04).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between high network viewers and low network viewers, a chi-square test was run comparing the answers of members of the two groups. The analysis shows that high viewers disagree more with this statement than low viewers. This means that high viewers are more likely to be influenced by the news than the low viewers. Again there seems to be a similar parallel with the previous differences between the two groups, because the percentage of those respondents agreeing to this statement in the high viewing group, is significantly higher than the same column in the low viewing group. These differences are significant at the .06 level (see Table 10c).

#### 11. Freeze is threat

Respondents were asked to evaluate the nuclear freeze, in order to determine their view on the danger the Soviet Union presents. Respondents were asked to rate a statement "A nuclear freeze in the arms race would threaten the United States," by responding "strongly agree, agree, no

opinion, disagree and strongly disagree." Results show that 38 of the respondents (12.6%) strongly agreed, 177 or 39% agreed, while 35 (11.6%) had no opinion, 98 respondents (32.6%) disagreed and 13 or 4.3% strongly disagreed (see Table 11a).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the three groups, low, moderate and high viewers, a chi-square test was performed, comparing the answers of members of all three groups. The results showed that there was no significant difference between the three groups. All three had responses in the agree column, around half of each group agreed that the freeze would pose a threat to the United States. A very similar percentage had no opinion, in all three groups this was about 10.5%. In the disagree column there were some differences; 41% of the low viewers did not think the freeze would pose a threat, while only 29% of the high viewers group believed that a freeze would threaten the United States. Of the moderate viewers, 37% disagreed (see Table 11b).

As anticipated the high viewer leads in the "agree column" and is smallest in the disagree column. The moderate viewer, as was the case with the previous statements, is often times in between the high and the low viewers.

Table 11a. Freeze is threat, all respondents

Strongly agree.....38 (12.6%)  
 Agree.....117 (39%)  
 No opinion.....35 (11.6%)  
 Disagree.....98 (32.6%)  
 Strongly disagree.....13 (4.3%)

Table 11b. Freeze is threat, all respondents -  
 Chi-square = 3.51, DF = 4,  
 Significance = 0.47

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 Agree	2 No opinion	3 Disagree	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	64 47.1 41.3 21.3	16 11.8 45.7 5.3	56 41.2 50.5 18.6	136 45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	41 50.6 26.5 13.6	10 12.3 28.6 3.3	30 37.0 27.0 10.0	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	50 59.5 32.3 16.6	9 10.7 25.7 3.0	25 29.8 22.5 8.3	84 27.9
Column total	155 51.5	35 11.6	111 36.9	301 100.0

Figure 11c. Freeze is threat, - all respondents -  
Bar graph

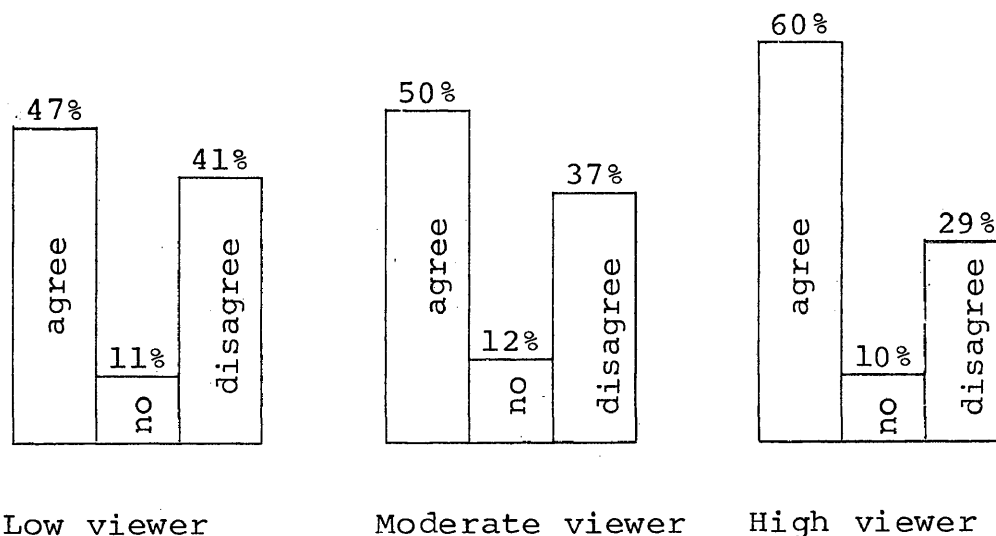


Table 11d. Freeze is threat - all respondents -  
High and low respondents  
Chi-square = 2.73, DF = 2,  
Significance = 0.25

	agree	no opinion	disagree
Low viewers	64 (47.1%)	16 (11.8%)	56 (41.2%)
High viewers	59 (57.8%)	10 (9.8%)	33 (32.5%)

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between high network news viewers and low network news viewers, a chi-square test comparing the answers of the two groups was run. The test showed no significant differences between the two groups (see Table 11c).

12. United States government officials' honesty

Respondents were asked to evaluate United States government officials, in order to determine whether or not they would trust American government officials more than foreign government officials. Respondents were asked to rate a statement "Compared to government officials in other countries, American government officials are sometimes more honest," by responding "strongly agree, agree, no opinion, disagree and strongly disagree."

Results show that 30 or 10% strongly agreed, 143 of the respondents or 47.6% agreed, 47 (15.6%) had no opinion, while 68 (22.6%) disagreed, and 13 or 4.3% strongly disagreed (see Table 12a).

In order to determine if there is a difference between the three groups, low, moderate, and high viewers, a chi-square test was performed, comparing the answers of members of all three groups. The results showed that half of the low viewers agreed, while 60% of the moderate viewers agreed, and almost 67% of the high viewers agreed that

United States government officials are sometimes more honest than other governments' officials. A difference in response is observed in the 'no opinion' column, where 21% of the low viewers, and 16% of the moderate viewers were grouped. A mere 6% of the high viewers had no opinion. The disagree column came out similar for all three groups, around 25% disagreed with the statement that United States government officials are sometimes more honest than other governments' officials (see Table 12b, significance = 0.03).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between high network news viewers and low network news viewers, a chi-square test was performed, comparing the answers of members of the two groups. The results show that high viewers agreed in a large majority that United States government officials are sometimes more honest than other governments' officials, 65.7%, while as in some of the previous cases, the low viewers endorse this statement with less intensity, 50.7%, significance = 0.002. (see Table 12d).

As anticipated, the high viewer has the highest agree column. However, the disagree column of the high and low viewer is the same. The "no opinion" column seems to indicate that more low viewers than high viewers were undecided (see Table 12c).

Table 12a. United States government official honesty -  
all respondents

Strongly agree.....	30 (10%)
Agree.....	143 (47.6%)
No opinion.....	47 (15.6%)
Disagree.....	68 (22.6%)
Strongly disagree.....	13 (4.33%)

Table 12b. United States government official honesty -  
all respondents - chi-square results  
Chi-square = 10.43, DF = 4,  
Significance = 0.03

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 Agree	2 No opinion	3 Disagree	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	69 50.7 39.9 22.9	29 21.3 61.7 9.6	38 27.9 46.9 12.6	136 45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	48 59.3 27.7 15.9	13 16.0 27.7 4.3	20 24.7 24.7 6.6	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	56 66.7 32.4 18.6	5 6.0 10.6 1.7	23 27.4 28.4 7.6	84 27.9

Figure 12c. United States government official honesty - all respondents - bar chart

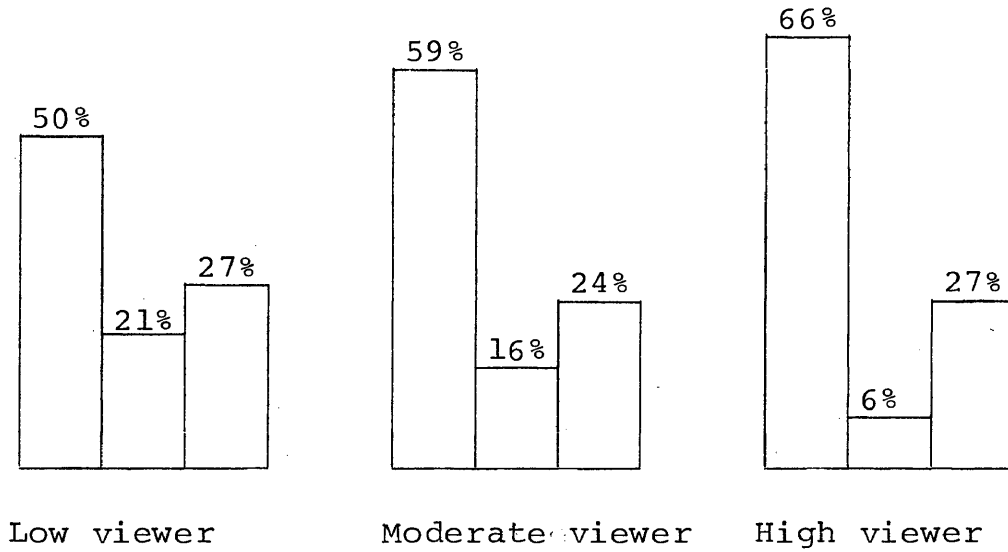


Table 12d. United States government official honesty - High and low respondents  
Chi-square = 11.73, DF = 2,  
Significance = 0.002

	agree	no opinion	disagree
Low viewers	69 (50.7%)	29 (21.3%)	38 (27.9%)
High viewers	67 (65.7%)	6 (5.9%)	29 (28.4%)



### 13. Personal data

Respondents were asked for their age, in order to determine whether or not their age was significant for belonging to one of the groups. Ages distributed as follows:

Table 13a. Personal data - respondents; age

20-29	109 (36.3%)
30-39	94 (31.3%)
40-49	53 (17.6%)
50 and over	45 (15%)

In order to determine if there is a significant difference in age between the three groups, low, moderate and high viewers, a chi-square test was run, comparing the ages (see Table 13b). This table shows that there is a closeness in age for the three groups, in the 20-29 viewing age. After 30 the differences in viewing become more apparent; in the 30-39 category, moderate and high viewers differed 8%, while low viewers were close to the moderate viewer. In the 40-49 category, differences were more apparent; nearly 23% of the low viewers were between 40-49, only 8% of the moderate viewers were between 40-49, while 18% of the high viewers were between 40-49. Over 50 were mostly the high viewers, 23.8%, while the low and

Table 13b. Personal data - all respondents; age  
Chi-square results  
Chi-square = 0.59, DF = 2, Significance = .74

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 20-29	2 30-39	3 40-49	4 50+	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	45 -33.1 41.3 15.0	44 32.4 46.8 14.6	31 22.8 58.5 10.3	16 11.8 35.6 5.3	136 45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	37 -45.7 33.9 12.3	28 -34.6 29.8 9.3	7 -8.6 13.2 2.3	9 11.1 20.0 3.0	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	27 32.1 24.8 9.0	22 -26.2 23.4 7.3	15 -17.9 28.3 5.0	20 -23.8 44.4 6.6	84 47.9
Column total	109 36.2	94 31.2	53 17.6	45 15.0	301 100.0

Table 13c. Personal data; age - high and low respondents  
Chi-square = 3.02, DF = 3, Significance = 0.38

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 20-29	2 30-39	3 40-49	4 +50	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	45 33.1 57.7 18.9	44 32.4 59.5 18.5	31 22.8 62.0 13.0	16 11.8 44.4 6.7	136 57.1
2. High viewing hrs.	33 32.4 42.3 13.9	30 29.4 40.5 12.6	19 18.6 38.0 8.0	20 19.6 55.6 8.4	102 42.9
Column total	78 32.9	74 31.1	50 21.0	36 15.1	238 100.0

moderate viewer over 50 years old constituted only 11% (see Table 13b, Significance = .74).

In order to determine if there is a significant differences between the ages of the high network news viewers and the ages of the low network news viewers, a chi-square test was run, comparing the ages of members of the two groups. The test showed no significant differences (see Table 13c).

#### 14. Sex

Respondents were asked to fill out their sex, to determine whether their sex is significant for belonging to one of the categories. A hundred and seventy five of the respondents were male and a hundred twenty six were female respondents (see Table 14a).

Table 14a. Sex - all respondents  
Significance = 1.00

Male	175 (58.1%)
Female	126 (41.9%)

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the three groups, low, moderate, and high viewers, a chi-square test was performed, comparing the sex in every category. Results show that 56.6% of the males are low viewers, while 43.4% of the femals are low

Table 14b. Personal data - sex; all respondents  
 Chi-square results  
 Chi-square = 0.59, DF = 2,  
 Significance = 0.74

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	77 56.6 44.0 25.6	59 43.4 46.8 19.6	136 45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	50 61.7 28.6 16.6	31 38.3 24.6 10.3	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	48 57.1 27.4 15.9	36 42.9 28.6 12.0	84 27.9
Column total	175 58.1	126 41.9	301 100.0

Table 14c. Personal data - sex; high and low respondents  
 Chi-square = 0.0, DF = 1, Significance = 1.00

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 Male	2 Female	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	77 56.6 57.0 32.4	59 43.4 57.3 24.8	136 57.1
2. High viewing hrs.	58 56.9 43.0 24.4	44 43.1 42.7 18.5	102 42.9
Column total	135 56.7	103 43.3	238 100.0

viewers. In the moderate viewing group, 61.7% were male and 38.3% were female. In the high viewing group, 57.1% was male and almost 43% was female. The major difference between male and female in viewing hours is in the moderate viewing group; the men have nearly twice as many members in this group than the females; 61.7% of the moderate viewers were men, while 38% of the moderate viewers were females (see Table 14b).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between high network news viewers and low network news viewers, a chi-square test was performed, comparing the sexes of the viewers to the two categories. Results show no major differences between male and female viewers in both categories. (see Table 14c).

#### 15. Education

Respondents were asked for their education completed in order to determine whether their education was related to their news viewing. Respondents were asked to fill out "Education completed", by responding "Junior College, Trade School, University, Other." Results showed that 75 (25%) went to Junior College, 32 (10.6%) went to Trade School, 156 of the respondents went to University (52%), and 38 or 12.6% filled out other (see Table 15a).

Table 15a. Personal data - Education; all respondents

Junior College	75 (25%)
Trade School	32 (10.6%)
University	156 (52%)
Other	38 (12.6%)

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the three groups, low, moderate and high viewers, a chi-square test was performed, comparing education within all three categories. Nearly half of every category is a university graduate. In the low viewing group, university graduates and junior college graduates have the largest percentage of viewers. Trade school and 'other' have only 9.6% of its members in the low viewing group. The moderate viewing group is similarly categorized; after the university graduates, are the junior college graduates, followed by the trade school graduates and 'other'. High viewing hours column is a little bit different; university graduates are followed by junior college graduates, 25%, followed by 'other', which make up 20.2%, while trade school is last with only 8.3% (see Table 15b).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between high network news viewers and low

Table 15b. Personal data - Education; all respondents  
 Chi-square results  
 Chi-square = 10.21, DF = 6, Significance=0.11

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 JR	2 TS	3 U	4 OTHER	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	39 28.7 52.0 13.0	13 9.6 40.6 4.3	71 52.2 45.5 23.6	13 9.6 34.2 4.3	136 45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	15 18.5 20.0 5.0	12 14.8 37.5 4.0	46 -56.8 29.5 15.3	8 9.9 21.1 2.7	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	21 25.0 28.0 7.0	7 8.3 21.9 2.3	39 -46.4 25.0 13.0	17 20.2 44.7 5.6	84 27.9
Column total	75 24.9	32 10.6	156 51.8	38 12.6	301 100.0

Table 15c. Personal data - Education; high and low  
 respondents  
 Chi-square = 4.14, DF=3, Significance = 0.24

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 JR	2 TS	3 U	4 OTHER	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	39 28.7 59.1 16.4	13 9.6 59.1 5.5	71 52.2 60.2 29.8	13 9.6 40.6 5.5	136 57.1
2. High viewing hrs.	27 26.5 40.9 11.3	9 8.8 40.9 3.8	47 46.1 39.8 19.7	19 18.6 59.4 8.0	102 42.9
Column total	66 27.7	22 9.2	118 49.6	32 13.4	238 100.0

network news viewers and their education, a chi-square test was performed, comparing the answers regarding their education. The results yielded not a significant difference, however, a difference is observed in the 'other' group; in the low viewing group there are 9.6% of the respondents who had 'other' education than junior college, trade school, and university. In the high viewing group, there were 18.6% of those with an other education. University graduates make up for half of the low viewing group and the high viewing group, followed by junior college (see Table 15c).

#### 16. Income of respondents

Respondents were asked for their income, in order to examine whether there is a relationship between the number of hours of network news viewing and their income. Respondents were asked to fill out "Income: under \$15,000, \$16,000-30,000 or over \$30,000." Results showed that 102 respondents earned under \$15,000, 109 respondents earned between \$16,000 and \$30,000, while 84 earned over \$30,000 and 6 respondents filled out 'not known'. (see Table 16a).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the three groups, low, moderate and high viewers, a chi-square test was performed, comparing



Table 16a. Personal data - Income; all respondents

\$15,000	102 (34%)
\$16,000-\$30,000	109 (36.3%)
Over \$30,000	84 (28%)
Not known	6 (2%)

the income of the respondents to the viewing categories. Results show that the low viewing group was evenly divided by all income brackets; 33% earned under \$15,000, 34% earned between \$16,000 and \$30,000 and 31% earned over \$30,000. Not known was filled out by only 0.7% of the respondents. The moderate viewing group was similarly divided; thirty percent earned under \$15,000, 39% earned between \$16,000 and \$30,000 while 28% earned over \$30,000. In the high viewing group there was a difference between those who earn over \$30,000 and the other incomes. The test did not yield significant differences (see Table 16b).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between high network news viewers and low network news viewers, and their subsequent incomes, a chi-square test was performed, comparing the answers of the members of the two groups. The low viewers group remained the same as the previous results showed, and high viewers incomes are also very similar; the high viewers income ranges from 22% over \$30,000 to 38% under \$15,000.

Table 16b. Personal data - Income - all respondents  
 Chi-square results  
 Chi-square = 3.90, DF=3, Significance = 0.27

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 Under 15	2 16-30	3 30+	4 Not known	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	45 33.1 44.1 15.0	47 34.6 43.1 15.6	43 31.6 51.2 14.3	1 0.7 16.7 0.3	136 45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	24 29.6 23.5 8.0	32 39.5 29.4 10.6	23 28.4 27.4 7.6	2 2.5 33.3 0.7	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	33 39.3 32.4 11.0	30 35.7 27.5 10.0	18 21.4 21.4 6.0	3 3.6 50.0 1.0	84 27.9
Column total	102 33.9	109 36.2	84 27.9	6 2.0	301 100.0

Table 16c. Personal data - Income - high and low  
 respondents  
 Chi-square = 5.69, DF=6, Significance = 0.45

Tot pct	1 Under 15	2 16-30	3 30+	4 Not known	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	45 33.1 53.6 18.9	47 34.6 56.0 19.7	43 31.6 65.2 18.1	1 0.7 25.0 0.4	136 57.1
2. High viewing hrs.	39 38.2 46.4 16.4	37 36.3 44.0 15.5	23 22.5 34.8 9.7	3 2.9 75.0 1.3	102 42.9
Column total	84 35.3	84 35.3	66 27.7	4 1.7	238 100.0

### 17. Political affiliation

Respondents were asked to fill out their political affiliation, in order to examine whether there is a relationship between group 1 and group 3 and their political beliefs. Respondents were asked to fill out the statement "Do you consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican or Other." Results show that 137 respondents were Democrats, 71 were Republican and 93 filled out other (see Table 17a).

Table 17a. Personal data - party affiliation;  
all respondents

Democrat	137 (45.6%)
Republicans	71 (23.6%)
Other	93 (31%)

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between the three groups, low, moderate and high viewers, and the respondents' political affiliation, a chi-square test was run, comparing the answers of the members of the three groups. Results show that Democrats lead the low viewing group with 45%, followed by 'other' with 33% and Republicans were last with 21%. Democrats were leading again in the moderate viewing group with 44%, 'other' followed with 34% and Republicans made up 21%.

Table 17b. Personal data - Party affiliation; all respondents; chi-square results  
Chi-square = 3.85, DF = 4, Significance = 0.42

	Dem.	Rep.	Other	
1. Low viewing hrs.	62 45.6 45.3 20.6	29 21.3 40.8 9.6	45 33.1 48.4 15.0	45.2
2. Mod viewing hrs.	36 44.4 26.3 12.0	17 21.0 23.9 5.6	28 34.6 30.1 9.3	81 26.9
3. High viewing hrs.	39 46.4 28.5 13.0	25 29.8 35.2 8.3	20 23.8 21.5 6.6	84 27.9
Column total	137 45.5	71 23.6	93 30.9	301 100.0

Table 17c. Personal data - Party affiliation; high and low respondents  
Chi-square = 4.13, DF = 2, Significance = 0.12

Count Row pct Col pct Tot pct	1 Dem.	2 Rep.	3 Other	Row Total
1. Low viewing hrs.	62 45.6 57.4 26.1	29 21.3 47.5 12.2	45 33.1 65.2 18.9	136 57.1
2. High viewing hrs.	46 45.1 42.6 19.3	32 31.4 52.5 13.4	24 23.5 34.8 10.1	102 42.9
Column total	108 45.4	61 25.6	69 29.0	238 100.0

The high viewing group constituted of 46% Democrats, nearly 30% Republicans and 23% 'other' (see Table 17b, significance = 0.42).

In order to determine if there is a significant difference between high network news viewers and low network news viewers, a chi-square test was performed, comparing the answers of the members of both groups. Results showed that the same percentage of Democrats were in the low viewing group as there were in the high viewing group. A little less Republicans were in the low viewing group than in the high viewing group, 21.3% were low viewers (Rep.) and 31% were high viewers (Rep.). In the 'Other' column, there did not appear to be a significant difference either between the two viewing groups. Thirty three percent was low viewers and 23% was high viewers in the 'Other' category (see Table 17c, Significance = 0.12).

CHAPTER 8  
CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Analysis of Differences

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the results of this survey. The statistical test that was used for analyzing the data was a chi-square test. Data was first processed by a correlation test, however, findings showed no significant difference. When the chi-square was performed, questions yielded significant differences between the groups. All significance levels that yielded figures bigger than .10 were not regarded as significant to this study, for the impact of chance is enhanced when the significance level becomes bigger than .10.

Data yielded by the chi-square test showed a difference between the low viewing group and the high viewing group in their reactions to the same questions. A tendency was observed showing that high news viewers were in general more supportive of government policies than low viewers.

The data showed that the group that watches more network news is less critical of government policies, identifies more with United States government decisions and in general is more supportive of the United States political system.

Some questions did not yield significant differences between the answers of the members of the high and low viewing group. Of the first 12 questions, 6 yielded significant differences. Those questions that involved more and less exposure to network news showed significant differences, such as question 3, network news is trustworthy. Interestingly, question 6, network news displays government propaganda, did not yield a significant difference. However, after the chi-square test was run between question 1 and 3, a distinction was observed between the reaction of the two viewing groups.

The tendency of the high viewing group seemed to be directional towards positive identification with government officials, policies and decisions; while the tendency of the low viewing group seemed to be more skeptical towards government official honesty, government policies and decisions.

Low viewers are not exposed to network news and its messages to the same extent of high viewers are. This may well be the reason that there is a consistent tendency amongst members of the low viewing group not to identify with government policies and decisions as does the high viewers.

Results of statement 4, network news influences the attitudes of the viewer on political events, suggest that

there is a significant difference between the reaction of high and low viewers. Significant is the difference in the disagree column. Few (8%) of the low viewers disagree, while many more (19%) of the high viewers disagree. The reason for a similar difference between the 2 groups, like in the previous statement, may be on account of the similar variable which influences the high viewing group exposure to network news. High viewers, being exposed to network news for many hours, will not agree that their attitudes or opinion is being formed or influenced by the news. The low viewing group, it could be interpreted, knows how manipulative network news can be, which in turn leads to being less influenced.

Question 5, network news identifies with government policies, question 6, network news displays government propaganda and question 7, do you believe that United States presidents engage in practices that could be called news management, did not yield significant differences between the high and the low viewing groups. Questions 5 and 6 had a high number of "no opinion" responses. Question 7 yielded interesting results, even though the significance level did not show a significant difference between the low and high viewing group. Data suggest that members of the high viewing group do believe more strongly in the honesty of the United States Presidents than members



of the low viewing group. It is observed however, that both groups strongly believe that United States Presidents are capable of news management. Still, low viewers seem to be more inclined to agree that United States Presidents practice news management than high viewers.

The results of statement 8, the United States political system is the best in the world, indicate that high viewers are more inclined to support the United States political system than low viewers. This may be caused by the same variable as in answers to statements 1 and 2. Almost 20% more members of the high viewers filled out the agree column. A small number of members within the high viewing group had no opinion (7.8%) as opposed to nearly 17% of the low viewers. One may infer from this that the high viewer is more positively decided about the United States having the best political system in the world. Also in statement 8, the low viewing group seems rebellious in the disagree column. Nearly one quarter of the low viewers does not support the United States political system, while high viewers only disagreed a little over 17%.

Statement 9, the U.S. government accurately portrays U.S. involvement in Central American, seemd to evoke similar reactions of both groups. Almost half the members of both groups do not believe that they are informed accurately about the political development in Central

America. However, statement 10, The Soviet Union is a threat to the United States, shows again that a difference exists between high and low viewers.

When the network news viewer learns through the news what a threat the Soviet Union is, they will be conditioned to believe so; it is clear from the data that the news has some kind of influence on high viewers, for their agree column shows that nearly 75% agrees with the fact that the Soviet Union is a threat to the United States, while less than 65% of the low viewers agreed. The results also indicate that almost 25% of the low viewers disagreed with statement 10 as opposed to just over 10% of the high viewers who disagreed. The last statement yielded a significant difference; results of this statement are interesting, for the disagree column has practically the same percentage of people in it, while the agree column differs remarkably. In low viewers, half of its members agree with the statement, while in high viewers, there is a higher number of endorsement. However, group 1 seem to be confused again for the number of no opinion is extremely high: over 1/5 of its members seem to have no opinion, while high viewers had very few members with no opinion.

The results suggest that the group of high network news viewers support the United States government and its

policies and its decisions in a more positive fashion than the low viewers.

The purpose of this study was to explore whether there is a relationship between network news viewing and the support for the political system in the United States of America. The review of the literature demonstrated that a school of thought exists amongst researchers that television, is for a large part, responsible for peoples' ideas, beliefs and attitudes. Researchers found that television is a powerful force - it does inform the audience about politics. Television has been regarded, according to certain polls, as more credible than other media. This study is not to be used as proof of television's reliability, data does show, however, that in many instances audiences who watch television news extensively do have a more positive attitude towards United States government officials, Presidents and policies in general.

Although some researchers find television power to be a fallacy or a myth, others are convinced that news exposure is indeed positively associated with attitude consistency, and the formation of opinions on political issues.

The research study establishes support for the following postulate: Between heavy network news viewers and the light network news viewers, there is to be observed

a significant difference in government credibility and policy endorsement. This study has shown that indeed those members who belong to group 2, the high network news viewing group, do endorse with more intensity government policies, decisions and strategies.

## 8.2 Limitations of the Study

Within the limitations of this study, it was found that the low viewer was consistently more skeptical about endorsing United States policies and decisions than was the high viewer. The higher viewer seemed to be consistently more supportive of government policies. However, the degree of their support was not always more emphatic than the degree of disagreement of the low viewer.

It was observed that the answers yielded by statement 6, network news displays government propaganda, were quite similar between both groups. More than half of both groups did agree that there is a propaganda display in network news.

The fact that statement 5, network news identifies with government policies, yielded a high "no opinion" score, may be attributed by the unclarity of the formulation of the question. The statement would have better been clearer had it stated: "Network news usually sides with government policies."

While data indicate a difference of reaction between low and high viewers, it is not proven by the statistical test that the variable television network news causes this difference, for a chi-square statistical test does not prove cause and effect. Another limitation of the chi-square statistical test is that this particular test is non-parametric; it cannot be generalized to a population outside of the sample surveyed.

### 8.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Although this survey has answered several questions that were posed by the researcher, many questions are still unanswered. An interesting area for further exploration would be the relationship between propaganda of other mass media and political efficacy. Another interesting field for researchers to investigate is the difference in propaganda dissemination in countries with different political systems.

A fruitful area to study would be why propaganda would or not have a grasp on certain groups within a population and in what type of situation the dissemination would work best.

It would benefit both political scientists and sociologists, if researchers in their subsequent fields would continue to explore the realm of manufacturing consent

through manipulation of the masses by means of the mass media, and exchange their findings. With an increasing reliance on the mass media, which have introduced television as a political information channel, the practical importance of gathering data on this topic can't be refuted. Especially since scientists do agree on the potential impact of the mass media on their audiences.

#### 8.4 Closing Statements

The study of mass psychology and mass behavior will lead social scientists to a deeper understanding of the art of manipulation and conditioning of the minds.

Undoubtedly, categories such as the above will continue to fascinate scientist and student. Both scientist and student of political communication will have to link, compare and combine psychology and sociology to get a more complete understanding of the implementation of propaganda.

Data of this research project indicate that television is a powerful medium; it is apparent that mass media potential impact depends on the medium and its the format it is disseminated in. Therefore it is of utmost importance to both government and population, the disseminator and the absorber of propaganda, that this field is fully comprehended.

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