

A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES OF INDIVIDUALS TOWARD
FREEDOM OF THE PRESS/MEDIA

By

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PREFACE

This study was concerned with an analysis of the attitudes of individuals toward freedom of the press/media. The objective was to determine if various sociological factors had an effect as they operated on the psychological variable, attitude. The study was undertaken to expand on the limited data available regarding the public's attitude toward freedom of the press/media. The researcher concentrated on examining the attitudes of residents of Stillwater, Oklahoma, in the Winter of 1982, toward the rights of the media.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A free press/media is essential to protect the "public's right to know", and consequently the protection of press freedom is essential to the existence of the press. The rationale for protecting the press appears to stem from the primary function of the press: the collection and dissemination of public information or as John Oakes, former editorial page editor for the New York Times, stated:

. . . the guaranty of press freedom would seem to rest on the assumption that the discussion of public affairs and the expression of opinion would be the primary function of the press--at least that was the primary function that required special protection.¹

For a democracy to function properly, the citizens continually must be informed of the matters that affect the operation of that democracy. Uninformed people cannot properly evaluate information and issues that ultimately have a direct bearing on their own lives. As Steven H. Chaffee and Michael J. Petrick wrote in Using the Mass Media:

In a democracy such as ours, in which the people are to be sovereign, citizens can exercise their prerogative to make many key decisions about public affairs. Obviously enough, intelligent decision making by citizens rests upon the quality of information the public has at its disposal and see fit to use. Few of us want to entrust decision making to a mass of 'know nothing and care less' citizens, and the country couldn't afford to do so.²

The belief that well informed citizens are essential to sustaining our Republic is not new, nor is the concept of the role played by the

news media. Chaffee and Petrick further pointed out "Since the founding of the Republic, American political theorists have placed a key role on the news media as the source of information on which the public can base its democratic decisions."³

The public is the constituency of the media, thus media rights are fundamentally derived from the people. Without popular public support, media rights are curtailed and the flow of information from the media to the public is diminished. The objective of this study is to determine what a sample of a selected public's attitude is toward media rights.

Background

Historically, common law does not provide any substantive assurance of freedom of the press. In Great Britain, where common law developed, complete and total access to Parliament was not guaranteed until 1874, and even then the House of Commons could exclude anyone by a majority vote. Initially secrecy was intended to prevent statements from reaching the crown that might cause problems for the Parliament from its constituency.⁴

The freedom of the press issue is as old as this country, going back to 1690 and the emergence of the first American newsletter, known as the Publick Occurrences. That Boston publication came into being close behind its English counterparts and lasted only one issue. Publick Occurrences immediately was suppressed by the Massachusetts royal governor primarily because that one issue was in effect an early attempt at investigative journalism. The issue contained an account of the corruption of Indians by the colonists and the seduction of the governor's daughter-in-law by the King of France. The Massachusetts

royal governor noted that Public Occurrences had been published "without the least . . . countenance of authority."⁵ Thus, the first newspaper went out of business before it actually went into the business of publishing the news.

When the colonies won their independence and adopted the Constitution, freedom of the press was taken for granted and utilized fully. There was as yet nothing written into law. A few years later the adoption of the First Amendment legitimized the press, however there are no provisions for the public business being transacted in public and reported by the press, nor are there any guarantees that publishers and editors will act responsibly. Nothing is stated or guaranteed that the press should be allowed to function as a forum for public debate of ideas and issues.

The new Congress was reluctant to grant rights and privileges to the press. The government had duties (then as now much work is done in secret committee meetings) and the press had reporting duties on behalf of the public.

The Congress moved to Washington and so did the press. Samuel Harrison Smith, founder of the National Intelligencer, led the way in attempts to gain press rights. His successors, Joseph Gales and William W. Seaton (Annals of Congress and Register of Debates), gained access to and accommodations by Congress. This marked the beginning of official Washington journalism.⁶

By the 1930s, Congress and the press achieved some rapport, with Congress having the upper hand over the press through patronage and special access powers. Although partisan politics inhibited total control, the patronage system dictated that editors enjoyed support of a

majority of the members of Congress.⁷ The next decade saw those favored press rights provided to the Washington-based papers being challenged by an emerging Washington corps of reporters.⁸

In 1967 Congress enacted the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). The FOIA requires the agencies of the executive branch (but not the Congress or the courts) to make available to the public and the press certain records and procedures not considered exempt. The effectiveness of the FOIA has been under criticism as evidenced by the following statements:

The FOIA and President Nixon's executive order on declassification of documents have removed some of the barriers to the free flow of information. However, petty bureaucratic secrecy still plagues the system. A government official may withhold information for no better reason than that it reflects unfavorably on him or his department.

In most agencies the procedures have undergone no noticeable change, and officials have been known to react with amused incredulity when, on the strength of the law, newsmen demanded certain data. The law is laced with exceptions that preclude the release of national security information, internal documents, law enforcement material and other types of information.¹⁰

Fifteen years ago Congress passed the Freedom of Information Act which many people believed would eliminate a great deal of unjustified secrecy in government. It was adopted with enough loopholes for any determined government administrator to drive a truck through. And, some of them did.¹¹

The relationship between the press and government has become an adversary one as the media attempt to provide information for public review while the Congress and the executive branch attempt to withhold information. As society continues to change, the judicial system makes new rulings on media rights while the Congress enacts self-interest legislation. In 1981 more than 20 bills were introduced in Congress to exempt certain information from disclosure under the FOIA. Government agencies that sought to restore total secrecy to their operations through

that proposed legislation included Treasury, Defense, State, FBI, CIA and the Secret Service. Such legislation, viewed as being done under the aegis of an anti-crime movement and the appeal for law and order, potentially could limit the effectiveness of the FOIA while, at same time, legitimizing a return to secrecy in government.¹²

Presently, the judiciary has assumed the dual role of participant and umpire in the game of media rights played between the government and the media. Howard Simons and Joseph A. Califano, Jr., noted ". . . the dispute (over the dual role) is not without irony. The central foundation of support for the rulings of the judiciary is the people."¹³

A similar relationship can be drawn between the media and the people, with regard to who is actually to be sovereign in this republic. "Journalists are important; but their special status derives from the right of the people. For the journalists hold the public's right-to-know hat in their right-to-print hand."¹⁴

In a democracy in which the people are sovereign, the public has the right and responsibility to see that their opinions on issues are integrated into formulation of government legislation, as well as being represented by judiciary rulings.

No historical evidence is to be found that embodies the media with the right to collect and publish information on behalf of the public or to serve as a forum for public debate of ideas and issues. Freedom of the press/media continually fluctuates; its progression or regression is directly related to the attitude and subsequent support or non-support of the people.

Media and Media Rights

Discussion of the media must begin with defining the functions of

the mass media in contemporary America. The functions of the media have been viewed as being three-fold: 1) the media act as a public "watchdog" scanning the environment both near and far; 2) the media aid social decision-making by opinions, appraisals and information of events and people; 3) the media teach by making available information and applicable knowledge to the public.¹⁵

The media are no longer just the press that served the colonies. Today, the media are institutions of economic and social significance. Purposely, the functions of the media are carried out with regard to both economic considerations and communications roles. In light of this duality of purposes, the media must remain responsible and credible to their constituency, for the media's position of power rest on that precarious balance on the government-control/self-control, teeter-totter which is weighted by the media's social responsibility as economic responsibility priorities. The public may, at its discretion, shift the weight of that balance by its support or non-support of the media and media rights.

In today's society the media are equated with economic institutions and, thus, are viewed as having a "Big Business" image. Distinguished newspaperman, former ombudsman and press critic, Ben Bagdikian, reported he found the media industry profits to be 76 per cent higher than those of all other American industries.¹⁶ The Washington Post has published a financial profile of thirteen leading newspaper firms showing a reported average increase of 35.8 per cent on net income from 1975 to 1976.¹⁷

Making a profit is not in contradiction with the democratic system, but the figures are significant in that they indicate the economic viability of the mass media; the same mass media that are considered the

principal means of communication in this society. In 1977, in employment terms, the newspaper industry was listed as this country's third largest manufacturer, behind automobiles and steel.¹⁸ In 1978, Charles B. Seib, then press ombudsman for the Washington Post, acknowledged that substantial segments of the American news media are big business he indicated there is every reason to believe they will get bigger.¹⁹

To survive, newspapers and other media in general have centralized their operations and in effect have materialized their big business image. That development has the potential in both the public and judiciary for altering their respective views as to what should be their First Amendment rights. The economic necessity of centralization would appear to conflict with the perceived notion of a free press operating as an agent of the people. The consequences of growth, centralization and economic stability, if viewed by the public as being negative factors, could become a rationale for diminishing media rights.

Any statements about the status of the media necessitates views of the perceived, as well as the actual power credited to the media. In a speech given in 1979, George E. Reedy, Nieman Professor of Journalism at Marquette, was quoted as saying:

There has been one factor in centralization of newspaper ownership which differs from the picture in the rest of our society. It is that increasing centralization has not been accompanied by increasing power--at least in the political field. Centralization has led to a higher degree of stability and profit than has existed in the past . . . the newspaper of today does not carry the 'clout' that characterized the newspapers of forty or fifty years ago.²⁰

A contrasting view of media power is presented by Dr. Max M. Kampelman, noted author and former professor at the University of Minnesota, who, while defending a free press as a vital part of our democracy, also raises important questions concerning status of media power. Dr. Kampelman

points out there is no way authors of the First Amendment could have known the media would grow into the profitable industries they are today. Neither could they have envisioned the complex corporate entities that control the media operations or that the media would assume enormous rights and privileges for themselves.²¹ Writing in Policy Review, Dr. Kampelman concluded:

The relatively unrestrained power of the media may well represent an even greater challenge to our democracy. Power itself is not antithetical to a democracy. There are, of course, definite restraints on the power of the President and on the power of the Congress. The genius of the Polity, in fact, has been its ability to balance various elements of power. Powerful corporations and unions restrain one another and both are restrained by government and by laws. The American press, however, perhaps the second most powerful institution in the country next to the Presidency, is characterized by few, if any, effective restraints.²²

Designating the American press as the second most powerful institution in the country, Dr. Kampelman referred to a 1974 survey by U.S. News and World Report which showed that a cross section of national leaders ranked television ahead of the White House as the country's number one power center.²³

Charles Cooley contended²⁴ that the dissemination of information in a society makes possible public opinion, thus a "public will" capable of influencing the government. Implicit in Cooley's contention is the idea that information is power.²⁵ The concept that information is power is equivalent to the concept that social control is power. The media, which traditionally have served as instruments of social control, perform that function based upon a distributive control of knowledge. Knowledge or information, whichever term is preferred, is power; however, control of that knowledge or information that is the apex of social control.²⁶ Machlup²⁷ termed the "knowledge industry" those institutions

that specialize in the control of information. The media are part of the knowledge industry.

Utilization of power by the media, in confrontation with another powerful institution - the government - entails the possibility of severely damaging the level of freedom enjoyed by the media. Two such potentially damaging confrontations were over the Pentagon Papers and Watergate. Jeffrey St. John, syndicated columnist and Emmy recipient, summarized the effect of these confrontations:

The price the free enterprise press paid for those victories was the undermining of public confidence in their function as a fair and disinterested institution--it was using and abusing its rights under the U.S. Constitution. This loss of public confidence in the free enterprise press leaves the way open for the legislatures, the courts and executive agencies to impose restrictions and regulations while a mass of Americans look on with little sympathy for a free enterprise press that, in their view, is deserving of such potentially draconian measures.²⁸

Perception of the media by the public as an institution of unrestrained power may set the stage for yet another confrontation: the people against the media. As institutions become powerful so do they become the enemies or the scapegoats for some disenchanted faction of the public. Professor of Education and Organizational Behavior at Harvard, Dr. Chris Argyris, proposed that, "what will sour the thoughtful citizens on the freedom of the media is the citizen's strong concern for justice and his belief that the media people can destroy his own freedom."²⁹ The public's concern for justice stems from this country's concept that along with power should go confrontation of that power. This is evident in the checks and balances system incorporated into the legislative, judicial and administrative branches of our government. Also inherent in the concept of justice is the belief that the actions of powerful institutions should be both confronted and influenced by one

societal agent. That societal agent was and continues to be the media; the function of the media as the societal agent for the public may well have been the reason for First Amendment protection. As the public realizes that the societal agent to which it has delegated power to confront other powerful institutions is itself not confrontable or influenceable, it's sense of injustice will surface and demand stricter control of the media.³⁰

A scenario has been developed by Dr. Argyris that suggests how the public will react to ever increasing feelings of alienation toward the media and institutions in general which are not influenceable. About this "double bind" scenario Dr. Argyris wrote:

The results will be increasing frustration and paranoia. As these pent-up feelings reach the point of explosion, all powerful institutions that appear uninfluenceable will be attacked. The attack will be especially vicious on those organizations that create double binds for the citizens. For example, if the citizens believe that their media are uninfluenceable and if they believe that the media should be free, then they will find themselves believing that institutions that harm individual freedom should be free. One way to deal with such a double bind is to lash out against the media.³¹

Other institutions in our society are required to exercise role responsibility. Sociologist C. Wright Mills, commenting on the role of the media, observed:

Very little of what we think we know of the social realities of the world have we found out first hand. Most of 'the pictures in our heads' we have gained from these media--even to the point where we often do not really believe what we see before us until we read about it in the paper or hear about it on the radio. The media not only give us information; they guide our very experiences. Our standards of credulity, our statements of reality, tend to be set³² by the media rather than by our own fragmentary experiences.

The media must remain faithful to their communication roles. The importance of the media's communication roles of providing any and all information which might help the public to formulate opinions and to

influence the policies they wish their government to follow cannot be understated. The assumption that people have a "right to know" and that the media act as societal agent for the people gives the media a major role in this country's governance.³³ In a large, complex society such as the United States, only the media can provide the public with much of the information necessary to make the numerous decisions on a variety of issues and to participate in the governmental process. The media, therefore, must exercise role responsibility. Schramm and Roberts have pointed out:

Only the media can insure that this information is complete. Theirs is the responsibility of making sure that the public receives all available information about various issues before those issues are resolved by our elected leaders. Theirs is the responsibility of insuring that the power which information implies remains diffused throughout the populace.³⁴

The public must have a better understanding of the media's role as the public's surrogate in society for gathering the information the public needs to make competent decisions.³⁵ That understanding is somewhat difficult to achieve as misconceptions are fostered about the media; the media have been perceived as being an accelerator of conflict, or by their mere presence at least, a contributor to conflict.³⁶ The media as an "accelerator" of the conflict concept have been examined and, in a study of the press and community conflict, Tichenor et al. concluded:

To say that newspapers or the other media start a controversy would be a gross oversimplification of the process. These media may, however, take part in the initiation process while playing their major roles in acceleration of the topic to a higher and wider level of public awareness, interest, and intensity than it would have reached otherwise. Initiation and acceleration are separate processes and media may perform differently in each. Often, particularly in smaller, more homogeneous communities, the newspaper will take no part whatsoever in initiation, but will report the controversy (if at all) only after the controversy has become public through

some other channel--a debate at a city council meeting or after a formal statement of challenge by an organized group.³⁷

Such a pattern as described above has been identified in studies by Mazur regarding fluoridation and nuclear power issues.³⁸

Confusion about the role and responsibility of the media may well stem from their being viewed as institutions separate from society. A viewpoint suggested by the "societal agent" or "watchdog" concept has become embedded in our thought and history. Our previous definition of the media may be superseded when compared to another definition of the media as a social subsystem. The Tichenor study of the press and community conflict provided the following definition of the media:

The analysis of conflict situations provides abundant evidence that newspapers and other media of communication are not the independent, self-styled social agents that either they or members of the public may imagine them to be. The efficacy of viewing the press, or any other mass medium, as constituting a separate 'fourth estate' is doubtful at best. The press is an integral subsystem within the total system, and its strong linkage with other system components impinges upon it as much as it impinges upon them, if not more.³⁹

If the public evaluates being a big business, being powerful and being a societal agent as negative factors, then the media may indeed be in jeopardy of losing their rights and privileges. There are signs of widening gaps between the public and the media.⁴⁰ Some examples are:

- The creation of a national news council and regional news councils as media monitors, responding to citizen criticisms of the media.
- The development of media reform groups, such as Accuracy in Media and the Media Institute, based in Washington, D.C.
- Advocacy advertisements by companies like Mobil on issues such as:
 - 'Does the TV camera distort society?'⁴¹
 - 'The news story you never got to see'.

The public's participation in the system that collects and

disseminates its news and information is no less important than the public's participation in the system that implements the rules and regulations upon which the society operates; that system being the government. If the people, through their voiced opinions, are part of the system of checks and balances of government, then logically so should they be part of the system of checks and balances of the system that provides them with the information about their government.

Journalists and the Judiciary

The press and the judiciary have been likened as "two institutions pedestalled in fragile loneliness by the Constitution."⁴² Neither institution has executive or legislative power, nor does it have any military power or unlimited bureaucratic clout to enforce those editorials or rulings.

Our judiciary system constitutionally was established as a separate branch of government, and remains, as Simons and Califano have pointed out, "dependent upon the executive for enforcement of its rulings and orders and on the legislature for funds to carry out its work and for a definition of the jurisdictional limits of its power."⁴³

The press or media, however, have been considered independent of all branches of government: the First Amendment--"Congress shall make no law . . . abridging . . . freedom of the press. . . ." Interpretation of those few words differs when purpose and point of view of each institution is considered. In their book, The Media & the Law, Simons and Califano concluded:

Most journalists interpolate 'the government' for 'Congress' and read the prohibition absolutely; most judges are intellectually tortured by perceived ambiguity. Journalists prefer to read the First Amendment in vacuumed isolation; judges weigh

its forbidding mandate against other rights and duties set forth in the Constitution. Journalists believe the First Amendment places them in a constitutionally elite class; judges tend to remind journalists that they are citizens just like every other American.⁴⁴

A point-counterpoint is provided by former Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart and Benjamin C. Bradlee, executive editor of the Washington Post.

Justice Stewart, who has been referred to as "one of the press' best friends" and considered, along with Justice William J. Brennan Jr. to be a "founding father" on free expression,⁴⁵ drew the following characterization of the media's constitutional rights in a 1974 address to the Yale Law School:

So far as the Constitution goes, the autonomous press may publish what it knows and may seek to learn what it can.

But this autonomy cuts both ways. The press is free to do battle against secrecy and deception in government. But the press cannot expect from the Constitution any guarantee that it will succeed.⁴⁶

Benjamin C. Bradlee, giving a commencement address at Franklin and Marshall College in 1974, said:

Journalists like to believe it is no accident that the First Amendment comes first, that all constitutional rights depend on the right to know, and that the right to know depends on a free press.⁴⁷

Each of the two different interpretations of the Constitutional meaning of media rights is clearly stated. For Justice Potter Stewart, the Constitution only establishes the contest with nothing guaranteed the media as to the outcome of the contest; the media perceive the Constitution as granting unconditional victory to them in their contest with the government.

The government does not remain inactive in the ongoing battle over control and dissemination of information; attempts are made to utilize

the media to influence the public's concept of, and behavior toward, government and governmental policies. Schramm and Roberts, referring to attempts by the government to use the media in an effort to influence the public, wrote:

They (the government) do both by trying to control access to information which might engender public disagreement with the policies they have formulated and by presenting us with interpretations of issues and images of candidates which they hope will be appealing to the public from which they derive their power.⁴⁸

The journalist's perception of the First Amendment statement, as an unlimited guarantee of media rights, extends into the decision making process of what and when to publish. That perception by journalists has had judiciary support in the past. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black, in the Pentagon Papers case, stated:

In the First Amendment the Founding Fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to fulfill its essential role in our democracy. The press was to serve the governed, not the governors. The government's power to censor the press was abolished so that the press would remain free to censure the government and inform the people. Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government.⁴⁹

Another statement acknowledging absolute rights granted to the media by the First Amendment was rendered by Judge Murray Gurfein of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York in that court's decision in the Pentagon Papers case (that judgment was later affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court). Judge Gurfein wrote:

Security also lies in the value of our free institutions, a cantankerous press, an obstinate press, [a] ubiquitous press must be suffered by those in authority in order to preserve the even greater values⁵⁰ of freedom of expression and the right of the people to know.

U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger, in his dissenting opinion, rendered in the Pentagon Papers case, expressed another viewpoint:

The newspapers make a derivative claim under the First Amendment: they denominate this right as the public 'right to know'; by implication, the Times asserts a sole trusteeship of that right by virtue of its journalistic 'scoop'. The right is asserted as an absolute. Of course, the First Amendment right is not an absolute, as Justice Holmes so long ago pointed out in his aphorism concerning the right to shout 'fire' in a crowded theater if there was no fire.⁵¹

The perception of absolute rights and advocacy of certain viewpoints and policies by the media may have spawned what journalist and former director of the American Newspaper Publishers' Association, Peter B. Clark, has termed "media elite journalism"⁵² and parallels Theodore White's description of the national journalists as a "self-selected group" drawn from a social and educational elite.⁵³ In documenting the general trend of media elite journalism, Clark described the media's situation as a result of advocating certain viewpoints and policies in this way:

Having diagnosed complex public problems, and having taken unequivocal public positions on them, they [the media] apparently wish to demonstrate that they were right. They have a substantial⁵⁴ journalistic and moral stake in proving their own rightness.

Author and syndicated political columnist Robert D. Novak also has concluded that the trend toward a "media elite" consists of basically two developments: liberalized thinking and advocacy; those developments, in his view, have created a gap between the media and the public. Of those two developments Novak has written:

First, the journalists working for the television networks, the big news magazines, and the important metropolitan press had now become part of the liberal establishment, both in their manner of living and in their ideological commitment.

Second, in a later and less-fully developed trend, these journalists were increasingly advocating causes of the moment rather than functioning as neutral observers. Taken together, the developments widened the gap⁵⁵ between the mass media and the great mass of citizens . . .

In a speech before journalism educators, Allen H. Neuharth, chairman and president of Gannett, Inc., warned against an "imperial press".

Mr. Neuharth was quoted as saying:

. . . I have to say if we had an imperial press in this country, it would be just as great a threat as an imperial presidency or an imperial judiciary . . . serious doubts about our credibility would render us ineffective in an increasingly complex information society.⁵⁶

We are in an era where media technology is growing rapidly and new First Amendment issues confront us such as: What are a newspaper's First Amendment rights when it transmits its news electronically? Will the Fairness Doctrine become applicable to a newspaper transmitting by cable? The state of the First Amendment as it applies to the media is in question; erosion of media rights in the future is a possibility suggested by Boston Globe editor, Thomas Winship, who wrote:

Every sign points to a period ahead of powerful change in values and terrifying uncertainty. We are moving into an era of scarcity and sacrifice, or should be. We are seeing new views and feelings about human rights, civil liberties and civil rights.

In this climate, the people and the press need each other like never before. This could be a moment of unprecedented mutual trust between the press and the public. Or, it⁵⁷ could be a period of fierce repression of the free press.

However, a different view was expressed by Justice John Paul Stevens in his opinion on Richmond Newspapers, Inc. vs Virginia, when he called it a "watershed" case for the press.⁵⁸ Referring to constitutional guarantees for media rights, Justice Stevens wrote that, "Never before has the court squarely held that the acquisition of newsworthy matter is entitled to any constitutional protection whatsoever."⁵⁹ Justice William Brennan, joined by Justice Thurgood Marshall, brought the Richmond Newspaper, Inc. vs Virginia ruling into a contemporary light:

The court's approach in right of access cases simply reflects the special nature of a claim of First Amendment right to gather information. . . . But the First Amendment embodies more than a commitment to free expression and communicative interchange for their own sakes; it has a structural role to play in securing and fostering our republic system of self-government. Implicit in this structural role is not only the 'principle that debate on public issues should be uninhibited, robust, and wideopen,' New York Times vs Sullivan, but the antecedent assumption that valuable public debate--as well as other civic behavior--must be informed. The structural model links the First Amendment to that process of communication necessary for a democracy to survive, and thus entails solicitude not only for communication itself, but for the indispensable conditions of meaningful communication.⁶⁰

Noted journalist Lyle Denniston suggested in an article, "the time when the court was willing to advance First Amendment protection has passed."⁶¹ Denniston emphasized that in his view:

. . . the last term [1981] seemed to indicate that the justices might even be growing indifferent to the whole question. The majority of the court is less and less capable of mustering the strong and rich emotions that have given such vitality to this part of its work.

The modern struggles over the First Amendment have been intense and rigorous, and this is a court [new session] not eager for pitched battle, constitutionally.

Rather, if there is any eagerness in this court, it is in its increasing readiness to leave to others the mediation of the hard controversies of social and political life. That leaves legislators and regulators much freer to experiment with or implement controls.⁶²

Simons and Califano have chronicled a complementary relationship between the journalists and the judiciary during the early 1970s and through Watergate; they believe that relationship no longer exists and have suggested:

. . . the clash between jurist and journalist is more serious than at any time in recent memory. Its persistent escalation threatens our society. What should be a coherent dialogue more nearly resembles a Tower of Babel in which judges and journalists do not even seem to be speaking the same language.⁶³

Jack C. Landau, a lawyer and director of the Reporters Committee

for Freedom of the Press, has proposed that media rights are eroding and have been eroding since 1971. Landau has concluded that the press is under siege. He traced the erosion, in his opinion, of media rights from the 1971 Pentagon Papers case and the Stanford Daily search through the limited confidentiality cases of 1972 to the broad Farber subpoena in 1978. Mr. Landau has recommended that the media move the battle from the courts into the domain of legislative action and public opinion.⁶⁴

The maintenance of a vigorous and effective free media rests with the public support accommodated the media. Perhaps the most inclusive appraisal of the media rights question and the most pertinent answer were given by John Oakes of the New York Times, who said:

This is an era when every value is being re-examined and every right is under question, even the Constitutional protection of freedom of the press.

It is vital that public confidence in the credibility of the press be maintained and strengthened. Its erosion is a threat to that freedom, because as Hamilton so clearly warned us, it is on the 'general spirit of the people' that freedom of the press in the longest run depends.⁶⁵

Statement of the Problem

The problem facing the media in the 1980s in the United States is a republic in which the people are considered sovereign, a republic in which the people make many key decisions about public issues, a republic in which the people have the power via public opinion to increase or diminish media rights, yet we have no discernible picture of public attitude toward media freedom. If indeed the media have lost public favor and confidence then they will have lost their most fundamental protection, the people's support. Signs of losing public support have been evident to Times editor, John Oakes. He said:

I think there are ominous symptoms today that we of the press are indeed in danger of losing that public confidence.

The growing number of attacks on press freedom in the courts is, I believe, a reflection of that development in the public mind.⁶⁶

Perhaps the most important question is: What is the public's attitude toward rights/freedom of the press? The media must determine the attitude of the American people toward freedom of the press. Harlan Warner has written that the "media are not taking the time to demonstrate the citizen feedback mechanisms, which are built in as citizen safeguards."⁶⁷ A foreboding statement was made by Vermont Royster, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist, in a speech to the National Press Club:

We should remember that the First Amendment protects the freedom of speech of all citizens, not just our own voices. That is where we should stand our ground, defending the rights of all. Beyond that we should be wary. We should be especially wary of claiming for ourselves alone any exemptions from the obligations of all citizens, including the obligation to bear witness in our courts once due process has been observed.

The risk, if we do, is that someday the people may come to think us arrogant. For there is nothing in any part of the Bill of Rights, including the First Amendment, that makes us a privileged class apart.

And it cannot be said too often: freedom of the press is not some immutable right handed down to Moses on Mt. Sinai. It is a political right granted by the people in a political document, and what the people grant they can, if they ever choose, take away.⁶⁸

To summarize, there are limited data available regarding the public's attitude toward freedom of the press/media. In this era of re-examination of values and rights, a study of public attitude toward freedom of the press media was indicated. This study concentrated on the attitudes of individuals toward the rights of the media.

Freedom of the Press/Media Studies

A search for literature specifically related to the study of indi-

viduals' attitudes toward press/media rights revealed the following studies which encompassed measurement of public attitude toward the mass media on several levels. The studies provided much useful information to the development of this survey.

A study by James L. Rogers, conducted in 1955, investigated attitudes toward freedom of information and toward newspapers. Rogers developed a Guttman-type scale for attitude toward freedom of information with its content questions about legal restrictions upon the freedom of newspapers to publish and the rights of reporters to gather news. Data were collected with survey questionnaires completed by 686 undergraduate students. Rogers reported a reliability coefficient of .861.⁶⁹ The mean score for the sample was 4.53 with a possible score of 8.0 and a standard deviation of 1.64.⁷⁰ The survey results indicated a somewhat even division of attitudes in the sample. In an analysis of the study, Shaw and Wright suggested that "a large portion of the sample did not hold intense attitudes toward the topic in question."⁷¹

As noted Rogers also surveyed the 686 undergraduate students on their attitudes toward newspapers. Again using an eight-item, Guttman-type scale with its content the effect of newspapers as a mass medium, Rogers reported a reliability coefficient of .857;⁷² the survey results indicated that the respondents were evenly divided in their attitudes toward newspapers.⁷³ Findings of the study included a statement by Rogers that:

Only half of a representative group of prospective high school teachers in Texas have attitudes favorable to newspapers, and their attitudes toward freedom of information show even less understanding and stability. Nine out of ten would approve licensing of newspaper reporters by the state.⁷⁴

In 1975 the Roper Organization, Inc. published a study entitled

"Trends in Public Attitudes Toward Television and Other Mass Media 1959-1974." The survey dealt with various media; particular emphasis centered on television. A multistaged, stratified, area probability sample was utilized and included (since 1971) 18 - 20-year olds because of the lowered voting age limits. The Roper Organization determined that the inclusion of the younger age group did not affect results in total; trend differences reported were deemed to reflect changes in attitude of the population as a whole.⁷⁵ The combined results reflected data from surveys conducted every other year beginning in 1959 and ending in 1974.

Included in the issues studied were:

Performance ratings: television stations in 1974 rated excellent or good (71%) to newspapers (58%) to schools (50%) and to local governments (35%). These are comparative percentage ratings.⁷⁶

Government control: two questions were asked, one on programs and one on news. Regarding programs, the survey results indicated increasing sentiment for less controls since 1963. Roper reported that in 1974 by 'a significant margin (less control 41%, more control 15%, about right 36%, don't know 8%),⁷⁷ the prevailing position is that there should be less government control--reflecting perhaps, a decreased regard for government as well as heightened respect for television.'⁷⁸

Regarding control over news, Roper reported 'an even smaller minority (less control 88%, more control 9%, don't know 3%)⁷⁹ wants more government control of news than wants control over programming in general. The vast majority in all groups is against it, and for the most part, more so than in 1972.'⁸⁰

In 1973 the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA) News Research Center commissioned Dr. Alex S. Edelstein, former director of the School of Communications at the University of Washington, to conduct a study of mass media exposure, usefulness and credibility. Dr. Edelstein asserted that the study was based on the actual behavior of audiences as they used the media to cope with problems important to them,

whereas, he thought the Roper data were solely based on attitudes toward media institutions.⁸¹ Data for the study were collected in 1973; 597 adults residing in Longview, Washington were surveyed.⁸² The main purpose of the study was to examine media credibility and the believability of Watergate. One dimension examined in the data was attitudes toward the media and other institutions. Concerning public attitudes toward the media and other institutions, the survey results indicated:

1. Significant differences were reported with respect to younger and older age groups' attitudes toward the media and other institutions.⁸³ The older groups were more positively oriented toward the press as an institution than the younger groups and had more faith in the democratic process and a need for a free press.⁸⁴ The groups were: young--up to 30, older--60 and above.
2. Significant differences were reported concerning attitude formation toward the media and other institutions. Results indicated that women showed a greater tendency to not have opinions about the media and other institutions. While behaviorally men and women were similar, attitudinally women's views were less formed and less structured.⁸⁵
3. Additionally, differences in attitudes for men and women toward the media and other institutions were attributed to higher levels of education in men.⁸⁶

The major findings of the 1979 Gallup Poll with regard to the public's attitude toward the media was that the public favored stricter controls on the press.⁸⁷ The Gallup Opinion Index published in 1980 reported that:

The American people lean heavily, 2 to 1, to the view that the present curbs placed on the press 'are not strict enough' rather than 'too strict'. . . about four persons in 10 (37%) advocate stricter curbs on the press while 17% believe that current controls are too strict. Another 32% say 'about right' and 14% do not express an opinion.⁸⁸

The Gallup survey cited three main reasons offered by the respondents as a basis for lessening press rights:

1. Newspapers publish information--including news about the government and about foreign affairs--that should not be made public because it is not in the best interest of the nation.
2. Newspapers distort and exaggerate the news in the interest of making headlines and selling papers.
3. Newspapers do not devote enough time to getting all the facts straight before they publish.⁸⁹

The Gallup study noted that underlying those criticisms was the belief by some people that the press was often careless in coverage and handling of news and showed a lack of Constitutional knowledge about the right to a free press.⁹⁰

In the area of confidentiality of news sources the Gallup survey found that:

A steadily increasing proportion of Americans believe a reporter should not be required to reveal confidential information sources used in gathering information for a news report. A total of 69% in the survey hold this view. In 1972 the comparable figure was 57%.⁹¹

A special Washington Post poll conducted in 1981 by Chilton Research Services reported that the public had sharp complaints about the news media.⁹² The research firm asked 1,507 persons nationwide by telephone to express their views about the three network tv news departments and three major weekly news magazines. Results of the survey indicated that the majority of Americans did not feel the press was too powerful and favored the news media remaining influential.⁹³

Among other findings were:

1. 70% of the respondents said the news media were accurate 'almost always' 14%, and 'most of the time' 56%, in reporting matters which the respondents knew a good deal about personally.
2. Almost four out of ten said reporters in the major news media often give too much of their own opinions and not enough facts.

3. Overall, the respondents gave the media an 85% endorsement for doing a good job (excellent, 16%; good, 69%), with only 11% saying not so good and 3% poor, with 2% expressing no opinion.⁹⁴

In 1981 the Los Angeles Times reprinted in detail the results of 1,170 responses from adults surveyed nationwide plus an oversampling of 945 adults in the Los Angeles metropolitan area in a poll conducted by Times Poll Director, I. A. Lewis. The Times poll included questions on the media and current issues. The nationwide sampling plus the Los Angeles area sampling permitted comparisons between local and national replies. No significant differences between the two samples were reported on the vast majority of the questions.⁹⁵

The Los Angeles Times reported that:

1. Most Americans by comparison regard the major news media as being more fair (71%) than accurate (61%). Only slightly more than half of the respondents (53%) said the media exercise their power responsibly; 39%⁹⁶ said the media abuse their privilege, and 8% were not sure.
2. When asked about controls for media abuse of privileges, respondents favored self-regulation by 33%, easier libel suits against the media 35%, and government regulation by 21% (14% were not sure and 1% refused to answer).
3. When compared to other institutions, very few said they favored a reduction of the media's power. Only 12% said the media's power should be reduced, compared to 35% who said they favored a reduction in government power, 21% who said they favored a reduction in labor power and 14%⁹⁸ who said they favored a reduction in business power.
4. When asked about which institutions had the highest standards of honesty and integrity, the media rated highest at 36%, followed by business 17%, government 16%, labor 12%⁹⁹ (14% were unsure or did not answer and 5% said 'none').

The Los Angeles Times suggested that inconsistencies in the opinions of respondents:

. . . appear to illustrate not only the public's continuing disenchantment with most major societal institutions (including the media), but also its conflicting feelings about the media themselves--a longstanding commitment (in theory, at

least) to a free press but a periodic disenchantment with the press in several specific areas.¹⁰⁰

Conclusion

A review of the literature related to the public's attitude toward freedom of the press/media seemed to indicate that public attitude does not remain static, but fluctuates, and suggested a need for future studies. Former New York Times editor John Oakes stressed in a 1978 speech at the Washington, D.C., Journalism Center that as the media change so does the audience. Oakes was quoted as saying the American audience has changed and with that change

has come a change in public attitudes toward the press, a weakening, in that public understanding and support of the First Amendment in 'the general spirit of the people'¹⁰¹ is the rock on which its protective power ultimately rests.

There is limited empirical data on the attitudes of individuals toward media rights. Existing studies reflect shifts in public attitude. This study seeks to determine what the public attitude of Stillwater residents is toward freedom of the press/media in the Winter of 1982.

FOOTNOTES

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CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

The subjects of this study were persons residing in Stillwater, Oklahoma, in the winter of 1982. The author utilized a systematic random sampling method in selecting 400 names from approximately 23,000 listed in the November, 1981 Stillwater phone directory.

The shifts in public attitude found in existing studies were such that the researcher was reluctant to hypothesize specific attitude changes that might occur due to the independent variables studied.

A general research question was asked: "What were the effects of sex, age, education and family income of the subjects on their attitude toward freedom of the press/media?"

The basis for the research question centered upon studies conducted in the behavioral sciences, including social psychology, with regard to the attitudes of people and groups. The research on attitudes proposed that: 1) both membership and reference groups affect attitudes held by individuals - Sherif and Sherif (1953), 2) attitudes possess varying degrees of interrelatedness to one another - Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachey (1962), 3) attitudes are learned, rather than being innate - Sherif and Sherif³ (1956), McGrath⁴ (1964), 4) attitudes are relatively stable and enduring - Sherif and Sherif⁵ (1956), Newcomb, Turner, and Converse⁶ (1965).

Operational Definitions

This study did not have a classical independent variable (presumed cause/dependent variable (presumed effect) relationship. This investigation into public attitudes can be classified as a field study; the nature of a field study, Kerlinger explained, is a study where:

. . . the investigator looks at a social or institutional situation and then studies the relations among the attitudes, values and perceptions, and behaviors of individuals and groups in the situation. He ordinarily manipulates no independent variables.

Non-manipulative attributes, as they existed, were studied. The survey research focused on individuals in their present environment; the author investigated sociological facts, which Kerlinger stated can be considered the independent variables and the presumed cause of the dependent, psychological variable, attitude.⁸

Kerlinger characterized sociological facts as, "attributes of individuals that spring from their membership in social groups." Those attributes listed by Kerlinger included sex, age, race, income, and education.⁹ For this study, the author examined the effect of sociological factors as they presumably operated on the psychological variable.

The independent variables examined in this study were:

1. sex of the subjects
2. age of the subjects
3. education of the subjects
4. family income of the subjects
5. treatments by subjects - each subject was measured on attitude toward freedom press/media on three levels:

- a. toward the media in general
- b. toward media rights
- c. toward increased media rights

The dependent variable was attitude of subjects toward freedom of the press/media with attitude defined as "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner."¹⁰

The "press/media" included newspaper, radio & tv stations and cable-pay tv systems. "Freedom of the press/media" was defined as the right to gather and disseminate information for public use.

Methods of Measurement

Milton Rokeach has contended that a traditional overemphasis exists in contemporary social psychology and other behavioral sciences with regard to the treatment of attitude as a concept operating independently of beliefs and values.¹¹

Rokeach has written that:

. . . an understanding of man's beliefs, attitudes, and values will not come about unless we are willing to distinguish these concepts from one another and to employ them in distinctively different ways . . . beliefs, attitudes, and values are all organized together to form a functionally integrated cognitive system, so that a change in any part of the system will affect other parts, and will culminate in behavioral change.¹²

Attitude as defined by Rokeach is: "a relatively enduring organization of beliefs around an object or situation predisposing one to respond in some preferential manner."¹³ The conception of an attitude as an organization of beliefs is consistent with the Krech and Crutchfield view that all attitudes incorporate beliefs¹⁴ and Asch's assertion that "attitudes are particularly enduring sets formed by past experiences."¹⁵

Beliefs as conceived by Rokeach make up a belief/disbelief system which can be thought of as:

- a. Belief System - all the beliefs (i.e. predispositions to action)¹⁶ that a person at a given time accepts as true of the world he lives in.¹⁷
- b. Disbelief System - a series of subsystems containing the different degrees at a given time of agreement with beliefs.¹⁸

The belief/disbelief system is but a manifestation of the "open and closed mind"¹⁹; a concept explained by Rokeach as:

. . . that degree to which a person's belief/disbelief system is open or closed to changes in their mode of thought²⁰ . . . based upon their two opposing sets of motives: the need to know and the need to defend against threat.²¹ A belief system can be conceived as varying along a single dimension ranging from open at one end to closed at the other.²²

Rokeach proposed that values have to do with "modes of conduct and end-states of existence,"²³ and to say a person "has a value" is to say that:

. . . he has an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally and socially preferable to alternative modes of conduct or end-states of existence. Once a value is internalized it becomes, consciously or unconsciously, a standard or criterion for guiding action, for developing and maintaining attitudes toward relevant objects and situations.²⁴

Research concerned with that phenomenon, attitude,³² becomes difficult; Cook and Selltiz wrote that:

An attitude cannot be measured directly, but must always be inferred from behavior--whether the behavior be language in which the individual reports his feelings about the attitude-object, performance of a task involving material related to the objects or actions toward a representative of the object-class.³³

Cook and Selltiz outlined the most frequently used method³⁴ of measuring attitudes:

By far the most frequently used method of securing material from which to make inferences about an attitude is to ask an

acceptance or rejection of standardized items--his beliefs about the attitudinal object, how he feels about it, how he behaves or would behave toward it, how he believes it should be treated.³⁵

The investigator chose to examine self-reported feelings as the acceptable basis of inference about attitudes. Summers wrote that, "traditionally, self-reported beliefs, feelings and or intentions to act with respect to an object have been used as the primary basis of inference."³⁶

Measurement is obtained by the assignment of numbers to observations (the self-reported feelings in this study) according to a set of rules.³⁷ The utilization of mathematics allows one to show relations between independent and dependent variables, as explained by Garner and Creelman:

We can use more abstract mathematics to show relations between dependent and independent variables, and the effect of the independent variable on some aspect of behavior. A mathematical equation can summarize and show most relationships between variables far more efficiently, and perhaps with greater meaning, than can the simple listing of experimental conditions and results.³⁸

To measure the subjects' attitudes toward freedom of the press/media, the author used a five-point Likert-type scale developed in 1932 by Rensis Likert as a simpler method of attitude-scale construction that used voting only.³⁹ Kerlinger described a Likert-type scale as:

. . . a set of attitude items, all of which are considered of approximately equal 'attitude value,' and to each of which subjects respond with degrees of agreement or disagreement (intensity). The scores of the items of such a scale are summed, or summed and averaged, to yield an individual's attitude score. As in all attitude scales, the purpose of the summated rating scale is to place an individual somewhere on an agreement continuum of the attitude in question.⁴⁰

In the method of constructing an attitude scale, Murphy and Likert wrote on the selection of statements that:

Each statement should be of such a nature that persons with different points of view, so far as the particular attitude is concerned, will respond to it differently. Any statement to which persons with markedly different attitudes can respond in the same way is, of course, unsatisfactory.⁴¹

Murphy and Likert cited the following criteria in selecting statements for an attitude scale:

1. It is essential that all statements be expressions of desired behavior and not statements of fact. Two persons with decidedly different attitudes may, nevertheless, agree on questions of fact. Consequently, their reaction to a statement of fact is no indication of their attitudes.⁴²
2. The second criterion is the necessity of stating each proposition in clear, concise, straightforward statements. Each statement should be in the simplest possible vocabulary. No statements should involve double negatives or other wording which will make it involved and confusing. Double-barreled statements are most confusing and should always be broken in two. Often an individual wishes to react favorably to one part and unfavorably to the other and when the parts are together he is at a loss to know how to react.⁴³
3. In general it would seem desirable to have each statement so worded that the modal reaction to it is approximately in the middle of the possible response.⁴⁴
4. To avoid any space error or any tendency to a stereotyped response it seems desirable to have the different statements so worded that about one-half of them have one end of the attitude continuum corresponding to the left or upper part of the reaction alternatives, and the other half have the same end of the attitude continuum corresponding to the right or lower part of the reaction alternatives.⁴⁵

Scale items were selected and worded for the survey instrument by following the criteria established by Murphy and Likert, as well as using two criteria explained by Jahoda, Deutsch and Cook:

. . . the items must elicit responses which are psychologically related to the attitude being measured. . . . A second criterion requires that the items differentiate among the people who are at different points along the dimension being measured.⁴⁶

The subjects' responses to the survey items were scored by a summated

ratings method; Murphy and Likert described the method as:

. . . the assuming of values of from 1 to 5 to each of the 5 different positions on the 5 point statements. The ONE end always assigned to the negative end, and the FIVE end always assigned to the positive end.

The subjects were asked to mark each of the statements that was closest to their own feelings about the matter in question along a five-point continuum. An example of a scale item is:

Reporters should be licensed like doctors or lawyers.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

The numerals shown above to score the responses were not included on the survey to avoid any response bias which could result from disclosure of the scoring system.

To avoid response set, marking the same position on each statement for reasons other than content of the item, the attitude items toward freedom of the press/media were worded positively or negatively for each level of measurement; this procedure resulted in 13 positively worded statements and 13 negatively worded statements. The highest scale value (5) was always given to the response choice indicative of the most favorable attitude toward the media item in question, thus a "Strongly disagree" response to a negatively worded statement concerning media rights would receive a score of 5--the most favorable attitude toward the rights of media. Placement of the items on the survey instrument was determined by a simple random assignment.

Data Gathering Procedure

The study was conducted in the winter of 1982. The survey instrument was mailed to each of the 400 subjects during the week of January 4

Enclosed with each survey instrument was a cover letter explaining the nature of and the need for such a study to the respondents. Copies of the cover letter and the survey instrument are to be found in Appendixes A and B.

Of the 400 surveys mailed, 141 were returned yielding a return rate of 35.25 percent. Of the 141 returned 139 were useable yielding a useable return rate of 34.75 percent. Concerning mail questionnaires, Kerlinger wrote that, "Returns of less than 40 or 50 percent are common."⁴⁸

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was measured by a treatment by subjects analysis of variance. This type of ANOVA allowed the researcher to determine how efficiently the attitude items separated the individuals, given repeated measures on the attitude items. This procedure enabled a powerful control of variance⁴⁹; by matching a subject with himself, the researcher had greater control over the influences of independent variables extraneous to the purpose of the survey instrument reliability test.⁵⁰ The sample upon which the original 53 attitude statement items were evaluated comprised 20 residents of Stillwater, Oklahoma, who were not in the final sample of 400 selected for the survey.

A test of item discriminatory power eliminated 27 of the original 53 attitude statement items. The remaining 26 attitude statement items were tested by a treatment-by-subjects ANOVA which yielded a between subjects F-ratio of 11.33, which greatly exceeded the critical value of 2.13 at the .001 level of confidence ($p < .001$). This means that the

observed mean differences among the subjects toward the attitude items in each of the three levels of measurement would occur by chance less than one time in a thousand. The scale had a reliability coefficient of .91; Seiler and Hough reported in their comparison of Thurstone and Likert techniques that:

It has been demonstrated that if one constructs and scores a scale by the Likert method, 20 or 25 items are usually enough to produce a reliability coefficient of 90 or more, which as a rule of thumb, is considered sufficiently high.

Validity of the Instrument

The validity of the survey instrument was measured by the procedure of content and logical validity before the survey questionnaire was mailed to the subjects. Survey items were derived from the search of the literature and the review of media law cases. The original 53 attitude statement items were presented to the committee members who judged that the survey instrument measured the attitude object in question.

Values and Limitations

The methodology was based on a collection of known and accepted procedures. The research technique utilized in this study was such that other individuals can repeat the study within different communities.

The design had only partial external validity. The responses should be considered representative of the individuals residing in Stillwater, Oklahoma, in the winter of 1982, dependent upon the representativeness of the sample itself. An attitude statement was selected by a simple random method. That statement item #9 was analyzed by the

percentages of the 139 respondents and their respective attitude score on the five point continuum to determine the normal curve approximation. Of the 139 attitude scores on item #9: 5.75% were assigned to position 1 - strongly disagree at the negative end of the continuum; 13.66% were assigned to position 5 - strongly agree at the positive end of the continuum; 80.57% were assigned to the positions 2, 3, 4 - disagree-neutral-agree comprising the center and adjacent positions of the continuum, thus, the responses resembled a normal curve with most responses in middle positions. The sampling procedure did not permit generalization of results to all individuals in America.

FOOTNOTES

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- ³³ Stuart W. Cook, Claire Selltitz, "A Multiple-Indicator Approach to Attitude Measurement", reprinted in Summers' Attitude Measurement, p. 23.
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CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

Introduction

The subjects of this study were residents of Stillwater, Oklahoma in the winter of 1982. Of the 400 surveys mailed out, 141 were returned for a return rate of 35.25 percent. Of those 141 returned surveys, 139 were scorable, yielding a useable return rate of 34.75 percent.

In line with low response rates, the respondents were categorized into demographic groupings shown in Table I. Hereafter, the demographic groupings will be referred to as: Young age group for 18-29, Older age group for 30 and older, High education group for the college degree group, Low education group for the same college group and less; High income group for the \$25,000 and over income group, Low income group for the \$19,999 and less income group.

The researcher points out that the above established dichotomies are not to be taken literally; they are a result of this study's data distributions and serve to facilitate the analyses and interpretations.

Race was included as a demographic category, however there were not enough respondents in each race group to allow analysis of the data by race (White, 135 or 97.12 percent; Black, 2 or 1.44 percent; Other, 2 or 1.44 percent).

TABLE I
 NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS BY
 DEMOGRAPHIC CATEGORIES

Category	Number	Percent
SEX:		
Male	80	57.5
Female	<u>59</u>	<u>42.5</u>
TOTAL	<u>139</u>	<u>100.0</u>
AGE:		
18-29	74	53.0
30 and older	<u>65</u>	<u>47.0</u>
TOTAL	139	100.0
EDUCATION:		
College degree	69	50.0
Some college and less	<u>70</u>	<u>50.0</u>
TOTAL	139	100.0
FAMILY INCOME:		
\$25,000 and over	75	57.0
\$19,999 and less	<u>56</u>	<u>43.0</u>
TOTAL	131*	100.0

*Note: 8 respondents provided no income information

Analysis of the Attitude Scores

Each of the 139 surveys was scored by a summated ratings method with values assigned 1 to 5 to each of the five different scale positions under the attitude statements. The "1" value was always assigned to the negative end of the statement and the "5" value was always assigned to the positive end of the statement. By this scoring method, a mean attitude score of 4.0 for a statement for all 139 respondents would indicate a favorable attitude toward and agreement with the statement.

The mean attitude of all 139 respondents was near the 3.0 or undecided position on the attitude scale and would seem to indicate that the respondents did not hold intense attitudes toward the freedom of the press/media issue.

The mean attitude of all 139 respondents toward each of the 26 freedom of the press/media statements are shown in Table II. The statement items are rank ordered by the highest favorable attitude rating given to each item by all the 139 respondents.

In reviewing Table II, the items for which there was a definite favorable attitude were #14 Free press as a Constitutional guarantee with a 4.10 mean attitude, #4 No government censorship of TV with a 4.09 mean attitude, #20 No government censorship of cable-pay TV with a mean attitude of 4.09 and #18 No government censorship of radio with a 4.02 mean attitude. These favorable attitude responses would seem to indicate support for a free press and reluctance to support government censorship of the media. The researcher points out that item #19, Access to state legislature meetings with a 3.96 mean attitude, approaches the 4.0 agreeable attitude position.

TABLE II
 MEAN ATTITUDE SCORES OF ALL RESPONDENTS ON FREEDOM
 OF THE PRESS/MEDIA ACROSS ALL LEVELS

Rank	Item Number	Freedom of the Press/Media Items	Mean Attitude
1	14	Free Press as a Constitutional guarantee	4.10
2	4	No government censorship of TV	4.09
3	20	No government censorship of cable-pay TV	4.09
4	18	No government censorship or radio	4.02
5	19	Access to state legislature meetings	3.96
6	10	Discussion of sexual problems on TV talk shows	3.65
7	3	No withholding of law enforcement records	3.60
8	1	Reporters keep the public informed about what the government is doing	3.56
9	16	No arrest of reporters on high school grounds	3.52
10	5	No withholding of information about a former government official	3.48
11	8	Newspapers protect the rights of citizens	3.45
12	26	Reporters give only their own opinions	3.41
13	2	Newspapers are just out to "make a buck"	3.37
14	12	Newspapers keep the public informed on important community issues	3.20
15	11	Access to a county's public personnel records	3.19
16	9	Judges may ban reporters from criminal trials	3.18
17	25	Too much information is published not in the best interest of the country	2.99

TABLE II (Continued)

Rank	Item Number	Freedom of the Press/Media Items	Mean Attitude
18	15	No government control of TV ads for children	2.97
19	13	Right to publish the name of a juvenile arrested	2.90
20	22	No arrest of reporters for following protestors onto private property	2.87
21	21	Right to copies of videotapes admitted as criminal trial evidence	2.85
22	24	Licensing of journalists	2.84
23	6	Cameras in the courtroom for all criminal trials	2.83
24	7	Right to publish the name of a crime suspect	2.71
25	17	High competency of reporters	2.44
26	23	Right to publish the name of a rape victim	1.84
Mean Total Attitude			3.27*

* (Slight numerical differences due to rounding of individual scores)

Although the media received favorable attitude scores regarding government censorship items, the respondents were less supportive of individuals in the media. Concerning the licensing of journalists, the mean attitude was 2.84, slightly below the undecided position on the 5-point statement scale. The mean attitude for a high competency rating of journalists was 2.44, approximately half-way between the number 2 position of disagreement and the number 3 position or undecided.

Overall, respondents seemed more favorable toward the media as an institution than toward the individuals who comprise the media. It should be noted that the over-all mean attitude toward freedom of the press/media was 3.27.

To aid further in interpretation of Table II, the mean attitude of all 139 respondents toward freedom of the press/media was subdivided into the three levels measured by the survey: 1) attitude toward the media in general, 2) attitude toward media rights, and 3) attitude toward increased media rights. Those mean attitudes of all 139 respondents by levels of measurement are shown in Table III.

In reviewing Table III, the attitudes of the respondents can be viewed by each level of measurement and allows for differentiation between attitudes toward the media in general, media rights and increased media rights as follows.

Attitude Toward the Media in General

The only item receiving a clear-cut favorable response was #14 to which all 139 respondents agreed that a free press is one of our most precious Constitutional guarantees. That favorable attitude toward a free press concept overshadowed the other "media in general" items

TABLE III
 MEAN ATTITUDE SCORES OF ALL RESPONDENS ON FREEDOM
 OF THE PRESS/MEDIA ITEMS BY LEVELS

Rank	Item Number	Media in General Items	Mean Attitude
1	14	Free press as a Constitutional guarantee	4.10
2	1	Reporters keep the public informed about what the government is doing	3.56
3	8	Newspapers protect the rights of citizens	3.45
4	26	Reporters give only their own opinions	3.41
5	2	Newspapers are just out to "make a buck"	3.37
6	12	Newspapers keep the public informed on important community issues.	3.20
7	25	Too much information is published not in the best interest of the country	2.99
8	24	Licensing of journalists	2.84
9	17	High competency of reporters	2.44
Mean Total Attitude			3.28*
<u>Media Rights Items</u>			
1	4	No government censorship of TV	4.09
2	18	No government censorship of radio	4.02
3	19	Access to state legislature meetings	3.96
4	10	Discussion of sexual problems on TV talk shows	3.65
5	11	Access to a county's public personnel records	3.19

TABLE III (Continued)

Rank	Item Number	Media in General Items	Mean Attitude
6	9	Judges may ban reporters from criminal trials	3.18
7	15	No government control of TV ads for children	2.97
8	21	Right to copies of videotapes admitted as criminal trial evidence	2.85
9	7	Right to publish the name of a crime suspect	2.71
Mean Total Attitude			3.39*
<u>Increased Media Rights</u>			
1	20	No government censorship of cable-pay TV	4.09
2	3	No withholding of law enforcement records	3.60
3	16	No arrest of reporters on high school	3.52
4	5	No withholding of information about a former government official.	3.48
5	13	Right to publish the name of a juvenile arrested	2.90
6	22	No arrest of reporters for following protestors onto private property	2.87
7	6	Cameras in the courtroom for all criminal trials	2.83
8	23	Right to publish the name of a rape victim	1.84
Mean Total Attitude			3.14*

* (Slight numerical differences due to rounding of individual scores).

regarding attitudes toward journalists and their newspapers. The respondents did not indicate disapproval of the media in general; their responses were not definitely in one position. Except for the favorable attitude toward the concept of a free press, the other attitude scores ranged from 2.44 (approximately mid-way between an unfavorable and undecided response) to 3.56 (approximately mid-way between an undecided and favorable response).

Attitude Toward Media Rights

Two out of nine media rights received approval by all 139 respondents. All agreed there should be no government censorship of TV or radio. The right of journalists to attend state legislature meetings received a 3.96, approving of that right. Of the nine current rights of the media measured in this survey, seven did not sustain approval by the respondents. The mean attitude of all respondents on those seven media rights ranged from 2.71 (edging toward the undecided response) to 3.96 (near the favorable response).

Attitude Toward Increased Media Rights

Only one of the eight proposed increased media rights received approval by all respondents. With a mean attitude of 4.09, all expressed a favorable attitude toward no government censorship of cable-pay TV. No other proposed increase in media rights received unanimous approval by the respondents. Item #23, the right to publish the name of a rape victim, received a mean attitude of 1.84, disapproval of such a right. The indication of the intensity of the disapproval is suggested by the score itself, 1.84, which is below the 2.0 disagree position on the 5 point attitude scale.

Again the researcher points out that the mean attitude toward all freedom of the press/media statements was 3.27, near the undecided position. This indicates a lack of intense feelings by the respondents toward the attitude referent.

Access to governmental agencies and courts did not receive support by the respondents as evidenced by the 3.19 mean attitude for access to a county's public personnel records, the 3.18 mean attitude toward the banning of reporters from criminal trials, the 2.85 mean attitude toward the right to copies of videotapes admitted as criminal trial evidence and the 2.83 mean attitude toward cameras in the courtroom. Those mean attitudes are all near the 3.0 undecided attitude position.

No support was indicated for the media rights of publishing the names of crime suspects or the names of juveniles arrested. The mean attitude for the right to publish the name of a crime suspect was 2.71 while the mean attitude for the right to publish the name of a juvenile arrested was 2.90. Again the mean attitudes approximate the 3.0 or undecided response position.

Differences in attitude between each of the three levels of measurement on attitude toward the freedom of the press/media are suggested by the differences in mean total attitudes shown in Table III. Those possible differences and analyses will be discussed later.

Attitudes: Levels of Freedom

A three-factor mixed analysis of variance was utilized to determine differences between types of respondents and their attitudes toward each of three levels of the press/media freedoms: (1) attitude toward the media in general, (2) attitude toward media rights, and (3) attitude toward increased media rights.

The demographic information respondents allowed the researcher to determine any main or interactive effects of five combinations of the demographic variables and attitudes. The researcher rotated the demographic factors two at a time with repeated measures on the third factor—freedom of the press/media measured on three levels. The five combinations considered were: (1) sex-education-media levels, (2) sex-income-media levels, (3) age-education-media levels, (4) education-income-media levels, and (5) sex-age-media levels.

Sex-Education-Media Levels

The researcher tallied the attitude responses of the subjects by sex and education group (high or low) to which they belonged.

Did the respondents have different attitudes toward freedom of the press/media because of their level of education? Insignificant differences are indicated by the between education F-ratio of .02 at the .05 level of probability. The level of a person's education (high or low) did not significantly affect that person's attitude toward freedom of the press/media.

The interaction findings between sex and education (F-ratio 1.96 $p > .05$) are not statistically significant. Sex and education acting in concert did not make a difference in a person's attitude toward freedom of the press/media.

No statistically significant effects were found when the interaction of (1) media levels and education or (2) media levels, sex, and education were tested.

Sex-Income-Media Levels

The subsequent analysis considered the combination of sex-income-

media levels factors. The attitude responses were grouped by sex and income levels. Eight respondents provided no income information, thus 131 rather than 139 subjects' responses were analyzed in this factor combination.

Did the subjects have different attitudes toward freedom of the press/ media because of their level of family income (high or low)? Analysis of the data could not answer the question affirmatively. The between income F-ratio of .02 at the .05 probability level indicated there was no significant difference in attitude toward freedom of the press/ media due to either a subject's high or low family income level.

Additionally in examining whether or not the interaction of (1) sex and income or (2) media levels and income or (3) media levels, sex and income had any subsequent effects on attitude, no statistically significant effects were found. Minor variations in attitude were evidenced (.36 sex and income, .26 media levels and income, and .29 media levels, sex and income), but no statistical significance was present. The variations due to the interaction of the factor combinations would occur by chance alone more than five times in one hundred.

Age-Education-Media Levels

The age-education-media levels factors were next considered. The attitude responses were grouped by age and education levels. In order to facilitate the analysis utilizing the Type III design, four subjects were randomly selected out of the young age-low education group. 135 subjects' responses were analyzed in this factor combination rather than 139.

Did the subjects differ in attitude toward freedom of the press/ media because of their age and education? No statistically significant evidence was found to indicate that the interaction of age and education had an effect on a persons attitude toward the referent attitude. The interaction of age and education (F-ratio .75 $p > .05$) did not exceed the probability level for statistical significance. The variations in attitude (.42) found due to the interaction of age and education could occur by chance alone more than five times in one hundred.

The researcher reminds the reader that the factorial analysis considered the demographic groupings by the previously stated categories of: age as-young age group being 18-29 and older age group 30 and older; education as-high education group for people with a college degree and low education group for people with some college and less.

Education-Income-Media Levels

The next combination of factors analyzed were the education-income-media levels factors. The attitude responses were grouped by education and income levels. As eight respondents provided no income information, 131 rather than 139 subjects' responses were analyzed.

Did the subjects differ in attitude toward freedom of the press/ media because of their education and family income? The interaction of education and income was not statistically significant (F-ratio .41) at the .05 level of probability. The scant variation (.21) in attitudes due to the effects of education and income acting in concert on attitudes would occur by chance alone more than five times in one hundred.

Sex-Age-Media Levels

The final combination of factors analyzed were the sex-age-media levels factors. Results of the analysis indicated there was no difference in attitude due to sex or age.

Did the respondents differ in attitude on each level of freedom? That is to say, did they respond differently to the three groups of attitude statements regarding: 1) media in general, 2) media rights, and 3) increased media rights? The between media levels F-ratio of 13.0 shows a significant difference in the respondents attitudes measured on each of the media levels. The relationship between the media levels and the respondents attitudes is a weak one (.20). An Eta correlation from the data showed that only 4% of the total variation in mean attitude was explained by the three media freedom levels.

To see further the fine points of the findings, one can look at the mean attitude scores in Table IV.

TABLE IV
MEAN ATTITUDES TOWARD THREE LEVELS OF
MEDIA FREEDOMS: BY SEX AND AGE

Sex	Media in General	Levels of Freedoms		Mean Totals
		Media Rights	Increased Media Rights	
Male	3.18	3.43	3.17	3.26
Female	3.37	3.35	3.10	3.27
Mean Totals	3.28	3.39	3.14	3.27
				Grand Total

Since the between media levels F-ratio for mean attitude of respondents was highly significant, post hoc tests were run on differences between pairs of means of media levels. At the probability level .05, the critical difference between the means was .10. The totals at the bottom of Table IV, the main effects, all exceed this critical difference. This means that, overall, the 139 respondents had significantly different mean attitudes toward the three media levels. The difference in those mean attitudes would occur by chance alone less than five times in one hundred. All individuals were more favorable in attitude toward media rights than toward either the media in general or toward increased media rights. The largest difference exists between current media rights and suggested media rights. The significant difference in attitude would seem to suggest that, although the respondents were favorable to current rights overall, they were less inclined to see the media obtain any increased rights. Once again, the author points out that even the mean attitude for media rights is 3.39 and represents a position on the attitude scale just moderately above the undecided response. The respondents did not overall exhibit an attitude in agreement with media rights. A lack of intense feelings toward all three media levels is indicated by the mean attitude scores.

Interaction between sex and age did not indicate statistical significance (F-ratio .33, $p > .05$). Very little variation (.17) in the respondents' attitudes toward freedom of the press/media could be attributed to the combination of sex and age factors.

However, the F-ratio for interaction between media levels and sex of 4.22 was significant at the .05 level. The relationship of sex and the media levels to the respondents' attitudes on freedom of the press/

media was statistically significant, but rather weak (.11). At Eta correlation showed that only 1% of the total variation in mean attitude could be attributed to the interaction of the sex of the respondents and the media level on which they were measured.

Gap tests were run to determine where the interaction differences occurred by comparison of the mean attitude scores in Table IV. At the probability level of .05, the critical difference between the means was .14. Two significant relationships were found. Men were found to have less favorable mean attitude toward the media in general than did women. This finding suggests that, as an institution, women are more favorable in attitude toward the media than are men in this sample. A second significant relationship indicated that, although men had a less favorable attitude toward the media in general than did women when it came to their perception of media rights versus the media in general, the men had a more favorable attitude toward those rights than did the women. The author hastens to remind the reader that these relationships are statistically significant, but also weak, and do not reveal any intense attitudes toward the referent media levels.

Conclusion

Overall, the respondents appeared not to hold any intense attitudes toward freedom of the press/media as the grand mean for all 139 subjects was only 3.27, an attitude response near the undecided position of the scale.

The respondents did, however, indicate support for the free press as a concept and did not favor government censorship of the media. There was a definite favorable attitude for #14 Free press as a

Constitutional guarantee with a 4.10 mean attitude, #4 No government censorship of TV with a 4.09 mean attitude, #20 No government censorship of cable-pay TV with a mean attitude of 4.09, and #18 No government censorship of radio with a 4.02 mean attitude. Individually journalists did not receive a high competency rating. This over-all mean attitude of the 139 respondents was 2.44, approximately half-way between the number two positions or disagreement and the number three position or undecided.

The statistically significant results though weak in relationship, suggest that people in the study were somewhat more favorable to current media rights than they were favorable to the establishment of any increased rights. And women had a more favorable attitude toward the media in general than did men, although when it came to the issue of media rights men were more supportive of those rights in comparison to the media in general than were the women. Again, these relationships were statistically significant, but not very strong. Education, age and income had nothing to contribute to individuals' attitudes toward freedom of the press/media.

If the respondents had held more intense attitudes toward the freedom of the press/media concept, perhaps other areas of significance would have appeared elsewhere in the study, however, this was not the case for this sample of people.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Research Findings

A summary of the researcher's findings indicated: The subjects in the study did not appear to have any intense attitude toward freedom of the press/media. The grand mean for all 139 subjects was 3.27, an attitude approximating the 3.0 or undecided response. Such a grand mean exhibited a decided lack of consensus on the freedom of the press/media attitude concept. The survey results seemed to indicate a somewhat even division in the attitudes of the subjects in the sample.

To suppose that no clear-cut attitude for all the 139 subjects was indicative of a negative attitude toward the media and media rights would be misleading. In examining the mean attitudes of all 139 respondents on individual items, research findings showed support for the concept of a free press and non-support for government censorship of the media. The author points out that although all 139 respondents had a favorable attitude toward the concept of a free press/media, journalist did not fare as well.

There was no indication that the subjects favored licensing of journalists, however, the subjects rated journalists lower on their professional competency. The mean attitude of the 139 respondents on agreement that journalists were highly competent professionals was 2.44, approximately half-way between disagreement and undecided.

Rotated, factorial variance analysis of the subjects' mean attitude scores showed statistically significant, although weak, attitudes toward the three levels of media measured when the sex of the subjects was considered. The findings indicate that women had a more favorable attitude toward the media as institutions than did men. Men were, however, more favorable toward the current rights that the media enjoy when compared to the media in general than were the women. As a group, the subjects viewed current media rights more favorably than either the media as institutions or the establishment of any increased rights.

Those comparisons revealed the largest statistical difference which were between the subjects' attitudes held for current media and increased media rights. The survey results appear to indicate that current media rights are acceptable, but any further increase in media rights would not have much support by the respondents to this survey. The researcher reminds the reader that the statistically significant results were not very strong and that the mean attitudes of the subjects were over-all close to the undecided attitude response. Combinations of variables (education, age, and income) had no effect on attitude toward freedom of the press/media. The lack of strong relationships between the factors and the less than intense feelings subjects of the sample had for the freedom of the press/media concept does not allow even qualified inferences to be generalized beyond the sample itself.

Conclusions

Overall the findings of the study seemed to indicate a somewhat lack of intense attitudinal feelings toward the freedom of the press/media concept. Without attempting to generalize beyond this particular

sample the researcher would suggest for thought that finding no intense attitudinal feelings toward the freedom of the press/media concept was by its very nature a finding that merited attention, again for this particular sample. The findings might suggest public apathy toward the issue and lead the researcher to a question for possibly future studies: Can public apathy endanger media freedom?

The sampling procedure did not permit either generalizing or projecting the results of this study beyond the subjects who participated in the study, even though statistically significant results were found at the .05 level of probability. On a small scale such as this, the researcher's objective was to determine if various sociological factors (sex, age, education, and income) had any effect on individuals' attitudes toward freedom of the press/media. Hopefully, the findings would expand on the limited data available regarding the publics' attitude toward the media and media rights, both current and suggested increased rights. Analysis of the data and subsequent findings are the results of examining attitude responses from a sample of residents of Stillwater, Oklahoma in the Winter of 1982. To this extent, the author has contributed to that limited body of empirical data on the attitudes of individuals toward media rights.

Recommendations

As the existing studies reflect shifts in public attitude toward the media, more so is the need for not only further but continuous studies. The author suggests that this research be repeated in the future using the same or similar attitude statements outlined in Appendix B in other communities with other samples.

Continued research by the academic world or the professional media, could the author suggests, lead to a significant, beneficial and more detailed answer to the basic research question: What are peoples' attitudes toward the media? Perhaps the academic and professional media communities should team up to enable continuous and adequate research in this area.

Support or non-support of freedom of the press/media ultimately comes from the people. Any fluctuations in media rights may well reflect the changes in public support as attitudes toward the media change or shift. As a society that continually examines and re-examines its values and rights, a continued monitoring of the people who impact on the society is indicated.

The original desire of the author was to determine what the attitudes of individuals are toward freedom of the press/media. However, results of this study suggest that such a task cannot be completed with a definitive answer. The debate over media rights and what the people think and feel about the media as institutions and those media rights will continue as long as there are media. Now, attention should be turned to providing continued information on public attitude toward the media in light of an ever-changing multi-media system operating in a highly complex societal structure.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER

Dear Citizen of Stillwater,

You have been selected to participate in an important study of community attitudes toward newspapers, radio and TV stations.

The communications industry is rapidly growing and offering expanded sources of information for public use. It is necessary to determine what the rights of newspapers, radio and TV stations should be in collecting and presenting that information to you. We need to know what you think about the media in America.

Your name was chosen at random from the Stillwater phone directory. Your responses to the enclosed survey will be most valuable in determining future information services by newspapers, radio and TV stations.

Enclosed is a postage-free envelope for your prompt reply. Your willingness to respond to the 26 statements will be most helpful and appreciated. Only about ten minutes are required to complete the survey. It is not necessary for you to sign your name.

May I expect your response within 5 days? Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dave Cramer
Bureau of Media Research

Enclosure

APPENDIX B

ATTITUDE SURVEY

Newspaper, Radio & TV Survey

The purpose of this survey is to determine the attitudes of people toward the rights of newspapers, radio and tv stations to collect information and present that information to the public.

You have been selected as a member of a test group to participate in this survey. It is not necessary for you to identify yourself. Your responses to the following survey statements will only be used to help determine what the attitudes of people in general are toward the rights of newspapers, radio and tv stations.

Your assistance in completing this survey is greatly appreciated.

SURVEY STATEMENTS:

Please read each of the following statements and then mark the response that is closest to your own feelings about the matter.

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | Reporters keep the people informed about what the government is doing. | <u>Strongly agree</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Strongly disagree</u> |
| 2. | Newspapers are just out to "make a buck". | <u>Strongly agree</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Strongly disagree</u> |
| 3. | All law enforcement records should be withheld from reporters. | <u>Strongly agree</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Strongly disagree</u> |
| 4. | The government should not have the right to decide what tv shows people can watch. | <u>Strongly agree</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Strongly disagree</u> |
| 5. | The government should be allowed to withhold from reporters information about a former government official. | <u>Strongly agree</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Strongly disagree</u> |
| 6. | TV cameras should be allowed in the courtroom at all criminal trials. | <u>Strongly agree</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Strongly disagree</u> |
| 7. | Newspapers should not be allowed to print the name of a man suspected of a crime. | <u>Strongly agree</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Strongly disagree</u> |
| 8. | Newspapers do nothing to protect the rights of people. | <u>Strongly agree</u> | <u>Agree</u> | <u>Undecided</u> | <u>Disagree</u> | <u>Strongly disagree</u> |

9. Judges should have the right to ban reporters from criminal trials.
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
10. TV talk shows should be allowed to discuss sexual problems.
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
11. Reporters should have the right to look at a county's public personnel records.
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
12. Newspapers don't take an active enough role in informing the community on important issues.
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
13. A newspaper should be allowed to publish the name of a juvenile arrested for a crime.
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
14. A free press is one of our most precious Constitutional guarantees.
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
15. The government should control tv ads for children.
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
16. A reporter interviewing students on the high school grounds should not be arrested for trespassing.
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
17. Almost all reporters are highly competent in their work.
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
18. The government should have the right to decide what programs a radio station can air.
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
19. Reporters should be present when state legislatures conduct their meetings.
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
20. The government should be allowed to censor programs on cable-pay tv.
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
21. Reporters should have the right to copies of videotapes admitted as evidence in criminal trials.
Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

22. Reporters should not be arrested for following protestors onto private property.
 Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
23. A newspaper should be allowed to publish the name of a rape victim.
 Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
24. Reporters should be licensed like doctors or lawyers.
 Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
25. Newspapers publish too much information that is not in the best interest of the nation.
 Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree
26. Reporters give their own opinions and nothing else,
 Strongly agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly disagree

GENERAL DATA:

Please mark the appropriate response for you.

AGE: 18-24
 25-29
 30-49
 50 and older

SEX: Male
 Female

RACE: White
 Black
 Other

LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME PER YEAR: under \$10,000
 \$10,000 to \$14,999
 \$15,000 to \$19,999
 \$20,000 to \$24,999
 \$25,000 and over

LEVEL OF EDUCATION: less than High School Diploma
 High School Diploma
 some college
 College Degree

Have you ever been employed by a newspaper, radio or tv station?

 Yes No

VITA²

David Howard Cramer

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: A STUDY OF THE ATTITUDES OF INDIVIDUALS TOWARD FREEDOM OF THE PRESS/MEDIA

Major Field: Mass Communications

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Long Branch, New Jersey, June 11, 1946, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Howard A. Cramer.

Education: Graduated from Independence High School, Independence, Kansas, in June, 1964; attended the University of Tulsa, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 1964-1968; attended Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1975-1977 and 1980-1981; received Bachelor of Arts in Arts and Sciences degree from Oklahoma State University in May, 1981; completed requirements for Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University in July, 1982.

Professional Experience: Collections agent, Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, 1968-1969; Credit reporter, Dun & Bradstreet, Inc., 1969-1970; Sergeant, United States Air Force, 1970-1974; Proprietor, Paradise Glass Co., 1977-1980; Radio announcer and production assistant, KOSU/FM, 1980-81.