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# CHAIN OWNERSHIP, ORGANIZATIONAL SIZE, AND EDITORIAL ROLE PERCEPTIONS

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**By Roya Akhavan-Majid and Timothy Boudreau**

*This study examined the relationship between chain ownership and editorial role perceptions to illuminate the impact of chain ownership on content. Based on 258 questionnaires returned by a nation-wide sample of daily newspaper editors, the study found the editors of chain-owned newspapers to be more likely than their independent counterparts to subscribe to activist role perceptions. The tendency toward activist values increased as the size of the chain increased. Further, in general, editors of larger news organizations tended to subscribe to activist values more than did editors in smaller organizations.*

The steady rise of newspaper chains and increasing concentration in newspaper ownership have been major concerns in the history of American newspapers. Critics contend that concentration not only threatens to diminish the diversity of voices in the "free marketplace of ideas," but may also negatively affect the quality of the editorial product. In response to this concern, a number of empirical studies have sought to examine the impact of chain ownership not only on newspaper content, but also on a variety of content-related factors.<sup>1</sup> Despite the importance of editorial role perceptions in shaping the character of newspaper content, however, no studies to date have explored the relationship between chain ownership and editorial role perceptions.

This study sought to determine whether editors of chain-owned newspapers perceive their editorial mission in systematically different ways than their independent counterparts and to understand what structural or organizational factors might be responsible for the differences.

Because organizational size is one basic structural characteristic that tends to set chain newspaper organizations apart from their independent counterparts, it can serve as a useful starting point for predicting and explaining differences in editorial role perceptions between chain and independent newspapers.

The most directly relevant piece of empirical evidence in this area comes from a classic study of journalistic role perceptions by Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman.<sup>2</sup> Focusing specifically on "participant" vs. "neutral" orientations, Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman found a positive relationship between "organizational size" and "participant" journalistic values.<sup>3</sup> This finding was later confirmed by a secondary analysis of the Johnstone data.<sup>4</sup> Thus, one may expect the editors of the larger chain newspaper organizations to be more likely than those in the smaller chains and independent newspapers to subscribe to "participant" editorial values.

A study by Olien, Donohue, and Tichenor<sup>5</sup> showed that editors of smaller community newspapers were less willing than those of metropolitan newspapers to report on local government conflict. Although the focus in this study was on community rather than newspaper organizational size, the authors reported a close association between community size and newspaper circulation size (contingency coefficient = .85).<sup>6</sup> A more recent study by Lacy and Bernstein<sup>7</sup> found that larger circulation papers devoted a greater percentage of their editorial and op-ed space to city issues than did the smaller newspapers. These findings are in line with those of a study by Shapiro and Schofield,<sup>8</sup> which found that of the *Miami News* and the *Miami Herald*, the larger paper (the *Herald*) gave a significantly higher level of interpretive coverage to a major racial incident in the city.

The relationship between organizational size and editors' perceptions of their editorial mission was also examined by Gladney in a study of how editors judge newspaper "quality."<sup>9</sup> The study found that editors of large newspapers were significantly more likely than those of small newspapers to rate "editorial courage" and "editorial independence" as primary indicators of newspaper excellence.

Among previous studies directly addressing the impact of chain ownership on editorial content is a comparative study by Akhavan-Majid, Rife, and Gopinath<sup>10</sup> of the editorial positions taken by Gannett and non-Gannett papers on three controversial national issues. In addition to a high level of homogeneity in the Gannett editorial positions, the Akhavan-Majid et al. study found the Gannett papers to be far more likely than the non-Gannett papers to (1) editorialize on the three national issues under study and (2) oppose the positions taken, either by the administration in power (i.e., President Bush's nomination of Senator Tower for Secretary of Defense) or by the Supreme Court (i.e., Richmond Set Aside and Webster decisions). These findings may be considered to suggest a higher level of editorial "activism" on the part of the Gannett papers as compared to the non-Gannett papers.

In general, the studies reviewed above indicate a positive relationship between "organizational size" and an overall constellation of "activist" editorial values that place the primary emphasis on an active, interpretive, investigative, and critical role for the press.

At the theoretical level, the existence of a relationship between organizational size and activist editorial role perceptions may be explained by individuals' views of their positions within a power structure. An individual's sense of "empowerment," it may be argued, is likely to derive from association with a variety of power hierarchies in society. Though perhaps a less prominent factor than gender, race, and social class, close association with a prominent organization, such as a large newspaper organization, may affect individuals' perceptions of their own positions in a societal power structure. Public opinion research, furthermore, has suggested that a person's perceptions of power affect a wide range of attitudes and orientations. For example, Andsager found that individuals who belonged to the most powerful (or "secure") demographic groups in society also reported the highest levels of support for expressive rights.<sup>11</sup>

These studies suggest that editors of larger news organizations may be more likely to advocate activist positions because they perceive themselves to be in powerful positions. Given their perceptions of ability to effect or inhibit social change, the editors of the larger and more prominent chain news organizations may be more likely than their independent counterparts to subscribe to activist editorial values.

In large measure, the differences in the level of empowerment experienced by various editors may also be a function of the differences in "financial resources" available to their newspaper organization. As pointed out by Gladney, an editor's ability to focus on an active

interpretive role in the newspaper "depends largely on the paper's financial and manpower strength, considering that this sort of work requires more time to produce and the services of experienced news professionals who draw larger salaries." Given that larger papers have greater resources to meet these standards, he further argues, "they may be more likely to hold [such standards] because they are more achievable and realistic."<sup>12</sup>

Thus, the element of "financial power" may also play an important role in creating and maintaining a sense of empowerment among the editors of larger newspaper organizations, leading in turn to a higher likelihood on the part of such editors to subscribe to activist editorial values.

Factors other than perceived power also may contribute to positive association between organizational size and activist role perceptions. As Tichenor, Donohue, and Olien have pointed out, the level of structural pluralism within a community influences the role of the local newspaper. The higher the level of structural pluralism within a community, the greater the likelihood of (1) outside corporate ownership of the newspaper and (2) reporting of conflict by the newspaper.<sup>13</sup> Given the close correlation, in the majority of instances, between structural pluralism, community size, newspaper size, and orientation toward conflict reporting, the willingness of editors of large newspaper organizations to take a more active editorial role within the community may be explained, in part, as a response to the needs of the structurally pluralistic metropolitan areas in which they operate.

#### **Definition of Terms:**

In their 1976 study, Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman used the term "participant" to refer to the journalistic role of active discovery and interpretation of news and the term "neutral" to describe the journalist as a passive transmission link dispensing information to the public. The items on the role perception scale defining "participant" values were:

- investigate statements made by government officials.
- provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems.
- discuss national policy while it is still being developed.

The items defining the "neutral" orientation were:

- get information to the public quickly.
- concentrate on news of interest to the widest public.
- provide entertainment and relaxation.
- avoid stories with unverified content.
- develop intellectual and cultural interests of the public.

While employing the same role perception scale, in a more recent study<sup>14</sup> Weaver and Wilhoit introduced two new terms, "interpreter" and "disseminator," to replace "participant" and "neutral." They also added a new category, "adversarial," to the scale, defined by the following items:

- function as an adversary of the government.
- function as an adversary of business.

This study includes almost all items previously used by Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman, and Weaver and Wilhoit,<sup>15</sup> but addresses additional sets of professional values. To expand the conceptual reach of the role perception scale, the following items were added to the study's questionnaire:

- provide critical evaluation of local government performance.
- function as a watchdog of people in positions of power.
- expose unethical practices of elected officials.
- function as a watchdog of business on behalf of consumers.
- promote social reform.
- create awareness about global problems.
- raise consciousness about global interdependence.

Initially, the first four items above were aimed at extending the "adversarial" concept, the fifth item was intended to supplement the "interpreter" category, and the sixth and seventh items were designed to introduce a new category entitled "globally conscious." At the highest and most abstract conceptual level, however, all of these items (along with the "interpreter" and "adversarial" items used in previous studies) were considered to reflect an activist journalistic mind-set, one that sees the professional journalist not as a passive bystander, but as an active agent in policy development and social change through interpretation, investigation, and criticism.

### **Research Hypotheses:**

Based on the empirical evidence and conceptual clues provided by the studies discussed above, it was hypothesized in this study that:

H1: The editors of chain-owned newspapers would be more likely than the editors of independent newspapers to subscribe to activist values.

H2: Editors of larger newspaper chains would be more likely than the editors of smaller chains to hold activist values.

H3: Editors of larger circulation papers would be more likely than the editors of smaller circulation papers to subscribe to activist values.

"Organizational size" was operationalized in this study as a function of the overall circulation size of the chain organizations or the independent newspapers under study.

### **Method:**

A systematic sample of 468 editors<sup>16</sup> was drawn, using the 1992 *Editor and Publisher Yearbook*. The sample was stratified by size, representing equal numbers of small (20,000 and below circulation), medium (20,001 to 70,000 circulation), and large (70,001-plus circulation) newspapers.<sup>17</sup> A mail questionnaire was then designed, using eight items from the role

perception scales developed by Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman, and Weaver and Wilhoit, and seven additional items developed for this study. A response rate of 56% was achieved after two mailings.

The statistical procedures used to analyze the data in this study included factor analysis, t-test, Anova, Multiple Classification Analysis, and Turkey test, using the SPSS-X program.

**Results:**

Prior to testing the research hypotheses, factor analysis was performed on the data to identify patterns of association among the new items on the scale and their relationship to the role perception categories previously identified by Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman, and Weaver and Wilhoit. The analysis showed that four of the new items, "provide critical evaluation of local government performance," "function as a watchdog of people in positions of power," "expose unethical practices of elected officials," and "function as a watchdog of business on behalf of consumers," along with one of the items used in previous studies, i.e., "investigate statements of officials," comprised a distinct category, with factor loadings ranging from .84 to .58 (Table 1). Reflecting the conceptual orientation of these items, the term "critical watchdog" was developed to refer to this new role perception category.

TABLE 1  
Principal Components Analysis with Rotation to Oblimin\*

	Global Interpreter	Critical Watchdog	Disseminator	Adversarial
<b>Global Interpreter</b> (alpha = .81)				
Global problems	.87	.37	.09	.17
Global interdependence	.82	.22	.06	.24
Discuss national policy	.82	.39	.30	.16
Analysis / interpretation	.77	.37	.19	.12
Promote social reform	.45 <sup>1</sup>	.17	.05	.45 <sup>1</sup>
R <sup>2</sup>	31.9%			
<b>Critical Watchdog</b> (alpha = .77)				
Expose unethical practices	.25	.84	.14	.20
Watchdog of power	.24	.82	.20	.25
Critical of government	.23	.71	.18	.25
Investigate statements	.54	.65	.23	.17
Watchdog of business	.45	.58	.03	.34
R <sup>2</sup>	11.7%			
<b>Disseminator</b> (alpha = .52)				
Widest public interest	.06	.11	.79	.04
Inform public quickly	.02	.24	.69	.19
Entertain and relax	.31	.14	.65	.06

R <sup>2</sup>	9.3%				
Adversarial (alpha = .79)					
Adversary of business	.23	.27	.11	.91	
Adversary of government	.09	.34	.17	.85	
R <sup>2</sup>	8.5%				
Total R <sup>2</sup>	61.4%				

\* Minimum eigenvalue for factoring = 1.0

1 "Promote social reform" was rounded from .453 on the "Global Interpreter" factor and from .446 on the "Adversarial" factor.

TABLE 2  
*Mean Responses by Size of Chain and Ownership*

	L. Chain	M. Chain	S. Chain	Ind.
Get information to the public quickly	3.82	3.78	3.81	3.73
Concentrate on news of widest interest to the public	3.55	3.32	3.55	3.48
Provide entertainment and relaxation	2.83	2.80	2.80	2.67
Discuss national policy while it is still being dev.*	3.17 <sup>a</sup>	3.26 <sup>a</sup>	2.80 <sup>b</sup>	3.00
Provide analysis/interpretation of complex problems *	3.49	3.50	3.20	3.36
Investigate statements by government officials*	3.40	3.42 <sup>a</sup>	3.09 <sup>b</sup>	3.27
Create awareness about global problems	2.92	2.94	2.61	2.82
Raise consciousness about global interdependence	2.59	2.48	2.33	2.32
Function as an adversary of the government	2.37	2.37	2.22	2.31
Function as an adversary of big business*	2.16 <sup>a</sup>	1.91	1.73 <sup>b</sup>	1.84
Provide critical evaluation of local government *	3.76 <sup>a</sup>	3.70	3.54	3.50 <sup>b</sup>
Promote social reform*	2.79 <sup>a</sup>	2.70 <sup>a</sup>	2.27 <sup>b</sup>	2.44
Function as a watchdog of people in power *	3.73 <sup>a</sup>	3.70	3.45 <sup>b</sup>	3.65
Expose unethical practices of elected officials*	3.74 <sup>ac</sup>	3.88 <sup>a</sup>	3.50 <sup>b</sup>	3.63 <sup>bc</sup>
Function as watchdog of business on behalf of c.*	3.23 <sup>a</sup>	3.08	2.89	2.82 <sup>b</sup>
	(n=67)	(n=50)	(n=55)	(n=86)

\*ANOVA, p< .05

a,b,c = means with different letters differ at .05 (Turkey)

Factor analysis, furthermore, showed the two "globally conscious" items, (i.e., "create awareness about global problems" and "raise consciousness about global interdependence,") to be closely related to the items defining the "interpreter" dimension, with factor loadings of .87 and .82, respectively. These two sets of items were thus combined in this study and referred to as the "global interpreter" role perception factor. Although reflecting a weaker factor loading (.45), the "promote social reform" item also was most closely related to this dimension and was, therefore, included in the "global interpreter" category.

Having determined the four-factor pattern, i.e., "adversarial," "disseminator," "critical watchdog," and "global interpreter," in the data, the hypothesis-testing process focused primarily on identifying the differences in editorial role perceptions along these four dimensions.

In the first bi-modal comparison of the chain-owned and independent newspaper editors, the chain-owned newspaper editors scored consistently higher than the independent editors on all of the activist ("adversarial," "critical watchdog," and "global interpreter") role perception factors. However, only the differences on the "critical watchdog" dimension approached significance at  $p < .09$ . Closer examination of the data at the individual item-level revealed differences between chain-owned and independent newspapers on two individual items within the "critical watchdog" category - "provide critical evaluation of local government performance," and "function as a watchdog of business on behalf of consumers" - at the .05 level.

Overall, while the data reflected a clear pattern in the hypothesized direction on all of the activist items, the differences between chains and independent organizations fell short of being statistically significant when considered along the factored dimensions.

TABLE 3  
*Mean Responses by Size of Chain and Ownership*

	L. Chain	M. Chain	S. Chain	Ind.
Adversarial	2.27	2.16	1.98	2.08
Disseminator	3.40	3.31	3.39	3.29
Global interpreter **	3.00 <sup>a</sup>	2.98 <sup>a</sup>	2.60 <sup>b</sup>	2.79
Critical watchdog**	3.58 <sup>a</sup>	3.56 <sup>a</sup>	3.30 <sup>b</sup>	3.38
	(n=67)	(n=50)	(n=55)	(n=86)

\*\* ANOVA,  $p < .01$

<sup>a, b</sup> = means with different letters differ at .01 (Turkey)

In order to discern the potential differences among the editors of various chain sizes and independent organizations, the chain organizations were divided into small (.5 million or less circulation), medium (between .5 and 1.2 million circulation), and large (over 1.2 million circulation), and their editors compared to each other and to those in the independent newspaper organizations.

The results of the analysis showed clear similarities between editors of the small chain and independent newspaper organizations, on the one hand, and editors of the medium-size and large newspaper chains, on the other. In the comparison among chains of different sizes and



independent organizations, medium chain editors differed significantly from independent editors on the activist item "expose unethical practices of elected officials," and large chain editors differed from independent editors on two activist items, "function as a watchdog of business" and "provide critical evaluation of local government" (Table 2).

Despite the significant differences on these individual items, and the consistently higher averages on the part of the editors of large and medium chains on all of the "adversarial," "critical watchdog," and "interpreter" items, no significant differences were detected between the larger chains and independent organizations along the factored activist dimensions. The most significant differences with respect to the factored dimensions emerged primarily among the editors employed by different chain sizes, with the editors of the large and medium chains being significantly more likely ( $p < .01$ ) than those in the small chains to hold "critical watchdog" and "global interpreter" role perceptions (Table 3). (Interestingly, independent editors scored close to, but just above, the small chain editors on all of the activist dimensions.)

Having noted the pattern of similarity between the small chains and independent newspapers, on the one hand, and the large and medium-size newspaper chains, on the other, the four groups were collapsed into two groups - small chain/independent and large chain/medium chain, respectively - and compared on editorial role perceptions. As expected, the analysis showed the editors of large chain/medium chain organizations to be significantly more likely ( $p < .001$ ) than those in the small chain/independent organizations to subscribe to the "critical watchdog" and the "global interpreter" role perceptions. There were no significant differences between the two groups on the "adversarial" and "disseminator" role perceptions.

TABLE 4  
*Mean Responses by Newspaper Size*

	Large	Medium	Small
Adversarial	2.12	2.18	2.06
Disseminator	3.36	3.35	3.33
Global Interpreter***	3.08 <sup>a</sup>	2.83 <sup>b</sup>	2.52 <sup>c</sup>
Critical Watchdog	3.53	3.41	3.38
	(n=96)	(n=99)	(n=64)

\*\*\*ANOVA,  $p < .001$

<sup>a, b, c</sup> = means with different letters differ at .001 (Turkey)

If differences in chain size can lead to such clear differences in editorial role perceptions, one would expect the same to be true of variations in the size of individual newspaper organizations. In other words, if it is indeed the element of "organizational size" that is responsible for the observed differences in editorial role perceptions among various chain sizes, then the same pattern should hold when newspapers are compared with respect to the size of the individual newspaper organization.

To test the relationship between organizational size and editorial role perceptions at the individual newspaper level, the newspapers under study were regrouped into large (above 70,000

circulation), medium (20,001 to 70,000) and small (20,000 and below circulation) newspapers and their editors compared on role perceptions.

The analysis of variance showed the editors of the larger papers to be far more likely ( $p < .001$ ) than those in the smaller newspapers to subscribe to "global interpreter" editorial values. The Turkey test showed all possible pairs of newspaper size categories (i.e., small vs. medium, medium vs. large, and small vs. large) to be significantly different on this factor (Table 4). In the case of the "critical watchdog" dimension, however, while the progression of the scores was in the expected direction, the differences were significant only at the  $p < .10$  level. No significant differences existed among the three newspaper sizes for the "adversarial" and "disseminator" categories.

These results appear to strongly confirm the hypothesized association between organizational size and editorial role perceptions, both when newspapers are grouped with respect to the overall size of the chain they belong to, and when they are considered with respect to their own circulation size.

**Controls:**

Given the important role played by the element of "size" at the individual newspaper level, the question arises as to whether the observed differences among different chain sizes would hold if the element of newspaper size were held constant. In other words, can we be sure that the observed differences in role perception among the editors employed by large, medium, and small chains are not simply a function of the type of individual newspapers (e.g., mostly small or mostly large) owned by those chain organizations? In order to answer this question, multiple classification analysis was used to compare role perceptions among editors of large, medium, and small chains while controlling for individual newspaper size.

*TABLE 5*  
*Summary of Multiple Classification Analyses:*  
*Influence of Chain Size on Role Perceptions with Controls for Newspaper Size*

	Factor			
	Adversarial	Disseminator	Global Interpreter	Critical Watchdog
Covariate				
Newspaper Size (partial correlation)	-.05	.10	.15*	.21***
Chain size Adjusted means				
Large (n=67)	2.30	3.39	2.97	3.57
Medium (n=50)	2.17	3.30	2.95	3.54
Small (n=55)	2.00	3.33	2.66	3.27

Multiple R <sup>2</sup>	.024	.030	.119	.152
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\* p <.05

\*\*\* p <.001

Multiple classification analysis yielded the same results with regard to the hypothesized relationship between chain size and editorial values. Once again, the analysis showed the large and medium chains to be significantly different from the small chains on the "global interpreter" and "critical watchdog" dimensions when newspaper size was held constant (Table 5). Analysis of variance, furthermore, was used to compare large chain/medium chain and small chain/independent newspaper categories, while controlling for newspaper size. As before, the analysis revealed significant differences between the two sets of editors on the "global interpreter" and "critical watchdog" dimensions.

### **Summary and Discussion:**

This study sought to examine the impact of chain ownership on editor role perceptions. In addition, it has sought to illuminate the primary structural factor which may be responsible for differences between chain owned and independent newspapers in editorial role perceptions.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that chain "ownership," in and of itself, may not have a significant effect on editorial role perceptions. The sheer "organizational size" associated with newspaper chains, however, appears to strongly influence how editors perceive their editorial mission. The primacy of organizational size as a major determinant of editorial values is reflected not only in the progressive differences between editors of chains and independent news organizations as the chains increase in size, but also, and most notably, in the marked differences among the editors of chains and newspapers of various sizes.

The findings of this study may thus be considered to point to the importance of including "organizational size" as a major variable in any comparisons between chains and independent organizations on organizational goals, journalistic values, and/or content performance. Given the clear differences in the behavior of chains of various sizes, whether or not significant differences are detected between chains and independent organizations in any given study may depend largely on the modal size of the chains included in the study.

As indicated by the overall pattern of the data in this study, editorial orientations tend to gravitate increasingly toward activist (i.e., "global interpreter" and "critical watchdog") role perceptions as news organizations increase in size and prominence. Clearly, the suggested tendency toward activist editorial values in large newspaper chain organizations can potentially be either reinforced, or inhibited, through hiring practices and editorial policies at the chain headquarters level. Should the large chain organizations choose to reinforce the structural pull toward activist values created by their organizational prominence, a potentially strong impact on the overall character of the news flow is likely to ensue. The precise nature and the level of social desirability of this impact, however, will depend largely on whether the nation's large and prominent newspaper chain organizations choose to harness their structurally determined editorial activism to promote their own ends or to serve the public interest.

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## Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, David Pearce Demers, "Opinion Polling Practices of Chain and Independent Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly* 65 (summer 1988): 500-503; John Busterna, Kathleen Hansen, and Jean Ward, "Competition, Ownership, Newsroom, and Library Resources in Large Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly* 68 (winter 1991): 729-739. A number of other studies have addressed the impact of chain ownership on various aspects of newspaper content - from homogeneity of political endorsements to the overall topical emphasis in the news coverage. See, for example, Ronald Hicks and James Featherstone, "Duplication of Newspaper Content in Contrasting Ownership Situations," *Journalism Quarterly* 55 (autumn 1978): 549-553; Cecile Gaziano, "Chain Newspaper Homogeneity and Presidential Endorsements, 1972-1988," *Journalism Quarterly* 66 (winter 1989): 836-845; Daniel Wackman, Donald Gillmor, Cecile Gaziano, and Everette Dennis, "Chain Newspaper Autonomy as Reflected in Presidential Campaign Endorsements," *Journalism Quarterly* 52 (autumn 1975): 411-420; Theodore Glasser, David Allen, and Elizabeth Blanks, "The Influence of Chain Ownership on News Play: A Case Study," *Journalism Quarterly* 66 (autumn 1989): 607-614; and Ronald Wagenberg and Walter Suderland, "The Influence of Chain Ownership on Editorial Comment in Canada," *Journalism Quarterly* 52 (spring 1975): 93-98.

<sup>2</sup> John Johnstone, Edward Slawski, and William Bowman, *The News People: A Sociological Portrait of American Journalists and Their Work* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976).

<sup>3</sup> Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman, *The News People*

<sup>4</sup> Lee Becker, Idowu Sobowal, and Robin Cobbey, "Reporters and Their Professional and Organizational Commitment," *Journalism Quarterly* 56 (winter 1979): 753-763, 770.

<sup>5</sup> Clarice Olien, George Donohue, and Philip Tichenor, "The Community Editor's Power and the Reporting of Conflict," *Journalism Quarterly* 45 (summer 1968): 243-252.

<sup>6</sup> Olien, Donohue, and Tichenor, "The Community Editor's Power," 243-252.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen Lacy and James Bernstein, "Daily Newspaper's Relationship to Publication Cycle and Newspaper Size," *Newspaper Research Journal* 9 (spring 1988): 49-58. A general tendency by chain newspaper organizations toward an active editorial posture was further confirmed in another study by Lacy that found group-owned newspapers allocated more space to editorials and op ed material than their independent counterparts. See Lacy, "Effects of Group Ownership on Daily Newspaper Content," *Journal of Media Economics* 4 (spring 1991): 35-47.

<sup>8</sup> Mitchell Shapiro and Lemuel Schofield, "How Proximity, Circulation and Geographical Distribution Influenced Coverage of Miami's Overtown Disturbance," *Newspaper Research Journal* 7 (summer 1986): 55-6

<sup>9</sup> George Gladney, "Newspaper Excellence: How Editors of Small and Large Papers Judge Quality," *Newspaper Research Journal* 11 (spring 1990): 59- 71.

<sup>10</sup> Roya Akhavan-Majid, Anita Rife, and Sheila Gopinath, "Chain Ownership and Editorial Independence: A Case Study of Gannett Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly* 68 (spring/summer 1991): 59-66.

<sup>11</sup> Julie L. Andsager, "Examining the Relationship Between Media and Personal Expressive Rights: The Effect of the Need for Cognition," (Ph.D. diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1993).

<sup>12</sup> Gladney, "How Editors of Small and Large Papers Judge Quality," 61.

<sup>13</sup> For a detailed discussion, see David Pearce Demers, "Structural Pluralism, Intermedia Competition, and the Growth of the Corporate Newspaper in the United States," *Journalism Monographs* 145 (June 1994). Also see George Donohue, Clarice Olien, and Philip Tichenor, "Reporting Conflict by Pluralism, Newspaper Type and Ownership," *Journalism Quarterly* 65 (autumn 1985): 489-499.

<sup>14</sup> David Weaver and Cleveland Wilhoit, *The American Journalist: A Portrait of U.S. News People and Their Work* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1986).

<sup>15</sup> The two "disseminator" items, "avoid stories with unverified content" and "develop intellectual/cultural tastes," were not included in this study.

<sup>16</sup> After accounting for the nondelivered mail due to newspaper closures and "no forwarding address," the size of the original sample was reduced to 464.

<sup>17</sup> In order to draw the sample, three sampling frames of small (20,000 and below circulation), medium (20,001 to 70,000 circulation), and large (70,001 plus circulation) daily newspapers were developed. Reflecting the pattern in the *Editor and Publisher Yearbook*, the papers were listed in the alphabetical order of the states in which they were located. A systematic

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sampling procedure was then used to draw samples of 156 newspapers each from the small and medium-size newspaper sampling frames. The intervals used in drawing the systematic samples were chosen in such a way as to ensure inclusion in the sample of newspapers from all geographic areas within the United States. The sample size of 156 for the large papers was equal to the actual population of daily newspapers with more than 70,000 circulation.