

379  
N81  
NO. 5355

AN ANALYSIS OF COMMUNITY ATTITUDES TOWARD THE BOWIE NEWS  
AS A NEWS-ADVERTISING MEDIUM

THESIS

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

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

James Daniel Whitfield, B. J.

Denton, Texas

May, 1977

JSK

Whitfield, James Daniel, An Analysis of Community Attitudes Toward the Bowie News as a News-Advertising Medium. Master of Arts (Journalism), May, 1977, 72 pp., 7 tables, 1 figure, bibliography, 11 titles.

This study measured attitudes of newspaper staff members, advertisers, subscribers, and power structure members toward the Bowie News as a news and advertising medium. Three hypotheses were tested: that members of the power structure would have a more favorable attitude toward the Bowie News than other readers; that the Bowie News would play an active role as an instrument of the power structure; and that all four publics would differ in their perception of the newspaper's role in getting information to the community.

The hypotheses were tested by a t test and rejected. Publics' attitudes were homogeneous. It was concluded that the Bowie News reflects consensus opinion within the community and is a trusted news source.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES . . . . .	iv
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS . . . . .	v
 Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Statement of the Problem	
Hypotheses	
Related Studies	
Justification	
Definition of Terms	
Limitations	
Methodology	
Organization	
II. A HISTORY OF BOWIE AND THE <u>NEWS</u> . . . . .	12
III. GROUP COMPARISONS ON CLOSED-ENDED STATEMENTS . . . . .	19
IV. COMPARISONS BETWEEN GROUPS ON CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURES . . . . .	59
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	68
APPENDIX I . . . . .	73
APPENDIX II . . . . .	81
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	82

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Rank-Order of Newspaper Staff's Means on Statements Relating to the <u>Bowie News</u> as a News-Advertising Medium . . . . .	22
II. Rank-Order of Advertisers' Means on Statements Relating to the <u>Bowie News</u> as a News-Advertising Medium . . . . .	29
III. Rank-Order of Subscribers' Means on Statements Relating to the <u>Bowie News</u> as a News-Advertising Medium . . . . .	36
IV. Rank-Order of Power Structure Members' Means on Statements Relating to the <u>Bowie News</u> as a News-Advertising Medium . . . . .	44
V. <u>t</u> Values Showing Significant Differences Between Responses of Advertisers, Subscribers, and Power Structure Members in Relation With Responses of Newspaper Staff Members . . . . .	52
VI. Comparison of Mean Scores on Four Functions . . . . .	56
VII. Four Group Means on Evaluative, Potency, and Activity Factors . . . . .	64

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Page
1. Mean Profiles of the Four Groups on the Concept " <u>Bowie News</u> " . . . . .	62

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Community newspapers are an integral part of the social and economic life of their communities. They interrelate within the community as a major source of local news and as a vehicle for advertising by local businesses, and they help develop a sense of community by recording events in the local area through use of stories, pictures and announcements about local people and events that would not normally appear elsewhere. Community newspapers frequently strive to serve the welfare and progress of their communities through such devices as business and trade promotion and by serving as a forum for discussion of local problems.

The Bowie News fits this description. Published twice a week, on Sunday and Thursday, it has a circulation of approximately 3,800 each edition. The Thursday edition is larger than the Sunday edition because advertisers use the Thursday edition to reach weekend shoppers. The number of pages on Thursday ranges from twenty to thirty; on Sunday, generally ten.

Bowie, a city of about 5,300 people, according to unofficial 1975 population estimates,<sup>1</sup> is the largest

---

<sup>1</sup>Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide 1976-1977  
(Dallas, 1975), p. 336.

community in Montague County. It is roughly midway between Denton and Wichita Falls along Highway 287. A rural community, Bowie nevertheless is a trade center. Its businesses advertise almost exclusively in the Bowie News, providing the bulk of the newspaper's income, and on a local radio station.

### Statement of the Problem

Students of the press, as well as professional journalists, are aware that journalists and their readers frequently differ on issues regarded as important to the well-being of the press and the community. In addition, newspaper readers belong to several specific publics, each of which judges the newspaper differently, in accordance with its own attitudes. The study posed these questions:

What are the underlying attitudes of specific community publics toward the Bowie News? Specifically, is it trusted as a source of news by its publics?

Are its advertisements considered honest by its publics?

Do its publics consider the newspaper a trusted watchdog for the community's best interests against those who may strive for undue political, social, or economic power?

The study gauged the newspaper's effectiveness as a source of local news and advertising and measured attitudes of each public toward the Bowie News. The purposes of the study were

1. To determine whether differences in attitudes toward the newspaper exist among four separate publics:

the newspaper's staff, advertisers, subscribers, and community political-civic leaders hereinafter referred to as the power structure.

2. To determine to what degree each of these publics differs in its perception of the role of the newspaper in serving the welfare and progress of the community.

3. To determine to what extent each public is satisfied with the Bowie News as a source of community news, opinion, and advertising.

### Hypotheses

Studies of community power structure by Floyd Hunter, Claire W. Gilbert, and other sociologists and political scientists found that newspapers tend to serve the interests of the community's power structure in helping formulate and maintain public opinion. Hunter found that on some subjects the press plays a major role in getting information to the public for discussion, and is a means for distributing the power structure's propaganda.<sup>2</sup> Gilbert found that "political scientists often consider newspapers an important element in a community political system."<sup>3</sup>

The following three propositions were hypothesized:

Hypothesis One: Members of the power structure would have a more favorable attitude toward the Bowie News than

---

<sup>2</sup>Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure (Chapel Hill, 1953).

<sup>3</sup>Claire W. Gilbert, Community Power Structure (Gainesville, 1972), p. 181.



those readers not included within the community's power structure.

Hypothesis Two: The Bowie News would play an active role, serving as an institution of the power structure, in promoting the power structure's leadership.

Hypothesis Three: All four publics would have different attitudes toward what they perceive to be the newspaper's role in getting information to the community.

#### Related Studies

Research articles, theses and books have probed producer and consumer attitudes toward community newspapers. In his unpublished thesis, James M. Fisher found that 1) the attitudes of communities are congruent to the attitudes of editors and publishers, and 2) community attitudes must maintain this consistency.<sup>4</sup>

Literature on community power structure is expanding, especially in the fields of sociology and political science. A pioneering work was Floyd Hunter's Community Power Structure. A doctoral dissertation published by the University of North Carolina Press in 1953, it established the reputational approach to determining power structure. This reputational approach consists of asking a panel of judges to rank-order individuals who, in each judge's opinion, are the most influential persons from the point of view of

---

<sup>4</sup>James M. Fisher, "The Effects of Community and Editor-Publisher Attitudes on the Community Weekly Newspaper," Journalism Abstracts, (1972), p. 107.

ability to lead others. Those mentioned most often are interviewed. Each is presented the list of persons that was compiled and is asked to rank-order those on the list and to add to it as appropriate. Persons chosen consistently are considered members of the power structure.<sup>5</sup>

A basic criticism leveled at Hunter's reputational approach is that it did not necessarily isolate influential individuals and the degree to which they are powerful in different issue areas.<sup>6</sup> Robert Dahl and Edward Banfield published separate studies in 1961 that avoided this weakness by a decisional method of determining power structure. Less explicit in their methods than Hunter, they combined materials from newspapers, documents, interviews and participant observation. Their analysis of these materials, reconstructing specific decisions, permits their methodology to be called decisional.<sup>7</sup>

C. W. Gilbert, an expert on power structure, examined the relationship between politics and newspapers.<sup>8</sup> Terry Nichols Clark reviewed urban research into community power structure and included a comprehensive bibliography of this research.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Hunter, op. cit., p. 62.

<sup>6</sup>Terry Nichols Clark, Community Power and Policy Outputs (Beverly Hills, 1973), pp. 28-29.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>8</sup>Gilbert, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>9</sup>Clark, op. cit., pp. 83-98.

Five research articles published in Journalism Quarterly examined attitudes toward newspapers by producers and readers. These are "The Community Press as Perceived by Its Editors and Readers," by Bradley S. Greenberg, an examination into the relationship between the local weekly newspaper and the daily newspaper whose sphere of distribution, exploitation, or interest encompasses the weekly;<sup>10</sup> "Producer/Consumer Perceptions of the Function of the Daily Newspaper," by Kenneth Starck, an examination into differences of opinion concerning the function of the press in society as perceived by newspaper personnel in policy-making positions and selected newspaper readers;<sup>11</sup> "How Newsmen and Readers Perceive Each Others' Story Preferences," by Erwin Atwood, a factor analysis of differences in attitude toward story preferences between newsmen and readers;<sup>12</sup> "Attitude Toward the Press as a Function of Interests," by Philip Anast, a factor analysis of responses to 130 statements about news story content isolated into four clusters;<sup>13</sup> and "The Weekly Newspaper's

---

<sup>10</sup>Bradley S. Greenberg, "The Community Press as Perceived by Its Editors and Readers," Journalism Quarterly, XLI (Summer, 1964), 437-440.

<sup>11</sup>Kenneth Starck, "Producer/Consumer Perceptions of the Function of the Daily Newspaper," Journalism Quarterly, LI (Winter, 1974), 570-576.

<sup>12</sup>Erwin Atwood, "How Newsmen and Readers Perceive Each Others' Story Preferences," Journalism Quarterly, XLVII (Summer, 1970), 296-302.

<sup>13</sup>Philip Anast, "Attitude Toward the Press as a Function of Interests," Journalism Quarterly, XXXVIII (Summer, 1961), 376-380.

Leadership Role," by Alex S. Edelstein and J. Blaine Schulz, a study of attitudes by journalists and a community's power structure toward a weekly newspaper's leadership role in its community.<sup>14</sup>

#### Justification

By its measurement of community attitudes toward the Bowie News, this study can provide publishers and editors in other communities a better understanding of their role as journalists. If too close an identification with special interest groups can be determined, steps may be taken to reorient a newspaper more toward its community as a whole, making it more representative of, and more trusted within, its community. The example of the Bowie News, a twice weekly newspaper in a rural community of approximately 5,300 population, can be applied to numerous other weekly and twice weekly newspapers in the state. Publishers and staff members of those newspapers, if willing, can apply the results of the study to their own newspapers and communities in an effort to make their newspapers more representative of the community as a whole. The general public would benefit through closer identification with, and trust in, a potentially important vehicle for promoting the community's economic and social welfare. In a respected

---

<sup>14</sup>Alex S. Edelstein and J. Blaine Schulz, "The Weekly Newspaper's Leadership Role," Journalism Quarterly, XL (Fall, 1963), 565-574.

newspaper, advertising should acquire increased believability.

This study can serve as a model for future studies of weekly and daily newspapers in the state to determine their degree of influence with defined publics and to make these newspapers more effective vehicles for promoting their community's economic and social welfare.

#### Definition of Terms

A major public studied was the power structure. The study considered the power structure as comprising those individuals within the community who control or contribute actively to the decision-making process on issues affecting the community and who help determine local policy-making.

The public advertisers comprised the fifteen top advertisers in the Bowie News as determined by total advertising volume during 1975.

The public subscribers comprised all readers paying for a subscription to the newspaper at the time research began and whose names were on the active subscriber files in the newspaper's circulation department.

The newspaper staff comprised all editorial and advertising personnel, and office staff.

#### Limitations

The study did not include a content analysis of the Bowie News. Instead, it measured perceptions of the newspaper's

role by each of the four defined publics. A questionnaire<sup>15</sup> was used to survey these publics in order to determine community reactions to the newspaper, newspaper staff members' attitudes toward their role within the community, and the newspaper's social and economic functions.

### Methodology

Information about attitudes toward the newspaper was obtained from newspaper staff members, subscribers, and advertisers and members of the power structure as determined by the reputational approach.

Weaknesses of the reputational approach, specifically its failure to measure degrees of influence, were discounted for their effect upon the study because the study was not an attempt to measure the power structure's influence within Bowie. The only need in determining the power structure was to isolate its members into a specific public in order to gauge their attitudes toward the Bowie News.

To determine who belonged to the power structure, lists of membership in local political, civic, and social organizations were obtained from a person responsible for maintaining a role of members. Two judges, selected at random from each of these lists, were asked to rank-order whom they considered to be the ten most important persons on the lists. Each judge was asked to add to his list any names that he

---

<sup>15</sup>See appendix.

thought belonged there. Names appearing most frequently on the judges' lists were categorized as members of the power structure.

The questionnaire was used to survey each public. It was distributed to the fifteen major advertisers, the ten leading members of the power structure, all newspaper staff members and a sample of every nth subscriber selected from the newspaper's subscriber list to gain a sample of five per cent of subscribers.

The questionnaire was composed of eight pages and included closed-ended statements and a seven-point semantic differential. Three independent factors or dimensions of individual judgments were measured on the semantic differential toward these concepts: an evaluative (or attitudinal) factor represented by such scales as fair-unfair; a potency factor by such scales as feeble-vigorous; and an activity factor by such scales as fast-slow. Closed-ended statements sought individual opinions about the newspaper. These consisted of subjective statements followed by a Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A t-test was used to determine the significance of difference in means among the four publics.

#### Organization

The study is organized as follows: Chapter I, Introduction; Chapter II, A History of Bowie and the News; Chapter III, Comparisons on Closed-Ended Statements;

Chapter IV, Comparisons Between Groups on Conceptual Structures; Chapter V, Summary and Conclusions.



## CHAPTER II

### A HISTORY OF BOWIE AND THE NEWS

The railroads created Bowie. Its founding in 1882 and the rapid development that allowed Bowie to outgrow older Montague County communities were "due entirely to the coming of the railroad."<sup>1</sup>

Bowie was built around the intersection of two railroads: the Fort Worth and Denver City Railway and the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad. The first train reached Bowie on July 1, 1882, and Bowie remained a railhead for several months after construction of the Fort Worth and Denver City Railway progressed to Wichita Falls. By 1883, the town had a population of 1,100 permanent residents, most of whom earned their living in trade and marketing.<sup>2</sup>

Bowie's growth was rapid. The first post office was established on August 24, 1882.<sup>3</sup> The older nearby community of Queen's Peak, unable to compete economically with more strategically located Bowie, moved to the new town "buildings and all."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Jeff S. Henderson, editor, 100 Years in Montague County (Saint Jo, 1958), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Bowie News, July 24, 1958, Sec. 12, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Henderson, op. cit., p. 3.

Although Bowie was founded in 1882, it was officially incorporated on October 29, 1883. The first bank was founded in 1890 and a second bank opened in 1892, the same year the Rock Island and Gulf Railroad came through Bowie, sparking the economic surge that made it the largest town in Montague County.<sup>5</sup> Trade and marketing were important in Bowie from its founding, with fifty business houses open by July 1, 1882. This permanent business community gave Bowie the stability to survive after it ceased to be a railhead.<sup>6</sup>

Contributing to Bowie's stability was an influx of churches, around which centered the town's civic life. A Methodist Church was organized on September 29, 1881.<sup>7</sup> This was followed by the First Baptist Church on December 24, 1882;<sup>8</sup> the First Presbyterian Church on June 15, 1884; and the First Christian Church in 1886. This latter church contained the city's first baptistry, which was used by the other churches for several years.<sup>9</sup>

Bowie's economic and social stability attracted newspaper publishers. In 1883 the Bowie Cross Timbers

---

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 5

<sup>6</sup>Bowie News, July 24, 1958, Sec. 9, pp. 1-2.

<sup>7</sup>Bowie News, July 24, 1958, Sec. 12, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup>Bowie News, July 24, 1958, Sec. 8, P. 7.

<sup>9</sup>Bowie News, July 24, 1958, Sec. 12, pp. 3-4.

began publication. It was joined in 1891 by the Bowie Blade, which was originally called the Search Light. The Cross Timbers ceased publication in 1911 or 1912 and the Blade's owners bought its equipment. The Blade itself was sold in 1923, but continued publishing until 1948.<sup>10</sup>

Publishing, trade and marketing were supplemented by manufacturing industries in the last years of the nineteenth century. Perhaps the first and most important industry in Bowie was a brick kiln founded in 1883. These bricks were a major source of building materials in the rapidly growing town. An ice plant opened about the same time, and cotton gins, cotton compresses and a cotton oil mill added to Bowie's industry.<sup>11</sup>

Additional agriculture-oriented industries emerged as King Cotton began his reign. The economic life of Bowie gradually became tied to agriculture<sup>12</sup> as a flour mill, a processing plant and a poultry ranch joined the cotton-spawned industries.<sup>13</sup>

Agriculture began to decline at the turn of the century, but the discovery of oil in the Ranger field gave a new boost to Bowie's economic life. Pump stations were

---

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>Henderson, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>12</sup>Bowie News, July 24, 1958, Sec. 9, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup>Henderson, op. cit., p. 9.

built by several oil companies, and the railroads passing through Bowie were major carriers of oil. This stable new industry supplied jobs and helped Bowie's businesses to prosper.<sup>14</sup>

Bowie's early cultural pursuits resulted from the town's prosperity. To attract trade from outside Bowie the early merchants supported a band that gave many concerts in Bowie. An opera house was built, but it was superseded by a motion picture theater built in 1909. In the 1920s the city entered what can be called its modern era, as a municipal power plant, a city auditorium, and a hospital were built. Highways were blacktopped, and a bus station was established.<sup>15</sup>

The 1920s were the beginning of the modern era for Bowie's newspapers. The forerunner of the Bowie News was first published in 1921 by Robert Murphy. This newspaper, the Bowie Booster, competed with the Bowie Blade for readers and advertising. In the late 1930s Lum Lovette purchased the files and subscription list of the Bowie Booster, bought new printing equipment, and changed the name to the Bowie News.<sup>16</sup>

Bowie, like the rest of the nation, suffered from depression during the 1930s and survived on federal and state aid. The Works Progress Administration built the

---

<sup>14</sup>Henderson, op. cit., pp. 11-13.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Bowie News, July 29, 1971, p. 3.

present Amon G. Carter Lake and established a sewing center that employed many local women. The Civilian Conservation Corps employed youths for soil conservation projects, and other federal agencies and state financial assistance provided relief to help offset the loss of jobs in private industry.

World War II and the production of oil in the immediate Bowie area ended the depression. By 1943 more than sixty drilling rigs were active around Bowie. New business and industries allied to the oil industry moved in. The Continental Oil Company established district headquarters in Bowie and numerous well service companies located in the city.<sup>17</sup> Bowie's population grew from 3,131 in 1930 to 5,002 by 1950. This influx of new residents caused a building boom as new houses were constructed, a shopping center was built and older buildings were remodeled.<sup>18</sup>

Bowie's newspaper were changing during this period of rapid growth. Coy Perry bought the Bowie News from Lovette in the early 1940s and introduced format and typographic changes while boosting advertising volume as the revitalized oil industry geared up for World War II. He sold the paper to Mark Campbell, who in turn sold it on December 30, 1943, to Mr. and Mrs. H. I. Trout. The Trouts

---

<sup>17</sup>Henderson, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>18</sup>Bowie News, July 24, 1968, Sec. 9, p. 2.

published the Bowie News for ten years until April, 1953, when they sold it to Harlow E. Tibbetts.

In 1948 the Bowie Blade, finding competition from the Bowie News and a third newspaper, the Bowie Times, quit publishing. Tibbetts ended direct newspaper competition in Bowie when he bought the Times as well as the News. He consolidated the papers and published semi-weekly, the Times on Monday and the News on Thursday.

In September, 1951, a fire gutted the Bowie News' plant. Some machinery and equipment were saved, however, and the newspaper was moved to a rented building on Smythe Street. Tibbetts bought new equipment and continued publishing the newspaper until July 1, 1958, when he sold it to Emerson Lynn, Jr. Lynn sold the Bowie News to Jim Winter, the present publisher, in November, 1965. Winter changed to offset printing and moved to the paper's present location at 218 West Tarrant.<sup>19</sup> He continues to publish the Bowie News on Sunday and Thursday.

Bowie today has an estimated population of 5,754, almost twice the population of Nocona, Montague County's second largest city. It remains a center for agricultural-related businesses and oil field service industries and boasts a community hospital and a nursing home.<sup>20</sup> Every June Jim

---

<sup>19</sup>Bowie News, July 24, 1958, Sec. 8, p.3

<sup>20</sup>Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide 1976-1977, (Dallas, 1975), p. 336.

Bowie Days draws hundreds of visitors to Bowie to celebrate the city's continued importance as a regional business center. Although the railroads have declined in importance as a link with the outside world, major highways connect Bowie with Fort Worth to the south, Wichita Falls to the northwest and Gainesville to the northeast. Bowie was founded because two railroads intersected there; it remains an important business center with a stable population because it is easily accessible by highways to communities near and far away.

## CHAPTER III

### GROUP COMPARISONS ON CLOSED-ENDED STATEMENTS

The survey questionnaire (Appendix I) was distributed to newspaper staff members, advertisers, subscribers, and members of the power structure between mid-May and mid-June, 1976. Those returning questionnaires filled out completely comprised six newspaper staff members, thirteen advertisers, twenty-seven subscribers, and five members of the power structure.

#### Description of Method

The survey instrument consisted of two parts: thirty-two statements and eighteen semantic differential scales. The statements were designed to measure attitudes toward the Bowie News and were measured on a seven-point continuum. Point one indicated strong agreement with the statement; two indicated moderate agreement; three indicated mild agreement; four indicated a neutral position; five indicated mild disagreement; six indicated moderate disagreement; and seven indicated strong disagreement. The statements were designed to measure four types of attitudes. The first type related to the function of the Bowie News as a socially responsible newspaper that takes an active role in recognizing problems within the community, acting as a public



advocate in pointing out needed improvements (statements 16, 17, 21, 25, 32, 35, 36, 39, and 42); the second type related to the Bowie News in a libertarian context as a newspaper that takes a passive role in community affairs while presenting all sides of an issue in an attempt to help others make decisions or reach conclusions (statements 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 28, 34, 37, 40, 41, and 43); the third type related to the Bowie News as an instrument of special interest groups used within the community to promote specific goals (statements 29, 30, 31, and 33); the fourth type related to the Bowie News as an advertising medium (statements 24 through 27).

A t-test was used to determine significance of difference in means among the four publics studied in order to test the hypotheses.

#### Responses of Newspaper Staff Members

Questionnaires completed by the six newspaper staff members were picked up on May 19. Participating in the study were the publisher; his assistant, who serves as advertising manager and staff writer; an advertising salesman-reporter; the bookkeeper; and two full-time workers in the composition department. Three respondents were male and three were female; ages ranged from the mid-twenties to the early fifties. All had at least moderate exposure to the general public while working for the Bowie News.

Table I presents staff members' responses to the statements, rank-ordered by means, the most favorable first.

### The Bowie News as a News Medium

The newspaper staff rated the Bowie News high as an instrument for serving the public welfare. The newspaper scored highest for taking the initiative in pointing up the need for improvement in areas where it sees such a need exists (mean = 1.17); as an adequate source of news about the community (mean = 1.67); as an independent voice in community affairs (mean = 1.83); as the community's most important instrument for bringing together all elements of the community (mean = 1.83); and as informative and promoting constructive change (mean = 1.83).

The Bowie News received moderately high ratings for timely reporting and helping to expose crime and corruption (mean = 2.00); for attempting to serve the welfare of the entire community and as a trusted source of community news (mean = 2.17); for informing readers about political developments, as a trusted source of what happens at local meetings, and for providing background information to help readers understand events (mean = 2.33); and as an effective watchdog against special interest groups that may attempt to seize too much power within the community for themselves (mean = 2.50).

Staff members generally agreed that the Bowie News does a good job of reporting the news and that the newspaper actively promotes the public welfare, but they appeared to differ in their view of the newspaper as free from the

TABLE I

RANK-ORDER OF NEWSPAPER STAFF'S MEANS ON STATEMENTS RELATING  
TO THE BOWIE NEWS AS A NEWS AND ADVERTISING MEDIUM

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
1	The <u>Bowie News</u> takes the initiative in pointing up the need for improvement in areas where it sees such a need exists.	0.41	1.17 ** ***
2	The <u>Bowie News</u> should present both sides in a controversy.	0.52	1.33 **
3	I use <u>Bowie News</u> advertisements to aid me in my routine shopping.	0.84	1.50 ** ***
4	The <u>Bowie News</u> is a marketplace in which consumer and seller are brought together.	0.52	1.67 **
	The <u>Bowie News</u> is an adequate source of news about the community.	0.52	1.67 ** ***
5	The <u>Bowie News</u> is an independent voice in community affairs.	0.75	1.83 *
	Advertisements in the <u>Bowie News</u> are honest and truthful.	1.33	1.83 **

TABLE I--Continued

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
6	The <u>Bowie News</u> is the community's most important instrument for bringing together all elements of the community.	0.75	1.83 #
	The <u>Bowie News</u> is informative.	0.75	1.83
	The <u>Bowie News</u> promotes constructive change.	0.75	1.83
	The <u>Bowie News</u> protects its readers against false advertising.	1.26	2.00 ***
7	The <u>Bowie News</u> helps expose crime and corruption	0.89	2.00
	News in the <u>Bowie News</u> is timely.	1.09	2.00
	The <u>Bowie News</u> attempts to serve the welfare of the entire community.	1.47	2.17
	The <u>Bowie News</u> is a trusted source of community news.	0.75	2.17
8	The <u>Bowie News</u> informs its readers about political developments.	0.81	2.33
	The <u>Bowie News</u> is a trusted source of what happens at local meetings and of the decisions others make on controversial matters.	1.03	2.33

TABLE I--Continued

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
9	<p>The <u>Bowie News</u> provides background information to help readers understand events.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> is an effective watchdog for the public's interests against political groups and other groups that may attempt to seize too much community power for themselves.</p>	0.82	2.33
10	<p>The <u>Bowie News</u> reflects the ideas of the whole community in a non-partisan manner.</p> <p>I can believe what I read in the <u>Bowie News</u>.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> should report on the events after meetings are held and others have made decisions on controversial matters.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> is entertaining.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> serves as a guardian of everyone's civil rights.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> does not represent the interests of any one group or combination of special interests; rather, it honestly attempts to serve the best interests of the entire community.</p>	<p>1.52</p> <p>1.37</p> <p>1.63</p> <p>2.25</p> <p>0.52</p> <p>1.17</p> <p>1.55</p>	<p>2.50</p> <p>2.67 ***</p> <p>2.67</p> <p>2.67</p> <p>2.83</p> <p>3.00</p>
11			
12			

TABLE I--Continued

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
13	At times the <u>Bowie News</u> plays down or drops some controversial opinions or news items.	2.59	3.50
14	The <u>Bowie News</u> does not serve the special interests of any one group or organization.	1.86	3.67
15	The <u>Bowie News</u> represents the interests of those who wield financial power in the community.	2.42	4.33
16	The <u>Bowie News</u> represents the interests of those who wield political power in the community.	2.59	4.50
17	Too often the <u>Bowie News</u> takes only one side in a controversy.	1.90	5.00 *
	The <u>Bowie News</u> should only present the facts and should avoid expressing an opinion on community affairs.	2.28	5.00
18	The <u>Bowie News</u> should play down or drop some controversial opinions or news items for the good of the entire community.	2.25	5.33

\* Mean significant with advertisers,  $p < 0.05$

\*\* Mean significant with subscribers,  $p < 0.05$

\*\*\* Mean significant with power structure,  $p < 0.05$

influence of special interests, as high standard deviations to statements 30, 31, and 33 indicate. Staff members only mildly disagreed that the Bowie News serves the interests of those who wield political power in the community (mean = 4.50 with 2.59 SD), and as a whole were neutral toward the statement that the Bowie News serves the interests of those who wield financial power in the community (mean = 4.33 with 2.42 SD). Staff members mildly agreed that at times the Bowie News plays down or drops some controversial opinions or news items (mean = 3.50 with 2.59 SD). Overall, staff members were neutral in their opinions that the Bowie News serves as an instrument of special interest groups. The mean response toward statements relating to the Bowie News as an instrument of special interest groups was 4.33, with a 2.37 standard deviation, indicating a wide range of opinion within the group.

Staff members rated the Bowie News almost equal in a socially responsible context and in a libertarian context, with average means of 2.50 and 2.45 respectively. Standard deviation to statements relating to the Bowie News in a socially responsible context and in a libertarian context were 1.17 and 1.19 respectively.

#### The Bowie News as an Advertising Medium

Staff members rated the Bowie News high as an advertising medium. Two of the highest rank-ordered statements on the advertising function of the newspaper were that the

newspaper's ads are an aid in routine shopping (mean = 1.50) and that the newspaper is a marketplace for consumer and seller (mean = 1.67). The two other advertising-related statements, that the Bowie News' advertisements are honest and truthful (mean = 1.83) and that the Bowie News protects its readers against false advertising (mean = 2.00) were nearly as high rated. Overall, staff members considered the Bowie News an effective and trusted advertising medium. The mean of responses to statements relating to the Bowie News as an advertising medium was 1.75. The average standard deviation to the four advertising-related questions was 0.99.

#### Responses of Advertisers

Questionnaires were distributed to fifteen Bowie News advertisers during the last two weeks in May and were picked up during the last week in May and the first week in June. Names of fifteen advertisers had been obtained from the publisher's assistant; those selected for the study were major purchasers of advertising space as determined by 1975 advertising revenues. Fourteen of the fifteen advertisers contacted agreed to participate in the study and one advertiser who agreed to participate did not complete his questionnaire; the incomplete questionnaire was discarded. Thirteen questionnaires were used for final tabulation.

Eight questionnaires were completed by males and five by females. One advertiser was in his twenties and one advertiser was more than sixty-one years old; seven advertisers



ranged in age from thirty-one to forty-five and four from forty-six to sixty.

Table II presents advertiser's responses to the statements, rank-ordered by means, the most favorable first.

### The Bowie News as a News Medium

Advertisers rated the Bowie News highest on two suggested libertarian functions: the newspaper should present both sides in a controversy (mean = 1.77) and the Bowie News should report on the events after meetings are held and others have made decisions on controversial matters (mean = 2.23). The Bowie News scored moderately high for taking the socially responsible position of pointing up a need for improvement in areas where it sees such a need exists (mean = 2.31) and for promoting constructive change (mean = 2.54).

Advertisers mildly agreed with several statements relating to the Bowie News in a libertarian context. The paper was seen as an adequate source of community news and as one that informs its readers about political developments (mean = 2.69); as informative and a trusted source of what happens at local meetings (mean = 2.77); as attempting to serve the welfare of the entire community, and for offering timely news (mean = 2.85).

Advertisers mildly disagreed with the suggestion that the Bowie News should play down or drop some controversial opinions or news items for the good of the community (mean = 5.08) but they mildly agreed that the newspaper, in fact, does

TABLE II

RANK-ORDER OF ADVERTISERS' MEANS ON STATEMENTS RELATING  
TO THE BOWIE NEWS AS A NEWS AND ADVERTISING MEDIUM

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
1	The <u>Bowie News</u> should present both sides in a controversy.	0.60	1.77
2	The <u>Bowie News</u> should report on the events after meetings are held and others have made decisions on controversial matters.	1.09	2.23
3	The <u>Bowie News</u> takes the initiative in pointing up the need for improvement in areas where it sees such a need exists.	0.95	2.31
4	I use <u>Bowie News</u> advertisements to aid me in my routine shopping.	1.04	2.39
5	Advertisements in the <u>Bowie News</u> are honest and truthful.	0.76	2.54
	The <u>Bowie News</u> promotes constructive change.	0.66	2.54
6	The <u>Bowie News</u> is a marketplace in which consumer and seller are brought together	1.12	2.61

TABLE II--Continued

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
7	The <u>Bowie News</u> is an adequate source of news about the community.	0.85	2.69
	The <u>Bowie News</u> informs its readers about political developments.	1.55	2.69
8	The <u>Bowie News</u> is informative.	0.93	2.77
	The <u>Bowie News</u> is a trusted source of what happens at local meetings and of the decisions others make on controversial matters.	1.36	2.77
9	The <u>Bowie News</u> attempts to serve the welfare of the entire community.	1.57	2.85
	The <u>Bowie News</u> is an effective watchdog for the public's interests against political groups and other groups that may attempt to seize too much community power for themselves.	1.34	2.85
	News in the <u>Bowie News</u> is timely.	0.80	2.85
10	The <u>Bowie News</u> protects its readers against false advertising.	1.25	2.92
	The <u>Bowie News</u> is entertaining.	1.19	2.92

TABLE II--Continued

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
11	<p>The <u>Bowie News</u> is an independent voice in community affairs.</p> <p>Too often the <u>Bowie News</u> takes only one side in a controversy.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> helps expose crime and corruption.</p>	<p>0.91</p> <p>1.35</p> <p>1.35</p>	<p>3.00 *</p> <p>3.00 *</p> <p>3.00</p>
12	<p>The <u>Bowie News</u> does not represent the interests of any one group or combination of special interests; rather, it honestly attempts to serve the best interests of the entire community.</p> <p>At times the <u>Bowie News</u> plays down or drops some controversial opinions or news items.</p>	<p>1.52</p> <p>1.52</p>	<p>3.15</p> <p>3.15</p>
13	The <u>Bowie News</u> provides background information to help readers understand events.	1.09	3.23
14	<p>The <u>Bowie News</u> is the community's most important instrument for bringing together all elements of the community.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> serves as a guardian of everyone's civil rights.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> is a trusted source of community news.</p>	<p>1.03</p> <p>0.95</p> <p>1.31</p>	<p>3.31 *</p> <p>3.31</p> <p>3.31</p>

TABLE II--Continued

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
15	The <u>Bowie News</u> does not serve the special interests of any one group or organization.	1.50	3.38
16	I can believe what I read in the <u>Bowie News</u> .	1.05	3.46
17	The <u>Bowie News</u> represents the interests of those who wield political power in the community.	1.61	3.61
18	The <u>Bowie News</u> should only present the facts and should avoid expressing an opinion on community affairs.	1.75	3.69
19	The <u>Bowie News</u> represents the interests of those who wield financial power in the community.	1.86	3.85
20	The <u>Bowie News</u> reflects the ideas of the whole community in a nonpartisan manner.	1.66	4.08
21	The <u>Bowie News</u> should play down or drop some controversial opinions or news items for the good of the entire community.	1.66	5.08

\* Mean significant with newspaper staff members,  $p < 0.05$

so (mean = 3.15). Advertisers mildly agreed that the Bowie News is socially responsible as an effective watchdog for the public's interests against groups that may attempt to seize too much power (mean = 2.87) and that the Bowie News does not represent the interests of any one group or combination of special interests (mean = 3.15).

Advertisers mildly agreed, with high standard deviations, that the Bowie News serves special interest groups within the community. The statement that the Bowie News too often takes only one side in a controversy was agreed with mildly (mean = 3.00 with 1.35 SD); advertisers divided between agreement and a neutral opinion that the Bowie News represents the interests of those who wield political power within the community (mean = 3.61 with 1.61 SD) and that the Bowie News represents the interests of those who wield financial power within the community (mean = 3.85 with 1.86 SD). Advertisers mildly agreed that the newspaper plays down or drops some controversial opinions or news items (mean = 3.15 with 1.52 SD).

Advertisers mildly agreed that the Bowie News does a good job of reporting the news and that the newspaper actively promotes the public welfare, and they mildly agreed that the Bowie News is used by special interest groups to promote their ideas, although high standard deviations to statements concerning the newspaper's relationship to these groups indicate considerable disagreement among advertisers. The mean response toward statements relating to the Bowie

News as an instrument of special interest groups was 3.15, with a 1.58 standard deviation.

Advertisers' average means relating to the Bowie News in a socially responsible context and in a libertarian context were 3.16 and 2.98 respectively. Standard deviations to statements relating to the Bowie News in a socially responsible context and in a libertarian context were 1.19 and 1.20 respectively.

#### The Bowie News as an Advertising Medium

Advertisers rated the Bowie News high as an advertising medium. Three of the highest rank-ordered functions of the newspaper were that the newspaper's ads are an aid in routine shopping (mean = 2.38); that the Bowie News' advertisements are honest and truthful (mean = 2.54); and that the Bowie News is a marketplace in which consumer and seller are brought together (mean = 2.61). The fourth advertising-related statement, that the Bowie News protects its readers against false advertising, was not as high rated (mean = 2.92) as the other advertising-related statements. Average mean for the four advertising-related statements was 2.61. Standard deviation to the four statements was 1.05.

#### Responses of Subscribers

Seventy-two questionnaires were mailed to subscribers selected at random from the Bowie News' subscription list. Two separate samplings were taken, the first sampling of

every twentieth subscriber, beginning with the eighth name on the list; and the second; of every twentieth subscriber, beginning with the thirteenth name on the list. The seventy-two names selected represented about ten per cent of the subscribers to the Bowie News.

Questionnaires were mailed during late May and early June. Twenty-seven were completed and returned in accordance with instructions on the questionnaire and in a cover letter enclosed with the questionnaire (Appendix II). Sixteen respondents were male and eleven were female: eighteen were 61 years and older; five were from forty-six to sixty years; two were from twenty-two to thirty years; and one was from thirty-one to forty-five years.

Table III presents subscribers' responses to the statements, rank-ordered by means, the most favorable first.

#### The Bowie News as a News Medium

Two suggested libertarian functions were rated highest by subscribers: that the Bowie News should report on events after meetings are held and decisions are reached by others on controversial matters (mean = 1.85), and that the Bowie News should present both sides in a controversy (mean = 2.07). Statements relating to the newspaper in a socially responsible context generally were rated as highly as statements relating to the Bowie News in a libertarian context, but, with one exception, subscribers were mildly favorable toward the Bowie News on the statements. That exception was that the Bowie



TABLE III

RANK-ORDER OF SUBSCRIBERS' MEANS ON STATEMENTS RELATING  
TO THE BOWIE NEWS AS A NEWS AND ADVERTISING MEDIUM

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
1	The <u>Bowie News</u> should report on the events after meetings are held and others have made decisions on controversial matters.	0.95	1.85
2	The <u>Bowie News</u> should present both sides in a controversy.	0.92	2.07 *
3	I use <u>Bowie News</u> advertisements to aid me in my routine shopping.	0.92	2.18 **
4	The <u>Bowie News</u> takes the initiative in pointing up the need for improvement in areas where it sees such a need exists.	1.07	2.33 *
5	The <u>Bowie News</u> helps expose crime and corruption.	1.31	2.55
6	The <u>Bowie News</u> is an independent voice in community affairs.	1.01	2.59
7	The <u>Bowie News</u> is a marketplace in which consumer and seller are brought together.	0.97	2.63 *
8	The <u>Bowie News</u> protects its readers against false advertising.	1.03	2.70

TABLE III--Continued

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
9	<p>The <u>Bowie News</u> attempts to serve the welfare of the entire community.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> is a trusted source of what happens at local meetings and of the decisions others make on controversial matters.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> promotes constructive change.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> is an effective watchdog for the public's interests against political groups and other groups that may attempt to seize too much community power for themselves.</p>	<p>1.06</p> <p>1.23</p> <p>1.09</p>	<p>2.74</p> <p>2.74</p> <p>2.74</p>
10	News in the <u>Bowie News</u> is timely.	1.40	2.74
11	The <u>Bowie News</u> is an adequate source of news about the community.	1.28	2.78
12	The <u>Bowie News</u> is informative.	1.26	2.85 *
	The <u>Bowie News</u> is a trusted source of community news.	1.34	2.89
	The <u>Bowie News</u> does not represent the interests of any one group or combination of special interests; rather, it honestly attempts to serve the best interests of the entire community.	1.28	2.89
		1.05	2.89

TABLE III--Continued

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
13	The <u>Bowie News</u> is the community's most important instrument for bringing together all elements of the community.	1.46	2.92
14	The <u>Bowie News</u> does not serve the special interests of any one group or organization. Advertisements in the <u>Bowie News</u> are honest and truthful.	1.43	3.04
15	The <u>Bowie News</u> serves as a guardian of everyone's civil rights.	1.19	3.04
16	The <u>Bowie News</u> is entertaining. I can believe what I read in the <u>Bowie News</u> .	1.21	3.07
17	The <u>Bowie News</u> provides background information to help readers understand events.	1.50	3.22
18	The <u>Bowie News</u> reflects the ideas of the whole community in a nonpartisan manner.	1.53	3.22
19	At times the <u>Bowie News</u> plays down or drops some controversial opinions or news items.	1.39	3.33 *
		1.76	3.48 **
		1.55	3.52

TABLE III--Continued

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
20	The <u>Bowie News</u> should only present the facts and should avoid expressing an opinion on community affairs.	2.10	3.89
21	The <u>Bowie News</u> should play down or drop some controversial opinions or news items for the good of the entire community.	2.09	4.07
	Too often the <u>Bowie News</u> takes only one side in a controversy.	1.61	4.07
22	The <u>Bowie News</u> represents the interests of those who wield political power in the community.	1.50	4.22
	The <u>Bowie News</u> represents the interests of those who wield financial power in the community.	1.39	4.22

\* Mean significant with newspaper staff,  $p < 0.05$

\*\* Mean significant with power structure,  $p < 0.05$

News takes the initiative in pointing up the need for improvement in areas where it sees a need exists (mean = 2.33), a rating indicating moderate agreement. Subscribers mildly agreed that the Bowie News helps expose crime and corruption (mean = 2.55); that the Bowie News protects its readers against false advertising (mean = 2.70); that the Bowie News promotes constructive change (mean = 2.74); that the Bowie News is an effective watchdog against groups that may attempt to seize too much power in the community (mean = 2.74); and that the newspaper serves as a guardian of everyone's civil rights (mean = 3.07).

Subscribers rated the newspaper highest in a libertarian context as an independent voice in community affairs (mean = 2.59); for informing readers about political developments (mean = 2.63); as a trusted source of community news and for attempting to serve the welfare of the entire community (mean = 2.74); as a timely news source (mean = 2.78); as an adequate source of news (mean = 2.85); as an informative and trusted news source (mean = 2.89); and as the community's most important instrument for bringing together all elements of the community (mean = 2.92).

The Bowie News was lower rated for entertainment value and overall believability (mean = 3.22); for providing background information about events (mean = 3.33); and for reflecting the ideas of the whole community in a nonpartisan manner (mean = 3.48). Subscribers mildly agreed with, or were

neutral toward, statements that implied the Bowie News serves as an instrument of special interest groups. Statements that the newspaper represents the interests of those who wield political and financial power in the community were disagreed with more strongly than were any other statements (mean = 4.22). Subscribers were neutral toward the statement that too often the Bowie News takes only one side in a controversy (mean = 4.07), and mildly agreed that at times the Bowie News plays down or drops some controversial opinions or news items (mean = 3.51). Subscribers mildly agreed that the Bowie News does not represent the interests of any one group or combination of special interests but, instead, honestly attempts to serve the best interests of the entire community (mean = 2.89). Overall, subscribers were neutral in their opinions that the Bowie News serves as an instrument of special interest groups. The mean response toward statements relating to the Bowie News as an instrument of special interest groups was 4.00, with a 1.51 standard deviation.

Subscribers rated the Bowie News almost equal in a socially responsible context and in a libertarian context, with average means of 2.89 and 2.87 respectively. Standard deviation to statements relating to the Bowie News in a socially responsible context and in a libertarian context were 1.30 and 1.32 respectively.

### The Bowie News as an Advertising Medium

Subscribers rated the Bowie News moderately high as an advertising medium. Highest rated was the statement that the Bowie News is an aid in routine shopping (mean = 2.18); second rated was the statement that the newspaper is a marketplace in which consumer and seller come together (mean = 2.63); third was the statement that the Bowie News protects its readers against false advertising (mean = 2.703); lowest rated was the statement that advertisements are honest and truthful (mean = 3.037). The average mean for the four advertising-related statements was 2.64. Standard deviation to the four statements was 1.03.

### Responses of Power Structure Members

The reputational approach was used to determine members of the power structure. Lists of membership were obtained from the Bowie Country Club, the Bowie Chamber of Commerce, the Kiwanis, Rotary and Lions Clubs, and the Bowie Chapter of Business and Professional Women. Two judges, selected at random from each of these lists, were asked to rank-order the ten persons whom they considered most important on the lists; each judge was asked to add any names to the list that he believed belonged there; but few did so.

Eight names appeared considerably more often than others. These were a dentist, an elected city official, owner of one of Bowie's largest manufacturing firms, a banker, a partner in an oil field service company, a former

school board president, manager of the city's largest retail business, and an official with the public school district. Seven members of the power structure agreed to participate in the study; two declined; and one was out of town during the survey period. One of those who participated, the manager of Bowie's largest retail store, was included on the list of advertisers to be surveyed. Since his store was the largest single advertiser with the Bowie News, it was decided to include his responses with the advertiser public. Another member of the power structure was the publisher of the Bowie News. His responses were judged more appropriate for inclusion with newspaper staff members' responses.

Characteristics of Bowie's leaders were similar to general characteristics of leaders of other rural or semirural communities.<sup>1</sup> Most have lived in Bowie for at least one generation; all earn a relatively high income; all but one are college graduates; two are under forty-five years of age and none is over sixty; all are Protestants; all are businessmen or professionals; one was an elected public official at the time the study was conducted; and all are male.

Table IV presents the responses of power structure members, rank-ordered by means, the most favorable first.

---

<sup>1</sup>Alex S. Edelstein and J. Blaine Schulz, "The Weekly Newspaper's Leadership Role," Journalism Quarterly, XI (Fall, 1963), P. 567.



TABLE IV

RANK-ORDER OF POWER STRUCTURE MEMBERS' MEANS ON STATEMENTS RELATING  
TO THE BOWIE NEWS AS A NEWS AND ADVERTISING MEDIUM

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
1	The <u>Bowie News</u> should present both sides in a controversy.  The <u>Bowie News</u> should report on the events after meetings are held and others have made decisions on controversial matters.	0.89  0.55	1.60  1.60
2	The <u>Bowie News</u> is informative.	0.45	1.80
3	The <u>Bowie News</u> is a marketplace in which consumer and seller are brought together.  News in the <u>Bowie News</u> is timely.	0.71  0.71	2.00  2.00
4	Advertisements in the <u>Bowie News</u> are honest and truthful.  The <u>Bowie News</u> is the community's most important instrument for bringing together all elements of the community.	0.45  1.09	2.20  2.20
5	The <u>Bowie News</u> is an independent voice in community affairs.	2.07	2.60

TABLE IV--Continued

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
6	I can believe what I read in the <u>Bowie News</u> . The <u>Bowie News</u> informs its readers about political developments.	1.14 1.92	2.60 2.80
7	The <u>Bowie News</u> attempts to serve the welfare of the entire community. The <u>Bowie News</u> serves as a guardian of everyone's civil rights.	1.87 1.41	3.00 3.00
8	The <u>Bowie News</u> promotes constructive change. The <u>Bowie News</u> is an effective watchdog for the public's interests against political groups and other groups that may attempt to seize too much community power for themselves. The <u>Bowie News</u> takes the initiative in pointing up the need for improvement in areas where it sees such a need exists. The <u>Bowie News</u> should only present the facts and should avoid expressing an opinion on community affairs.	2.00 1.92 2.17	3.00 3.20 3.20 *
	The <u>Bowie News</u> is entertaining.	2.17 1.64	3.20 3.20

TABLE IV--Continued

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
9	<p>The <u>Bowie News</u> is a trusted source of community news.</p> <p>I use <u>Bowie News</u> advertisements to aid me in my routine shopping.</p> <p>Too often the <u>Bowie News</u> takes only one side in a controversy.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> does not represent the interests of any one group or combination of special interests; rather, it honestly attempts to serve the best interests of the entire community.</p>	<p>1.82</p> <p>1.67</p> <p>1.95</p>	<p>3.40</p> <p>3.40 *</p> <p>3.40</p>
10	<p>The <u>Bowie News</u> should play down or drop some controversial opinions or news items for the good of the entire community.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> helps expose crime and corruption.</p>	<p>1.82</p> <p>2.30</p> <p>2.07</p>	<p>3.40</p> <p>3.60</p> <p>3.60</p>
11	<p>At times the <u>Bowie News</u> plays down or drops some controversial opinions or news items.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> protects its readers against false advertising.</p> <p>The <u>Bowie News</u> is an adequate source of news about the community.</p>	<p>2.17</p> <p>1.78</p> <p>2.17</p>	<p>3.80</p> <p>3.80 *</p> <p>3.80 *</p>

TABLE IV--Continued

Rank- Order	Statement	Standard Deviation	Mean
	The <u>Bowie News</u> is a trusted source of what happens at local meetings and of the decisions others make on controversial matters.	1.92	3.80
12	The <u>Bowie News</u> does not serve the special interests of any one group or organization.	2.34	4.00
	The <u>Bowie News</u> provides background information to help readers understand events.	2.12	4.00
13	The <u>Bowie News</u> represents the interests of those who wield political power in the community.	1.95	4.60
14	The <u>Bowie News</u> represents the interests of those who wield financial power in the community.	2.17	5.20
15	The <u>Bowie News</u> reflects the ideas of the whole community in a nonpartisan manner.	1.14	5.60 **

\* Mean significant with newspaper staff,  $p < 0.05$ \*\* Mean significant with subscribers,  $p < 0.05$

### The Bowie News as a News Medium

Power structure members rated the Bowie News highest on two suggested libertarian functions: that the newspaper should present both sides in a controversy, and that it should report on events after meetings are held and others have made decisions on controversial matters (mean = 1.60). Other high rated statements relating to the Bowie News in a libertarian context were that the paper is informative (mean = 1.80); timely (mean = 2.00); and that the Bowie News informs its readers about political developments (mean = 2.80). Power structure members made neutral responses to the statement that the Bowie News is an adequate source of community news (mean = 3.80), and the high standard deviation of 2.17 of responses to this statement shows a wide range of opinions on the statement. Likewise, power structure members made a neutral response to the statement that the Bowie News provides background information to help readers understand events (mean = 4.00), but their responses showed a high standard deviation of 2.12. Power structure members were critical of the Bowie News' function in reflecting the ideas of the whole community in a nonpartisan manner (mean = 5.60); the standard deviation of 1.14 to this statement was among the lowest standard deviations to responses by power structure members.

Power structure members mildly agreed, on the whole, with statements reflecting the Bowie News in a socially responsible

context. The highest rated socially responsible function was that the newspaper is the community's most important instrument for bringing together all elements of the community (mean = 2.20). Rated equally were statements that the Bowie News attempts to serve the welfare of the entire community; serves as a guardian of everyone's civil rights; and promotes constructive change (mean = 3.00). Respondents mildly agreed that the Bowie News is an effective watchdog for the public's interests against groups that may attempt to seize too much community power for themselves and that the newspaper takes the initiative in pointing up the need for improvement in areas where it sees such a need exists (mean = 3.20), but power structure members gave an identical rating to the statement that the Bowie News should present only the facts and should avoid expressing an opinion on community affairs. Responses tended toward neutral on statements that the newspaper helps expose crime and corruption (mean = 3.60) and that it sometimes plays down or drops some controversial opinions or news items (mean = 3.80).

Power structure members' responses ranged from mild agreement to mild disagreement on statements relating to the Bowie News as an instrument of special interest groups. Respondents mildly agreed that the newspaper often takes only one side in a controversy (mean = 3.40), but tended to be neutral toward the statement that the newspaper at times plays down or drops controversial opinions or news items

(mean = 3.80). Respondents mildly disagreed with statements that the Bowie News represents the interests of those who wield political power (mean = 4.60) and of those who wield financial power (mean = 5.20). Overall, power structure members were neutral in their opinions that the Bowie News serves as an instrument of special interest groups. The mean response toward statements relating to the Bowie News as an instrument of special interest groups was 4.25, with a standard deviation of 2.06. This high standard deviation indicates a wide range of opinion among power structure members toward statements relating to the Bowie News as an instrument of special interest groups.

Power structure members rated the Bowie News almost equal in a socially responsible context and in a libertarian context, with average means of 3.22 and 3.04 respectively. Standard deviation to statements relating to the Bowie News in a socially responsible context and in a libertarian context were 1.84 and 1.55 respectively.

#### The Bowie News as an Advertising Medium

Power structure members rated the Bowie News higher as an advertising medium than as a news medium. Highest rank-ordered statement was that the Bowie News is a marketplace in which consumer and seller are brought together (mean = 2.00). Almost as high rated was the statement that advertisements are honest and truthful (mean = 2.20); but power structure members were neutral in their attitudes

that the Bowie News protects its readers against false advertising (mean = 3.80). Power structure members mildly agreed that Bowie News advertisements aid them in routine shopping (mean = 3.40). The average mean for the four advertising-related statements was 2.85. Standard deviation of responses to the four advertising-related statements was 1.15.

#### Four Group t Value Comparisons

Tables I through IV indicated by asterisk that newspaper staff members, advertisers, subscribers, and power structure members' responses were significantly different from mean scores of at least one of the other groups on some closed-ended statements. Table V presents the degree to which such scores were significant at the .05 level by comparing responses of advertisers, subscribers, and power structure members against those of newspaper staff members.

Newspaper staff members differed significantly from advertisers on three statements, from subscribers on five statements, and from power structure members on five statements. In all instances, newspaper staff members' responses were more favorable toward the newspaper.

Subscribers and power structure members differed significantly with newspaper staff members in that the Bowie News takes the initiative in pointing up the need for improvement in areas where it sees a need exists (-2.28 for



TABLE V

t VALUES SHOWING SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RESPONSES OF ADVERTISERS, SUBSCRIBERS, AND POWER STRUCTURE MEMBERS IN RELATION WITH RESPONSES OF NEWSPAPER STAFF MEMBERS

Statement	Group		
	I	II	III
The <u>Bowie News</u> takes the initiative in pointing up the need for improvement in areas where it sees such a need exists.	..	-2.28	-2.96
The <u>Bowie News</u> should present both sides in a controversy.	..	-2.03	..
I use <u>Bowie News</u> advertisements to aid me in my routine shopping.	..	..	-3.05
The <u>Bowie News</u> is a marketplace in which consumer and seller are brought together.	..	-2.24	..
The <u>Bowie News</u> is an adequate source of news about the community.	..	-2.15	-2.88
The <u>Bowie News</u> is an independent voice in community affairs.	-2.16	..	..
Advertisements in the <u>Bowie News</u> are honest and truthful.	..	-2.49	..

TABLE V--Continued

Statement	Group		
	I	II	III
The <u>Bowie News</u> is the community's most important instrument for bringing together all elements of the community.	-2.35	. .	. .
The <u>Bowie News</u> protects its readers against false advertising.	. .	. .	-2.48
The <u>Bowie News</u> reflects the ideas of the whole community in a nonpartisan manner.	. .	. .	-2.93
Too often the <u>Bowie News</u> takes only one side in a controversy.	2.50	. .	. .
I--Advertisers	p < 0.05		
II--Subscribers			
III--Power Structure Members			

subscribers, -2.96 for power structure members). Advertisers disagreed with newspaper staff members that the Bowie News is an independent voice in community affairs (-2.16); that the newspaper is the community's most important instrument for bringing together all elements of the community (-2.35); and that the Bowie News too often takes only one side in a controversy (2.50).

Subscribers indicated that at times the Bowie News should not, in their opinion, present both sides in a controversy (-2.03); differed significantly with the newspaper staff members that the Bowie News is a marketplace bringing together consumer and seller (-2.34); disagreed with the newspaper staff members about the honesty and truthfulness of Bowie News advertisements (-2.49); and differed with staff members about the adequacy of the Bowie News' local news coverage (-2.15).

Members of the power structure indicated they do not rely as much as newspaper staff members upon Bowie News advertisements to aid them in their routine shopping (-3.05); differed with newspaper staff members on the adequacy of the newspaper's news coverage (-2.88); differed with newspaper staff members on the extent to which the Bowie News protects its readers against false advertising (-2.48); and disagreed with the newspaper staff that the

Bowie News reflects the ideas of the whole community in a nonpartisan manner (-2.93).

In every instance except two, in which one group's response to a statement differed significantly with another group's response, it was a difference from that of the newspaper staff. Advertisers' responses did not differ significantly from those of subscribers or power structure members on any of the statements. On only two statements did power structure members and subscribers differ: "I use Bowie News advertisements to aid me in my routine shopping" (subscribers 2.42 with power structure members), and "The Bowie News reflects the ideas of the whole community in a nonpartisan manner" (subscribers 2.63 with power structure members). Newspaper staff members consistently rated the Bowie News higher as a news medium both in a libertarian and socially responsible context; as a news source free from the influence of special interest groups; and as an advertising medium. Power structure members, on the whole, were least favorable toward the Bowie News.

Table VI presents a comparison of mean scores of all groups on all statements relating to the Bowie News in a libertarian context; in a socially responsible context; as an instrument of special interest groups; and as an advertising medium. Advertisers' and subscribers' responses were similar toward the Bowie News in a libertarian context (mean = 2.98 for advertisers, 2.87 for subscribers) and in a socially

TABLE VI  
COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES ON FOUR FUNCTIONS

Function	Group			
	I	II	III	IV
Libertarian	2.45	2.98	2.87	3.04
Socially Responsible	2.50	3.16	2.89	3.22
Special Interests Use	4.33	3.15	4.00	4.25
Advertising Medium	1.75	2.61	2.64	2.85
I--Newspaper Staff Members	III--Subscribers			
II--Advertisers	IV--Power Structure Members			

responsible context (mean = 3.16 for advertisers, 2.89 for subscribers). Advertisers and subscribers rated the Bowie News almost identically as an advertising medium (mean = 2.61 for advertisers, 2.64 for subscribers), but advertisers were the only group to positively rate the Bowie News as an instrument of special interest groups (mean = 3.15). The other groups tended to be neutral toward this concept (mean = 4.33 for newspaper staff, 4.00 for subscribers, and 4.25 for power structure members), but the advertisers' mean score on this concept did not differ significantly from mean scores of the other groups.

Although newspaper staff members tended to be most favorable overall toward the Bowie News, and power structure members rated the Bowie News lowest on three of the four concepts, none of these groups' means on the four concepts

was statistically significant with the other. In no instance was any group's mean score on any concept statistically significant with the mean score of another group.

#### Preliminary Findings on Hypotheses

Hypothesis One, that members of the power structure have a more favorable attitude toward the Bowie News than those readers not included within the community's power structure, is rejected by responses to closed-ended statements. Responses of power structure members to the Bowie News in a libertarian context, a socially responsible context and as an advertising medium were slightly less favorable than advertisers' and subscribers' responses and considerably less favorable than newspaper staff members' responses, although the differences were not statistically significant. Power structure members rated the Bowie News neutral as an instrument of special interest groups, as did newspaper staff members and subscribers.

Hypothesis Two, that the Bowie News plays an active role, serving as an institution of the power structure in promoting the power structure's leadership, is rejected because of the heterogeneous nature of the power structure, indicated by high standard deviations to almost all of the closed-ended statements. These high standard deviations indicate considerable disagreement among power structure members toward the Bowie News as a news and advertising medium. In addition, power structure members rated the Bowie News neutral as an

instrument of special interest groups. The Bowie News may serve the special interests of one or more specific factions within the power structure, but this cannot be accepted or rejected on the basis of data studied.

Hypothesis Three, that all four publics will have different attitudes toward what they perceive to be the newspaper's role in getting information to the community, is rejected. Responses of each group studied did not differ significantly from any other group's responses on the four concepts studied.

## CHAPTER IV

### COMPARISONS BETWEEN GROUPS ON CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURES

Respondents were asked to rate the Bowie News on a series of descriptive scales consisting of various bipolar adjectives. The connotative meaning of the Bowie News, as judged by respondents, was measured on semantic differential scales developed by Charles E. Osgood and associates.<sup>1</sup> The semantic differential is a method of observing and measuring the psychological meaning of concepts by having respondents judge the concepts against bipolar adjective scales.

Osgood and his associates found three major independent dimensions of connotative meaning and termed them evaluative, potency, and activity dimensions. A respondent's judgment of or attitude toward the Bowie News could be measured to a considerable degree by having him locate on a seven-point scale his judgment of the newspaper. On each scale a judgment of "4" denotes neutrality of judgment. Integers smaller than "4" denote positive judgments, and integers bigger than "4" indicate negative judgments. A respondent who rated a particular scale as a "3" would be more favorably disposed toward the newspaper than one who rated it as a "5."

---

<sup>1</sup>Charles E. Osgood, George Suci, and Percy H. Tannenbaum, The Measurement of Meaning (Chicago, 1957).



The Evaluative factor included seven scales consisting of these bipolar adjectives: beneficial--harmful; fair--unfair; wise--foolish; responsible--irresponsible; inferior--superior; important--unimportant, and timely--untimely. The Potency factor included eight pairs of adjectives: powerful--weak; large--small; feeble--vigorous; soft--hard, brave--cowardly; serious--humorous; unemotional--emotional, and easy--difficult. The Activity factor included three pairs of adjectives: active--passive; fast--slow, and calm--excitable.

In this chapter the totals of each group's responses are compared with those of the other groups. Measurements are made of the four groups' means on the 18 scales in order to determine whether differences in attitudes toward the Bowie News exist among the four publics and to test the three hypotheses: that members of the power structure have a more favorable attitude toward the Bowie News than those readers not included within the community's power structure; that the Bowie News plays an active role, serving as an institution of the power structure, in promoting the power structure's leadership; and that all four publics have different attitudes toward what they perceive to be the newspaper's role in getting information to the community.

Responses of each subject in the four groups studied were coded onto computer cards, and were then processed by the computer at the Computing Center at North Texas State

University, according to an analysis plan formulated in advance. Programming for the t-test used to measure the difference of responses at the .05 level of significance among groups was carried out by a programmer at the Computing Center

### Mean Profiles

Each group's mean judgments on the eighteen scales were summed and averaged. Figure 1 shows the mean profiles of the ratings on each of the scales by the four groups studied.

Figure 1 illustrates that newspaper staff members' responses were the most favorable, on the whole, toward the Bowie News. Newspaper staff members gave highest ratings to the scales denoting the newspaper as important (1.33), timely and powerful (1.83), and active (1.83). At the same time, the newspaper was viewed favorably on all the other scales measured, with staff members' responses all falling on the favorable side of "4" (neutral).

Advertisers' overall ratings on the scales were more negative than responses of the other three groups. Advertisers' mean ratings were mildly negative on two scales, excitable (4.92) and emotional (4.62). Advertisers were most favorable toward the concepts responsible (2.31); beneficial (2.38); important (2.54); brave (2.69); and active (2.69).

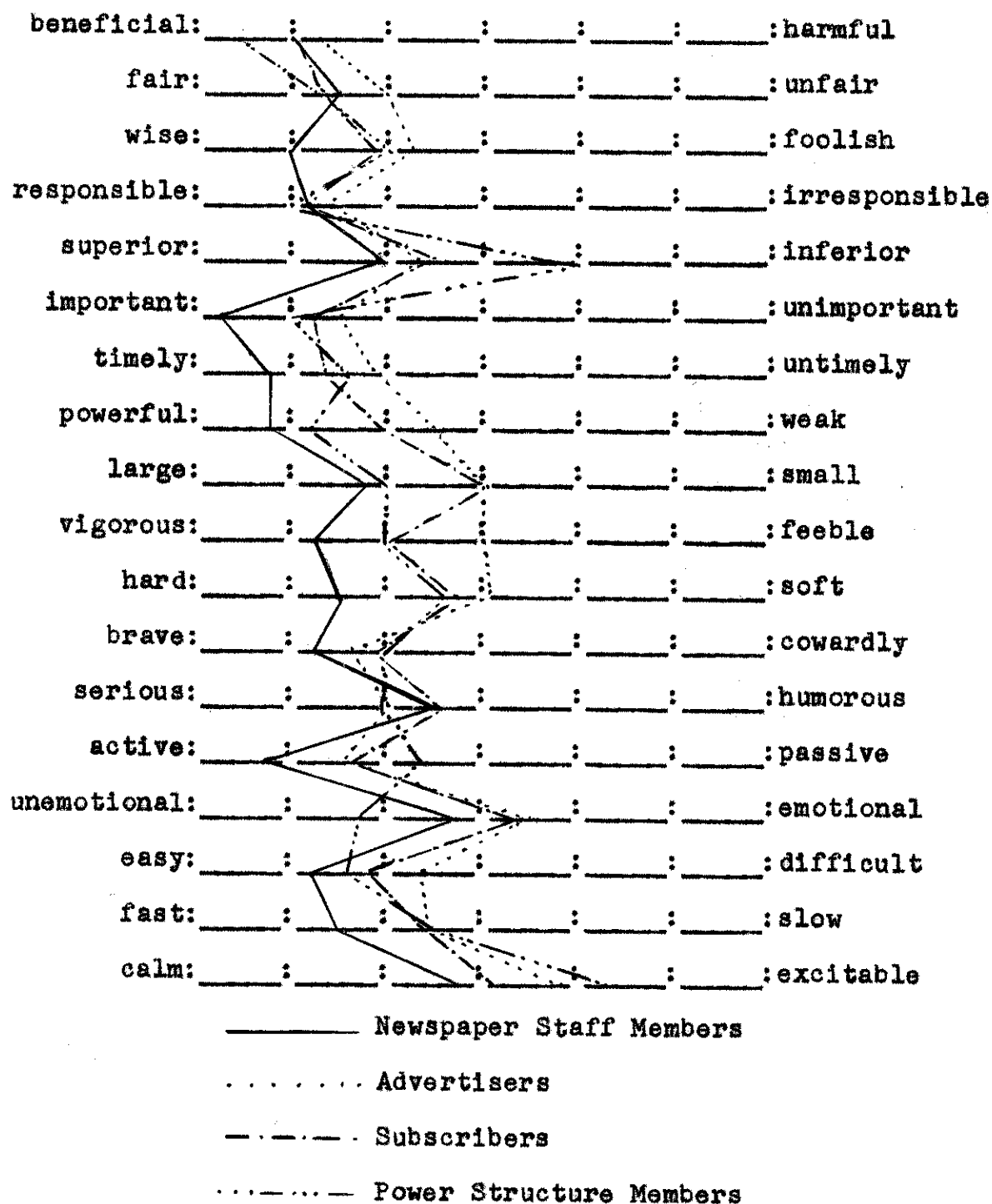


Fig. 1--Mean profiles of the four groups on the concept "Bowie News."

Subscribers' ratings were more favorable than advertisers' ratings but were not as favorable as newspaper staff members' ratings. Subscribers were mildly negative on the scale emotional (4.55). They tended to be neutral on three scales: small (4.07); soft (3.74); and excitable (4.18). Subscribers were most favorable toward the scales beneficial (2.04); responsible (2.15); important (2.26); timely (2.33); and fair (2.44).

Power structure members' responses, overall, were slightly less favorable than subscribers' ratings but were more favorable than advertisers' ratings. Power structure members were mildly negative on the scales excitable (5.20) and inferior (5.00). They were neutral on the scale soft (3.60), and were at least mildly favorable on the other scales. Subscribers were most favorable toward the scales beneficial (1.40); responsible (2.00); important (2.00); powerful (2.20); fair (2.40); and timely (2.60).

The mean judgment of the four groups was most favorable toward the scale beneficial (1.95). Other high rated scales were important (2.03); responsible (2.15); timely (2.42); fair (2.59); and active (2.67). The only negative rating by the four groups was that the Bowie News tends to be mildly excitable (4.53). Respondents were neutral in their opinions that the Bowie News is emotional (3.90) and a superior newspaper (3.73). The other mean judgments tended to be mildly favorable toward the Bowie News.

Table VI shows means of newspaper staff members, advertisers, subscribers, and power structure members on the evaluative, potency, and activity factors.

TABLE VII  
FOUR GROUP MEANS ON EVALUATIVE,  
POTENCY, AND ACTIVITY FACTORS

Group	Evaluative	Potency	Activity
Newspaper Staff Members	2.12	2.64	2.72
Advertisers	2.82	3.65	3.66
Subscribers	2.53	3.47	3.44
Power Structure Members	2.63	2.90	4.00

Table VI shows that newspaper staff members rated the Bowie News highest on evaluative (2.12), potency (2.64), and activity factors (2.72). Responses of advertisers and subscribers were similar on all three factors (advertisers: 2.82 on evaluative, 3.65 on potency, and 3.66 on activity factors; subscribers 2.53 on evaluative, 3.47 on potency, and 3.44 on activity factors). Power structure members' ratings fell between advertisers' and subscribers' ratings on the evaluative factor (2.63); were better than advertisers' and subscribers' ratings toward the Bowie News (2.90); and were least favorable on the activity factor (4.00). Each group, on each factor, judged the Bowie News favorably or was at least neutral.

#### Four Group $t$ Value Comparisons

Statistically significant differences were found between at least two groups on only three descriptive scales. Newspaper staff members differed from advertisers on two scales and from subscribers on one scale. Power structure members differed from advertisers and subscribers on one scale.

Newspaper staff members differed from advertisers on the scale powerful--weak. Staff members rated the scale favorably as powerful (mean = 1.833), whereas advertisers rated the scale not as favorably (mean = 3.54). At the .05 level of significance, the  $t$  value was 2.46.

Newspaper staff members differed from advertisers and subscribers on the scale hard--soft. Staff members rated the scale as hard (mean = 2.50), whereas advertisers (mean = 4.08) and subscribers (mean = 3.74) tended to be neutral on the scale. At the .05 level, the  $t$  value was 2.47 between staff members and advertisers and 2.12 between staff members and subscribers.

Power structure members differed from advertisers and subscribers on the scale emotional--unemotional. Power structure members rated the scale as unemotional (mean = 2.80), whereas advertisers (mean = 4.62) and subscribers (mean = 4.56) tended to judge the Bowie News as mildly emotional. At the .05 level, the  $t$  value was 2.68 between power structure members and advertisers and 2.80 between power structure members and subscribers.

No significant differences were found in the ratings of the four groups toward fifteen descriptive scales. In addition, no group's mean rating on the evaluative, potency, and activity factors (Table VI) was statistically significant at the .05 level with the mean of any other group. Standard deviations of responses within each group were almost identical. The standard deviation of newspaper staff members' ratings of the 18 paired bipolar adjectives was 1.37; standard deviation of advertisers' responses was 1.27; standard deviation of subscribers' responses was 1.36; and standard deviation of power structure members was 1.38. This indicates an identical central tendency of each group toward the scales rated; it can be inferred that respondents were drawn from the same population, i.e., residents of Bowie who were familiar with the Bowie News.

#### Preliminary Findings on Hypotheses

Hypothesis One, that members of the power structure have a more favorable attitude toward the Bowie News than those readers not included within the community's power structure, is rejected by responses on the 18 scales. Power structure members rated the Bowie News less favorably than did subscribers on the evaluative and activity factors. Power structure members rated the Bowie News less favorably than did advertisers on the activity factor but more favorably on the evaluative and potency factors. Although the power structure members' overall rating of the Bowie News is second only to the newspaper staff members'

rating, differences among power structure members, advertisers, and subscribers on the 18 scales are insignificant.

Hypothesis Two, that the Bowie News plays an active role, serving as an institution of the power structure in promoting the power structure's leadership, is rejected because power members' ratings on the 18 scales were not significantly higher than ratings of subscribers and advertisers.

Hypothesis Three, that all four publics will have different attitudes toward what they perceive to be the newspaper's role in getting information to the community, is rejected because of the similarity in ratings to the 18 scales on evaluative, potency, and activity factors. Only one public, the advertisers, differed significantly from at least one other public on more than one scale. It may be inferred that all four publics have basically similar attitudes toward the newspaper's role in getting information to the community.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was designed to develop a way by which attitudes of specific publics within a community toward their community's newspaper can be determined. Specifically, this study was designed to determine attitudes of four defined publics toward the Bowie News as a news and advertising medium. Attitudes of the four publics--newspaper staff members, advertisers, subscribers, and members of the power structure--were measured on a two-part survey instrument consisting of thirty-two closed-ended statements and eighteen pairs of bipolar adjectives on a semantic differential scale. The closed-ended statements compared the four publics' attitudes toward the Bowie News in a libertarian function, a socially responsible function, as an instrument of special interest groups, and as an advertising medium. The eighteen scales measured the concept Bowie News on evaluative, potency, and activity factors.

The study tested three hypotheses. Hypothesis One was that members of the power structure would have a more favorable attitude toward the Bowie News than those readers not included within the community's power structure. Hypothesis Two was that the Bowie News would play an active role, serving as an

instrument of the power structure, in promoting the power structure's leadership. Hypothesis Three was that all four publics would have different attitudes toward what they perceive to be the newspaper's role in getting information to the community. A t-test was used at the .05 level of significance to test the three hypotheses.

Hypothesis One was rejected. Power structure members' responses to closed-ended statements did not differ significantly from responses of the other three publics to the Bowie News in a libertarian function, socially responsible function, as an instrument of special interest groups, or as an advertising medium. In fact, mean responses of power structure members were less favorable toward the Bowie News than were mean responses of the other publics, but their ratings did not differ significantly with ratings of the other publics on the closed-ended statements. On the eighteen scales, power structure members were mildly favorable toward the concept Bowie News on the evaluative and potency factors, and were neutral on the activity factor. Their responses toward the concept Bowie News did not differ significantly with the other three publics.

Hypothesis Two was rejected. If the Bowie News serves as an instrument of the power structure's leadership it can be assumed that power structure members would have a more favorable attitude toward the newspaper than the other publics do. There was no significant difference on the closed-ended

statements and on the eighteen scales between power structure members' ratings and the ratings of any of the other publics. Power structure members were neutral in their attitude toward the Bowie News as an instrument of special interest groups. In addition, newspaper staff members and subscribers were neutral toward the newspaper as an instrument of special interest groups, although advertisers mildly agreed that the Bowie News serves as an instrument of special interest groups.

Hypothesis Three was rejected. Responses of each public studied did not differ significantly from any other group's responses on the four functions gauged on closed-ended statements and toward the concept Bowie News on the eighteen scales. The most striking characteristic of the four publics was their homogeneity. Newspaper staff members differed significantly from advertisers on only three of the thirty-two closed-ended statements; from subscribers on five statements; and from power structure members on five statements. Power structure members differed significantly from subscribers on only two statements. There were no other significant differences between ratings of any of the four publics.

The four publics showed similar attitudes toward the concept Bowie News on the eighteen scales. On fifteen of the eighteen scales not one public differed significantly with any other public. Only one public, the advertisers, differed significantly from at least one other public on more than one scale. No differences were found among publics on their ratings

of the evaluative, potency, and activity factors on the semantic differential.

### Conclusion

This study found a large degree of homogeneity in the four publics' attitudes toward the Bowie News. No public differed significantly from any other public's responses on the four functions measured on closed-ended statements and toward the concept Bowie News on the eighteen scales. Overall, newspaper staff members' responses were most favorable toward the Bowie News and power structure members' responses were least favorable, but the differences were not significantly significant. Advertisers and subscribers were most similar in their judgments of the Bowie News. For example, the mean rating of advertisers toward the Bowie News as an advertising medium was 2.61, whereas the mean rating of subscribers toward the Bowie News on this function was 2.64. It can be concluded that the Bowie News reflects consensus opinion within the community; in a homogeneous community like Bowie, this makes it a trusted news source.

These findings may not apply elsewhere. Future studies into the attitudes of publics within a community toward that community's newspaper may result in different conclusions. Researchers in future studies may want to find out about the community's demographic characteristics before deciding upon a method for selecting samples. The reputational approach to determining members of the power structure is sufficient

for small communities like Bowie, but the decisional method of determining power structure developed by Robert Dahl and Edward Banfield<sup>1</sup> could result in a larger sample of power structure members. This may be preferable for studies in large communities. Editors' and publishers' recommendations of whom to include in the study as members of the power structure can be relied upon because of their knowledge of their community.

A cluster sampling of neighborhoods selected for specific demographic characteristics can be included in future studies in addition to the systematic sample of subscribers. This could specify attitudes among clearly defined ethnic and socio-economic groups.

---

<sup>1</sup>Terry Nichols Clark, Community Power and Policy Outputs (Beverly Hills, 1973), pp. 28-29.

## APPENDIX I

1. Group 1 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Group 2 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Group 3 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Group 4 \_\_\_\_\_

This is a two-part questionnaire designed to determine specific attitudes toward the Bowie News. The first part will ask your opinions toward specific statements on a seven-point scale. The second part will attempt to measure how you interpret the meaning of words as they apply to the Bowie News.

The first part contains statements followed by a seven-point scale. You should circle the number along the scale most closely corresponding with your opinion. An example is given below:

- a. A newspaper is easy to read.

1	2	3	④	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

In this example, the number "4" is circled, indicating that the respondent has no opinion, or a neutral opinion, about the statement. If number "2" had been circled the respondent would agree with the statement. If number "1" had been circled the respondent would have agreed with the statement so strongly that he did not think his opinion can be altered. Mild agreement, "3", indicates only slight agreement with the statement. In like manner, slight disagreement would be marked by circling "5", disagreement by circling "6" and very strong disagreement by circling "7".

Please be sure to circle only one number for each statement. More than one answer per scale will void your response for that statement.

5. male \_\_\_\_\_ (Please check where appropriate)
6. female \_\_\_\_\_
- age group: (please check the appropriate category)
7. 21 and under \_\_\_\_\_
8. 22-30 \_\_\_\_\_
9. 31-45 \_\_\_\_\_
10. 46-60 \_\_\_\_\_
11. 61 and over \_\_\_\_\_

12. The Bowie News attempts to serve the welfare of the entire community.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

13. The Bowie News reflects the ideas of the whole community in a nonpartisan manner.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

14. The Bowie News does not serve the special interests of any one group or organization.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

15. The Bowie News is an independent voice in community affairs.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

16. The Bowie News is an effective watchdog for the public's interests against political groups and other groups that may attempt to seize too much community power for themselves.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

17. The Bowie News takes the initiative in pointing up the need for improvement in areas where it sees such a need exists.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

18. The Bowie News should only present the facts and should avoid expressing an opinion on community affairs.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

19. The Bowie News should present both sides in a controversy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

20. The Bowie News should report on the events after meetings are held and others have made decisions on controversial matters.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

21. The Bowie News should play down or drop some controversial opinions or news items for the good of the entire community.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

22. The Bowie News is a trusted source of community news.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

23. I can believe what I read in the Bowie News.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

24. Advertisements in the Bowie News are honest and truthful.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

25. I use Bowie News advertisements to aid me in my routine shopping.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

26. The Bowie News protects its readers against false advertising.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree



27. The Bowie News is a marketplace in which consumer and seller are brought together.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

28. The Bowie News is an adequate source of news about the community.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

29. Too often the Bowie News takes only one side in a controversy.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

30. The Bowie News represents the interests of those who wield political power in the community.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

31. The Bowie News represents the interests of those who wield financial power in the community.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

32. The Bowie News does not represent the interests of any one group or combination of special interests; rather, it honestly attempts to serve the best interests of the entire community.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

33. At times the Bowie News plays down or drops some controversial opinions or news items.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

34. The Bowie News informs its readers about political developments.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

35. The Bowie News helps expose crime and corruption.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

36. The Bowie News is the community's most important instrument for bringing together all elements of the community.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

37. The Bowie News is informative.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

38. The Bowie News is entertaining.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

39. The Bowie News serves as a guardian of everyone's civil rights.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

40. News in the Bowie News is timely.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

41. The Bowie News is a trusted source of what happens at local meetings and of the decisions others make on controversial matters.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly agree	agree	mildly agree	neutral	mildly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

42. The Bowie News promotes constructive change.

78

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly	agree	mildly	neutral	mildly	disagree	strongly
agree		agree		disagree		disagree

43. The Bowie News provides background information to help readers understand events.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
strongly	agree	mildly	neutral	mildly	disagree	strongly
agree		agree		disagree		disagree

## PART TWO:

The purpose of this section is to measure the meanings of certain things to you about the Bowie News. To do this you will judge the Bowie News against a series of descriptive scales. In marking this section, please make your judgments on the basis of what the Bowie News means to you. On each of the scales you are to rate the Bowie News according to your own attitudes.

Here is how you are to use these scales:

If you feel that the Bowie News is very closely related to one end of the scale, you should place your check-mark as follows:

good X : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ bad

or

good \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : X bad

If you feel that the Bowie News is quite closely related to one or the other end of the scale (but not extremely), you should place your check as follows:

good \_\_\_\_ : X : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ bad

or

good \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : X : \_\_\_\_ bad

If the Bowie News seems only slightly related to one concept as opposed to the other concept (but is not really neutral), then you should check as follows:

good \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : X : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ bad

or

good \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ : X : \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ bad

The direction toward which you check, of course, depends upon which of the two ends of the scale seem most characteristic of the Bowie News.

If you consider the Bowie News to be neutral on the scale, both sides of the scale equally associated with the Bowie News, or if the scale is completely irrelevant, in your opinion, to the Bowie News, you should place your check-mark in the middle space:

Good \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_bad

IMPORTANT: (1) Place your check-marks in the middle of spaces, not on the boundaries:

                    This                                    Not This  
\_\_\_\_\_X\_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_~~X~~\_\_\_\_\_

(2) Be sure you check every scale.

(3) Never put more than one check-mark on a single scale.

Do not look back and forth through the items. Do not try to remember how you checked similar items earlier in the test or how you answered Part One. Make each item a separate and independent judgment. Work at fairly high speed. Do not worry or puzzle over individual items. It is your first impressions, the immediate "feelings" about the items, that is wanted. On the other hand, please do not be careless. Your true impressions are wanted.

THE BOWIE NEWS IS:

44. beneficial \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_harmful

45. fair \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_unfair

46. wise \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_foolish

47. responsible \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_irresponsible

48. inferior \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_superior

49. important \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_unimportant

50. timely \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_untimely

51. powerful \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_weak

52. large \_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_:\_\_\_\_\_small

53. feeble : : : : : vigorous

80

54. soft : : : : : hard

55. brave : : : : : cowardly

56. serious : : : : : humorous

57. active : : : : : passive

58. emotional : : : : : unemotional

59. easy : : : : : difficult

60. fast : : : : : slow

61. excitable : : : : : calm

## APPENDIX II

Jim Whitfield  
1231 Valencia Lane  
Lewisville, Texas 75067  
214/221-1824

Please permit me to introduce myself. I am a graduate student at North Texas State University. To partially fulfill my requirements for a master of arts degree in journalism I am conducting an analysis of readership attitudes toward the Bowie News.

Your name was selected at random from the newspaper's subscriber list. Enclosed is an eight-page questionnaire that pre-testing has shown can be completed within a half-hour. If you choose to participate in this survey, please answer the statements on the questionnaire according to the instructions on the questionnaire. Enclosed is a stamped, addressed envelope for you to return the questionnaire. Do not write your name on the envelope or on the questionnaire. All responses are strictly confidential.

If you do not wish to participate in the survey could you please return the questionnaire? Participation is, of course, strictly voluntary.

If you have any questions concerning the study or the questionnaire please feel free to call me collect at the above telephone number.

Your participation will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,

Jim Whitfield

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books

- Clark, Terry Nichols, Community Power and Policy Outputs, Beverly Hills, Sage Publications, 1973.
- Gilbert, C. W., Community Power Structure, Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1972.
- Hunter, Floyd, Community Power Structure, Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 1953.
- Osgood, Charles E., George J. Suci, and Percy H. Tannenbaum, The Measurement of Meaning, Chicago, Illini Books, 1957.
- Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide 1976-1977, Dallas, A. H. Belo Corp., 1976.

### Articles

- Anast, Philip, "Attitude Toward the Press as a Function of Interests," Journalism Quarterly, XXXVIII (1961), 376-380.
- Atwood, Erwin, "How Newsmen and Readers Perceive Each Others' Story Preferences," Journalism Quarterly, XLVII (1970), 296-302.
- Edelstein, Alex S. and J. Blaine Schulz, "The Weekly Newspaper's Leadership Role," Journalism Quarterly, XL (1963), 565-574.
- Greenberg, Bradley S., "The Community Press as Perceived by Its Editors and Readers," Journalism Quarterly, XLI (1964), 437-440.
- Starck, Kenneth, "Producer/Consumer Perceptions of the Function of the Daily Newspaper," Journalism Quarterly, LI (1974), 670-676.

### Unpublished Materials

- Fisher, James M., "The Effects of Community and Editor-Publisher Attitudes on the Community Weekly Newspaper," unpublished master's thesis, Department of Journalism, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1971.