NEWS MAGAZINE USE OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD LEAKS IN THEIR COVERAGE OF THE DECLINE AND FALL OF SPIRO T. AGNEW

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the North Texas State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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MASTER OF ARTS

By

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This study is a content analysis of the coverage in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U. S. News & World Report* on Spiro Agnew from August 13 to October 22, 1973, and is concerned with the use of leaks as determined by analyzing the levels of attribution and the attitudes of the magazines toward leaks.

All three magazines used approximately equivalent amounts of material from concealed sources. *Time* and *Newsweek* defended the use of leaks; *U. S. News & World Report* attacked their use.

The perils inherent in using information from concealed sources make it necessary to consult as many sources as feasible when following a controversial story.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On August 6, 1973, Vice President Spiro T. Agnew publicly announced that he was under investigation by Glenn Beall, the United States Attorney for Baltimore, on charges of bribery, extortion, conspiracy, and income tax evasion. The inquiry was conducted because of allegations by Maryland general contractors and others that, in return for contracts awarded, Agnew had received kickbacks while serving as the Chief Executive for Baltimore County from 1962 to 1966, as Governor of Maryland from 1967 to 1968, and after becoming Vice President.

When Agnew first announced that he was under investigation, he stated that he would say nothing further until the problem had been resolved. On August 8, 1973, Agnew called a news conference and accused unnamed people of leaking information about him to the news media:

Because of defamatory statements that are being leaked to the news media by sources . . . close to the federal investigation, I cannot adhere to my original intention to remain silent following my initial statement. . . .

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Under normal circumstances, the traditional safeguard of secrecy under such proceedings would protect the subject. But apparently this protection is not to be extended to the Vice President of the United States. . . .

I have called this press conference to label as false and scurrilous and malicious these rumors, these assertions, and accusations being circulated.4

On October 10, 1973, Agnew resigned as Vice President and pleaded nolo contendere to one count of felony income tax evasion for which he was fined $10,000 and put on three years' probation by United States District Judge Walter E. Hoffman.5 Although the Department of Justice had entered into the record a forty-page document detailing the charges and evidence against Agnew, the question of whether Agnew was guilty of accepting bribes and of extorting money or conspiring to do so was left unresolved because the Department of Justice agreed not to attempt any further prosecution of Agnew, and the State of Maryland chose not to prosecute Agnew on any of the charges that could have been brought against him.6

Another question was left unanswered by Agnew's sudden resignation: Was Agnew's right to a fair trial, as guaranteed

4"'No Intention To Be Skewered,'" U. S. News & World Report, LXXV (August 20, 1973), 23.

5"Did Agnew Get Off Too Easy?" Newsweek, LXXXII (October 22, 1973), 50.

by the Sixth Amendment to the United States Constitution, destroyed by news media accounts of the events between August 6 and October 10, 1973?\(^7\)

Attorney General Elliot Richardson and President Richard Nixon joined Agnew in denouncing leaks to the news media, but this did not stop Agnew from accusing the Department of Justice and the White House of being the sources for the leaks.\(^8\) Although Agnew made a distinction between the news media organizations that were using the leaks and the persons who were the sources for the leaks,\(^9\) both the news media users of the leaks and the probable sources of the leaks were embroiled in Agnew's legal battles to have the investigation quashed.\(^10\)

The attorneys for Agnew--Judah Best, Jay Topkis, and Martin London--went to Judge Hoffman on October 3, 1973, and requested the power to subpoena members of the news media and employees of the Department of Justice so that the sources of the leaks could be determined. Judge Hoffman granted the subpoena power to Agnew's attorneys; and subpoenas were served on writers and editors for *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *Washington*

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\(^7\)Ibid., p. 382


Post, the New York Times, the New York Daily News, the Washington Star-News, the Columbia Broadcasting System, the National Broadcasting Company, Richardson, Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus, and Assistant Attorney General Henry Petersen, among others.\textsuperscript{11}

The news media organizations named in the subpoenas announced their intentions to fight the subpoenas; and Judge Hoffman set October 10, 1973, as the date for the hearing. Nothing was said about the subpoenas on that day; Agnew ended the matter by stepping down from office and pleading no contest to the income tax evasion charge.\textsuperscript{12}

The controversy over the leaks did not die down immediately; five days after his resignation, Agnew spoke on national television, saying:

Late this summer my fitness to continue in office came under attack when accusations against me in the course of a grand jury investigation were improperly and unconsciously leaked in detail to the news media. I might add that the attacks were increased by daily publication of the wildest rumor and speculation--much of it bearing no resemblance to the information being given to the prosecutors.

All this was done with full knowledge that it was prejudicial to my civil rights. The news media editorially deplored these violations of the traditional secrecy of such investigations, but at the same time many of the most prestigious of them were ignoring their own counsel by publishing every leak they could get their hands on.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{11}A Heartbeat Away, p. 273.
\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., p. 358
\textsuperscript{13}"Spiro Agnew Tells His Side of the Story," U. S. News & World Report, LXXV (October 29, 1973), 98.
The finger of blame that Agnew tried to point was directed toward at least two of the three news magazines: Time and Newsweek. Was "improperly and unconsciously leaked" material used by Time, Newsweek, and U. S. News & World Report "with full knowledge that it was prejudicial" to the Sixth Amendment rights guaranteed to every American? Were the leaks in fact "editorially deplored" but used extensively in the very same issues by all three magazines? The dangers of relying on sources that can not or will not allow their identities to be used can ensnare both the news medium and the consumer of information from that medium.¹⁴

The news media can be manipulated by a source that releases information structured to reflect the needs of the source in advancing a position or strategy. The news media can, in turn, mislead the public by publishing the information without giving the source for the information or his motives for releasing the information while withholding his identity. The source can evade responsibility for releasing the information by keeping his identity hidden; the news media can shrug off some of their responsibility by appearing to attribute the information while not giving the public any clue as to the actual identity of the source, other than the most general of descriptions.¹⁵


The influence exerted by the news magazines as information sources extends beyond their primary audience. A study by William L. Rivers found that Time, Newsweek, and U. S. News & World Report were ranked in that order in a list of periodicals used by reporters in their work in Washington, D. C.\textsuperscript{16} A study by the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan found that, although only 5 per cent of the people responding to one survey listed magazines as their primary source of information, this same 5 per cent scored highest in both issue familiarity and political activity.\textsuperscript{17} These studies demonstrate the necessity for establishing criteria for rating news magazines as information sources.

A magazine that relies heavily on official sources to the exclusion of other sources will be captive to the bias inherent in the official sources. A magazine that uses a variety of sources, many of which may be unnamed or undisclosed, has a greater opportunity to inject its own bias into its news coverage while seeming to remain objective.\textsuperscript{18}

Statement of the Problem

This study is concerned with the use of leaks in Time, Newsweek, and U. S. News & World Report in news stories about

\textsuperscript{16}William L. Rivers, The Opinion Makers (Boston, 1965), P. 55.

\textsuperscript{17}V. O. Key, editor, Public Opinion and American Democracy (New York, 1965), pp. 347-348.

Agnew that appeared between August 13 and October 15, 1973. The following questions will be investigated:

1. Did *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U. S. News & World Report* use leaks or material from unauthorized sources in their stories?
2. If so, how did they differ from one another in their use of leaks or material from unauthorized sources?
3. Did the three news magazines make any editorial comment about leaks?
4. If so, how do the three magazines differ in their attitudes toward the use of leaks?

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study will be to 1. establish ratios of attributed to unattributed material as used by the news magazines in their coverage of Agnew during the time period of the study; 2. establish the amounts of the different levels of attribution as used by the three news magazines; and 3. examine the bias in the news magazines toward leaks and their use.

**Hypotheses**

*Time* and *Newsweek* were called an "unholy duet" by one member of the Nixon administration, who cited *U. S. News & World Report* as providing "some degree of balance." The fact that *Time* and *Newsweek* were among the news media subpoenaed by Agnew's attorneys, and *U. S. News & World Report* was not, is

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another indication of how Agnew believed he was being treated by the three news magazines. On this basis, the following hypotheses were formulated.

1. *Time* and *Newsweek* will use more material leaked from unauthorized sources hostile to Agnew than will *U. S. News & World Report*.

2. *Time* and *Newsweek* will editorially display more favorable attitudes toward leaks and will defend their use.


**Definition of Terms**

The following definitions are formulated for this study.

A *leak* is information provided for public dissemination by a source who will not or cannot be identified as the person or persons giving out the information. The motivation for leaking information can originate from friendship for a reporter or a particular news medium, from a desire to bring about change that cannot be achieved through established channels, from a desire for revenge or retaliation, or from a desire to get public reaction to a proposed plan or policy without being known as the person or persons most interested in having the policy or plan adopted.\(^2\)

An *authorized source* is one who has the responsibility for giving out information or who is the original source for

the information, with full or at least partial attribution. Government spokesmen, press secretaries, and persons answering questions at press conferences are authorized sources.

An unauthorized source is one who can not or will not allow himself to be identified for various reasons, such as fear of retaliation or disciplinary action, fear of having the information discounted because of a known bias on the part of the source(s), or for legal or ethical considerations.²¹ Although the unauthorized source may be highly accurate and authoritative, the concealment of identity makes it difficult for the information consumer to take this accuracy into account while evaluating the information.

A full attribution gives the source's name or exclusive title in context with the information. An example of full attribution taken from the sample is: "President Nixon . . . expressed 'full confidence in the Vice President's integrity during the period that he has served as Vice President. . . ."²²

A partial attribution does not give a name or exclusive title in context, but limits the identity of the source to a known group. An example of partial attribution taken from the

²¹Ibid., p. 18.

sample is: '"The case,' said one prosecutor, 'could be delayed interminably by pretrial litigation over whether a grand jury has the power to indict a sitting Vice President.'"23

A blind attribution refers to the source for a statement, but does not identify the maker of the statement or allow the identity of the source to be deduced from context. An example of blind attribution taken from the sample is: '"The whole thing is a bag job,' said one Agnewite."24

A news medium might use a blind attribution to show that the information came from a source outside the news-gathering organization, but the news medium can not, for reasons that may be beyond its control, identify the person releasing the information. The responsibility for unattributed statements rests solely with the news medium conveying those statements; when attribution of any type is given, part of the responsibility shifts from the news medium onto the source.25

Methodology

The sample for this study consists of every news story appearing in Time, Newsweek, and U. S. News & World Report from August 13 to October 22, 1973, inclusive, in which Agnew


is the principal subject. Letters to the editor, transcripts of official documents, and verbatim texts of press conferences are not included in the sample because they are fully attributed and do not represent original reportage by the magazines. Signed columns, which may contain leaked information, are not included in the sample because they are statements of opinion attributed to a single author and are not original reportage.

Signed editorials, letters from the editor, and signed articles dealing with the topic of leaks are included in the sample solely as a means of determining internal attitudes as to the use of leaks and are not scored for attribution.

In news stories where Agnew is not the principal subject but is mentioned in context, the statements about Agnew have been extracted and used in the sample.

The methodology for this study is patterned after the techniques employed by Dru Evarts and Guido H. Stempel III in their study of bias coverage of the 1972 presidential campaign.26

The context unit will be the sentence; and the sentences will be classified as being either attributed or unattributed. An attributed sentence is one for which its author is identified by use of a name or title, or both, whether or not quotation marks are used. The percentages of attributed and

unattributed sentences are displayed on a graph covering the time period of the study. The raw scores are presented in tables for each magazine, along with the totals, the mean scores, and the mean scores expressed as a percentage.

Besides showing the number of attributed and unattributed sentences, the tables for the three news magazines display the frequency of attribution by category in the categories of full attribution, partial attribution, and blind attribution. The totals for each category are given, along with the mean scores and the mean scores expressed as percentages.

The percentage of full attributions out of the total number of attributions for each magazine over the time period of the study is displayed on a graph, as are the percentages of partial attributions and blind attributions on separate graphs for each category.

In the assessment of editorial attitudes toward the use of leaks as displayed in the news stories, the symbol codes are "leaks" and "rumors," and the sentence is the context unit. Four categories are used: favorable/attributed, favorable/unattributed, unfavorable/attributed, and unfavorable/unattributed. Favorable mentions are those that speak of leaks in terms of being necessary and of the people's right to be informed; and unfavorable mentions are those that speak of leaks in terms of attack or of being vicious or malicious. The scores are presented in tables for each magazine along with
the totals for each category, the mean score for each category, and the mean score expressed as a percentage for each category.

Evarts and Stempel found in their study of bias that a writer had greater control over the content of an unattributed sentence than over the content of an attributed one and was therefore more apt to express a personal bias in unattributed sentences. Opposing points of view would probably come from sources other than the news medium itself and, therefore, would be more likely to be attributed.\(^{27}\)

Survey of Literature

Evarts and Stempel found that the news magazines showed the greatest bias of the news media examined and that all three magazines showed a bias in favor of the Republicans. Newsweek displayed the greater range in the number of sentences favorable to the Republicans compared to the number of sentences favorable to the Democrats: 57.6 per cent pro-Republican to 42.4 per cent pro-Democrat (N = 831). U. S. News & World Report was next with 46.9 per cent pro-Republican and 43.1 per cent pro-Democrat (N = 1,689); and Time had 52.3 per cent pro-Republican and 47.7 per cent pro-Democrat (N = 1,320).\(^{28}\)

These findings were similar to those made by Bruce H. Westley, Charles E. Higbie, Timothy Burke, David J. Lippert, 

\(^{27}\)Ibid., p. 647.

\(^{28}\)Ibid., p. 646.
Leonard Mayrer, and Vernon A. Stone in their study of news magazine performance during the 1960 presidential race. All three magazines were found to be biased in favor of the Republicans and expressed the point of view of conservatives in stronger terms than the point of view of liberals.\textsuperscript{29}

Another measurement of news magazine performance, William R. Oates' study of the social and ethical content in science stories in the three magazines, found that the amount of coverage the three magazines would give to scientific stories was related primarily to the amount of breaking news available. Oates found that it was difficult, if not impossible, to establish an index of social or ethical content without "... a standard by which to audit any level of social or ethical content. We still do not know what level may be considered high or low, responsible or negligent, for any story."\textsuperscript{30}

Justification of the Study

Because the news magazines serve as sources of information for journalists in other news media and for politically active segments of the populace, as noted in the Rivers and Key studies cited earlier, and for other groups not mentioned, it is important to be able to measure objectively


the bias inherent in each of the three news magazines. This study provides a method that can be used for a variety of articles over flexible time periods.

Limitations of the Study

This study does not attempt to delve into the conflict between Agnew and certain segments of the news media, other than to note that it did exist prior to the time period of the study and that the Nixon administration considered Time and Newsweek hostile and U. S. News & World Report friendly.\textsuperscript{31}

This study is not meant to be an all-inclusive examination of the coverage given to Agnew by the news magazines during the time period stated; it is solely concerned with the use of leaked material in the three news magazines and the attitudes toward the use of leaks as expressed by the news magazines.

This study is not an attempt to determine the guilt of Agnew regarding the charges made against him immediately before and during the time period of the study.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I provides the introduction and cites the reasons for the study and the methods used therein. Chapter II is an analysis of the data on attribution. Chapter III is an analysis of the data on leaks. Chapter IV is devoted to a summary of the findings and the conclusions drawn from them.

\textsuperscript{31}Keogh, op. cit.
CHAPTER II

ANALYSIS OF DATA: ATTRIBUTION

The sentences referring to Agnew were analyzed and classified in the categories of attributed or unattributed sentences. The attributed sentences were classified in the categories of full attribution, partial attribution, and blind attribution.

Tables I, II, and III present scores for attributed and unattributed sentences and the levels of attribution used by each magazine in its original reportage on Agnew during the time period of the study. The totals are given for each category; and the mean score and the mean score expressed as a percentage are given for each category.

The percentages in the attributed and unattributed columns indicate their relationships to the total number of sentences referring to Agnew in the sample. The percentages under the columns for full attribution, partial attribution, and blind attribution indicate their relationships to the total number of attributed sentences.

The percentages of attributed and unattributed sentences for each magazine over the time period of the study are plotted on Figure 1. Figure 2 shows the percentage of full
attributions out of the total number of attributed sentences for all three magazines over the time period of the study. Figure 3 shows the percentage of partial attributions out of the total number of attributed sentences for each magazine over the time period of the study, and Figure 4 gives the percentage of blind attributions out of the total number of attributed sentences for each magazine over the time period of the study.

**Time**

In its issue of August 20, 1973, *Time* published forty attributed sentences and sixty-five unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, twenty-six were fully attributed, four were partially attributed, and ten were blindly attributed.

In its issue of August 27, 1973, *Time* published twenty-one attributed sentences and twenty-one unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, eight were fully attributed, four were partially attributed, and nine were blindly attributed.

In its issue of September 3, 1973, *Time* published twenty attributed sentences and twenty-one unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, fourteen were fully attributed, none were partially attributed, and six were blindly attributed.
In its issue of September 10, 1973, Time published twelve attributed sentences and seventeen unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, five were fully attributed, four were partially attributed, and three were blindly attributed.

In its issue of September 17, 1973, Time published twenty-seven attributed sentences and fourteen unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, three were fully attributed, one was partially attributed, and twenty-three were blindly attributed.

In its issue of September 24, 1973, Time published fourteen attributed sentences and twenty-four unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, five were fully attributed, five were partially attributed, and four were blindly attributed.

In its issue of October 1, 1973, Time published fifty-nine attributed sentences and eighty-five unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, thirty were fully attributed, seven were partially attributed, and twenty-two were blindly attributed.

In its issue of October 8, 1973, Time published 72 attributed sentences and 150 unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, 64 were fully attributed, 6 were partially attributed, and 2 were blindly attributed.
In its issue of October 15, 1973, Time published forty-seven attributed sentences and sixty-five unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, thirty-six were fully attributed, three were partially attributed, and eight were blindly attributed.

In its issue of October 22, 1973, Time published 70 attributed sentences and 131 unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, 55 were fully attributed, 12 were partially attributed, and 3 were blindly attributed.

Time had a total of 382 attributed sentences and 593 unattributed sentences about Agnew over the time period of the study. Of the attributed sentences, 246 were fully attributed, 46 were partially attributed, and 90 were blindly attributed.

The coverage in Time started at a high level in August as the story broke, and then dropped in September as a lack of developments cut down the amount of story material available. The coverage increased during the last week of September and early weeks of October as Agnew's attorneys began their legal maneuvers, such as requesting that the case be heard by the House of Representatives and serving subpoenas on members of the news media and employees of the Department of Justice. The coverage reached its high point when Agnew resigned.
TABLE I

FREQUENCY OF ATTRIBUTED AND UNATTRIBUTED SENTENCES AND LEVELS OF ATtribution IN COVERAGE OF AGNEW IN TIME FROM AUGUST 20 TO OCTOBER 22, 1973, WITH MEAN SCORES AND MEAN SCORES EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cover Date</th>
<th>Attributed</th>
<th>Full Attribution</th>
<th>Partial Attribution</th>
<th>Blind Attribution</th>
<th>Unattributed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08-20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-27</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>08-03</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-17</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-01</td>
<td>59</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-08</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>150</td>
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<td>10-22</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>593</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>64.39%</td>
<td>12.04%</td>
<td>23.56%</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39.17%</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>60.82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The original reportage in a "typical" week's issue of *Time* concerning Agnew during the time period of the study would contain a mean of 38.3, or 39.17 per cent, attributed sentences and a mean of 59.3, or 60.82 per cent, unattributed sentences. Of the attributed sentences, a mean of 24.6, or 64.39 per cent, would be fully attributed; a mean of 4.6, or 12.04 per cent, would be partially attributed; and a mean of 9.0, or 23.56 per cent, would be blindly attributed.

The ratio for attributed to unattributed sentences in *Time* referring to Agnew during the time period of the study was approximately two to three. The proportion of full attributions to partial attributions to blind attributions was approximately six to one to two. (See Table I.)

The issues of *Time* for September 17 and October 1, 1973, contain half of the blind attributions used by the magazine in the sample. In the September 17 issue, a "friend and advisor" was cited as the source for ten of the blindly attributed statements, and "a source close to the investigation" was cited as the source for thirteen statements.¹

In the October 1 issue, sources close to the investigation were cited as the sources for twelve blindly attributed statements.

¹"Two Conflicting Agnew Scenarios," *Time*, 102 (September 17 1973), 16.
attributed statements, Agnew staff workers for eight statements, a senior Republican for one statement, and White House officials for one statement.²

Thus, in the two issues of Time with the heaviest use of blind attribution, twenty-six of the forty-five blind attributions were from potentially hostile or neutral sources (sources close to the investigation and White House officials), and nineteen from potentially friendly or neutral sources ("friend and advisor," staff workers, and "senior Republican").

Newsweek

In its issue for August 20, 1973, Newsweek published seventy attributed and ninety-five unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, twenty-six were fully attributed, six were partially attributed, and forty-one were blindly attributed.

In its issue for August 27, 1973, Newsweek published fourteen attributed sentences and twenty-one unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, six were fully attributed, five were partially attributed, and three were blindly attributed.

In its issue of September 3, 1973, Newsweek published thirty-two attributed sentences and twenty-four unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, twenty-two were fully attributed, none were partially attributed, and ten were blindly attributed.

In its issue of September 10, 1973, Newsweek published twelve attributed sentences and twenty-three unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, none were fully attributed, four were partially attributed, and eight were blindly attributed.

In its issue of September 17, 1973, Newsweek published four attributed sentences and six unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, three were fully attributed, none were partially attributed, and one was blindly attributed.

In its issue of September 24, 1973, Newsweek published nineteen attributed sentences and thirty-seven unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, three were fully attributed, two were partially attributed, and fourteen were blindly attributed.

In its issue of October 1, 1973, Newsweek published sixty-nine attributed sentences and fifty-five unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, nineteen were fully attributed, four were partially attributed, and forty-six were blindly attributed.
In its issue of October 8, 1973, *Newsweek* published 103 attributed sentences and 99 unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, 68 were fully attributed, 11 were partially attributed, and 24 were blindly attributed.

In its issue of October 15, 1973, *Newsweek* published twenty-six attributed sentences and forty-nine unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, thirteen were fully attributed, seven were partially attributed, and six were blindly attributed.

In its issue of October 22, 1973, *Newsweek* published 123 attributed sentences and 103 unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, 57 were fully attributed, 48 were partially attributed, and 18 were blindly attributed.

*Newsweek* had a total of 472 attributed sentences and 512 unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, 217 were fully attributed, 84 were partially attributed, and 171 were blindly attributed.

The coverage in *Newsweek* followed a pattern similar to that in *Time*, starting high in August when the story broke and then dropping in September, to increase again in October as events built to a climax.
TABLE II

FREQUENCY OF ATTRIBUTED AND UNATTRIBUTED SENTENCES AND LEVELS OF ATTRIBUTION IN COVERAGE OF AGNEW IN NEWSWEEK FROM AUGUST 20 TO OCTOBER 22, 1973, WITH MEAN SCORES AND MEAN SCORES EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cover Date</th>
<th>Attribution</th>
<th>Full Attribution</th>
<th>Partial Attribution</th>
<th>Blind Attribution</th>
<th>Unattributed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08-20</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>95</td>
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<tr>
<td>08-27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-03</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-01</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-08</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-22</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>45.97%</td>
<td>17.79%</td>
<td>36.22%</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.96%</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>52.04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A "typical" week's original reportage on Agnew in *Newsweek* during the time period of the study would contain a mean of 47.2, or 47.96 per cent, attributed sentences and 51.2, or 52.04 per cent, unattributed sentences. Of the attributed sentences, a mean of 21.7, or 45.97 per cent, would be fully attributed; 8.4, or 17.79 per cent, would be partially attributed; and 17.1, or 36.22 per cent, would be blindly attributed.

The ratio of attributed sentences to unattributed sentences in the original reportage on Agnew in *Newsweek* during the time period of the study was approximately nine to ten. The proportion of full attributions to partial attributions to blind attributions was approximately five to two to four. (See Table II.)

The issues of *Newsweek* for August 20 and October 1, 1973, contain over half of the blind attributions used by the magazine in its original reportage on Agnew. In the August 20 issue, Agnew's associates were cited as the sources for twelve blindly attributed statements, White House officials were cited ten times, sources close to the investigation nine times, high Republican officials five times, Department of Justice officials three times, and Maryland state politicians two times.³

In the October 1 issue, White House officials were cited as the sources for blindly attributed statements fourteen times, Agnew's associates were cited twelve times, sources close to the investigation nine times, Republican officials six times, Department of Justice officials four times, and an "informed observer" one time. 4

Thus, of the eighty-seven blind attributions used by Newsweek in the two issues, forty-nine were from sources potentially hostile or neutral to Agnew (White House officials, sources close to the investigation, Department of Justice officials, and the "informed observer"), and thirty-eight were from sources potentially friendly or neutral to Agnew (Agnew's associates, Republican officials, and Maryland state politicians).

U. S. News & World Report

In its issue of August 20, 1973, U. S. News & World Report published sixteen attributed sentences and twenty-three unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, fifteen were fully attributed, none were partially attributed, and one was blindly attributed.

In its issue of August 27, 1973, *U. S. News & World Report* published one attributed sentence and four unattributed sentences about Agnew. The attributed sentence was a full attribution.

In its issue of September 3, 1973, *U. S. News & World Report* published sixteen attributed sentences and six unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, fourteen were fully attributed, none were partially attributed, and two were blindly attributed.


In its issue of October 1, 1973, *U. S. News & World Report* published sixty-one attributed sentences and forty-seven unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, twenty were fully attributed, three were partially attributed, and thirty-eight were blindly attributed.

In its issue of October 8, 1973, *U. S. News & World Report* published sixty-one attributed sentences and fifty-three
unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, thirty-eight were fully attributed, two were partially attributed, and twenty-one were blindly attributed.

In its issue of October 15, 1973, *U. S. News & World Report* published thirty-eight attributed sentences and seventeen unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, twenty-one were fully attributed, seven were partially attributed, and ten were blindly attributed.

In its issue of October 22, 1973, *U. S. News & World Report* published forty-three attributed sentences and thirty-one unattributed sentences about Agnew. Of the attributed sentences, twenty-three were fully attributed, one was partially attributed, and nineteen were blindly attributed.

*U. S. News & World Report* published 243 attributed sentences and 192 unattributed sentences about Agnew over the time period of the study. Of the attributed sentences, 134 were fully attributed, 13 were partially attributed, and 96 were blindly attributed.

The coverage in *U. S. News & World Report* started high in August when the story broke, dropped off through September, and increased in October. The stories in *U. S. News & World Report* were devoted mainly to giving Agnew's side of the story while the stories in *Time* and *Newsweek* were developed from sources in the Department of Justice and White House as well as Agnew's associates.
# TABLE III

Frequency of attributed and unattributed sentences and levels of attribution in coverage of Agnew in U.S. News & World Report from August 20 to October 22, 1973, with mean scores and mean scores expressed as percentages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cover Date</th>
<th>Attrited =</th>
<th>Full Attribution</th>
<th>Partial Attribution</th>
<th>Blind Attribution</th>
<th>Unattributed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08-20</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-03</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-10*</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-01</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-08</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-22</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>243</strong></td>
<td><strong>134</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td><strong>96</strong></td>
<td><strong>192</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Mean       | 24.3       | 13.4              | 1.3                 | 9.6               | 19.2         |
| **%**      | **(100%)** | **55.14%**        | **5.34%**           | **39.50%**        | **...**      |
|            | **55.86%** | **...**           | **...**             | **...**           | **44.13%**   |

*No coverage of Agnew in this issue.
A "typical" week's original reportage on Agnew in *U. S. News & World Report* during the time period of the study would contain a mean of 24.3, or 55.86 per cent, attributed sentences and 19.2, or 44.13 per cent, unattributed sentences. Of the attributed sentences, a mean of 13.4, or 55.14 per cent, would be fully attributed; 1.3, or 5.34 per cent, would be partially attributed; and 9.6, or 39.50 per cent, would be blindly attributed.

The ratio of attributed sentences to unattributed sentences in the original reportage on Agnew in *U. S. News & World Report* during the time period of the study was approximately five to four. The proportion of full attributions to partial attributions to blind attributions was approximately five to one to four.

The issues of *U. S. News & World Report* for October 1, and October 8, 1973, contained more than half of the blind attributions used by the magazine in the sample. In the October 1 issue, Republicans were cited as the sources for thirteen blindly attributed statements, legal experts were cited eleven times, Agnew's close friends and supporters six times, politicians five times, a "well-informed source" one time, Democratic leaders one time, and an Agnew critic one time.5

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In the October 8 issue, Agnew's friends and supporters were cited as the sources for nine blindly attributed statements, Republicans were cited six times, accounts published elsewhere four times, and Democratic leaders one time.6

Thus, of the forty-nine blind attributions used in the two issues of *U. S. News & World Report*, forty-two were from sources potentially friendly or neutral to Agnew (friends and supporters, legal experts, Republicans, politicians, and the "well-informed source") and seven were from sources potentially hostile or neutral to Agnew (Democratic leaders, reports from other publications, and the Agnew critic).

**Time, Newsweek, and U. S. News & World Report**

The week-by-week use of attributed and unattributed sentences for all three magazines over the time period of the study was converted to percentages, with the total number of sentences per given week equal to 100 per cent for the given magazine.

In their issues of August 20, 1973, *Time* had 38.09 per cent attributed sentences and 61.89 per cent unattributed sentences, *Newsweek* had 42.42 per cent attributed sentences and 57.47 per cent unattributed sentences, and *U. S. News & World Report* had 41.02 per cent attributed sentences and 58.98 per cent unattributed sentences about Agnew.

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In their issues of August 27, 1973, Time had 50 per cent attributed sentences and 50 per cent unattributed sentences, Newsweek had 40 per cent attributed sentences and 60 per cent unattributed sentences, and U. S. News & World Report had 20 per cent attributed sentences and 80 per cent unattributed sentences about Agnew.

In their issues of September 3, 1973, Time had 48.78 per cent attributed sentences and 51.21 per cent unattributed sentences, Newsweek had 57.14 per cent attributed sentences and 42.85 per cent unattributed sentences, and U. S. News & World Report had 72.72 per cent attributed sentences and 27.27 per cent unattributed sentences about Agnew.

In their issues of September 10, 1973, Time had 41.37 per cent attributed sentences and 58.62 per cent unattributed sentences, Newsweek had 34.28 per cent attributed sentences and 65.71 per cent unattributed sentences, and U. S. News & World Report had no sentences about Agnew.

In their issues of September 17, 1973, Time had 65.85 per cent attributed sentences and 34.15 per cent unattributed sentences, Newsweek had 40 per cent attributed sentences and 60 per cent unattributed sentences, and U. S. News & World Report had 28.57 per cent attributed sentences and 71.42 per cent unattributed sentences about Agnew.

In their issues of September 24, 1973, Time had 36.84 per cent attributed sentences and 63.15 per cent unattributed
sentences, Newsweek had 33.92 per cent attributed sentences and 66.08 per cent unattributed sentences, and U. S. News & World Report had 45.45 per cent attributed sentences and 54.54 per cent unattributed sentences about Agnew.

In their issues of October 1, 1973, Time had 40.97 per cent attributed sentences and 59.02 per cent unattributed sentences, Newsweek had 55.64 per cent attributed sentences and 44.35 per cent unattributed sentences, and U. S. News & World Report had 56.48 per cent attributed sentences and 43.51 per cent unattributed sentences about Agnew.

In their issues of October 8, 1973, Time had 32.43 per cent attributed sentences and 67.56 per cent unattributed sentences, Newsweek had 50.99 per cent attributed sentences and 49.01 per cent unattributed sentences, and U. S. News & World Report had 53.51 per cent attributed sentences and 46.49 per cent unattributed sentences about Agnew.

In their issues of October 15, 1973, Time had 41.96 per cent attributed sentences and 58.03 per cent unattributed sentences, Newsweek had 34.66 per cent attributed sentences and 65.33 per cent unattributed sentences, and U. S. News & World Report had 69.09 per cent attributed sentences and 30.90 per cent unattributed sentences about Agnew.

In their issues of October 22, 1973, Time had 34.82 per cent attributed sentences and 65.17 per cent unattributed sentences, Newsweek had 54.42 per cent attributed sentences
and 45.57 per cent unattributed sentences, and *U. S. News & World Report* had 58.1 per cent attributed sentences and 41.89 per cent unattributed sentences about Agnew.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of attributed and unattributed sentences in each of the three magazines over the time period of the study. The area above the tracks up to the 100-per cent level represents the amount of unattributed material, and the area below the tracks represents the amount of attributed material. The track for *U. S. News & World Report* stops at September 3 and resumes at September 17 because of an absence of coverage in the September 10 issue.

The coverage in all three magazines started high in August when the story broke, dropped off in September as a lack of developments in the case cut down on the amount of story material, and then increased in October as events reached a climax. It should be noted that the values plotted on Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 are relative values and may show large swings with only small changes in the absolute number of sentences involved. Therefore, the values for August 20 and 27 are based on a relatively high number of sentences, the values for September 3, 10, 17, and 24 are based on a relatively low number of sentences, and the values for October 1, 8, 15, and 22 are based on a relatively high number of sentences for each magazine.
Fig. 1--The percentage of attributed sentences in Time, Newsweek, and U. S. News & World Report about Agnew over the ten-week span of the study.

Full Attribution

In their issues of August 20, 1973, full attributions accounted for 65 per cent of the attributions in Time, 37.14 per cent of the attributions in Newsweek, and 93.75 per cent of the attributions in U. S. News & World Report in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of August 27, 1973, full attributions accounted for 38.09 per cent of the attributions in Time,
42.85 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and 100 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of September 3, 1973, full attributions accounted for 70 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 68.75 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and 87.50 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of September 10, 1973, full attributions account for 41.66 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, none of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and none of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report*, which had no coverage of Agnew while the other two magazines did.

In their issues of September 17, 1973, full attributions accounted for 11.11 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 75 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and 100 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of September 24, 1973, full attributions accounted for 35.71 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 15.78 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and none of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.
In their issues of October 1, 1973, full attributions accounted for 50.84 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 27.53 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and 32.78 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of October 8, 1973, full attributions accounted for 88.88 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 66.01 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and 62.29 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of October 15, 1973, full attributions accounted for 76.59 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 26.92 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and 55.26 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of October 22, 1973, full attributions accounted for 78.57 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 46.34 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and 53.48 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

Figure 2 shows the percentage of full attributions out of the total number of attributions in the coverage of Agnew in the three magazines over the time period of the study.
Fig. 2--The percentage of full attributions in the coverage of Agnew in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U. S. News & World Report* during the time period of the study.

The track for *U. S. News & World Report* stops at September 3 and resumes at September 17 because of an absence of coverage in the September 10 issue.

Partial Attribution

In their issues of August 20, 1973, partial attributions accounted for 10 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 4.28
per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and none of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of August 27, 1973, partial attributions accounted for 19.04 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 35.71 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and none of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of September 3, 1973, partial attributions accounted for none of the attributions in any of the three magazines in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of September 10, 1973, partial attributions accounted for 33.33 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 33.33 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and none of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report*, which did not have any coverage of Agnew in that issue.

In their issues of September 17, 1973, partial attributions accounted for 3.7 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, none of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and none of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of September 24, 1973, partial attributions accounted for 35.71 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 10.52 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and none of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.
In their issues of October 1, 1973, partial attributions accounted for 11.86 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 5.79 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and 4.91 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of October 8, 1973, partial attributions accounted for 8.33 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 10.67 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek* and 3.27 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of October 15, 1973, partial attributions accounted for 6.38 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 26.92 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and 18.42 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of October 22, 1973, partial attributions accounted for 17.14 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 39.02 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and 2.32 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of partial attributions out of the total number of attributions in the coverage of Agnew in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U. S. News & World Report* over the ten-week span of the study. The tracks of *Time* and *Newsweek* are superimposed between September 3 and September 10 because the values expressed for both magazines are the same. The track
for *U. S. News & World Report* begins at September 24 because October 1 was the first time the magazine used partial attribution in its coverage of Agnew.

![Graph showing the percentage of partial attributions in the coverage of Agnew in *Time, Newsweek, and U. S. News & World Report* during the time period of the study.]

**Time**

*Newsweek*

*U. S. News & World Report*

Fig. 3--The percentage of partial attributions in the coverage of Agnew in *Time, Newsweek, and U. S. News & World Report* during the time period of the study.

**Blind Attributions**

In their issues of August 20, 1973, blind attributions accounted for 25 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 58.57
per cent of the attributions in Newsweek, and 6.25 per cent of the attributions in U. S. News & World Report in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of August 27, 1973, blind attributions accounted for 42.85 per cent of the attributions in Time, 21.52 per cent of the attributions in Newsweek, and none of the attributions in U. S. News & World Report in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of September 3, 1973, blind attributions accounted for 30 per cent of the attributions in Time, 31.25 per cent of the attributions in Newsweek, and 12.5 per cent of the attributions in U. S. News & World Report in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of September 10, 1973, blind attributions accounted for 25 per cent of the attributions in Time and 66.66 per cent of the attributions in Newsweek in the coverage of Agnew in that issue.

In their issues of September 17, 1973, blind attributions accounted for 85.18 per cent of the attributions in Time, 25 per cent of the attributions in Newsweek, and none of the attributions in U. S. News & World Report in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of September 24, 1973, blind attributions accounted for 28.57 per cent of the attributions in Time,
73.68 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and 100 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of October 1, 1973, blind attributions accounted for 2.77 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek* and 34.42 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of October 8, 1973, blind attributions accounted for 2.77 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 23.3 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and 34.42 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of October 15, 1973, blind attributions accounted for 17.02 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 23.07 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and 26.31 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

In their issues of October 22, 1973, blind attributions accounted for 4.28 per cent of the attributions in *Time*, 14.63 per cent of the attributions in *Newsweek*, and 44.18 per cent of the attributions in *U. S. News & World Report* in the coverage of Agnew.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of blind attributions out of the total number of attributions in the coverage of Agnew in the three magazines over the time period of the study.
Figure 4--The percentage of blind attributions in the coverage of Agnew in *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U. S. News & World Report* during the time period of the study.

The track for *U. S. News & World Report* stops at September 3 and resumes at September 17 because of an absence of coverage in the September 10 issue.
CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DATA: LEAKS

The sentences referring to Agnew were analyzed for mentions of leaks; and the mentions were classified into the categories of favorable/attributed, favorable/unattributed, unfavorable/attributed, and unfavorable/unattributed.

The signed editorial comments on the topic of leaks appearing in the three magazines during the time period of the study were extracted for comparison with the scores for the mentions of leaks in the news stories to determine the attitude of each magazine towards leaks and their use.

Tables IV, V, and VI give the scores for the mentions of leaks in the four categories, the total for each category, the mean score for each category, and the mean score expressed as a percentage for each category. The signed editorial comments precede the scores and the table.

Time

A letter signed by Henry A. Grunwald, the managing editor of Time, gave that magazine's position in the controversy over leaks:

Time believes . . . it was entirely legitimate and in the public interest to print information about this . . . affair. We know well that the
public's right to be informed can conflict, or appear to conflict, with the right of the accused to make his defense in an impartial atmosphere and before an impartial jury. . . .

We also believe that a reporter should not be required to disclose confidential sources except in the most compelling circumstances, such as imminent danger of loss of life, or if the reporter had essential information on a violent crime . . . or danger to the national security. None of these factors apply in the present situation. ¹

In its issue of August 20, 1973, Time had no mention of leaks.

In its issue of August 27, 1973, Time had no mention of leaks.

In its issue of September 3, 1973, Time had one favorable/attributed mention and eleven unfavorable/attributed mentions of leaks.

In its issue of September 10, 1973, Time had no mention of leaks.

In its issue of September 17, 1973, Time had no mention of leaks.

In its issue of September 24, 1973, Time had no mention of leaks.

In its issue of October 1, 1973, Time had three unfavorable/attributed mentions and two unfavorable/unattributed mentions of leaks.

In its issue of October 8, 1973, Time had eleven favorable/attributed mentions, two favorable/unattributed mentions, and twenty-two unfavorable/attributed mentions of leaks.

In its issue of October 15, 1973, Time had nine favorable/attributed mentions, fifteen favorable/unattributed mentions, eleven unfavorable/attributed mentions, and nine unfavorable/unattributed mentions.

In its issue of October 22, 1973, Time had ten favorable/attributed mentions, five favorable/unattributed mentions, two unfavorable/attributed mention, and one unfavorable/unattributed mention of leaks.

Time had a total of thirty-one favorable/attributed mentions, twenty-two favorable/unattributed mention, forty-nine unfavorable/attributed mentions, and twelve unfavorable/unattributed mentions of leaks in its original reportage on Agnew during the time period of the study.
## TABLE IV

MENTS OF LEAKS IN COVERAGE OF AGNEW IN TIME
FROM AUGUST 20 TO OCTOBER 22, 1973, WITH
MEAN SCORES AND MEAN SCORES EXPRESSED
AS PERCENTAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cover Date</th>
<th>Favorable/Attributed</th>
<th>Favorable/Unattributed</th>
<th>Unfavorable/Attributed</th>
<th>Unfavorable/Unattributed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08-20</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>08-27</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-03</td>
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<td>11</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-10</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-24</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-01</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-08</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>%</strong></td>
<td>27.19%</td>
<td>19.29%</td>
<td>42.98%</td>
<td>10.52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a "typical" week's reportage on Agnew in *Time*, there would be 12.4 mentions of leaks, of which 3.1, or 27.19 per cent, would be favorable/attributed; 2.2, or 19.29 per cent,
would be favorable/unattributed; 4.9, or 42.98 per cent, would be unfavorable/attributed; and 1.2, or 10.52 per cent, would be unfavorable/unattributed. (See Table IV.)

**Newsweek**

*Newsweek* set forth its views on leaks in an article signed by Russell Watson in its "Media" section. The article said in part:

The press prints leaks out of principle (the public's "right to know") and self interest (to stay ahead of the competition), and when an Administration refuses to talk, newsmen rely on leaks more than ever. For their part, those notorious "informed sources" have an even wider variety of motives for revealing secrets, ranging from principle to self interest to a lack of caution to a simple love of gossip. . . .

The ethics of news leaks depends very much on the situation. . . .

Wholly innocent public officials may be harmed by news leaks, for careers can be shattered by rumors and suspicions alone. But then unfair publicity is an occupational hazard in politics. Preserving individual reputations is less important than giving the public the information it needs—at a time it needs most to know.  

In its issue of August 20, 1973, *Newsweek* had one unfavorable/unattributed mention of a leak.

In its issue of August 27, 1973, *Newsweek* had no mention of leaks.

In its issue of September 3, 1973, *Newsweek* had seven unfavorable/attributed mentions and two unfavorable/unattributed mentions of leaks.

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In its issue of September 10, 1973, Newsweek had one unfavorable/unattributed mention of a leak.

In its issue of September 17, 1973, Newsweek had one favorable/unattributed mention of leaks.

In its issue of September 24, 1973, Newsweek had one favorable/unattributed mention of leaks.

In its issue of October 1, 1973, Newsweek had one favorable/attributed mention, eight favorable/unattributed mentions, twelve unfavorable/attributed mentions, and one unfavorable/unattributed mention of leaks.

In its issue of October 8, 1973, Newsweek had one favorable/attributed mention, one favorable/unattributed mention, twelve unfavorable/attributed mentions, and one unfavorable/unattributed mention of leaks.

In its issue of October 15, 1973, Newsweek had eight favorable/attributed mentions, five favorable/unattributed mentions, eleven unfavorable/attributed mentions, and two unfavorable/unattributed mentions of leaks.

In its issue of October 22, 1973, Newsweek had two unfavorable/attributed mentions and one unfavorable/unattributed mention of leaks.

Newsweek had a total of ten favorable/attributed mentions, fifteen favorable/unattributed mentions, thirty-five unfavorable/unattributed mentions and eleven unfavorable/unattributed mentions of leaks in its original reportage on Agnew during the time period of the study.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cover Date</th>
<th>Favorable/Attributed</th>
<th>Favorable/Unattributed</th>
<th>Unfavorable/Attributed</th>
<th>Unfavorable/Unattributed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>08-20</td>
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<td>08-27</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-03</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-17</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-24</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-01</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-08</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-22</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>14.08%</td>
<td>21.12%</td>
<td>49.29%</td>
<td>15.49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In a "typical" week's reportage on Agnew in Newsweek, there would be 7.1 mentions of leaks, of which 1.0, or 14.08 per cent, would be favorable/attributed; 1.5, or 21.12 per
would be favorable/unattributed; 3.5, or 49.29 per cent, would be unfavorable/attributed; and 1.1, or 15.49 per cent, would be unfavorable/unattributed. (See Table V.)

U. S. News & World Report

U. S. News & World Report was the first of the three magazines to set forth its views on leaks when Howard Flieger did so in a signed editorial in the August 27, 1973, issue. Flieger attacked the use of leaks, saying in part:

Leaks can kill by ambush. In the first place the individual who springs the "leak" is unidentified. If he has material evidence to establish his point, the public has no way of verifying it.

How can people judge the information if they don't even know the identity of the informant ...? Are his the leaker's motives objective or selfish? Is he out to see justice done, or to destroy a foe--or perhaps to cover his own tracks?

The ... careful journalist sought to get the rumor--the "leak"--converted into a signature-bearing report or formal charge in court. If the information would not stand that test, then it would not deserve to be blindly passed along to the public.


In its issue of August 27, 1973, U. S. News & World Report had one unfavorable/unattributed mention of a leak.


In its issue of September 10, 1973, U. S. News & World Report had no coverage of Agnew.

In its issue of September 17, 1973, U. S. News & World Report had eleven unfavorable/attributed mentions and one unfavorable/unattributed mention of leaks.

In its issue of September 24, 1973, U. S. News & World Report had one unfavorable/unattributed mention of leaks.

In its issue of October 1, 1973, U. S. News & World Report had eleven unfavorable/attributed mentions and one unfavorable/unattributed mention of leaks.

In its issue of October 8, 1973, U. S. News & World Report had ten unfavorable/attributed mentions and five unfavorable/unattributed mentions of leaks.

In its issue of October 15, 1973, U. S. News & World Report had three unfavorable/attributed mentions and one unfavorable/unattributed mention of leaks.

TABLE VI
MENTIONS OF LEAKS IN COVERAGE OF AGNEW IN U. S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT FROM AUGUST 20 TO OCTOBER 22, 1973, WITH MEAN SCORES AND MEAN SCORES EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cover Date</th>
<th>Favorable/Attributed</th>
<th>Favorable/Unattributed</th>
<th>Unfavorable/Attributed</th>
<th>Unfavorable/Unattributed</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>08-20</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>08-27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-03</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-10*</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09-17</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>10-22</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>79.06%</td>
<td>20.93%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No coverage of Agnew in this issue.

In a "typical" week's reportage on Agnew in U. S. News & World Report, there would be 4.3 mentions of leaks, of which none would be favorable; 3.4, or 79.06 per cent, would be unfavorable/attributed; and 0.9, or 20.93 per cent, would be unfavorable/unattributed. (See Table VI.)
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

*Time*, *Newsweek* and *U. S. News & World Report* all used approximately equivalent amounts of information from concealed sources in their original reportage on Agnew during the time period of the study. *U. S. News & World Report* had the highest percentage of blind attributions in its total attributions, 39.5 per cent compared to 36.22 per cent for *Newsweek* and 23.56 for *Time*.

The first hypothesis, that *Time* and *Newsweek* would use more material from unauthorized sources hostile to Agnew than would *U. S. News & World Report*, is accepted. Although *U. S. News & World Report* may have used a higher percentage of blindly attributed material than the other two magazines, the nature of the sources alluded to by *U. S. News & World Report* was predominately friendly or neutral to Agnew, while the other two magazines made greater use of sources that were potentially hostile or neutral to Agnew. At least half of the blind attributions used by each magazine in its coverage of Agnew over the time period of the study were analyzed, and the results supported the first hypothesis as stated above.

The second hypothesis, that *Time* and *Newsweek* would display more favorable attitudes towards leaks and defend their use, was accepted on the basis of editorial comment extracted from the two magazines and other data (Tables IV and
V). In its original reportage on Agnew, *Time* had thirty-one favorable/attributed mentions of leaks, twenty-two favorable/unattributed mentions, forty-nine unfavorable/attributed mentions, and twelve unfavorable/unattributed mentions during the time period of the study.

In its original reportage on Agnew, *Newsweek* had ten favorable/attributed mentions of leaks, fifteen favorable/unattributed mentions, thirty-five unfavorable/attributed mentions, and eleven unfavorable/unattributed mentions during the time period of the study.

In their editorial comments on leaks, both magazines asserted that the public's right to be informed had to be served, even at the cost of individual reputations. The right of journalists to use information while concealing its source was also supported by both magazines.

The third hypothesis, that *U.S. News & World Report* would display an unfavorable attitude toward leaks and attack their use, was accepted on the basis of editorial comment extracted from that magazine and other data (Table VI). *U.S. News & World Report* had no favorable mentions of leaks in its original reportage on Agnew, and there were thirty-four unfavorable/attributed mentions and nine unfavorable/unattributed mentions during the time period of the study.

*U.S. News & World Report* held that the use of leaks was prejudicial to the rights of an accused person, that
information presented in the form of leaks was difficult to evaluate or verify, and that the use of the information before it became part of an official record was premature.

The high number of unfavorable/attributed mentions of leaks in all three magazines is because the people most likely to be quoted, such as Agnew, Richardson, Hoffman, and Nixon, all had reason to condemn leaks when speaking for public consumption. *Time* and *Newsweek* did seek out people who would go on record as speaking in favor of leaks; but *U. S. News & World Report* did not make the effort to achieve any degree of balance on the topic of leaks.

Robert C. Maynard of the *Washington Post* examined the material that was leaked concerning Agnew and compared it to what was contained in the forty-page document filed by the Department of Justice detailing the charges and evidence against Agnew. Maynard found that

First, it is obvious that a number of sources—not just people in the Justice Department—were being quoted. Some really were "reliable" sources; others were shaky. The stories vary from accurate to grossly inaccurate when compared to the case the government swore to the court it had developed.

Second, while key elements in the case did indeed worm their way into public view, the vast body of evidence contained in the information remained essentially undisclosed until released by the prosecutors.

Third, for all the potentially damaging disclosures, much that was favorable to the Vice President was also reported.¹

Although Maynard was referring specifically to the coverage in the *Washington Post*, his remarks can be applied to the news magazines with little or no change.

One of the main dangers in using leaked material is the ability of a source to manipulate a news medium into advancing the objectives of the source at the expense of truth or accuracy. The news medium may be aware that it is being manipulated and may choose not to pass on this information. A case in point is found in *U. S. News & World Report*:

Earlier news reports that Mr. Agnew had been "plea bargaining" to resign the Vice Presidency in return for leniency are regarded as another example of a damaging "leak" from those out to get the Vice President.

"I instituted no plea bargaining. My lawyers instituted no plea bargaining. If there was any plea bargaining, it came from the other side." 2

At the time the article was printed, one round of plea bargaining had been started at the request of the White House but called off by Agnew after reports of the session had surfaced in the news media. 3 A second round of plea bargaining would be started at Agnew's request within days after the article was published, and Agnew would agree to resign in return for leniency. 4 A reader with nothing more to go on than the *U. S. News & World Report* story would be led to

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4 Ibid., p. 304.
believe that no plea bargaining had gone on (although Agnew was being technically accurate when he said the "other side" had started it) or was likely to take place, and Agnew was going to fight to the last to stay in office.

*Time* and *Newsweek* both used information from the Department of Justice, which was being run by an Attorney General who saw the resignation of Agnew as "the most direct, desirable way to serve the public interest." The Department was serving its own interest when, "beginning in May and continuing to the very day that the news Agnew was under investigation surfaced, . . . the prosecutors repeatedly lied to the press."6

Most news coverage is intended to answer these questions: Who did it? What was done? When was it done? Where was it done? Why was it done? And how was it done? When statements from concealed sources are used, the questions should be: Who said it? What was said? When was it said? Where was it said? Why was it said? And how was it said? The "how" and "what" questions are the easiest to answer, but the "who," "why," "where," and "when" questions are often left unanswered, to the detriment of the news media consumer.

The news magazines and other news media should make an effort to give the motivation of a source that insists on concealment so that a reader can better evaluate the

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information he is given. The news magazines and other news media could make clear their own motives for using information from concealed or unauthorized sources.

Because the news magazines are unlikely to begin revealing their motives and the motives of their sources for releasing information with only blind attribution to guide the reader, it will be up to the reader to be aware of what questions are being left unanswered, and to seek out the answers by consulting a variety of news media, and comparing what each has to say.

A person wishing to get the most complete account of what happened during the decline and fall of Agnew could do so by reading all three magazines over the ten-week span. The next best thing to do would be to read a combination of *Time* and *U. S. News & World Report* or *Newsweek* and *U. S. News & World Report*, because either of these combinations would give the reader both sides of the issue. A combination of *Time* and *Newsweek* would involve a high degree of overlapping coverage without giving much in the way of opposing viewpoints. Any one of the magazines by itself would not give a balanced picture of what transpired.

**Suggestions for Further Study**

A further study centering on the unattributed material in each of the three magazines would be useful in evaluating the performance of the magazines in controversial issues. The
study could attempt to measure how much of the unattributed material is expository in nature, how much is devoted to the expression of opinion, and how much could have or should have been attributed. The major difficulty with such a study would be the devising of categories that would cover all the possibilities without a high degree of overlap which would tend to confuse the data generated in the study. Too great a proliferation of categories would also tend to dilute the data.
APPENDIX A

The following articles were the sources of data for this study.

*Time*


"In the Bull's Eye," *Time*, 102 (September 17, 1973), 71.


"Two Conflicting Agnew Scenarios," *Time*, 102, (September 17, 1973), 16.


*Newsweek*


"Did Agnew Get Off Too Easy?" *Newsweek*, LXXXII (October 22, 1973), 50.

"The Fall of Mr. Law and Order," *Newsweek*, LXXXII (October 22, 1973), 26-30, 35-36.

"From Burr to Calhoun to Colfax to Agnew," *Newsweek*, LXXXII (October 8, 1973), 34.

"How Strong is the Case?" *Newsweek*, LXXXII (October 8, 1973), 33.


"The Spiro Agnew 'Papers,'" *Newsweek*, LXXXII (October 22, 1973), 45, 49.

"Spiro Strikes Back: 'I Intend To Fight,'" *Newsweek*, LXXXII (October 8, 1973), 30-35.


**U. S. News & World Report**


"We Can Survive This Mess," U. S. News & World Report, LXXV


APPENDIX B

The following articles appeared in *Time*, *Newsweek*, or *U. S. News & World Report* during the time period of the study, but were not included in the sample. The articles were classified into three categories: full texts of statements or documents made by persons involved in the incident, signed columns, and articles related to the case but not specifically referring to Agnew.

**Full Texts**


**Signed Columns**


"Luck Runs Out," Newsweek, LXXXII (October 8, 1973), 120.

"Terra Incognita," Newsweek, LXXXII (October 8, 1973), 120.


Related Articles


"Picking a New No. 2," Time, 102 (September 17, 1973), 16, 21.

"Such Good Friends," Time, 102 (October 15, 1973), 79.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Carney, Thomas F., Content Analysis; a technique for systematic interference from communications, Winnipeg, University of Manitoba Press, 1972.


Publications of Learned Organizations


Articles
