A COMPARATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF TIME, NEWSWEEK, AND U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT COVERAGE OF THE 1979 ENERGY CRISIS

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

Julia Alicia Frazier, B.F.A.
Denton, Texas
May, 1982

This study was designed to determine whether Time, Newsweek and U.S. News & World Report news magazines expressed opinions in their coverage of four topics concerning the 1979 energy crisis: United States government, OPEC, oil companies, and consumers.

A content analysis of all stories in the three magazines from May to December 1979 indicated that Time was the most opinionated, U.S. News & World Report was second, and Newsweek was most neutral in coverage of the energy crisis. The percentage of article space allotted had no apparent effect upon the magazines' handling of those topics.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .................................................. iv

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ........................................... v

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION .................................................. 1

Statement of the Problem
Purpose of the Study
Questions
Review of Literature
Justification
Definition of Terms
Limitations of the Study
Methodology

II. RESULTS OF ANALYSES .......................................... 16

Organization of Data
Interests
All Articles

III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION .................................. 34

APPENDIX .......................................................... 39

BIBLIOGRAPHY ..................................................... 41
LIST OF TABLES

Table                                                                 Page
I. Allotment of Article Space to Interests . . . 20
II. Mean, Median, and Range of Article Scores . . 25
# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ranking of Mean United States Interest Scores</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ranking of Mean OPEC Interest Scores</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ranking of Mean Oil Company Interest Scores</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ranking of Mean Consumer Interest Scores</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ranking of Mean Article Scores</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was conceived long before its initial meeting in 1960. Fourteen years earlier, the oil minister of Venezuela, a lawyer named Juan Pablo Perez Alfonso, had begun studying the structure of the Texas Railroad Commission, which acted as a regulatory body for the price of United States oil (8, p. 48).

Critics contended that the commission artificially kept oil prices above what they should be. Proponents argued that the commission served as a stabilizing force for the roller coaster oil industry. Both of these views were true to an extent. The commission regulated the amount of oil that could be produced in a given time to avoid sluttng the market.

Perez admired the effectiveness of this method of controlling prices and issued similar directives for Venezuela's production schedule. He had them translated into Arabic and called a meeting of the first Arab Oil Congress, in Cairo, Egypt, in 1959. In attendance was Abdullah Tariki, director of the Office of Petroleum Affairs for Saudi Arabia.
Tariki, in turn, presented Perez' plan to oil ministers of Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait. On this groundwork, OPEC was formed in Baghdad, Iraq, September 9, 1960 by Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and Venezuela. At that time, the five countries produced 80 per cent of the world's exports of oil. This initial meeting was called to protest major oil company price cuts that had diminished the producing countries' income. For ten years, however, OPEC remained relatively ineffectual as the countries bickered among themselves over a few cents per barrel. The major oil companies often sent representatives to the meetings to negotiate prices.

One of the first embargoes that got the Western world's attention was triggered by United States support of Israel when Egypt attacked Israel October 6, 1973. This time there were no negotiations between OPEC and the United States oil companies. Crude oil prices went from three dollars per barrel to eleven dollars per barrel overnight. Production was cut back 20 per cent. OPEC's largest producer, Saudi Arabia, stopped shipments altogether. Anthony Sampson noted the embargo's impact on the world in *The Seven Sisters*:

For years the meetings of OPEC had attracted scarcely more attention than other trade organizations; only a handful of specialist journalists would attend. But after the sensational turn-about of 1973, the bleak offices became suddenly the object of intense curiosity for the rest of the world. The interest had reached its peak by the time of the annual meeting in December, 1974, a year after the price rise (5, p. 340).
Thereafter the news media took initial interest in what would be recorded as the "energy crisis." Today, the price of a barrel of crude oil hovers at forty dollars. OPEC now comprises thirteen countries: Ecuador, Iran, Kuwait, Venezuela, Iraq, Algeria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Gabon (associate), Indonesia, Nigeria, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

In addition to OPEC, interests at stake in the United States energy shortages included the independent and major oil companies, the United States government, individual consumers of petroleum products, and American industry in general. In an effort to contend with these interests, President Jimmy Carter formed the Department of Energy in 1977 to consolidate several energy-related functions scattered throughout the government.

James Schlesinger, defense secretary under President Richard Nixon, was appointed energy secretary. Employees and budgets were compiled from the Energy Research and Development Administration, the Federal Energy Administration, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Defense, and others to create the DOE. It had 18,000 employees and an annual budget of $10.5 billion. Its purposes included setting domestic oil and natural gas prices, enforcing energy legislation, and regulating interstate pipeline rates and synfuel development.

The United States petroleum industry, long characterized by its complexity and wealth, has been historically
laced with scandal, and often, as a result of its own arrogance and secretiveness, enmeshed in misunderstanding and lack of information. Not only did the willful industry grow up in a rapidly industrialized climate of "the public be damned," but for several decades it provided relatively cheap, efficient fuel that required no justification. Its poor public image was nothing new.

Much of the business was founded by speculators who often risked other people's money in the search for oil. In 1908, public outrage at John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Trust led to the Sherman Antitrust Act in 1911. At that time Standard Oil controlled 95 per cent of the oil business in the United States (7, p. 25).

In 1973, the American-Arabian Oil Company, Aramco, faced similar public outrage. During the 1973 OPEC embargo, Aramco was responsible for policing production cutbacks in Saudi Arabia, where it operated as a fusion of Standard Oil of California, Texaco, Mobil, and Exxon. Aramco was liable for any deviation from the embargo ground rules and was under pressure from the United States government as well as OPEC to see that all parties' conditions were met. In The Seven Sisters Sampson described the delicate situation in which Aramco found itself:

The Aramcons now found a real crisis of identity: for where was their ultimate loyalty? At the height of a war, with American public opinion highly charged, they were required to be the
agents of Arab government in enforcing an embargo, designed openly to change United States foreign policy. To the media Aramco appeared an all-powerful supragovernment in consortium of four of the richest companies in the world in league with an alien sovereign state (5. p. 302).

Oil companies became embroiled in investigations alleging conspiracy with OPEC and found little support in the public for the roles they had taken in international affairs. Throughout the turmoil, American consumers remained on the periphery of the international political conflict but felt the economic implications with a vengeance. The energy crisis became a social issue.

American crude oil prices, which were federally regulated, became artificially low compared to the world market for oil. Low prices had encouraged high consumption rates exemplified by the demand for big cars and recreational vehicles. With higher oil prices and shortages of fuel, consumers were asked to alter their lifestyles. Two-car families became increasingly difficult to sustain. The use of nonessential lighting was curtailed and grocery prices increased with transportation costs.

Reports of oil companies' "windfall profits" and the escalating price of gasoline served to increase the antagonism and confusion of consumers. They tended to blame the petroleum industry for creating the shortages. A 1979 survey taken by the New York Times reported that 65 per cent of the American public was not convinced that the energy shortage was real (4, p. 1a).
In the spring of 1979, the fall of the Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlazi, and production cutbacks in Saudi Arabia further shortened the energy supply. The effects began to be felt across the industrial world. On Monday, May 14, 1979, the price of Iranian crude oil was twenty-three dollars per barrel. By the end of the week, it had reached thirty-four dollars.

Statement of the Problem

The major problems of this study were (a) to determine whether opinion existed in stories in *Newsweek*, *Time* and *U.S. News & World Report* about the United States government, OPEC, the major oil companies, and consumers compared to a theoretical ideal of objectivity and (b) to determine if there is a significant relationship between the opinions expressed and the amount of coverage allotted each of the interests involved.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were to ascertain and quantify the opinions, or directional scores, of magazine articles toward the interests involved in the 1979 energy crisis by content analysis in order (a) to compare the magazines' opinions to the theoretical ideal of objectivity and (b) to compare the magazines' opinions to their allotment of article space.
Questions

The directional content analysis methods applied in this study attempted to determine how news magazines dealt with the prolific and often contradictory information that issued from OPEC, the United States government, the major oil companies, and consumer spokesmen during the eight-month period from May 1, 1979 to December 31, 1979. Since news magazines tend to deal with issues from social, political, and economic points of view, the following questions were formulated:

1. Which magazine's mean article score had an absolute value closest to zero, thereby expressing the most neutral stance?

2. Which magazine's mean article score had an absolute value farthest from zero, thereby expressing the strongest opinion?

3. What were the percentages of total article space allotted by Time, U.S. News, and Newsweek (a) to the United States government, (b) to OPEC, (c) to the oil companies, and (d) to consumer groups?

4. How did intensity of opinion (interest scores) vary according to percentage of article space?

Review of Literature

Most of the material published about energy was written in the interest of such special-interest groups as environmentalists, independent producers, and major oil companies.
Few of the articles or books surveyed attempted to render a well-rounded account of the energy industry's past, present and future, but, instead, tended to focus on a specific issue or incident.

A similar directional content analysis of the 1973 Chilean coup was conducted by Robert Hunnicutt in his thesis titled, "An Analysis of Magazine News and Editorial Coverage of the 1973 Military Coup in Chile" (3). From his conclusions, some of the questions for this study were formulated.

He found that Newsweek was most objective of the three news magazines; U.S. News registered the strongest opinion of the three; and when the directional scores were plotted by the week, positive and negative scores were fairly evenly distributed throughout the time period.

Justification

The importance of examining citizen sources of information about energy lies in the importance of energy to Americans and the United States economy. What was once a bountiful, inexpensive commodity, has today become a major social, political, and economic issue.

Within the framework of energy development as a whole, such factions as the United States government, OPEC, oil companies and consumer groups compete for support and publicity to further their own concepts of energy management. In the wake of the 1979 energy crisis, there were particular
petroleum industry spokesmen who were especially critical of the way the news media handled the issues.

Among them was Mobil's Herbert Schmertz, vice president of investor, government, and public relations. He wrote an article for *Fortune* magazine in which he contended:

The failure of American journalism is this: It has felt free to report the gossip and recriminations but has done little to expose the political motivations that give rise to them. Herein lies the information gap. The fact is that the real energy story has been the political manipulation of the energy issue. The press has simply ignored this story (6, p. 153).

Patricia and Robert Coyne supported this view in their book titled, *The Big Breakup* (7). They alleged that the news media were exploited by politically ambitious men who sought to take advantage of American consumers. The Coynes said that other politicians told their constituents that the crisis was a result of conspiracy between the oil industry and the Middle East.

Criticisms like these suggest the merits of further investigation into how, exactly, the crisis was covered to determine which interests involved were most successful in setting their story to the public.

**Definition of Terms**

Terms used in this study are defined as follows:

**Absolute value.**—The value of a number, regardless of a prefixed plus or minus sign. Example: The absolute value of −.1200 is +.1200. The absolute value of +.1200 is +.1200.
Article score.--The direction, or opinion, expressed in an article. It is expressed quantitatively in directional scores ranging from +1.000 to -1.000.

Article space.--Article space is the total approximate number of words in an article.

Category.--A Category is an archetypical thought unit symbolic of other thought units. Example: "Statement of opposition to the United States government" is the category in which the statement, "The DOE is inefficient" would fit.

Content analysis.--Content analysis is a method of observation in which the researcher can make inferences based on a systematic quantitative description. Basically, numerical values are assigned to words. Directional content analysis indicates the degree to which words are positive, negative, or neutral.

Direction.--Direction is the opinion expressed in a thought unit. The opinion may be positive, negative, or neutral. Direction is a quantitative measure of opinion and is expressed in directional scores that range from +1.000 to -1.000. Two types of directional scores in this study are article score and interest score.

Intensity.--Intensity is the absolute value of a directional score. It indicates the score's distance from zero. It does not indicate the direction of a score but the strength of the opinion expressed, whether it be positive or negative.
Interest.--The four interests in this study are the United States government, OPEC, oil companies, and consumers.

Interest score.--The direction or quantitative opinion, expressed about an interest. The four types of interest scores in this study are to measure opinions expressed by news magazines toward the United States government, OPEC, oil companies, and consumer groups. (See Interest, Direction)

Opinion.--Opinion is a written or spoken expression about a controversial subject. If the subject were not controversial, the expression would be fact. Opinions are overt expressions of attitudes.

Thought unit.--A thought unit is a phrase or statement expressing a single idea. Example: "OPEC comprises thirteen countries."

Limitations of the Study

This study will be limited to a directional content analysis of Newsweek, Time, and U.S. News from May 1, 1979 to December 31, 1979. This time period was chosen because it was one of the most recent periods of intense news media coverage of energy shortages. These magazines are among the most widely read news sources by the general public. Interests were confined to the United States government, OPEC, oil companies, and consumers because they have maintained the highest profiles in news media coverage.
Methodology

Methodology is based on content analysis as described by Budd, Throp, and Donohew in Content Analysis of Communications (1). The authors instruct researchers to formulate hypotheses, take a sample, define content categories, and code content according to specific rules.

A table of content categories is listed in Appendix A. It was condensed from a list of specific thought units found in a preliminary survey of the articles' contents.

Each thought unit was coded by comparison to the category table as positive, negative, or neutral. Irrelevant material was classified as neutral.

For simplicity, it was assumed that no single statement could be classified as both positive and negative. This provision eliminated the need for multiple coders, since each sentence can be reduced to individual thought units, which can be categorized as positive, negative, or neutral.

Compound sentences were divided into individual thought units. Example:

Developing countries, in particular, have suffered even more than the West every time the OPEC cartel has raised the world price -- and Americans' unsatisfied appetite for foreign crude has enabled the higher price to stick (9, p. 22).

Such a statement would be categorized as containing one anticonsumer thought unit and one anti-OPEC thought unit.

The direction of an entire article was determined by calculating the ratio of positive thought units to the total
and subtracting the ratio of negative thought units to the total.

Example: Of a total 100 thought units in an article, 60 are positive, 35 are negative, and 5 are neutral.

\[
\frac{60}{100} - \frac{35}{100} = +.2500 = \text{value of article = directional score.}
\]

The direction of an interest within an article was determined in the same way but negative and positive thought units were compared to the total number of thought units.

Example: Of a total 100 thought units in an article, 25 are allotted OPEC; 10 are positive and 15 are negative.

\[
\frac{10}{100} - \frac{15}{100} = -.0500 = \text{opinion expressed toward an interest = interest score.}
\]

This method of calculating interest scores yielded an answer that took into account the direction of the interest and the amount of coverage it received in the article. The directional scores were placed on a scale of +1.0000 to -1.0000 with 0.0000 as the point of absolute objectivity. Since absolute objectivity is unattainable, a range of +/- .0500 to +/- .0500 was considered objective. The scale:

\[
+/- 0.0500 \text{ to } +/- 0.3332 = \text{mild intensity.}
\]
\[
+/- 0.3333 \text{ to } +/- 0.6665 = \text{moderated intensity.}
\]
\[
+/- 0.6666 \text{ to } +/- 1.0000 = \text{strong intensity.}
\]

In order to determine how much article space was allotted an interest, the percentage was calculated by multiplying the number of words concerning an interest by
100 and dividing the product by the total number of words in the article.

Example: Of a total 1,000 words, 250 concern consumers, 
250/1000 x 100 = 25% = percentage of article space allotted consumers.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

RESULTS OF ANALYSES

Organization of Data

This study does not purport to be an exhaustive statistical analysis of news magazine coverage of the 1979 energy crisis. It is an attempt to assign numerical values to words in order to discover patterns within and relationships among opinions expressed, the amount of article space allotted those opinions, and their distribution through time.

Inherent to content analysis is the bias of the researcher in determining whether a thought unit or sentence is positive, negative, or neutral based on the word connotations, denotations, and context. Although this study is not a definitive treatise on the opinions news magazines expressed toward the United States government, OPEC, oil companies, and consumer groups during the 1979 energy crisis, it can provide some indication of the characteristics of news magazine coverage.

The figures obtained in content analysis can be manipulated in a number of ways but the methods specifically chosen for this study addressed the relationship between the amount of coverage major news magazines allotted the energy crisis and the opinions the coverage expressed.
The data comprise forty-seven articles coded by comparison to the category table (Appendix A). Thought units were categorized as positive, negative, or neutral in regard to the United States government, OPEC, oil companies, and consumer groups.

Each article's length was measured in picas. The length was then multiplied by lines per pica, that product was multiplied by words per line to determine the approximated total number of words per article. Words per line varied according to the layout of each article. The average number of words per line in an article was determined by counting total words in a ten-line block of copy and dividing by ten.

Based on the subject matter of such paragraph, the number of words allotted each interest was compared to the total number of words to determine percentage of article space.

For each article, the negative/total ratio of all thought units was subtracted from the positive/total ratio to determine the article score. Article score indicates the negative, positive, or neutral direction of the article as a whole.

In order to examine the opinions specifically expressed in the articles toward the United States government, OPEC, oil companies, and consumer groups, interest scores were calculated.

Interest scores within each article were determined by subtracting the negative/total ratio from the positive/total ratio of thought units for each interest compared to the
total. Interest score indicates the negative, positive, or neutral direction of each interest within each article. The subdivision of articles into interests was necessary because although the overall direction of an article could be negative, for example, the article could contain positive opinions. Such an example occurred in the November 19, 1979, issue of *Time* (1, p. 85). Although the article score was -.3000, the interest scores were +.0300 for the United States government and -.3333 for OPEC. Oil companies and consumer groups were not mentioned.

Mean magazine scores were calculated for *Time*, *U.S. News*, and *Newsweek* by averaging article scores for each of the magazines. The United States government interest scores from *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News* were correlated with their respective allotments of article space to determine whether the two variables correlated.

The degree of this relationship can be measured by a coefficient of correlation that can range from +1.000, indicating positive correlation, to -1.000, indicating negative correlation. Positive correlation means that the coordinates on the graph are directly related: as x increases, y increases. A negative correlation shows that x and y are inversely proportional: as x increases, y decreases or vice versa. For purpose of this study, +/− .0500 was considered to be neutral. The data comprise (a) mean article scores for *Time*, *U.S. News* and *Newsweek*; (b) individual article
scores for each magazine; (c) interest scores for the United States government, OPEC, oil companies, and consumer groups within each article; (d) the percentages of article space allotted each interest in each article; (e) word totals by week for all magazines and (f) interest word totals by week; (g) and the coefficients of correlation for article scores and allotted space. The data will be presented for each interest and followed by a discussion of the data as a whole.
Interests

Table I tabulates data totals for Newsweek, Time, and U.S. News.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magazine</th>
<th>Total articles</th>
<th>Total words</th>
<th>percentage of total article space</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U.S. govt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>58,000</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. News</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsweek</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The United States Government. -- Newsweek allotted the greatest percentage of article space to the United States government interest (36 per cent), followed by Time (30 per cent) and U.S. News (26 per cent).

Newsweek's score, -0.0276, indicated that it was neutral in its coverage of the United States government's role in the energy crisis (see Fig. 1). U.S. News' score, -0.0637, was mildly negative, as was Time's score of -2910. Time's mean score was the single most intense opinion expressed toward an interest.
Fig. 1—Ranking of Mean United States Government Scores

Scores:

-1.0 0 1.2 3.4 5.6 7.8 9.0

Newsweek: -0.0276
U.S. News: -0.0637
Time: -0.2910
The correlation between the United States government interest scores and allotted article space was mildly negative, -.1308. This indicated that as article space increased, interest score tended to decrease.

**OPEC.** — *Time* allotted the greatest percentage of article space to OPEC (22 per cent), followed by *Newsweek* (13 per cent) and *U.S. News* (6 per cent).

*U.S. News'* score, -.0916; *Newsweek'*s score, -.1324; and *Time*'s score, -.1386, indicated that all three magazines expressed mildly negative opinions in their coverage of OPEC's role in the energy crisis (see Fig. 2). *U.S. News'* score, however, was nearest neutral, followed by *Newsweek* and *Time*.

The correlation between the OPEC interest scores and allotted article space was, slightly positive, +.0377, although this score technically falls in the neutral zone.

**The Oil Companies.** — *Newsweek* allotted the greatest percentage of article space to the oil companies (18 per cent), followed by *U.S. News* (15 per cent) and *Time* (13 per cent).

*U.S. News'* score, -.0130; *Time*'s score, -.0274; and *Newsweek'*s score, -.0351, indicated that all three magazines were neutral in their coverage of the oil companies' role in the energy crisis (see Fig. 3). Oil companies were the only interest group that received neutral coverage from all three magazines.
Fig. 2--Ranking of Mean OPEC Interests Scores

-0.9 8.7 6.5 4.3 2.1 0

U.S. News = -.0916
Newsweek = -.1324
Time = -.1386

+0.05 Limits of Objectivity
The correlation between oil company interest scores and allotted article space was mildly negative, -0.1230. This indicated that as article space increased, article score tended to decrease.

**Consumers.** U.S. News allotted the greatest percentage of article space to consumers (33 per cent), followed by Time (19 per cent) and Newsweek (16 per cent).

Newsweek's score, -0.0046, and U.S. News' score, -0.0494, indicated that the two magazines were neutral in their coverage of consumers' role in the energy crisis (see Fig. 4). Time's score, -0.1063, expressed a mildly negative opinion in its coverage of the consumer interest.

The correlation between consumer interest scores and allotted article space was slightly negative, -0.0319, although this score technically falls in the neutral zone.

**All Articles**

Table II presents a tabulation of mean, median, range of total article scores for each magazine.
**TABLE II**  
MEAN, MEDIAN, RANGE  
OF ARTICLE SCORES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>U.S. News</th>
<th>Newsweek</th>
<th>All Magazines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>-.1408</td>
<td>-.0544</td>
<td>-.0499</td>
<td>-.0817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>-.2903</td>
<td>-.1742</td>
<td>-.2323</td>
<td>-.2272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>+.0740</td>
<td>+.3617</td>
<td>+.4000</td>
<td>+.4000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.6666</td>
<td>-.8421</td>
<td>-.5000</td>
<td>-.8421</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News' opinions ranged from moderately positive to strongly negative throughout the study period. Newsweek's mean article score of .0499 fell in the neutral range. U.S. News was next with -.0544. Time was farthest from neutral with -.1408 (see Fig. 5). Newsweek. -- Newsweek's mean, -.0499, differed substantially from its median of -.2323 because the distribution of the scores was not normal. In a normal curve, the same number of scores lies on one side of the mean. Newsweek's scores, however, tended to fall below the mean and vary widely.*
Fig. 3—Ranking of Mean Oil Company Interest Scores
During May, 1979, *Newsweek*'s scores were in the mildly negative range but dropped into the moderately negative range the second week of June. During that week, *Newsweek* registered its strongest single negative opinion at -.0500, which falls in the range of moderate intensity. *Newsweek* gave almost no coverage to the energy crisis in July and August but in September, its scores climbed to the moderately positive range. Its strongest positive score occurred the second week of September, +.4000. During October and November, *Newsweek*'s scores dropped again to the mildly negative range.

*Newsweek* had the lowest word total and published the fewest articles of the three magazines (see Table II). Its coverage focused on the United States government, which occupied 36 per cent of its article space. It allotted the least percentage of article space to consumers and the greatest percentage to the United States government, compared to *Time* and *U.S. News*.

*Time*. -- *Time*'s mean article score of -.1408 expressed the strongest opinion of the three magazines compared with *U.S. News' score of -.0544 *Newsweek*'s score of -.0499. *Time*'s mean and median scores were also substantially different, indicating an abnormal distribution of scores. *Time*'s mean article score of -.1408 expressed overall the most negative opinion of the three magazines.
Fig. 4--Ranking of Mean Consumer Interests Scores
During May, 1979, Time's scores ranged from mildly negative to moderately negative but rose to a neutral range the first week of June. During the fourth week of June, however, Time registered its strongest negative opinion, -.6666. During the first two weeks of July, its scores were in the moderate range. The third week they climbed to the mild range and the fourth week Time registered its most positive score, +.0740.

From that point, Time's scores grew increasingly more negative until the end of November, when they dropped to the moderately negative range, -.5172. During December, Time's scores continued to be in the moderately negative range.

Time had the highest word total and published the greatest number of articles among the three magazines (see Table II). Its coverage focused on the United States government, which occupied 30 per cent of its article space. It allotted the least percentage of article space to oil companies and the greatest percentage to OPEC compared to Newsweek and U.S. News.

U.S. News. -- U.S. News' mean article score of .0544 fell between Time's score of -.1408 and Newsweek's score of -.0499. U.S. News' mean and median scores were close, indicating a fairly normal distribution.

During May, 1979, U.S. News' scores dropped from a mildly negative intensity to a moderately negative intensity.
The first week of June they climbed to a mildly negative intensity but dropped the second week of June into a moderately negative range. The first week of July, *U.S. News* scored the strongest single negative article score among the three magazines at -.8421, which fell in the range of strong intensity. During the remainder of July, its scores were in the moderately negative range until the fourth week of July, when *U.S. News* scored its single most positive score, +.3617, which fell in the mildly positive range. The remainder of the year, its scores were in the mildly negative range.

*U.S. News* had the second highest word total and number of articles of the three magazines. Its coverage focused on the consumer, which occupied 33 per cent of its article space. It allotted the least percentage of article space to OPEC and the United States government and the greatest percentage to consumers when compared to *Time* and *Newsweek*.

**Unclassified Article Space**

Due to unclassified, or "neutral" paragraphs, percentages in Table II do not total 100 when added horizontally. Fifteen per cent of *Time*’s article space was unclassified; 20 per cent of *U.S. News*’ article space was unclassified; and 17 per cent of *Newsweek*’s was unclassified.

Although such unclassified article space was considered "neutral," it has a significant impact on article scores and
Fig. 5--Ranking of Mean Article Scores

+0.05 Limits of Objectivity
was important to this study. For example, if an article had a total of twenty thought units with six positive, eight negative and six neutral, the article score would have been:

\[
\frac{6}{20} - \frac{8}{20} = \frac{-2}{20} = -0.1000 = \text{article score.}
\]

In comparison, if an article has a total of twenty-five thought units with six positive, eight negative and eleven neutral, the article score would have been:

\[
\frac{6}{25} - \frac{8}{25} = \frac{-2}{25} = -0.0800 = \text{article score.}
\]

The five extra "neutral" thought units made the article score express a less negative opinion by changing the score from -0.1000 to -0.0800. The question this ultimately raised was, can descriptive, factual or irrelevant bits of information that remain unclassified be considered neutral? Although this study did not address itself to this question, it is a consideration when comparing scores.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

The problems in this study were to determine whether (a) *Time*, *Newsweek* and *U.S. News & World Report* news magazines expressed any opinions in their coverage of the 1979 energy crisis and (b) whether the amount of article space allotted the interests involved in the crisis affected the coverage. The interests involved were the United States government, OPEC, oil companies, and consumers.

Each of the forty-seven articles under consideration was coded by comparison to the category table in Appendix A. Thought units were classified as positive, negative, or neutral, and each class was totalled and compared to the total number of thought units in each article.

The negative/total ratio was then subtracted from the positive/total ratio to determine the direction and intensity for each interest and the entire article. The values for all articles within each publication were averaged to calculate a mean value for each interest and each magazine.

A neutral range was established within +/- .0500. Neutral results were classified as directionless or objective.

34
Conclusion

Overall, the magazines expressed little opinion in their coverage of the energy crisis. Newsweek's mean article score of -.0499 had an absolute value closest to zero, thereby having the most neutral stance (see Fig. 5). In addition, Newsweek had the most neutral mean interest scores for the United States government and consumers.

U.S. News was next with an article score of -.0544 except in its opinions of OPEC and oil companies. In these instances, U.S. News had the most neutral scores.

Time's mean article score of -.1408 had an absolute value farthest from zero, thereby expressing the strongest overall opinion. It consistently expressed the most negative opinions of the United States, OPEC, and consumers.

Time and Newsweek devoted more of their article space to the interest of the United States government than to any other interest. Newsweek allotted more of its article space to the oil companies' interest than did Time and U.S. News, which may indicate a tendency in Newsweek to cover news from an economic or business-oriented point of view. U.S. News' greatest emphasis, however, was on the consumer's role in the energy crisis. This could be attributed to a less politically oriented editorial stance in favor of providing readers information on alternative energy sources, the social implications of energy legislation, and the effects of the crisis on citizens. The lead sentence of
most articles immediately tied the subject of the article to the typical American reader who wants to know, "How will this affect me?"

In contrast, Time and Newsweek speculated primarily on the political innuendoes of legislation by discussing the alignments of politicians, lobbyists, labor leaders, and state officials. They tended to be prescriptive in approach by evaluating political proposals, weighing the alternatives, and recommending action.

There was apparently little correlation between the percentage of article space allotted interests and the interest scores. Nevertheless, the characteristics of these data make it impossible to pinpoint decisive opinions expressed by Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News toward the interests involved in the energy crisis. The magazines did not consistently attack or defend a particular interest. They alternated criticism and praise to varying degrees among the United States government, OPEC, the oil companies, and consumers.

Often the publications played devil's advocate for the sake of argument or examination of such alternatives as synfuels, electric automobiles, and conservation. In this instance, perhaps, the magazines played roles in the news media as forums in which diverse opinions could be exchanged. These analyses of the data disclosed no conspiracy on the part of the magazines collectively or individually to
protect one interest over another or to foist a fixed viewpoint on their audiences.

Regular readers of any of these news magazines would have received a variety of viewpoints on the energy crisis. The passage of time influenced the magazines' emphases on the roles played by the United States government, OPEC, the oil companies, and consumers as events unfolded during the crisis. With each turn of events, the magazines' focus changed. The highest peaks of coverage occurred in May, July, and December, 1979.

Combined news magazine coverage of the energy crisis reached its peak at 15,800 words during the third week of July, 1979. Word count for that week tripled the number of words published the week prior and fell to 11,000 the following week.

Coverage focusing on consumers' interests was intense in May, 1979, as oil prices rose with OPEC's price increases. The oil companies received intense coverage in May as the combination of higher prices, lower production, and an Iranian embargo culminated in gasoline shortages. Toward the end of May, the news magazines addressed the frustration of consumers with additional stories on how to take a close-to-home vacations and descriptions of violence in gas lines. Synfuel development became a popular topic of discussion.

Coverage slackened among all three magazines in June, but in July, President Jimmy Carter's creation of the
Department of Energy resulted in a stream of articles concerning Congress, the DOE, and Carter's credibility as a leader. In August, 1979, an oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico reminded the public of the oil companies' historically poor image and high profits. In the meantime, coverage of the United States government increased as the DOE changed hands when Charles Duncan replaced James Schlesinger as energy secretary. Coverage declined at the end of August until the announcement of third-quarter profits focused the media spotlight on oil companies. That same month OPEC announced another price increase and gasoline again became readily available.

In November, 1979, "windfall profits" legislation began. Coverage of OPEC increased with Iran's imprisonment of American diplomats as hostages. A peak in coverage in December can be attributed to an OPEC meeting to raise crude oil prices and the onset of winter, which drove up prices of heating oil.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The interest categories were not topically exhaustive and could be segmented into more specific topics. Among them could be the activities of such oil-producing but non-aligned countries as Mexico, or the role played by the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
TABLE OF CATEGORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressions of opposition to the American government:</td>
<td>Expressions favoring the American government:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOE</td>
<td>DOE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President Carter</td>
<td>President Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions in opposition to the American government:</td>
<td>Actions in support of the American government:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOE</td>
<td>DOE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President Carter</td>
<td>President Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements supporting the opponents of the American government:</td>
<td>Statements attacking opponents of the American government:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOE</td>
<td>DOE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td>Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President Carter</td>
<td>President Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressions of opposition to OPEC.</td>
<td>Expressions favoring OPEC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions in opposition to OPEC.</td>
<td>Actions in support of OPEC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements supporting opponents of OPEC.</td>
<td>Statements attacking opponents of OPEC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressions of opposition to the oil companies.</td>
<td>Expressions favoring the oil companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions in opposition to the oil companies.</td>
<td>Actions in support of the oil companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements supporting opponents of the oil companies.</td>
<td>Statements attacking opponents of oil companies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX A (Contd.)

TABLE OF CATEGORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expressions of opposition to consumers.</td>
<td>Expressions favoring consumers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actions in opposition to consumers.</td>
<td>Actions in support of consumers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements supporting opponents of consumers.</td>
<td>Statements attacking opponents of consumers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Budd, Richard; Throp, Robert; and Donohew, Lewis; Content Analysis of Communications, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1967.


Articles


"All Gassed Up," Time, June 18, 1979, p. 68.


"Battling Big Oil," *Newsweek*, October 1, 1979, p. 56.


"Big Oil Rides for a Windfall," *Newsweek*, November 5, 1979, pp. 81-82.

"Blaming the Obstetrician," *Newsweek*, June 4, 1979, p. 70.


"Drive Now, Freeze Later?" *Time*, May 14, 1979, pp. 60-63.


"Energy From the Americas," Time, June 11, 1979, p. 20.


"Fuelish Myths," Time, September 17, 1979, pp. 52-53.


"Gas: A Long Dry Summer?" Time, May 21, 1979, pp. 14-16.


"Heavy Oil Heats Up," Newsweek, September 10, 1979, pp. 59-60.

"Here They Come Again," Time, December 24, 1979, p. 69.


"Hot Prospect," Time, December 24, 1979, p. 65.


"Inheriting a Mess," Newsweek, August 27, 1979, p. 53.


"New Cheer in Energy," Newsweek, September 24, 1979, p. 76.


"Now the Heating Fuel Furor," Time, June 18, 1979, pp. 52-53.


"The Oil Game," Time, May 7, 1979, pp. 70-79.

"Oil: The Hottest Spot," Newsweek, June 11, 1979, pp. 81-82.


"OPEC Fails To Make a Fix," Time, December 24, 1979, pp. 22-23.


"Trying To Sweat It Out at 78°," Time, July 30, 1979, p. 31.


"A Windfall Profits Tax on Oil?" U.S. News & World Report, May 21, 1979, pp. 43-44.