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An assessment of the fundamental differences between mainstream and independent media : a content analysis of the print media

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**An Assessment of the Fundamental Differences between Mainstream and
Independent Media : A Content Analysis of the Print Media**

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Abstract

The mainstream media in the United States is an institutional arrangement of structural power within the political economy of capitalist society. The concentration and centralization of the media corporations creates the structural constraint for ideological social control. A few multinational corporations control a vast amount of media access that creates a filtering process for information. The mainstream media is extremely powerful in American society. The media helps to mold opinions on an array of news topics.

Major media sources in the US are conforming their news coverage to be “industry friendly”. In simply terms the American people are only getting part of the story. At a more abstract theoretical level, this organizational analysis of power is referred to the propaganda model of the news. The number one source of structural control in the media today is the fact media moguls are so deeply integrated vertically and horizontally with other large corporations by the capitalist class. Through the process of content analysis three controversial news topics will be analyzed in both mainstream and independent media sources to compare their latent content.

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Introduction

The mainstream media in the United States is an institutional arrangement of structural power within the political economy of capitalist society. The concentration and centralization of the media corporations creates the structural constraint for ideological social control. A few multinational corporations control a vast amount of media access that creates a filtering process for information. The mainstream media is extremely powerful in American society. The media helps to mold opinions on an array of news topics.

Understanding the connections between the mainstream media and corporate America is important. The nexus between large corporations and the media is a significant factor in the structural sources of control. “The merger mania of the 1980’s, similar to other merger movements, was a consequence of the tendency towards concentration and centralization resulting in larger corporations in control of more capital.”(Fox 1991) The connections can be used as a way to filter out unfavorable news on different corporations. The major media sources in the US are conforming their news coverage to be “industry friendly”. In simple terms the American people are only getting part of the story. At a more abstract theoretical level, this organizational analysis of power is referred to the propaganda model of the news.

The number one source of structural control in the media today is the fact media moguls are so deeply integrated vertically and horizontally with other large corporations.(Fox 1991) This is one of the most strategic filters of the propaganda model. The ownership and control of the large corporation is one of the most strategic mechanisms of structural control. In this regard, the print media is owned and controlled by the capitalist class. (Fox 1991)

Most sociologists would agree that the media has a significant impact on the masses. Corporate America's connection allows the media information to be used as a form of ideology social control. The Chomsky-Herman thesis argues that the media is an important social institution which manufactures the consent of the masses.

The U.S. public is generally unwilling to believe that the media is used as a tool of social control. However, this is what is so significant about ideological social control. Members of society are unaware that the news represents a dominant ideology from the perspective of the dominant class. In this stage of capitalism, this class derives its economic basis from the ownership and control of the large corporation. There, as the news shapers, the media manufactures the consent of the public in an implicit way. Therefore, ideological social control is more effective than overt social control because the masses are unaware that social control is achieved without overt force.

This form of social control is more effective than censorship. The Chomsky-Herman thesis argues that the news is filtered by the structural logic of organizational power. This is not a conspiracy theory but rather a structural theory of power. In this regard, ideas are filtered through an ownership filter and the end product is a capitalist class view of the news from the standpoint of the dominant class.

This model of ideological social control argues that the mainstream media represents elite interests. These interests correspond to the logic of profit maximization. Therefore, the propaganda model of the news proposes a market analysis of the media. From this theoretical framework, ideas including the media may be analyzed in the context of the market. Therefore what is printed in the mainstream media is what is profitable. The news which does not correspond to the elite interests of the capitalist is marginalized. Marginalization is more effective the overt censorship. Therefore, the mainstream media appears to be objective and neutral at the surface. But the essence is that the mainstream media reproduces the class relations of a class stratified society at both a national and international levels.

It is obvious that the people that control the media have a great deal of power in this country. Dr. Ewen explains. “ The media shapes our consciousness in two ways, they decide what we should know, and what they don’t want us to know.”(Ewen p.282, 1998) Once the connection is

made between large corporations and major media outlets it is painfully obvious that the media is a strategic mechanism for social control.

A media which is controlled by the elite is undemocratic. The Nazi party in the 1930's and 40's had a stranglehold on media access and distribution. Only it took many lives and years to learn of their true agenda. How can a media corporation with multiple connections with several other industries give an unbiased opinion? Former CIA director, William Colby, articulated this relationship of power when he concluded "The CIA owns everyone of significance in the major media." (McGowen p. 13, 1998) Until the average American can conceive that giant corporations control the flow of media the trend will continue and more information will be suppressed. The mass media will continue to filter news to fit their economic agendas.

On the other hand, are the independent media sources. There access to the majority of the public is much more narrow in scope than huge firms that own hundreds of newspapers and 25 television stations. The fundamental difference between mainstream and independent media sources is that mainstream sources are directly linked with corporate conglomerates.

It seems that independent media and mainstream media sources write conflicting stories on the same topics. The goal of this thesis is to assess that the mainstream media of providing biased opinions on crucial news topics. A biased opinion can be defined as any statement that is

altered in order to conceal information. These biased opinions are given to the public in the name of profit. The government also has a great deal of control over the media. This paper argues that the media operates like a transnational corporation, thus information is filtered through the ownership filter. Media information is filtered for many reasons. First, it helps maintain the current power structure, and second because profit margins could be affected.

The definition of independent media is an outlet that is not connected to the seven corporations that control 90% of the media market. Just because independent media sources are not connected to Corporate America doesn't mean that some of their opinion are not also biased. The lack of connections does make it easier to give an opinion that doesn't conflict with other organizations that constrain opinion.

Most mainstream media is distributed by large transnational corporations. This means that the worlds' media is becoming more and more concentrated and centralized. It is widely known that these corporations dominate the world markets economically .Therefore, there is a structural basis for the flow the media which is filtered. It is logical to think that corporations control the worlds' media flow.

The propaganda model is a good way of analyzing the mainstream media. Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman (1988) are able to show how media information is distributed. They explains his four filters of the media to explain how information is constrained by institutional forces. In a

democracy it is not too much to ask for unbiased information by mainstream sources. An unbiased media is not possible in any society without an economic and political democracy. The media in a democratic society should be separate from corporate influences. All these connections do is form information barriers. This doesn't allow an opinion that has underlying agendas. By looking at the propaganda model it is clear that the way media information is distributed needs a great deal of reform. If media corporations were separate from other large corporations, then there would be fewer filters on information given to the public.

The purpose of the research was to show differing opinions between mainstream and independent sources on certain news issues. Another reason for the research is to show the American people that the mainstream media has an agenda on some controversial subjects in the news. The three topics for research were strategically chosen because they are all connected to US foreign policy in one way or another. The war in Iraq is one subject that will be used in the research. The World Trade Organization is another topic discussed in this paper. Finally the Israeli and Palestinian conflict will be analyzed for latent content. All of these particular topics seem to have differing opinions between mainstream and independent media sources.

The goal of the research is to show that conflicting news reports on the same topics are different simply for economic reasons. An example is

the Disney Corporation. Disney owns ABC news. Therefore, ABC wouldn't have a news report that spoke negatively of any Disney corporation. A story of sweatshops in Haiti would only hurt the corporation as a whole. Project Censored reported that employees at Disney World were receiving crabs from wearing unsanitary costumes at the park. I'm sure that ABC never spoke about that news report. This has direct ties with the ownership filter on market capitalism. This is why you will never see this story on ABC. Capitalism only has one fundamental goal. That is to generate profit. Within the constraints of capitalism it is necessary to suppress information in the name of profit.

The research should show that the mainstream media connection to corporate America is the factor that changes the way the public gets their information. Questions like: Why is the mainstream media pro war in Iraq? Why the mainstream media seems to be pro Israeli concerning their conflict with the Palestinians? Also, why do the independent media sources seem to be anti-globalization? Most of these can be answer by the Mainstream Medias' integration with corporate America.

The method of research for this paper is content analysis. Online articles will be analyzed for their latent content. These articles will be selected from both mainstream and independent sites. A random sample will be the way the news reports will be selected. The articles will be obtained from specific sites that have built in search engines into the website. Those search engines will be used to find articles on the same

news topics. Half from mainstream media sources, and half from independent media sites. A comparison of the latent opinion will be done to look for inconsistencies.

The goal of this thesis is to connect mainstream media with particular opinions on controversial issues in US foreign policy. This paper will discuss three topics that seem to be current issues in the media today. The first subject for research is the World Trade Organization. The trend of globalization seems to be increasing at an alarming pace. In the last few years massive protests have been popping up throughout the world against the WTO.

There are several definitions of the WTO. I suppose that there is an economic and social definition. From an investment site on the internet the World Trade Organization, was described as An international agency which encourages trade between member nations, administers global trade agreements and resolves disputes when they arise. Independent sources will have differing opinions than mainstream media sources on this particular topic. Other less conservative definitions see the WTO as an international tool for exploitation. The WTO has a goal of loaning billions of dollars to Third World countries. With the loans they secure the ability for investors to obtain the rights to bring their operations to these under developed countries. Thus, the corporations can get extremely cheap labor in order to raise profit margins.

The second topic will be the US war with Iraq. The research on this topic assess whether or not the articles are pro war in Iraq, or anti war. These articles will be read for latent opinion and key words that show an opinion of the article. The final news story that will be discussed is the conflict between the Israelis' and the Palestinians. The reason these topic were picked was because these topics all are directly related to US foreign policy.

By analyzing the articles univocally it is easy to comprehend the overall position of the stories. The evidence should show that the mainstream Medias' position on the WTO, War in Iraq and the Israelis will all be positive. The independent sources should be anti war, anti WTO, and anti Israeli.

This type of research has some limitations. The connection between mainstream media and corporate America in this paper for the most part is grounded in Marxist class theory. By understanding Marx's class theory. It is clear that the dominant ideologies are controlled by the elite capitalist class. One way this is done is through the media. If the media is only available from 7 sources then there is only a possibility for 7 different ideologies This means that if the reader feels that the theory is wrong, then they will give no value to the research. It is well known that the media is increasingly more concentrated and centralized. This study will be used to assess the connections between big business and major media outlets.

This research tries to assess that the purpose of the mainstream media is to only give the public part of the story. The reason for the biased opinion in the media is linked to the profitability of the corporations that control the media. For Example, General Electric owns the media company CBS. GE also has military contracts with the United States military. Why would CBS have stories that are antiwar? That fact is that GE plans to make a lot of profit if a war occurs. Therefore, my guess is that all affiliates to CBS will produce pro war information. The single purpose of a corporation is to generate profit. Other things like ethical standards come second to profit maximization.

This paper will ask three distinct research questions. First, Is there a significant difference between mainstream and alternative media on the WTO? Second, Is there a significant difference between the mainstream and independent media on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Finally, Is there a significant difference between mainstream and independent media on the War in Iraq?

Chapter One - Review of Literature

The theoretical work “Manufacturing Consent” by Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky will be used as the foundation for the theoretical framework of this thesis. In the words of the authors, “The function of the mass media is to amuse, entertain, and inform the public.”(Herman,E. & Chomsky, N. p.1, 1988) That is the order that the media function. The first goal of the media is to amuse and entertain. The second is to inform the public of the information that they want them to know. The process of informing the public is only achieved after the media information passes through several filters.

Chomsky and Herman agree that “mass media also integrates values, beliefs, and codes of behavior. And to fulfill this role requires systematic propaganda.” (Herman, E. & Chomsky, N. p.2, 1988) The statement above explains how the mass media uses information to create rule and codes in our current society. Information becomes propaganda when the purpose of the information is to mislead the public. Countries that have influence on their media use their monopolistic control to censor controversial issues.

Chomsky and Herman have developed a theory known as the Propaganda Model is used to better explain the mass media filters. The four filters are concentrated ownership, advertising, government, and flak. A more precise definition will be given in the findings section. Both Herman and Chomsky agree “elite domination of the media and the

marginization of information is done naturally because of the filters that news is subjected too” (Herman, E & Chomsky, N.p.2 1988)

Although independent media sources are much smaller and reach far fewer people they still serve a purpose to society. The problem is that the more concentration of the media outlets, the people will be less likely to get an alternative opinion. The reason the mainstream media is fearful of the independent news outlets is because, “A radical alternative press was effective in reinforcing class conscious. (Herman, E. & Chomsky, N p.3 1988) This is why it is so important for the mainstream media to maintain their media domination.

The four filters of the propaganda model serve the purpose of controlling the flow of information that the public receives. “The filters narrow the range of news that passes through the gates; they also limit the news objectivity of the information.” (Herman, E. & Chomsky, N. p.31 1988) The filters of advertising and the government are more visible than concentration and flak.

The term “Propaganda” best describes the tactics used by the mainstreammedia to censor news stories. “Propaganda campaigns in general have been closely attuned to elite interests.”(Herman, E. & Chomsky, N. p.32, 1988) This concept explains how media information is manufactured to conform to elite class interests. The biased news is distributed by several media outlets. “Propaganda campaigns may be instituted either by the government or by one or more major media firms.”

(Herman, E. & Chomsky, N. p.33 1988) Both are very good at it, because they both have giant audiences that span the earth.

Propaganda is a way to manipulate information to justify things that are unjust. Chomsky and Herman feel that “A propaganda system will consistently portray people abused in enemy states as worthy victims” (Herman, E. & Chomsky, N. p. 37 1988)

Chomsky has also published many other books on the subject of media manipulation. Titles like Necessary Illusions and Propaganda and the Public Mind, are a key component in the theoretical framework of this paper. Chomsky strongly feels that there is a myth of the liberal media. “Democratizing the media is a myth” (Chomsky p.4, 1989) the mainstream media is a control mechanism and not part of the democratic process.

Most theorists would agree that the mainstream media is characterized by giant multi-national corporations. These companies claim to give an unbiased version of the news. The news of the mainstream gives several conservative positions on important topics. The filters of the “propaganda model” make the goal of unbiased opinion impossible. The goal of these enormous corporations is not to serve the people. Their only purpose is to accumulate capital and profit. The media does help people that expose themselves to the information to form opinions on several crucial issues. “The elite media usually sets the agenda that others generally follow.” (Chomsky p.8, 1989) This form of control exhibited by the media is ideological social control

David McGowan's book Derailing Democracy is useful when analyzing the Medias position on certain news topics. One point of McGowan is "The US media has become very adept at sterilizing war, shamelessly blurring the line between war and entertainment." (McGowen P.177,1998) The problem is that media manipulation is commonplace in our current society. "The model of the media as a corporate oligopoly is a natural system for a capitalistic democracy." (Chomsky p.2 1989)

Alexis de Tocqueville felt that American society is much less democratic than it appears. "I know my country in which there is so little independence of the mind, and real freedom of discussion as in America." (McGowen p.1 1998) A good example of this is the "communist scare" of the 1950's. Propaganda was prevalent in the United States in many forms of anti communism. Americans were not allowed to support communism in any way by law. This is an example of the US government using direct social control to maintain the power relationships that were held together by market capitalism. Media manipulation is a more indirect form of social control.

Edward Herman in Triumph of the Market defined a term called the Hyde Park Soapbox as a model of freedom of expression. Herman's point is that "Americans for the most part have very little freedom of expression." The US tradition of the Hyde Park Soapbox has never considered positive government acts and policies to make freedom of expression a reality." (Herman p.167, 1995)

Herman also maintains that advertisers have made the media a corrupt process in US society. "The owners of the media are wealthy individuals and companies, their operations are funded mainly by advertisers: this is, by business firms trying to sell goods and corporate messages." (Herman p.169, 1995) Advertising is a filter in mainstream media that seriously jeopardizes the objective liberal opinion of the news that is covered.

The major media outlets in America act to undermine the First Amendment of freedom of expression. Edward Herman makes a connection between free market capitalism and the bias nature of the media. "Market processes naturally constrain free expression."(Herman p. 177, 1995) The difference between the United States market based system and a less democratic country such as China is that an alternative media is available in the US. The Chinese government does not allow individuals to be critical of of the economic system they are subjected too.

This is why it is so important that mainstream media firms maintain their monopolistic control of the majority of media information in the United States. "The third merit of the market based system is that a dissident media is allowed to function, but without the capacity to reach large numbers." (Herman p.171, 1995) Therefore, the alternative media is marginalized. Given the market based analysis the news, then we can

understand contextually how the alternative media will have a less significant impact on public opinion than the dominant mainstream media.

Many sociologists are aware that there are connections between the US government, corporations, and the mainstream media. The question that hasn't been adequately assessed is, how do we fix the current problems with the media? The major players in these industries will do anything to maintain the current power structure. "This system is extremely difficult to attack or dislodge because the gatekeepers naturally do not allow challenges to their own direct interests to reach the public consciousness."(Herman p. 172, 1995) Without fundamental changes to the current subjective media they will continue without challenge. "Structural change is imperative for increased freedom of expression in the United States." (Herman p. 173, 1995)

Michael Parenti is another theorist that is very knowledgeable in the subject of media manipulation. Parenti argues that the mainstream media purposely distort the news to be "industry friendly." The major media almost never involve stories that are subject to differing opinions. "The corporate mainstream media seldom stray in territory that might cause discomfort to those who hold political and economic power including those who own or advertise in it."(Parenti p. 1, 1997)

According to Parenti suppression by omission is a tactic used by the mainstream media sources. Suppression is commonly done to deter

the public away from the topics in question. Sometimes a story can be discussed by mainstream sources without correctly educating the public. These tactics are used to maintain that profit will continue. One example that Parenti uses is “ The Tylenol poisoning of several by a deranged individual was treated like big news, but the far more sensational story of the industrial black lung poisoning of thousands of factory workers by large manufacturing interests was barely mentioned.” (Parenti p. 1, 1997)

The reason for the suppression of that particular story was because the manufactures that were responsible either owned interest in the media or advertised regularly, or evens both. Parenti also gives several other examples how media information is manipulated. Tactics used by the mainstream media are Labeling, Face value transmission, Slighting of Content, and Framing. These tactics all have the same purpose of distorting the information that is delivered to the general public.

Other theorists such as Karl Marx and C. Wright Mills will provide essential assumptions to construct the theoretical framework for the thesis. Marx’s analysis of class and political economy of capitalism will provide the theoretical framework for analyzing the concentration and centralization of the media. In this regard, Marx argues that the later stages of capitalism may be characterized as monopoly capitalism. The mainstream media represents the most strategic units of analysis in this stage of capitalism. Hence, the mainstream media is the economic basis of the capitalist class. Marx work on class argues that the class in

themselves becomes a class for themselves. Therefore we can see how important the print media is in regard class control and the ideas they push on the public.

Marx and Mills have written in great detail on the subjects of power and class struggle. These concepts will give a better understanding of the mainstream media domination throughout the United States as well as the rest of the world. Both statistics as well as theory are important when analyzing the medias connection to corporate America. These connections are the reasons for the biased opinion on controversial topic in the news.

Karl Marx analyzes the concept of ideology when relating it to the dominant class. Marx is considered the father of critical sociology. All the theorists that have been discussed in this paper have some theoretical tie to Karl Marx. "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, the class that is the material force of society is at the same time the intellectual force."(Marx, 1844) In more simple terms this means that the controllers of the mainstream media also control the way people feel about certain news stories. The wealthy elite also form value systems that are used by the majority of citizens. The owners of the media use it to accomplish the goals stated above.

C. Wright Mills in "White Collar" defines concentration and centralization as a system of capitalism that shrinks the middle class, and enlarges the gap between rich and poor. One point he makes is the loss in

middle class jobs across the board. Concentration and centralization are extremely important when looking at the media in this thesis. All of C. Wright Mills theory is based solely on the writings of Karl Marx in his three volumes of Capital. One interesting thing about C. Wright Mills is that his theories are not out dated because trends like the concentration of the media a current problem.

Robert McChesney is another theorist that is examines the problems of the global media. His knowledge is impressive on the connection between globalization and the mainstream medias' interpretation of globalization. McChesney argues "Economic and cultural globalization would be impossible without a global media system to promote global markets and to encourage consumer values."(McChesney p.2, 2001) In other words, global corporations control media access to aide the ongoing trend of globalization.

Robert McChesney also explains that extreme media concentration has been a recent trend. "Prior to the 80's and 90's, National media systems were typified by domestically owned radio, television and news paper industries."(McChesney p.2, 2001) McChesney admits that global media firms look at themselves as global entities. One example that he gives is, CEO Gerald Levin stated "We do not want to be viewed as an American company. We think globally"(McChesney p. 3, 2001)

Chapter Two - Research Design and Method

The mainstream media in America is controlled and constrained by multinational corporations. These corporations control the flow of information that is released to the public. The purpose of this research is to obtain a better understanding of how and why the media is dominated by giant corporations.

The method of research that will be utilized is content analysis. This method was chosen because it is best suited for analyzing ideologies. One goal of the research is to obtain a understanding of the ideology that is presented in each individual news report. The content of the research will be newspaper articles. The articles will be found via the internet. The total number of articles will be one hundred and fifty. This number will be split in half to allow two different sources. The first source will be the mainstream media articles. The second set of articles will be from independent media sources. All 150 articles will be split on three news topics. This means that there will be 25 mainstream and 25 independent articles for three different news stories. All the articles will be analyzed for their latent content. This will be made by asking each article a set of questions. The point of the study is to see if mainstream and independent media sources have differing views on the same topics.

In order to understand the content of the research, a few terms should be defined. First, the term “Mainstream” media can be defined as any media outlet that is somehow connected to the seven multinational

corporations that virtually all media access. “Independent” sources are known as all media sources that are no way connected to the media giants. Also all independent articles were found at sites that were endorsed as members of the independent media institute.

Other terms such as “Pro Israel” represent latent content that has a political stance that is in favor of the actions of Israel. On the other hand a “pro Palestine” depiction is an article with a latent content that is in support of the leaders of Palestine. An article that is deemed “neutral” is one that has no direct or indirect political stance on the news topic in question.

The three news topics were chosen for various reasons. First, all the topics are well connected to US foreign policy. All the topics are also important when analyzing the US economy. Another reason is that all three news topics are presented differently from mainstream to alternative media sources. All three topics are related to each other also.

Three news topics will be used to explain the differences between mainstream and independent media sources on controversial news stories. The first news topic that will be analyzed is the ongoing middle East conflict between Israel and Palestine. This topic was chosen because there seems to be differing opinions on the conflict. Another reason for this story is that it is a current problem and has been in the news for many years.

The second topic of the research is the current issue of “War in Iraq” This story has been in the news with some controversy. The mainstream sources seem to have an overall Pro war opinion. It seems that independent sources have a larger range of opinion with an overall antiwar stance.

The third topic of the research will be the actions of the World Trade Organization and the trend of “globalization”. The fifty articles will be analyzed for their latent content on their opinion of the World Trade Organization. The reason for choosing this topic is because it seems that mainstream sources only look at the WTO as an economic institution. The independent sources look more at the social consequences that are imposed by the WTO. The term globalization is defined as the trend of the world of becoming a global economy. The problem with globalization is that corporations end up exploiting people in the name of profit. Another problem is that there are very little laws involved with globalization. The giant corporations end up governing themselves.

Mainstream

Independent

Cnn.com

The nation.com

BBCnews.com

Altnet.com

Yahoo.com

Motherjones.com

Timemagazine.com

lol.com

New Yorktimes.com

Extra.org

Washingtonpost.com

Znet.com

All of the sites used for research had search engines on their websites. Key words were used on the search engines to find related articles. “Middle East conflict” was the key word for the section on Israel and Palestine. After the search was complete the articles were briefly analyzed to make certain that the article was on the subject in question. The sorting of the articles was done to ensure that all articles would have enough data to research. Iraq was the key word for the section on the war in Iraq. All these articles were sorted to find current articles on the subject of possible war. The last section of research used the WTO as the keyword. These articles were viewed to be sure that each one was about the trend of globalization.

To gain actual statistical data a coding sheet was made to analyze the articles for latent content. All statistical data was obtained through these three separate coding sheets. These coding sheets were designed to answer specific questions in relation to the topic.

Content analysis was chosen because it best analyzes ideologies. The purpose of the research is to gain an understanding of the latent content of each article. Earl Babbie feels that “Content analysis is particularly well suited for the study of communications and to answering the classic question of communications research.” (Babbie,1995) Since the random sample was used and all the news reports deal with communication. Content analysis was the most valid method of research analysis. The coding sheet was designed to ask each news report a series of questions depending on the subject matter.

Chapter Three - Discussion of Findings

By analyzing each article for its latent content, it is obvious that mainstream and independent media sources have different opinions of similar news topics. The research shows that all three news topics chosen for analysis yielded different positions from mainstream and independent media sources. The data acquired by the research shows that popular opinion coincides with mainstream Media's latent content.

The research also supports Chomsky and Herman's "Propaganda model". The propaganda model explains how the mainstream media outlets filter information in order to be "industry friendly." Herman and Chomsky that capitalism forces the mainstream media to operate in that fashion.

The first set of research questions used for analysis dealt with the Middle East conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. All five questions had considerable differences between mainstream and independent media sources. The first question looked at the latent content of the articles. The twenty five mainstream articles had 15 whose latent content was pro-Israeli. The mainstream articles only had one that had a latent content in favor of the Palestinians. One example of a Pro-Israel position is "Israelis have reoccupied every West Bank Palestinian town and city except Jer June. However Israeli officials have said the army does not

intend to seize areas in the Gaza Strip. Israeli operations have been confined to air strikes.” (Barzak, Yahoo news, 2/25/03)

An example of a pro-Palestinian position comes from altnet.org. “Israeli spin doctors immediately understood that the massacre would generate bad PR and change the official line.” (Gordon, Altnet, 7/30/02) By studying each article for its latent content it was clear that the mainstream articles were either pro-Israel or neutral. On the other hand independent articles were either prop-Palestinian or neutral for the most part.

Question two looked for any derogatory term associated with the Palestinians. Research showed that 64% of mainstream articles used derogatory terms when describing the people of Palestine. Several articles used the term “militant ” when explaining the Palestinian people. “Israeli forces killed eight Palestinians at least five of them armed Sunday as an army offensive on Islamic militant strongholds.”(Mugrabi, Yahoo news,2/23/03)

The independent articles only used derogatory terms 28% of the time when describing the Palestinians. This is considerably less than the mainstream sources. 72% of the independent articles didn’t use derogatory terms to explain the Palestinian people.

Question three asked if any statements I the articles used derogatory terms to explain the Israeli’s. The mainstream sources only had 12% of the articles that spoke of the Israeli’s in derogatory terms. The

independent media articles had 76% that used negative language to explain the Israeli people. For example, one article from Alternet.org describes the Israeli's as "spin doctors"(Gordon, Alternet, 7/30/02)

Questions four and five ask the articles if any statements were pro-Israeli (#4), or pro-Palestinian (#5) Question four showed that 60% of the mainstream articles had at least one pro-Israeli statement. This was lower than expected. Independent sources only had 32% that had pro-Israeli statements. This shows that mainstream sources are 22% more likely to have statements that are pro-Israeli.

Question five shows a much larger disparity with pro-Palestinian statements. Mainstream and independent sources show exact opposite results. Only 20% of the mainstream articles had at least one pro-Palestinian statement. The independent articles had pro-Palestinian statements in 80% of the stories.

In every case of comparison between mainstream and independent sources there were considerable differences in latent content. It is clear that mainstream sources for the most part either side with Israel or remain neutral. The independent sources usually side with the Palestinians or remain neutral. I think that these latent opinions can be directly related with economic relations between Israel and the United States. " According to numerous reports in the Israeli media during the summer of 1990, the bush administatration had determined that Iraq must

not be allowed to pick up the mantle of strategic deference vis a vis Israel.” (Arnove p. 25, 2000)

It is clear throughout the existence of Israel that the US has been extremely favorable to them. Personally it seems that Israel is a client state of the United States with the duty of security of the Middle East. This is why the US keeps good economic relations with Israel.

The second section of the content analysis tackles the thought of war with Iraq. The mainstream sources for the most part were pro-war in Iraq. The 25 independent articles show much more of an anti-war position. The independent articles also showed a much more critical position towards the US government and their current policies.

The mainstream sources showed almost complete support for the actions of the US government. One filter of the propaganda model explains how governments have control and power over their democratic media systems. The information derived from the research supports the propaganda model when analyzing filter of the mainstream media. The findings also support the notion that the mainstream media does not offer an unbiased opinion. “The mass media themselves also provide “experts” who regularly echo the official view”(Herman, E. & Chomsky, N. p. 24 1988)

The first question that was used to analyze the current issues in Iraq dealt with the latent content of the articles and their position of war with Iraq. The mainstream articles were 80% in favor of war in Iraq. This is

opposed by only 4% of the mainstream articles had a position that was anti-war. The remaining 16% for the most part was neutral on the notion of war with Iraq.

In sharp contrast were the 25 independent articles that spoke about the possibility of war with Iraq. 80% of the independent articles showed an anti-war stance. 20% of the articles were neutral on the thought of war with Iraq when analyzing the latent content of the news stories. Why are the findings exact opposite between independent and mainstream sources? It starts with where the money comes from to operate a media company.

The mainstream media is composed of only a few giant corporations."The 29 largest media firms control over half the output of newspapers."(Herman, & Chomsky p. 4, 1988) This fact is dated to 1988 and the trend continues today. The independent sources are not concentrated and remain independent from one another.

The second question asked if any statements in the articles were anti-war. The mainstream sources showed that 78% of the articles didn't have any statements that were anti-war. It was unexpected to find that 24% of the mainstream articles had at least one statement that was anti-war. A larger sample would have yielded a much larger disparity between independent and mainstream sources.

The independent articles had 84% that had statements that were antiwar. This is a significant difference from the mainstream sources. By

looking at the war from a profit standpoint, it is clear that war is the answer. This is why the mainstream media is pushing for war. The large corporations that control the media see the potential for profit with the war in Iraq. The reason the independent sources see it differently is because they are not as integrated with big business and won't profit either way. This is why independent media sources are much more likely to give an unbiased opinion on the issue of war with Iraq.

Question number three analyzed whether any of the articles had any pro-war statements. It was clear that the majority of the pro-war statements were found in the mainstream articles. 88% of the mainstream articles had at least one statement that was pro-war."US president Bush said Saturday that even if Saadam were to meet the deadline for getting rid of the missiles, Iraq would not be in full compliance with UN resolutions" (CNN.com 2/23/03)

The independent sources showed less likely to have pro-war statements. Only 16% of the independent articles had pro-war statements. The other 84% had no statements that were in favor of war in Iraq. It is clear that the mainstream articles for the most part were anti-war. Almost all the independent sources had anti-war positions.

Question #4 analyzed whether the articles dehumanized the Iraqi people in any way. 96% of the independent stories had no statements that dehumanized the Iraqi people. 60% of the mainstream articles did dehumanize the Iraqi people. " Blix said he has received no reply from the

Iraqi people in his order to start destroying its Al Samoud missiles”
(Lederer, Yahoo news, 2/25/03) The mainstream media uses the tactic of dehumanizing people in order to gain public support for a war with Iraq. Public opinion is created by mainstream sources. If these corporations that control the media want war, then the mainstream media sources will be flooded with pro-war opinions. The mainstream media is manufacturing consent for war by giving the public no chance to make their own personal opinions. If a media outlet only gives one side of the story, then the majority of people will agree with the one sided opinion.

The last two questions asked if any statements in the article supported the war in Iraq (#5) or did the articles denounce the war. (#6) 80% of the mainstream articles supported the war with Iraq. Only 24% of the independent sources supported the war in Iraq. This shows that the independent sources are much more liberal when presenting media information.

Question #6 showed that 76% of the independent articles denounced the notion of war. This is opposed to only 8% of mainstream sources that denounce the war. The research shows that the independent media sources are trying much harder to give the public an unbiased, unfiltered version of the news.

The third set of research questions deals with the World Trade Organization and the current trend of globalization. Many economic leaders feel that globalization is a way to generate new markets for the

purpose of profit. Proponents of the WTO feel they use their power to exploit people and economically dominate other smaller governments. The research shows that the mainstream media for the most part is in favor of the WTO and globalization. On the other hand independent sources most likely are anti-WTO and anti-globalization.

Question #1 analyzed the latent content of the fifty articles to find their position on the WTO and globalization. 68% of the mainstream articles had a position that was pro-WTO, as opposed to only 8% that was anti-WTO. One interesting point was that 24% of the mainstream articles were neutral on the topic of the WTO and globalization. The conclusion of this particular research is that the corporations that own and control the media stand a good chance of reaping huge profits if the current trend of globalization continues.

The independent articles for the most part had positions that were anti-WTO and anti-globalization. 76% of the independent articles had an anti-WTO position. Only 16% had a neutral view of the WTO. Only 8% of the independent articles had a positive view towards the WTO and globalization. Research shows that the majority of the independent sources were fundamentally against globalization and the WTO. This could be because independent media outlets have no connections to the international economy and have no interest in globalizing the entire earth.

The second question analyzes how the articles defined the WTO. This particular question was asked to show if mainstream media sources

only discussed the WTO in economic terms and consequences and very little about the social consequences involved with the WTO and globalization. As expected a large portion of the mainstream articles only analyzed the WTO in economic terms. 60% of the mainstream articles only looked at economic aspects of the WTO. Only 24% of the articles looked at social consequences involved with the WTO and globalization. 16% of the mainstream articles looked at both economic and social phenomena involved with both WTO and globalization in general.

The independent media sources had different outcomes on question #2. Only 16% of the independent articles talked exclusively about the WTO in economic terms. 60% of these articles focused primarily on social consequences involved with the WTO and globalization. One independent article touched on both economic and social factor involved with the WTO and globalization. 20% of the independent article talked about neither economic nor social issues when discussing the WTO. The findings seem to show that mainstream media sources are under reporting the social consequences in order to maintain the current exploitive system of globalization.

Question three analyzed whether any statement in the article were positive towards the WTO as a system of globalization. 92% of the mainstream articles had at least one statement that was in favor of the WTO and globalization as a system. Only 8% didn't recognize the WTO as a positive system. The mainstream media considers themselves as the

“liberal.” 92% approval rating of the WTO doesn’t seem at all liberal. It seems that mainstream media is forcing opinion upon the public. This is to legitimate the actions of global corporations and maintain the current global system. This shows that the mainstream media is a tool at the disposal of giant corporations. It is obvious that a pro-WTO stance is much more profitable than and anti-WTO position.

80% of the independent sources disagreed that the WTO was a positive system. Only 20% of the independent sources had at least one statement that was positive towards the WTO and globalization. By analyzing each question individually is it clear that the mainstream media sides with profit in every case.

For the most part the mainstream media has positions that side with the WTO, Israel, and war with Iraq. All three of these factors can be directly related to the economy. Two thirds of the corporations that control the media, are also contracted by the US government to produce war making materials. This proves that the mainstream media is used to manufacture consent on controversial news topics in order to maintain profit structures.

Chapter Four - Conclusion

Understanding the connections between the mainstream media and corporate America is important. The nexus between large corporations and the media is a significant factor in the structural sources of control. The connections can be used as a way to filter out unfavorable news on different corporations. The major media sources in the US are conforming their news coverage to be “industry friendly”. In simple terms the American people are only getting part of the story. At a more abstract theoretical level, this organizational analysis of power is referred to as the propaganda model of the news.

The number one source of structural control in the media today is the fact media moguls are so deeply integrated vertically and horizontally with other large corporations. This is one of the most strategic filters of the propaganda model. The ownership and control of the large corporation is one of the most strategic mechanisms of structural control. In this regard, the print media is owned and controlled by the capitalist class

The purpose of the research was to show differing opinions between mainstream and independent sources on certain news issues. Another reason for the research is to show the American people that the mainstream media has an agenda on some controversial subjects in the news. Most mainstream media is distributed by large trans-national

corporations. This means that the worlds' media is becoming more and more concentrated. It is widely known that these corporations dominate the world markets economically .Therefore, there is a structural basis for the flow the media which is filtered. It is logical to think that corporations control the worlds' media flow.

The mainstream sources showed almost complete support for the actions of the US government. One filter of the propaganda model explains how governments have control and power over their democratic media systems. The information derived from the research supports the propaganda model when analyzing filter of the mainstream media. The findings also support the notion that the mainstream media does not offer an unbiased opinion. “The mass media themselves also provide “experts” who regularly echo the official view”(Herman, E. & Chomsky, N. p. 24 1988)

The research should show that the mainstream media connection to corporate America is the factor that changes the way the public gets their information. Questions like: Why is the mainstream media pro war in Iraq? Why is the mainstream media seem to be pro Israeli concerning their conflict with the Palestinians? Also, why do the independent media sources seem to be anti-globalization? Most of these can be answer by the Mainstream Medias' integration with corporate America. Many sociologists are aware that there are connections between the US government, corporations, and the mainstream media. The question that

hasn't been answered is, How do we fix the current problems with the media? The major players in these industries will do anything to maintain the current power structure. "This system is extremely difficult to attack or dislodge because the gatekeepers naturally do not allow challenges to their own direct interests to reach the public consciousness." (Herman p. 172, 1995) Without fundamental changes to the current subjective media they will continue without challenge. "Structural change is imperative for increased freedom of expression in the United States." (Herman p. 173, 1995)

In conclusion I feel that the research was adequate enough to assess the reasons for the differences between mainstream and independent media sources. The research showed that for the most part the mainstream sources opinion tended to relate directly to US economic interests. I feel a larger sample would only support the hypothesis that the mainstream media is structurally intergrated with several other industries which inhibits its ability to give an unbiased opinion of a media that the public is exposed too. This is because that the corporations that control the media are more interested in generating profits and not giving unbiased opinion.

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Appendix

Coding Sheet

Middle East conflict

M=mainstream

A=independent

Variable

- 001** **What is the latent content of the articles?**
- 1)= Pro- Israel
- 2)= Pro Palestine
- 3)= Neutral
-
- 002** **Are any derogatory terms used when explaining people of Palestine?**
- 1)=yes
- 2)= no
-
- 003** **Does the article use derogatory terms aimed at Israel?**
- 1)= yes

2)= no

004 Are any statements in the article presented as Pro-Israeli?

1)= yes

2)= no

005 Do any statements in the articles presented as pro-Israeli?

1)= yes

2)= no

War in Iraq

Variable

001 What is the latent content of the articles?

1)= anti war

2)= pro war

3)= neutral

002 Are any of the statements in the articles antiwar?

1)= yes

2)= no

003 Are any statements in the articles pro war?

1)= yes

2)= no

004 Do any of the articles dehumanize the Iraqi people?

1)= yes

2)= no

005 Do any of the statements in articles support a military action
in Iraq?

1)= yes

2)= no

006 Do any of the statements in the articles denounce the notion
of war in Iraq?

1)= yes

2)= no

WTO and Globalization

Variable

001 What is the latent content of the articles?

1)= Pro war

2)= Antiwar

3)= Neutral

002 **How was the WTO explained as?**

1)= economic implications

2)= social implications

3)= Neither

4)= both

003 **Were any statements in the articles positive towards the
WTO?**

1)= yes

2)= no

004 **Was the article one sided in favor of the WTO?**

1)= yes

2)= no

005 **Was the articles one sided against the WTO?**

1)= yes

2)= no

Israeli/ Palestine Research

Statistics

	VAR001M	VAR002M	VAR003M	VAR004M	VAR005M	VAR001A	VAR002A	VAR003A	VAR004A	VAR005A
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Frequency Table

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VAR002M

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VAR003M

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VAR004M

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	15	60.0	60.0	60.0
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	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

VAR005M

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	5	20.0	20.0	20.0
	2.00	20	80.0	80.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

VAR001A

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	4.0	4.0	4.0
	2.00	14	56.0	56.0	60.0
	3.00	10	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

VAR002A

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	7	28.0	28.0	28.0
	2.00	18	72.0	72.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

VAR003A

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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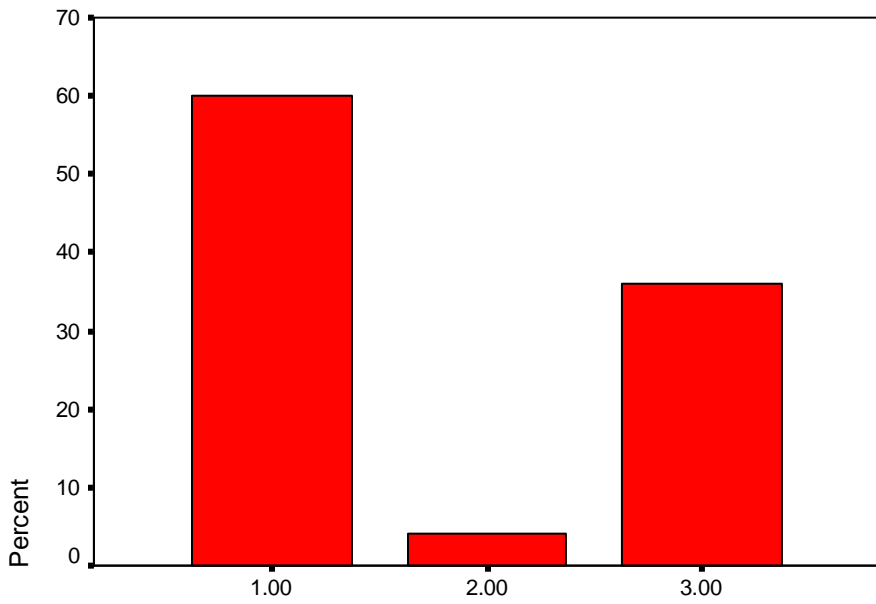
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Var005A

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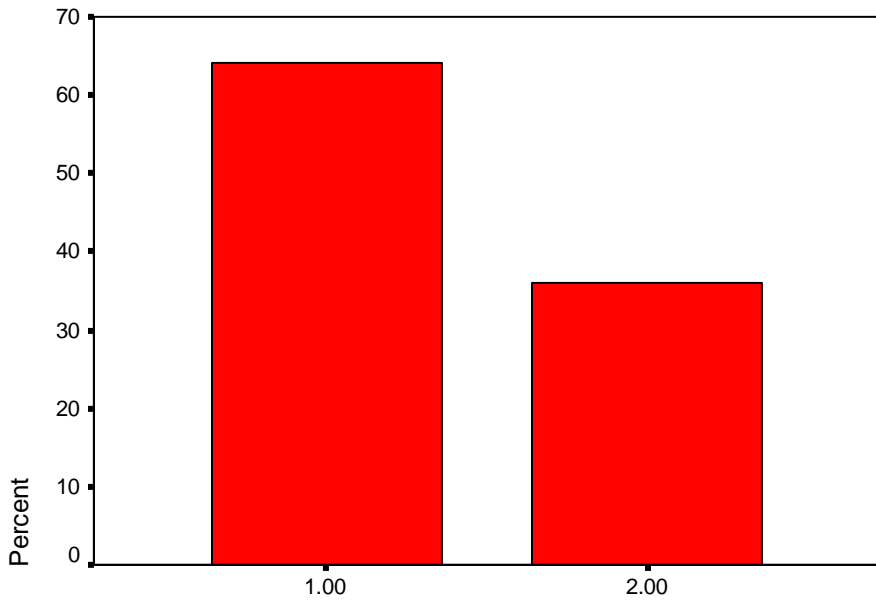
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VAR001M



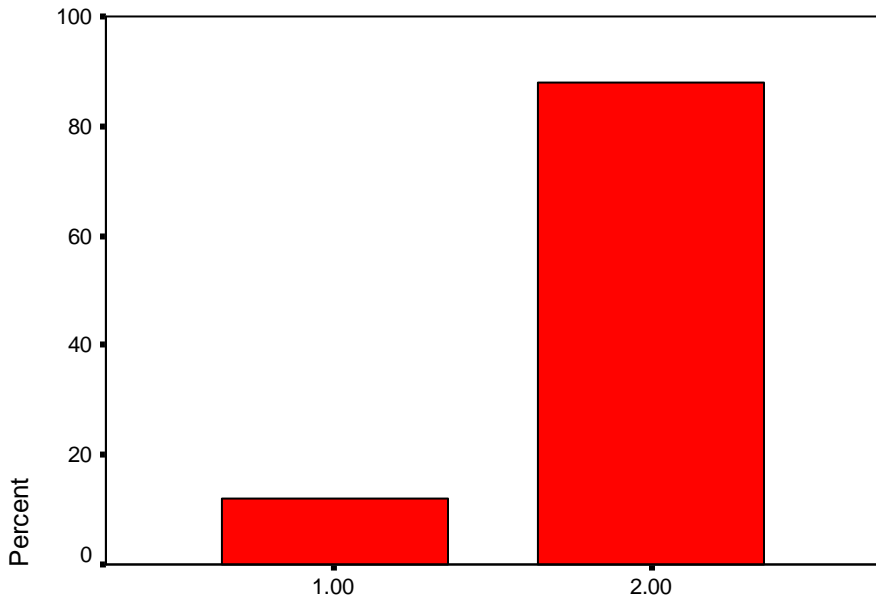
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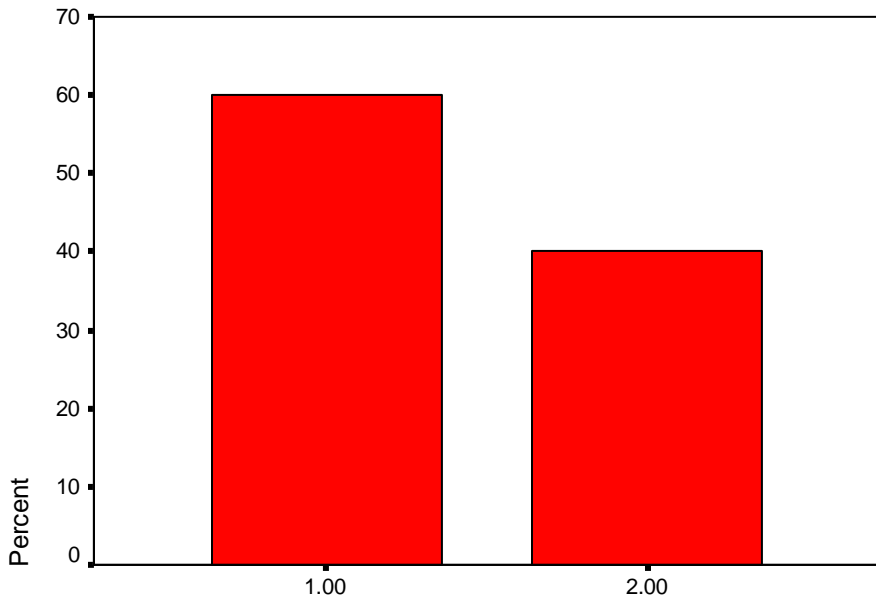
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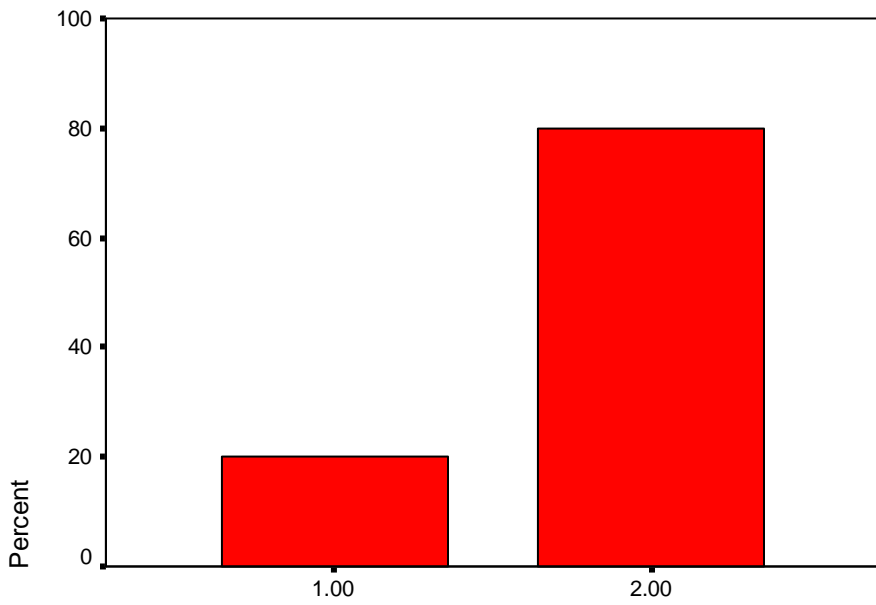
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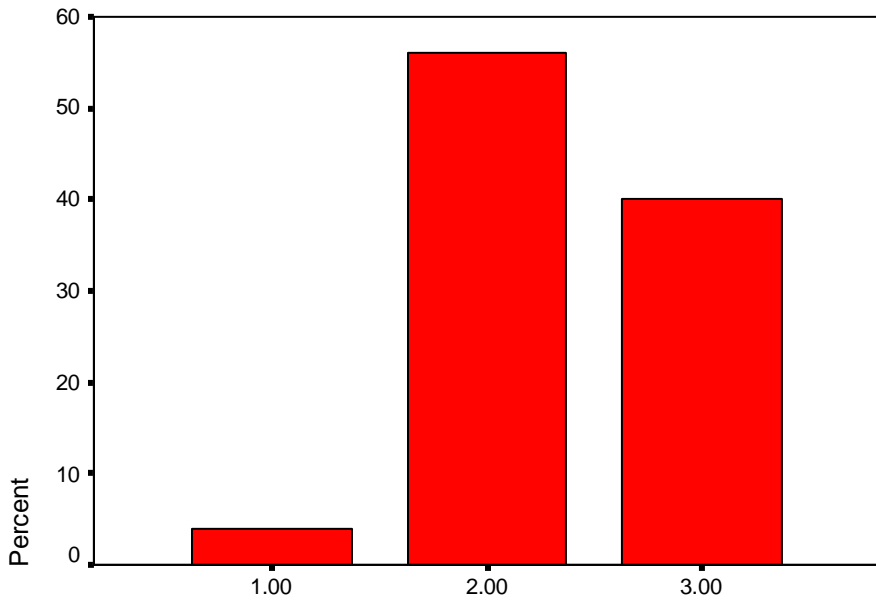
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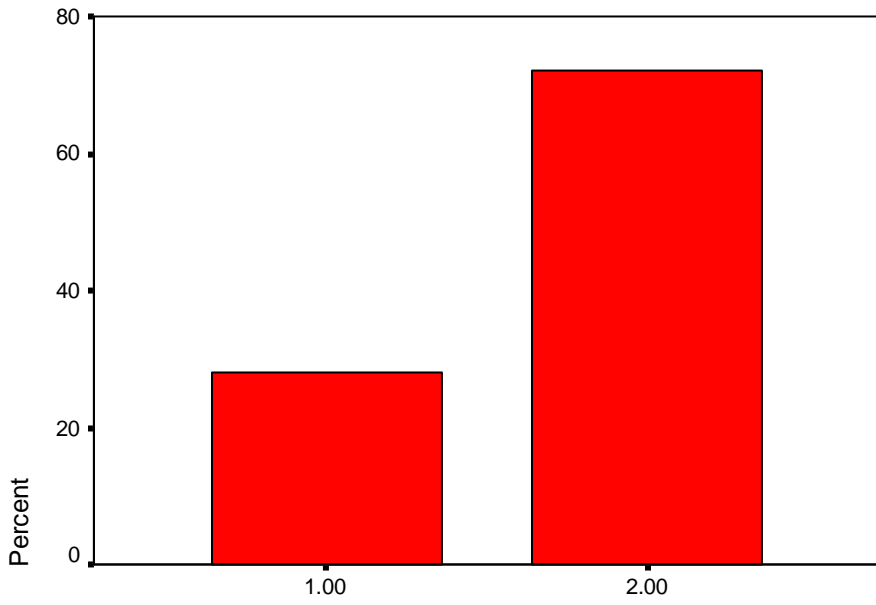
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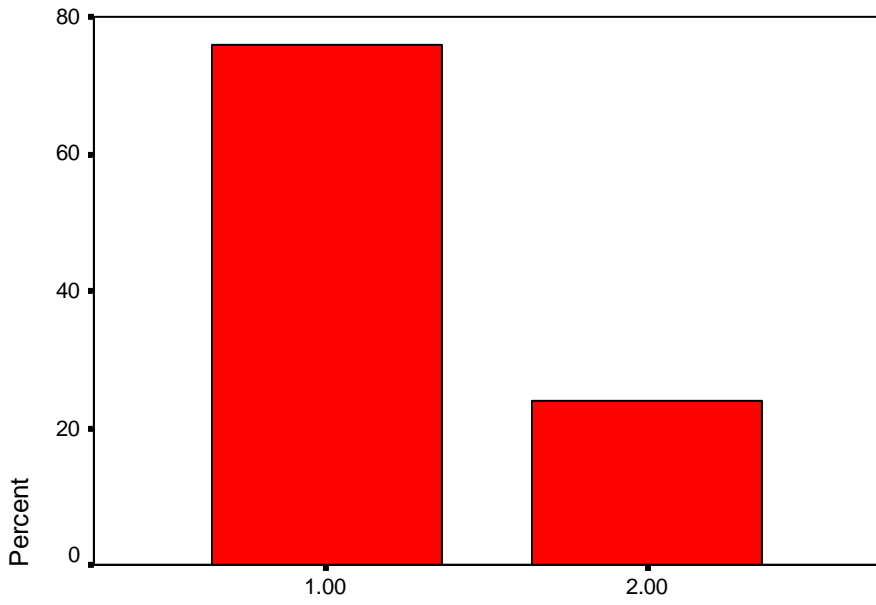
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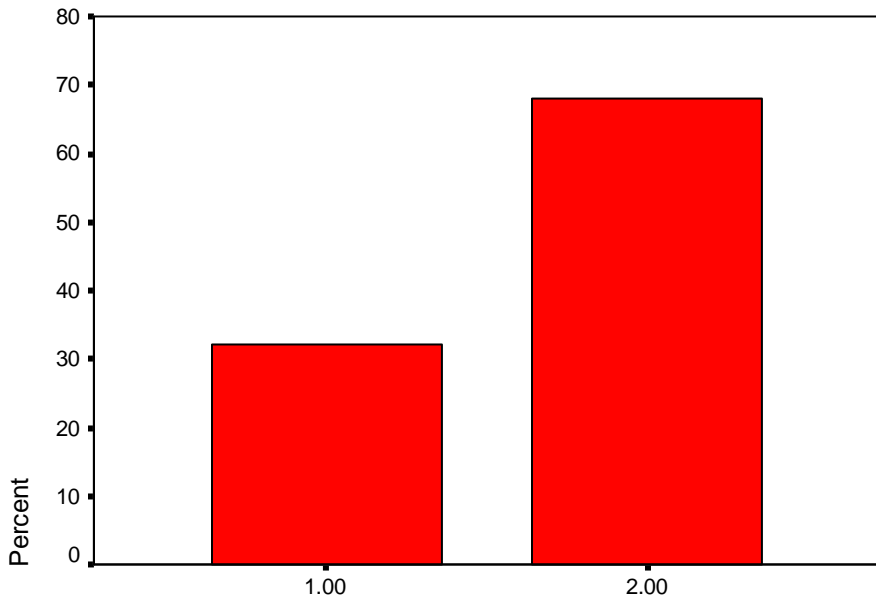
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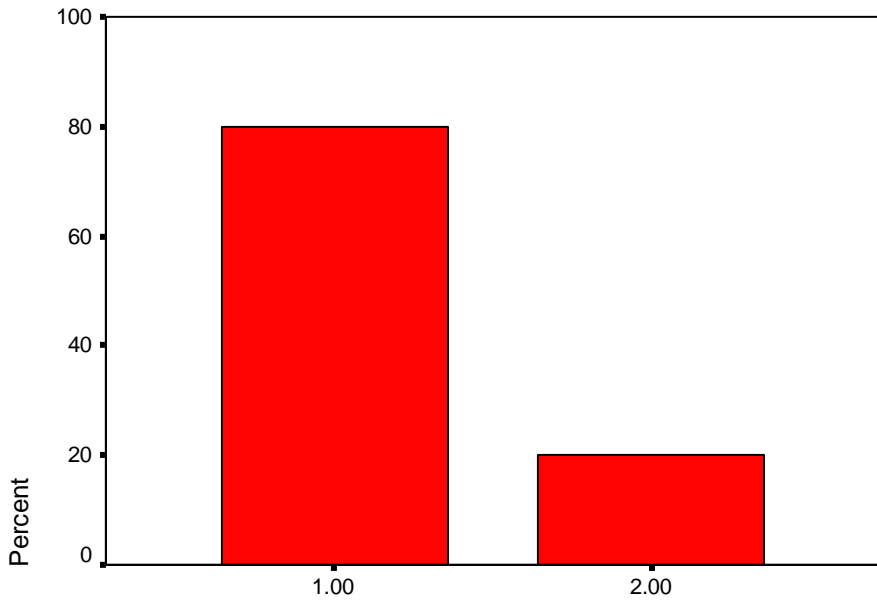
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VAR004A

VAR005A



VAR005A

War with Iraq Research

Statistics

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Frequency Table

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VAR002M

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VAR003M

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VAR004M

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VAR005M

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VAR006M

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VAR001A

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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	2.00	1	4.0	4.0	84.0
	3.00	4	16.0	16.0	100.0
	Total	25	100.0	100.0	

VAR002A

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VAR003A

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VAR004A

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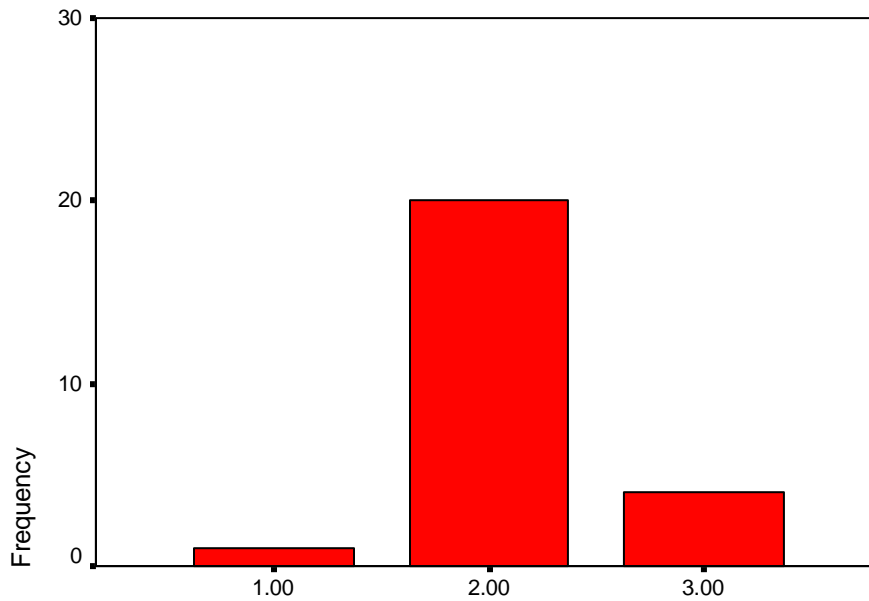
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VAR006A

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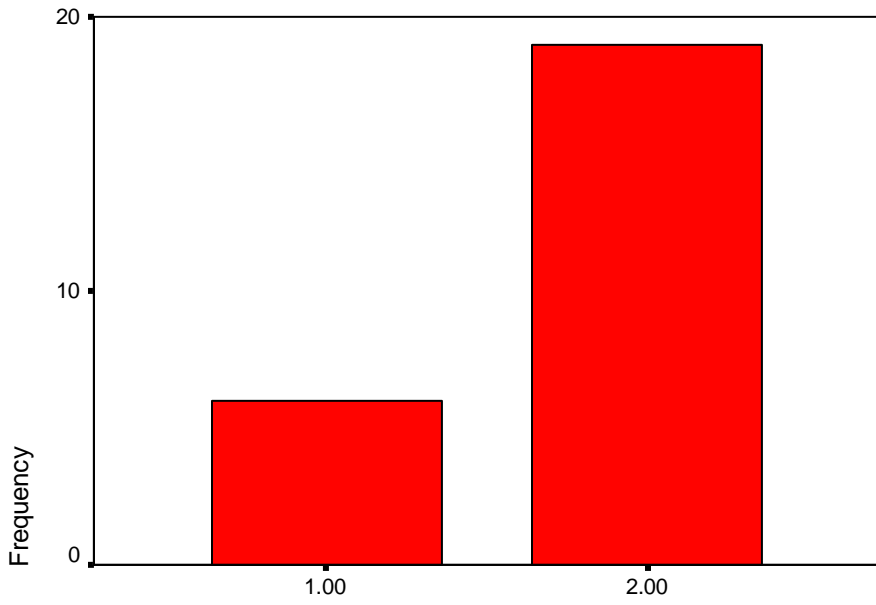
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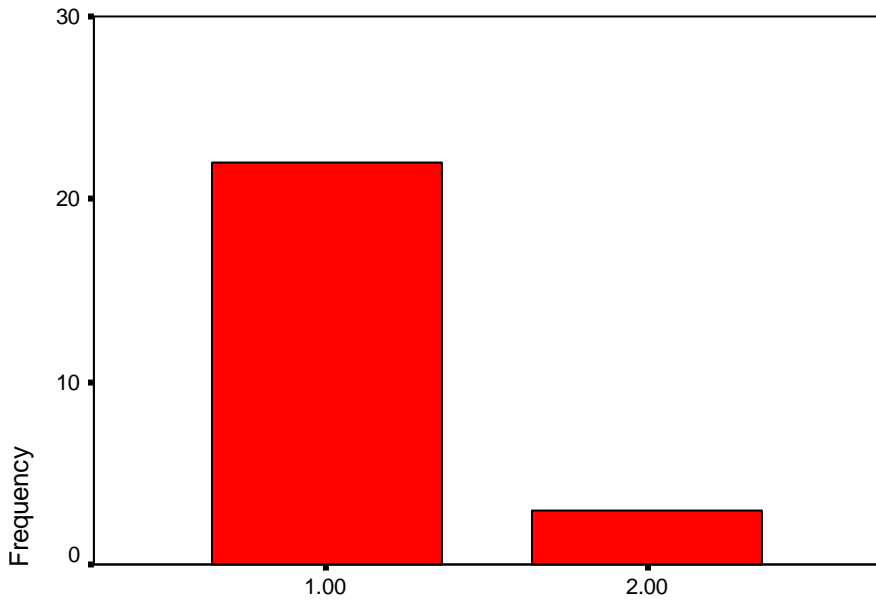
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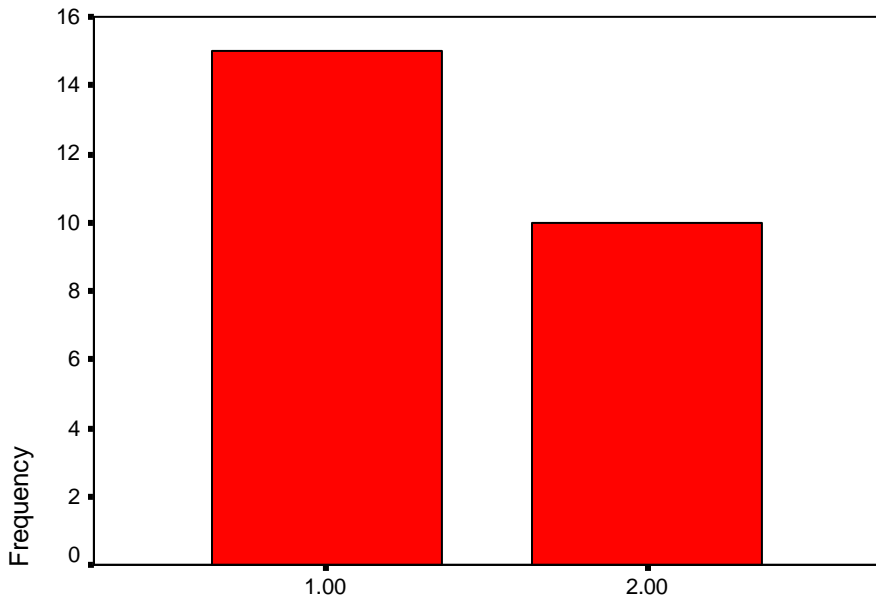
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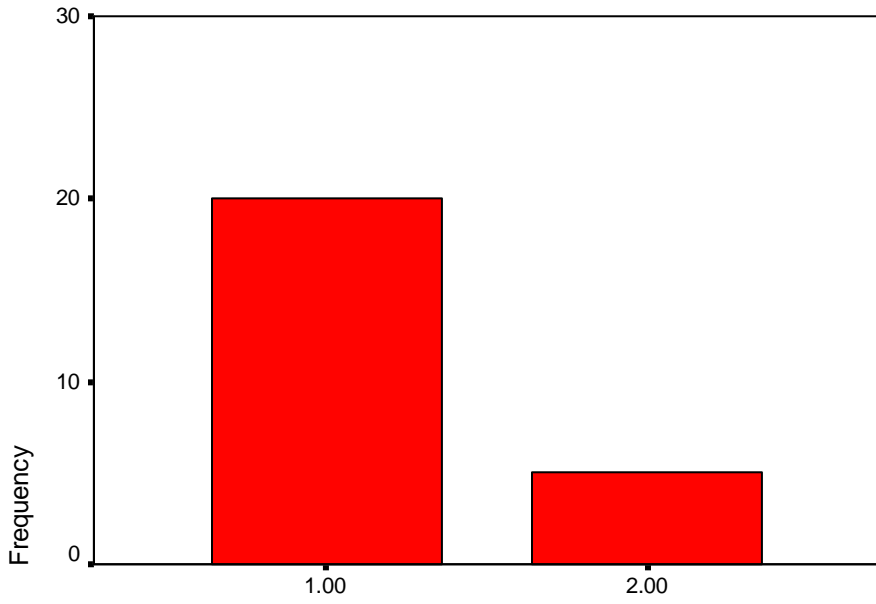
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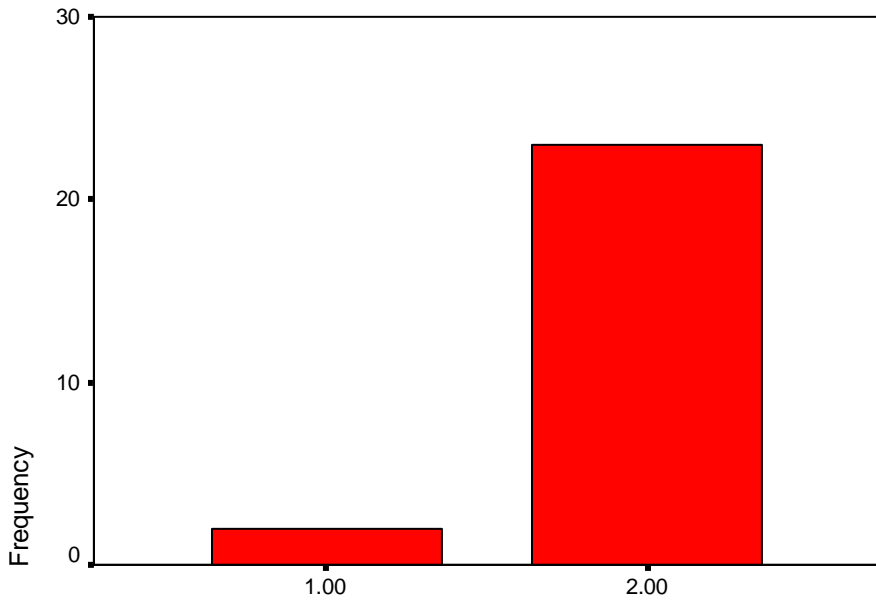
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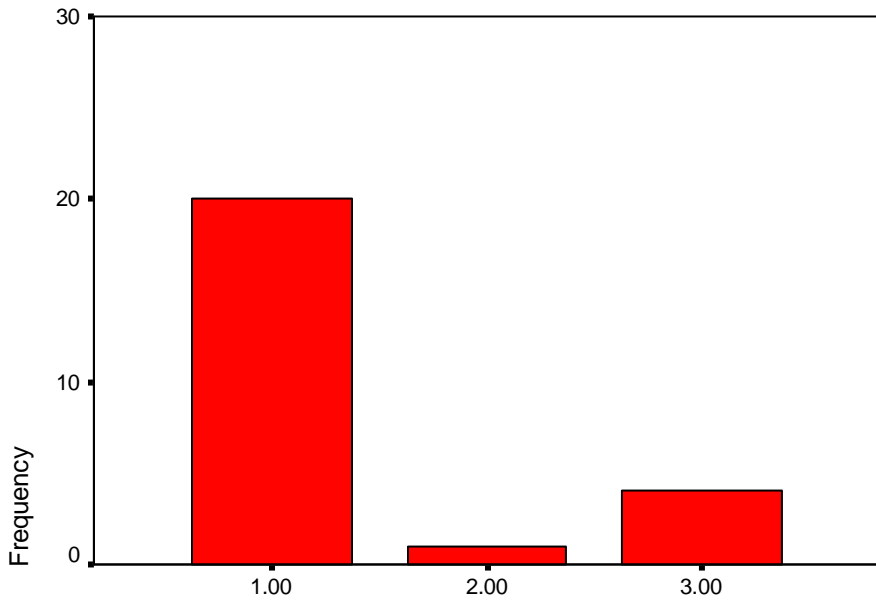
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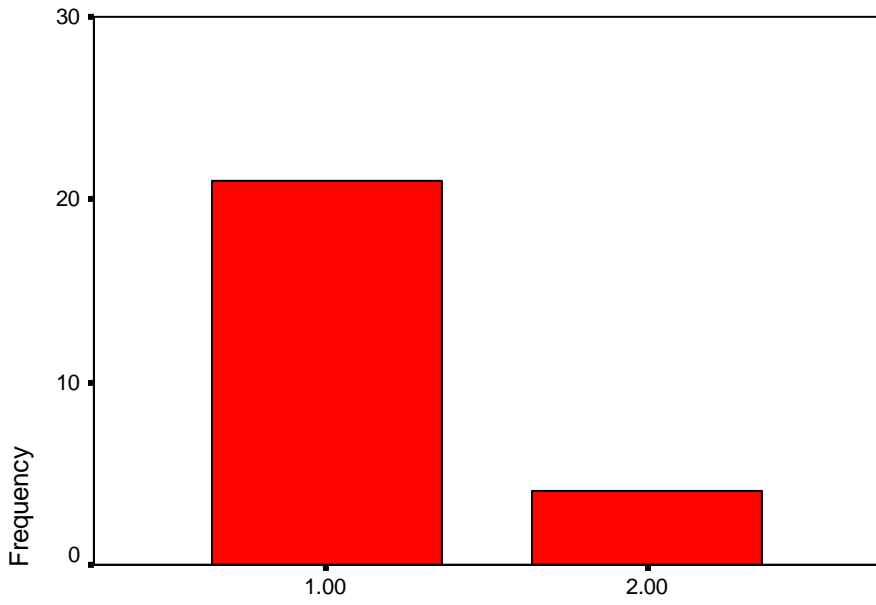
VAR006M

VAR001A



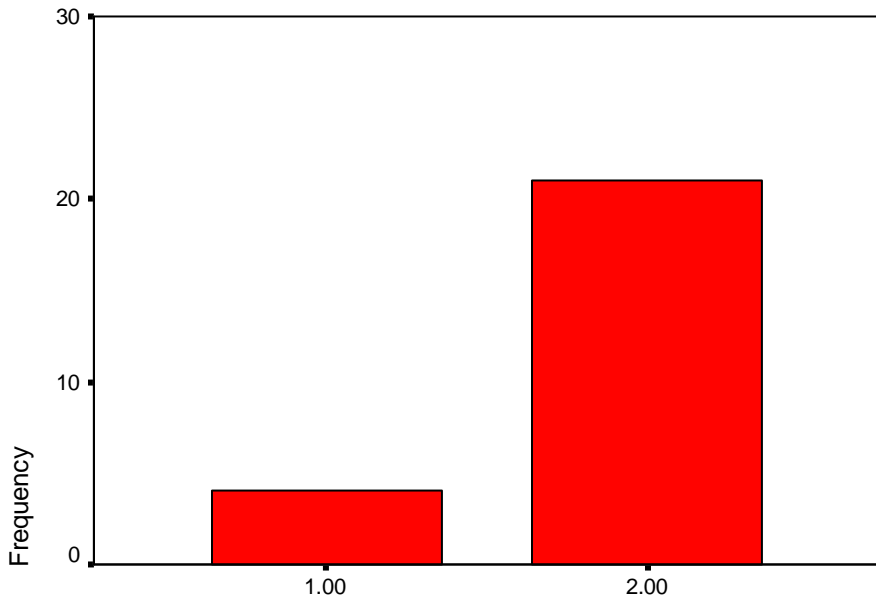
VAR001A

VAR002A



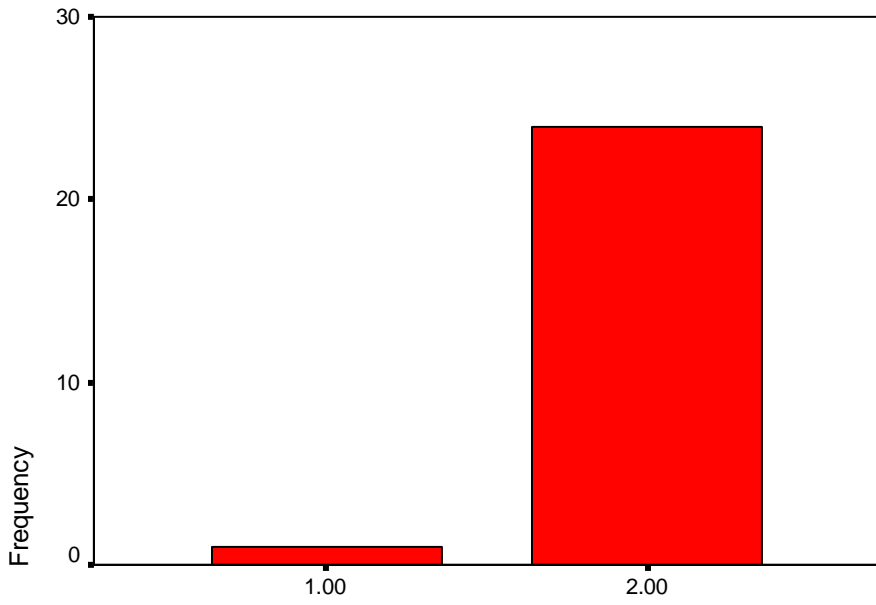
VAR002A

VAR003A



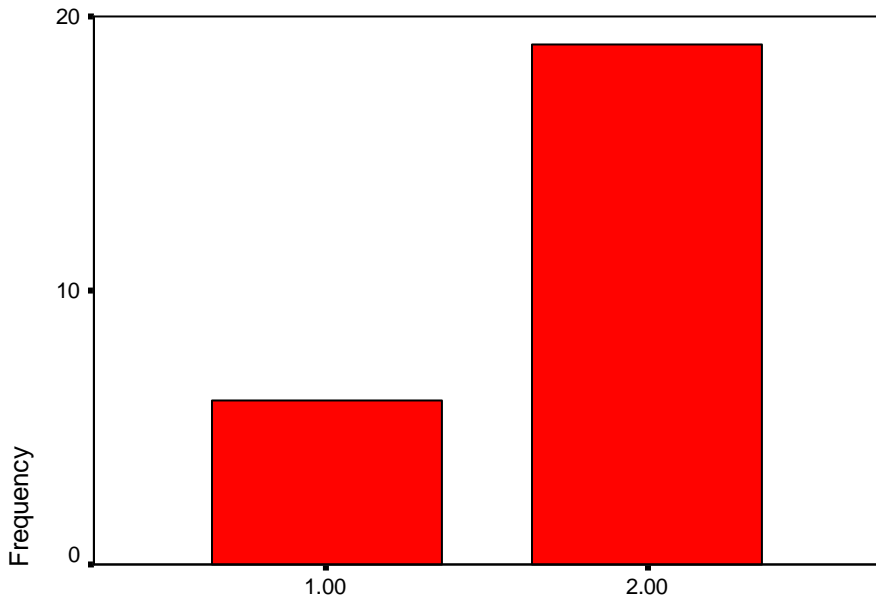
VAR003A

VAR004A

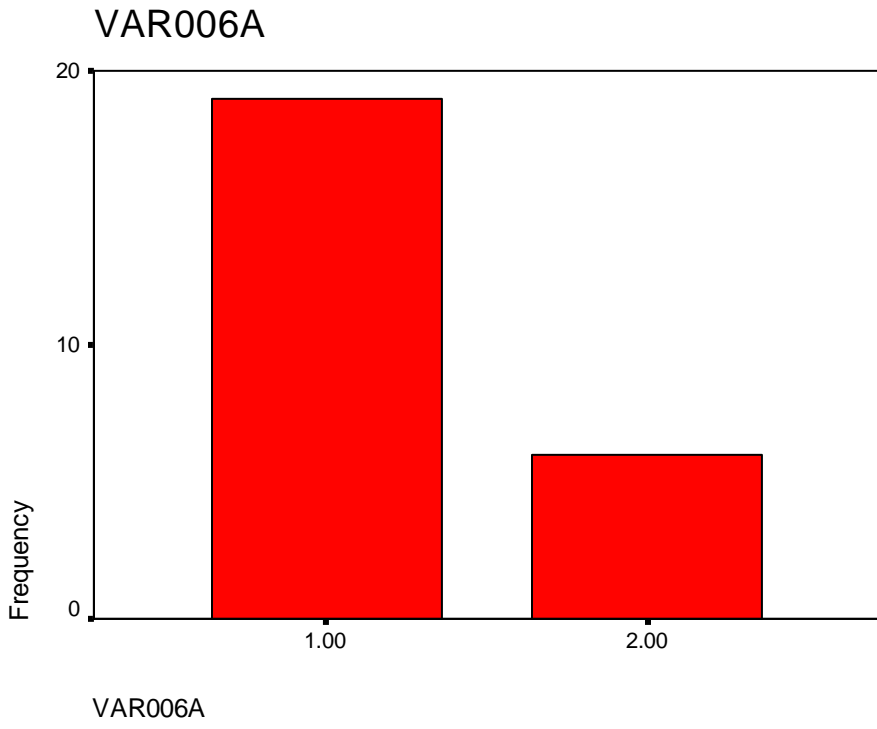


VAR004A

VAR005A



VAR005A



WTO research

Statistics

	VAR001M	VAR002M	VAR003M	VAR004M	VAR005M	VAR001A	VAR002A	VAR003A	VAR004A	VAR005A
N Valid	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25
Missing	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2

Frequency Table

VAR001M

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	17	63.0	68.0	68.0
	2.00	2	7.4	8.0	76.0
	3.00	6	22.2	24.0	100.0
	Total	25	92.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	7.4		
Total		27	100.0		

VAR002M

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	15	55.6	60.0	60.0
	2.00	6	22.2	24.0	84.0
	4.00	4	14.8	16.0	100.0
	Total	25	92.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	7.4		
Total		27	100.0		

VAR003M

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	23	85.2	92.0	92.0
	2.00	2	7.4	8.0	100.0
	Total	25	92.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	7.4		
Total		27	100.0		

VAR004M

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	21	77.8	84.0	84.0
	2.00	4	14.8	16.0	100.0
	Total	25	92.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	7.4		
Total		27	100.0		

VAR005M

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.00	25	92.6	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	2	7.4		
Total		27	100.0		

VAR001A

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	2	7.4	8.0	8.0
	2.00	19	70.4	76.0	84.0
	3.00	4	14.8	16.0	100.0
	Total	25	92.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	7.4		
Total		27	100.0		

VAR002A

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	4	14.8	16.0	16.0
	2.00	15	55.6	60.0	76.0
	3.00	1	3.7	4.0	80.0
	4.00	5	18.5	20.0	100.0
	Total	25	92.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	7.4		
Total		27	100.0		

VAR003A

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	5	18.5	20.0	20.0
	2.00	20	74.1	80.0	100.0
	Total	25	92.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	7.4		
Total		27	100.0		

VAR004A

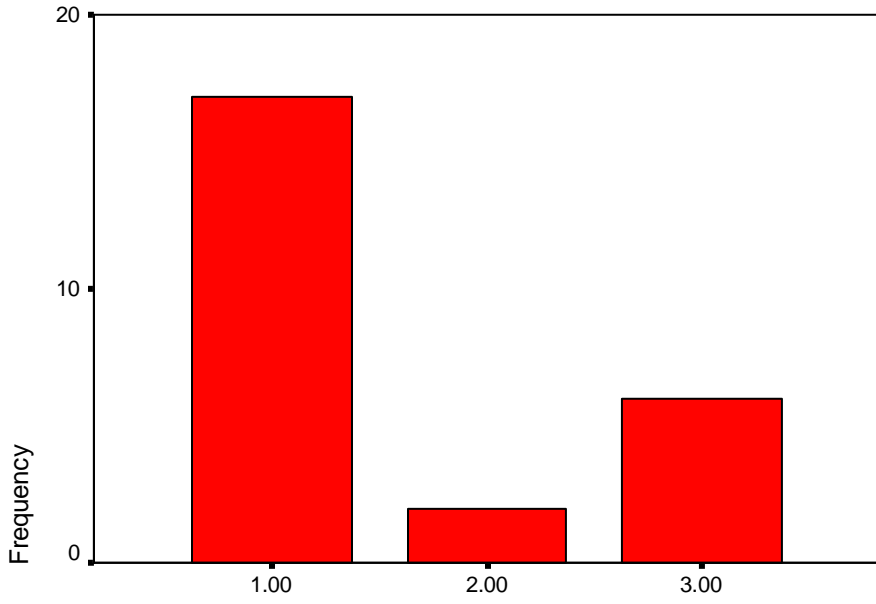
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	3.7	4.0	4.0
	2.00	24	88.9	96.0	100.0
	Total	25	92.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	7.4		
Total		27	100.0		

VAR005A

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	4	14.8	16.0	16.0
	2.00	21	77.8	84.0	100.0
	Total	25	92.6	100.0	
Missing	System	2	7.4		
Total		27	100.0		

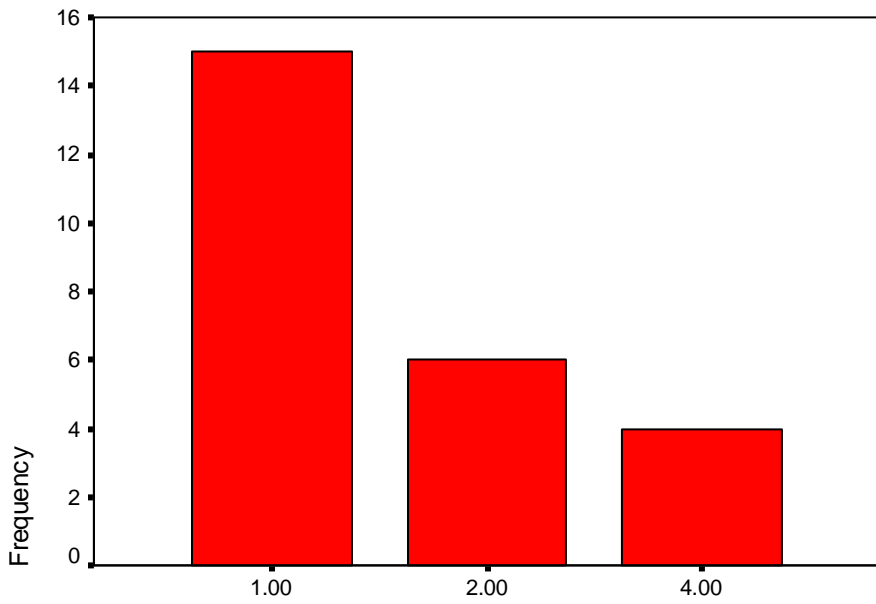
Bar Charts

VAR001M



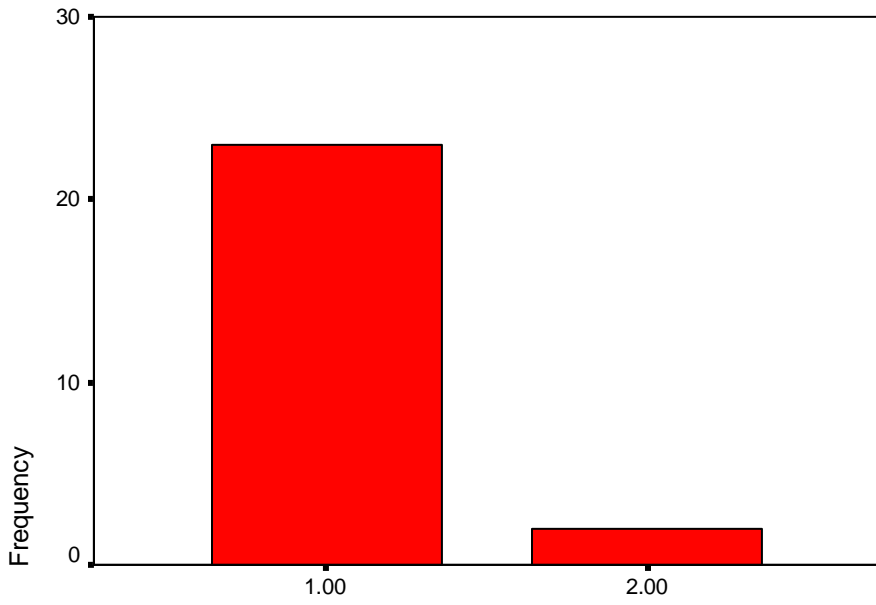
VAR001M

VAR002M



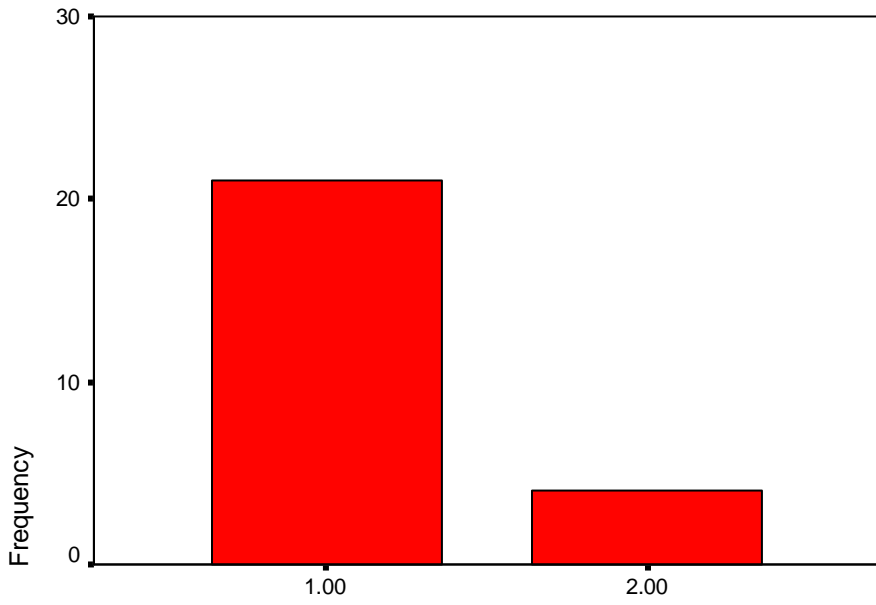
VAR002M

VAR003M



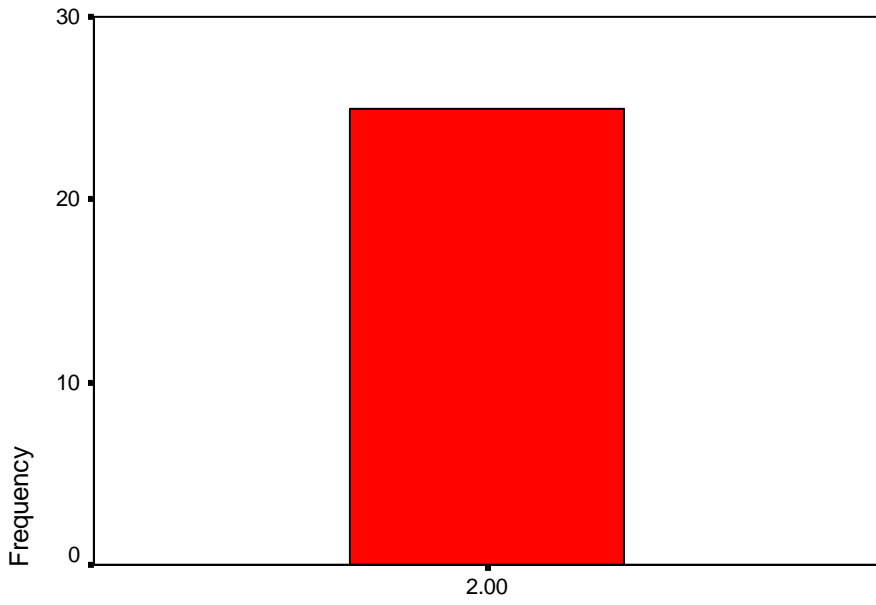
VAR003M

VAR004M



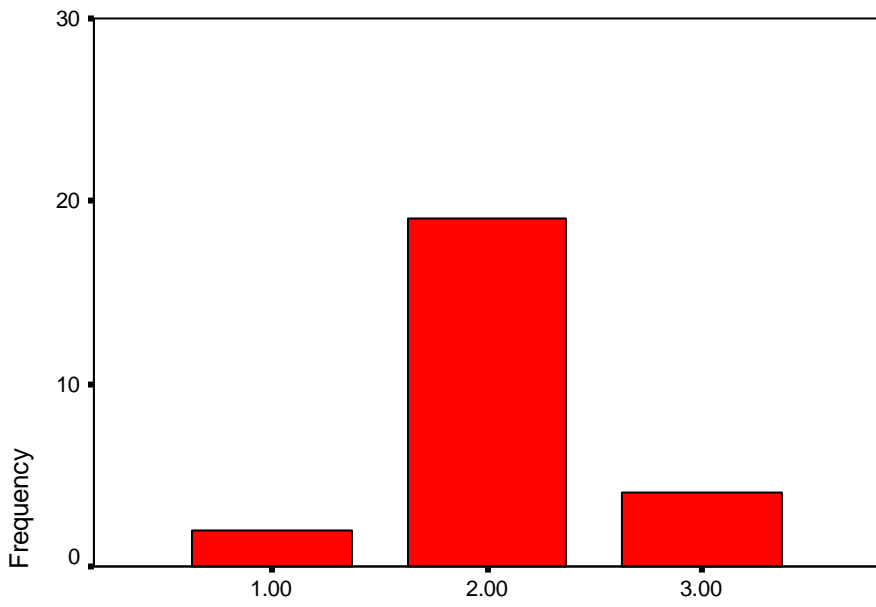
VAR004M

VAR005M



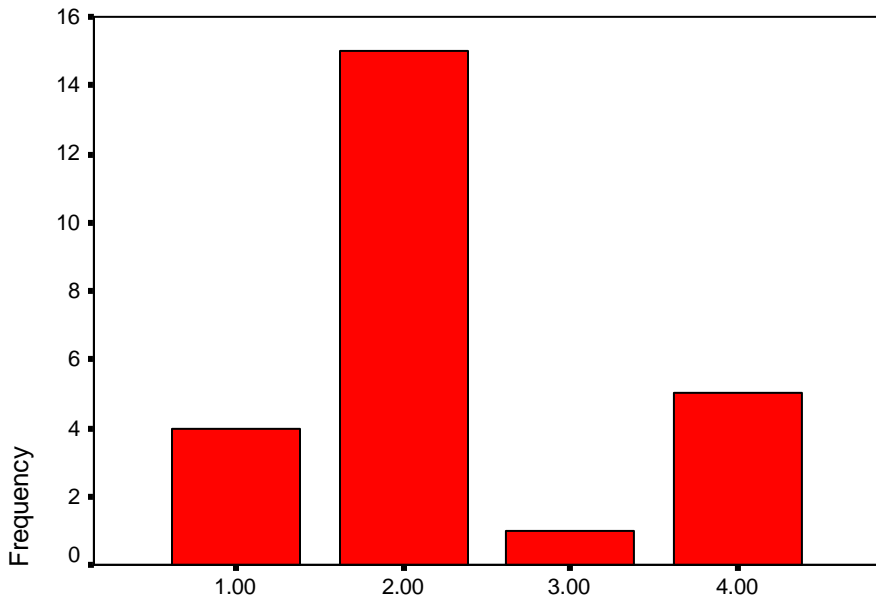
VAR005M

VAR001A



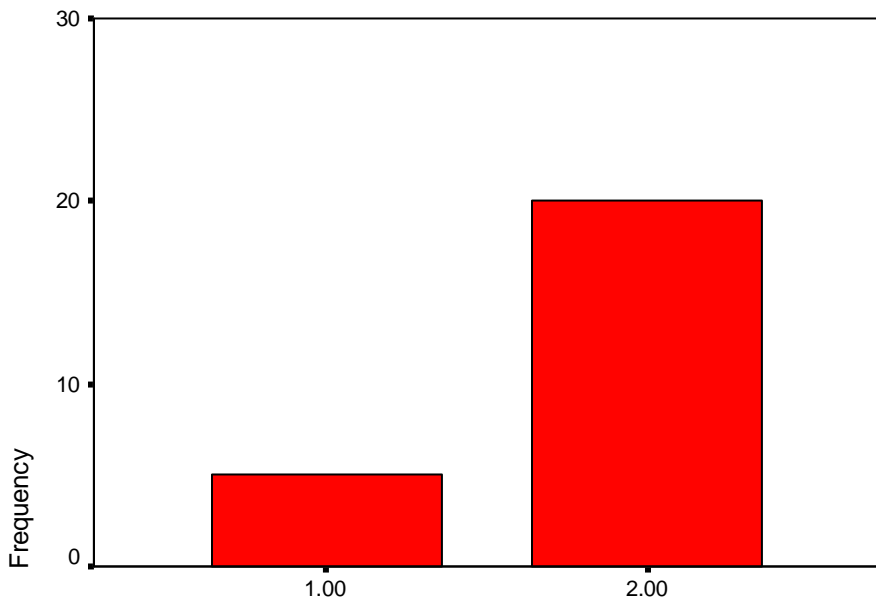
VAR001A

VAR002A



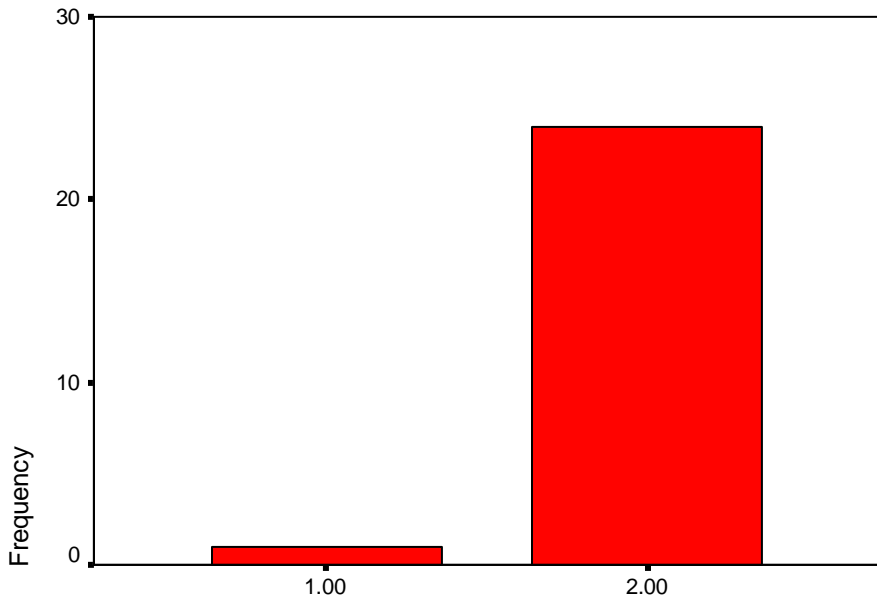
VAR002A

VAR003A



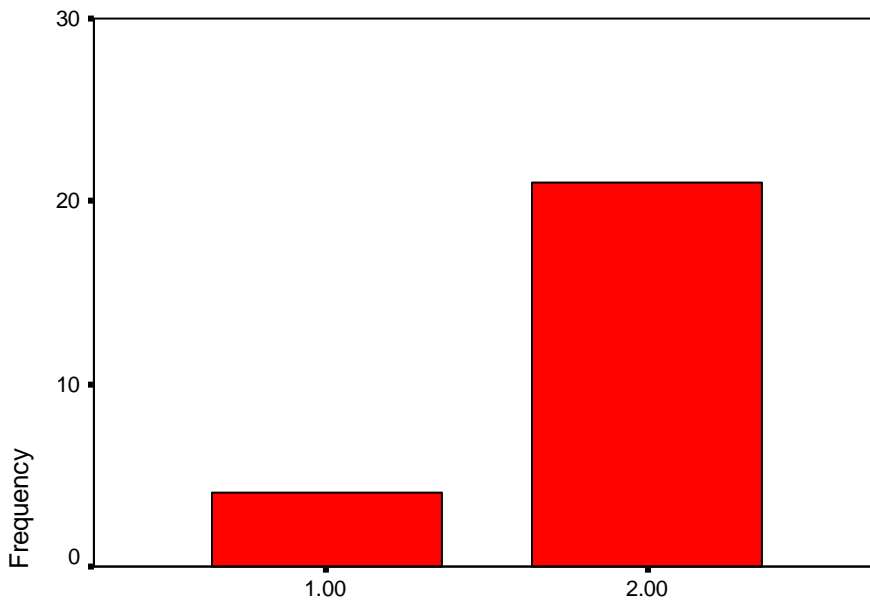
VAR003A

VAR004A



VAR004A

VAR005A



VAR005A

