The Effect of Changes in Corporate Ownership on Three Metropolitan Daily Newspapers' Editorials, 1961-1992

by

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ABSTRACT

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This study analyzes the effect of changes in corporate ownership at three large metropolitan daily newspapers as reflected in the content of lead Sunday editorials at each newspaper. The study sought to determine whether changes in type of ownership would increase the number of neutral editorials in the post-incorporation era for the newspapers.

The results suggest incorporation has an influence on the editorial content of the newspapers. Two of the three newspapers showed significant increases in the percentage of neutral editorials after changes in ownership. In addition, editorial domains were defined as either political, economic, or social. When controlling for these domains, logistic regression shows each newspaper altered its use of neutral editorials in a significant manner. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution increased the percentage of neutral editorials across each of the dimensions, the New York Times increased its use of neutral editorials across the economic and political dimensions while decreasing the percentage of

neutral social editorials, and the Washington Post increased its use of neutral editorials across each of the three dimensions.

For Lisa, who was always there

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Chapter One

Introduction

Near the end of Orson Welles' 1941 classic Citizen Kane, newspaper magnate Charles Foster Kane hypocritically fires his long-time friend -- a reviewer with one of his newspapers -- for embarrassing him because the reviewer was the only journalist in the city to praise Kane's wife's dreadful operatic debut. Despite her remonstrations, Kane forces his wife to continue her singing career as he announces he will take care of her future press releases and reviews. "People will think," he says, "what I tell them to think."

A montage follows where Kane-owned newspapers, the Cincinnati Inquirer, San Francisco Inquirer, Detroit Inquirer, St. Louis Inquirer, and New York Inquirer, spin into focus, each proclaiming the rising star of Kane's wife, Sharon Alexander. Despite the new-found media adulation and sold-out venues, Sharon Alexander attempts to kill herself.

Welles' fictitious world of the rise and fall of a turn-of-the-century newspaper tycoon was, of course, based on the life of William Randolph Hearst who, flexing his own journalistic muscle, succeeded in temporarily halting the release of the film. The story, though fanciful, points out a reality that once was the newspaper industry in the United States: important publishers such as Hearst, Horace Greeley, and Joseph Pulitzer controlled the news and information the masses received daily. Their power was indeed formidable:

Hearst, for example, is credited by some with fomenting the Spanish-American War in an effort to boost his newspaper's circulation; presidents, governors, and mayors often called on the publishers for advice and campaign support.

They also damned the publishers in public and in private when some publishers opposed them and their power to sway public opinion grew too great. Politicians did not hide their resentment of the press: the late Georgia governor Eugene Talmadge's favorite line, when referring to the Atlanta Constitution and Atlanta Journal, was "Those lying Atlanta papers." The great publishers and editors of the "yellow journalism" era and a handful of their disciples who followed, did not seem to mind. Their oft-quoted mission was to "Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable." Despite their shortcomings -- and with no competition from television and radio -- newspaper journalists at the turn of this century were advocates of causes from the rights of workers and child-labor laws, to opponents of government corruption and business misdeeds. The press truly was "the fourth estate." Regardless of its propensity to sensationalize and muckrake, the press was anything but neutral on social, economic, and political causes.

But has something happened along the way? Have the watchdogs lost their bark and been tamed by the very government and big business czars they used to face on a day-to-day basis? Did the owners of the major newspapers in the United States become "The Comfortable" and the press big business?

The transformation of, and what is seen by some as the taming of, the press in the United States has not taken place overnight (Dreier, 1981, Herman and Chomsky, 1988, Postman, 1985). Moreover, any change in the overall stance taken by the press has been a slow process that coincided with, and was part of, the rise of capitalism and corporate ownership, trademarks of business in this country during the past century. What sets apart the newspaper publishers at the turn of the century and newspaper publishers today may be the dominant form of ownership in the industry. Once nearly all family owned or individually owned enterprises, newspapers now are nearly all chain owned or controlled by large corporations with corporate boards deciding editorial policy.

The question arises, then, "Did the transformation of ownership contribute to a change in the advocacy role of newspapers?"

Statement of Problem

Corporate ownership of newspapers has grown significantly in the past two decades with less than a dozen chains controlling more than 80 percent of the total daily circulation (see, for example, Hiebert, et al., 1991, and Lee and Solomon, 1990). With this unprecedented growth in monopolies and concentration of organizational power come questions of the effect of changes in ownership on media content. Several problems have arisen which

researchers have attempted to resolve in the past thirty years, but few researchers (see, for example, Thrift, 1977, and Meyer and Wearden, 1984) have looked at corporate ownership's effect on the ideological orientation of a newspaper as reflected in editorials.

Judging from this research, one possible result of changes in corporate ownership may be a general "watering down" of journalistic opposition, and a lack of expressed solutions, to important social problems through increased neutral editorials. This also may satisfy the needs of the parent corporation and its owners/directors. Another possible effect is that of limiting or eliminating opposing viewpoints altogether. Ultimately, the problem may not be one simply of concentrated media ownership and limited political choices; rather, it may be the taming of the press as a social critic and, ultimately, a deterioration of the democratic process. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the effect of changes in corporate ownership on the advocacy orientation of three major metropolitan daily newspapers as reflected in lead Sunday editorials. These changes may be seen as increases or decreases in the use of position editorials in pre-incorporation and post-incorporation years.

Historical Background of U.S. Newspapers

The role of newspapers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, taken in a historical perspective, was that of conveying differing

opinions for political debate and inciting public action in both the news and editorial pages (Hallin, 1985, Schudson, 1979, and Tuchman, 1978)

> The main purpose of the newspaper, to the extent that it concerned itself with public affairs ... was to express a particular point of view as forcefully and eloquently as possible (Hallin, 1985, pp. 127).

Despite the fact that newspapers were used as an organ for public communication during the early 1800s, the six-cent price tag was prohibitive for the common consumer to afford on a daily basis. Still, while the newspapers of the late 1700s and early 1800s were read mainly by elites who could afford to buy them, when they purchased a particular newspaper, they usually knew exactly the political orientation of the publisher. The penny press that followed in the 1830s put newspapers into the hands of the masses, yet the political oratory that had been the keystone of earlier newspapers was beginning to diminish in favor of news, entertainment, and advertising. Incorporation ultimately led to what some see as the downfall of newspapers as a political commentator and also to its rise solely as a profit-generating venture for owners and investors (Herman and Chomsky, 1989, Lee and Solomon, 1990).

Three instances, albeit exceptions, in recent years stand as examples of the newspapers' ability to fulfill their more traditional advocacy role in a democratic society. During the 1960s, the Atlanta Constitution, under the

editorship of Ralph McGill, opposed what McGill perceived to be Georgia Gov. Eugene Talmadge's, and later Gov. Ernest Vandiver's, racist policies and called for an end to racial discrimination. As editor, and later publisher, of The Constitution, McGill directed the coverage of two of the first major civil rights issues in Georgia: the admittance of two blacks, Charlayne Hunter and Hamilton Holmes, to the University of Georgia, and the fire-bombing of a synagogue in downtown Atlanta. For his efforts, McGill won the Pulitzer Prize for editorial writing (Grimes, 1985). McGill kept hammering away at Georgia politicians with front-page, signed editorials, while the Journal and the Constitution printed numerous stories on the efforts of segregationists and other racists.

Then, in 1969, Daniel Ellsberg became disenchanted with the war in Vietnam and began photocopying the 7,000 page top-secret Pentagon report on the war. Two years later in June, 1971, the New York Times, with Ellsberg's help, obtained a copy of, and ultimately published, the Pentagon Papers despite the legal maneuvering of then-President Richard Nixon (Sheehan, 1989). The Supreme Court, at the request of the Nixon administration, enjoined the Times from publishing the report. The next day, however, the Washington Post also obtained a copy of the report and began publishing the papers. The Post too was enjoined and, after a month of court decisions and government appeals, including a span of several days in which the Boston

Globe and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch also published copies of the report, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the newspapers could publish the highly sensitive papers. The Pentagon Papers proved to be extremely embarrassing to the administration and helped to congeal anti-war sentiment in the country.

Finally, the Washington Post, with reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein leading the way, was in the forefront of reporting the Watergate break-in and cover up that ultimately led to the resignation of President Nixon. The Post was in daily competition with the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times for new leads on the story, but it was not until Woodward made contact with "Deep Throat" (many believe he was Woodward's former military boss General Alexander Haig or a composite of high-level FBI officials) that the Post became the nation's paper of record in reporting the corruption of President Nixon's White House.

Some critics argue, however, the press had little to do with these and other more recent journalistic exposes. For example, Sheehan (1989), Herman and Chomsky (1989), Lee and Solomon (1990), and Davis (1991) maintain Ellsberg repeatedly had to request for an editor at the New York Times to simply look at the papers he had smuggled out. It also has been suggested that the fall of the Nixon White House was less the doing of the Washington Post than it was a conspiracy within the federal government to oust President Nixon (Colodny and Gettlin, 1991). The mainstream press in the United States,

according to these critics, would prefer to avoid confrontation the majority of the time and toe the party line.

The 1960s and early 1970s also were important times for newspapers in the United States for reasons other than civil rights, the Pentagon Papers, and Watergate. Significant changes in ownership patterns of newspapers began during these time periods. Indeed, Hertsgaard (1989) and Herman and Chomsky (1988) argue that the press of today could not have reported the Watergate scandal or the Pentagon Papers as it did twenty years ago because corporate concerns, not family traditions, influence newspaper policies. In addition, the public's lack of interest in the Reagan and Bush era's Iran-Contra affair perhaps stands as an example of a waning in the press' watchdog role concerning questionable misconduct by public figures, and consequently, its inability to generate interest about such misconduct among the citizenry. This, too, may be a by-product of corporate concerns in the media seeking to raise the bottom line while not seeking to enrage powerful government and business officials because many of these same government and business officials often sit on the corporate boards of many newspapers. Indeed, as Mills notes,

> Such consolidation of the corporate world is underlined by the fact that within it there is an elaborate network of interlocking directorships. ... It points to a solid feature of the facts of business life, and to a sociological anchor of the community of interest, the unification of outlook and policy, that prevails among the propertied class (Mills, 1956, pp. 123).

The move toward corporate and chain ownership of newspapers in the United States since the early 1960s is well-documented (Bagdikian, 1989, Busterna, 1988, Parenti, 1986). The expansive growth of chain newspaper has been accompanied by a decline in the number of cities with more than one newspaper. At present, 98.1 percent of all cities with a daily newspaper have just one non-competitive daily (Editor and Publisher International Yearbook, 1991). Busterna (1988) looked at those trends using data from 1986 and concluded that the proportion of total daily circulation controlled by the larger national chains increased at the expense of smaller, more regional chains. The net result is one of increased absentee and corporate ownership of regional newspapers and the consolidation of daily newspapers into the hands of a small number of distant firms. Despite all the documentation, however, little research has been conducted dealing specifically with the effects of concentrated ownership on the editorial positions of once-independent newspapers. I turn next to a literature review of newspaper and organizational research.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

This chapter contains reviews of two relevant bodies of literature. First, research on organizations will be reviewed to indicate possible organizational consequences from ownership transformation. Second, research on newspapers will be reviewed to document changes in newspaper ownership patterns and the consequences of those changes on editorial page content. Finally, implications of these two bodies of literature will be discussed.

Organizational Research

Much of the literature dealing with comparative analyses between corporately owned and individually owned organizations concerns changes in influence in those organizations. Early studies of corporate culture, control, and power (see, for example, Berle and Means, 1968) argued that as corporations grew, control by the original family members decreased. Media and sociological theorists also have looked at organizational culture from the perspective of the effects of new management on editorial policy and the introduction of corporately based, non-media trained individuals into the role of publisher of once family owned newspapers (Clark, 1981). This research appears to be a direct offshoot of earlier research attempting to identify whether a conservative or liberal bias exists in the media. Clark found that as the corporation grew, the

chance for a once-dominant family member to ascend to the position of CEO declined. The consequence of this is that corporate concerns overtake the concerns of the family.

Further complicating a study about the editorialization of the press is recognizing the diminished role of individual corporate managers as well. Writing on corporations in general, Useem (1980) notes that corporations and corporate elites are the dominant force in American society and corporate elites are in

> a position to exercise major influence over the decisions and policies of these large companies. ...
> No simple criterion for ownership of a major fraction of stock can be established. At a minimum it would entail control over stock worth at least several hundred thousand dollars, but the importance of such blocks of stock varies with the size of the firm and the structure of ownership within it. Identification of the most important individual owners (of corporations) is complicated by the fact that between one third and one half of the common stock of US corporations is no longer in the hands of individual owners; it is held instead by a variety of 'institutional investors,' though these (latter) holdings are themselves often controlled in turn by individuals or wealthy families (Useem, 1980, pp. 42).

Furthermore, increasingly interlocking directorates represents a form of ownership (Kerbo, 1983, Useem, 1984). Kerbo summarizes the effects of interlocking directorates on society as follows: (1) interlocking directorates reduce competition among corporations in general, (2) represent outside influences over the corporation, (3) provide a means of sharing information about corporate plans and operations, (4) help provide unity among top

corporate officials in the economy (much like social clubs), and (5) thus help provide unity in corporate dealings with the government. The United States Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs further summed up the influence of interlocking directorates in a 1978 study. According to the committee

> They can have a profound effect on business attempts to influence Government policies. They can impact on corporate decisions as to the type and quality of products to be marketed in the United States and overseas. ... They can bear on corporate policies with respect to environmental and social issues and possibly, control the shape and direction of the nation's economy (United States Senate report, 1978, pp. 281).

This interlocking elite in Domhoff's (1967) view, is legitimated now to serve elite policy. This is done in three ways: (1) support of government policy, (2) the shaping of world news to favor elites and the dominant political economy, and (3) holding alternative viewpoints up for ridicule and scorn if, in fact, these alternative viewpoints are mentioned at all (Domhoff, 1977, Dye, 1979). If Domhoff is correct, newspapers' editorials should be increasingly similar in their legitimating of elite policy. When corporate interests control the media, a narrowing of viewpoints and a pandering to the whims and wishes of corporate ideologues, whose major concern is maximization of profits, ensues. Thus, a narrowing of the political range might be found in editorials.

The impact of corporate ownership on other types of media has been well documented (Bagdikian, 1989, and Lee and Solomon, 1990). For example, when General Electric purchased RCA (the parent company of NBC)

in 1986, the nation's second largest defense contractor added a key media group to its holdings and further concentrated the ownership of the mass media. As Bagdikian noted in a recent interview:

> Concentrated power over public information is inherently anti-democratic. If a nation has narrowly controlled information, it will soon have narrowly controlled politics ... In a world of multiple problems, where diversity of ideas is essential for decent solutions, controlled information inhibited by uniform self-interest is the first and fatal enemy (quoted in Lee and Solomon, 1990, pp. 74).

The impact of changes in journalism also has changed the way consumers view the media today. Gannett's USA Today has almost single-handedly forced newspaper owners and editors to rethink traditional means of producing and presenting a daily newspaper. Newspapers across the country now rely on more colorful graphics and less on in-depth analyses (Postman, 1985) with the end result a press that increasingly is indistinguishable from one city to the next.

From a critical theory persepctive, the increasing homogenization of news and decreased analysis will hinder the

ability of people to reflect on their social life (Hallin, 1985, and Luke, 1989). In this regard, Hallin notes that Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, and Habermas see capitalism as

> ... a form of social organization that brought the public sphere into being [and] nevertheless distorts and limits its development to the point that the society is unable to establish the process of

> dialogue and collective self-reflection that the advent of liberal institutions seemed to promise (Hallin, 1985, pp. 121).

The position taken in this study follows that of Marcuse, Horkheimer, and Adorno in that the media are seen as capable of producing an ideological hegemony. However, newspapers are seen as perhaps having a unique history that may have caused them to be late in joining the trend of other corporations.

Ideological hegemony in the press continues today, of course, but perhaps in a manner more suitable to the purposes of the owners of the press. Indeed, the ideological voice of the press may no longer pluralistic but could be a reflection of the concentration of economic and governmental powers in this country.

Finally, a distinction needs to be made between that of "bias" and "ideology." Bias is seen as existing in the news media as a slant or angle that is put on a story. An effort is made by journalists to lessen that bias by offering differing points of view to a particular news story. Ideology, or ideological orientation, is a particular distortion of an issue and the solution to the issue that, as a result, is presented as a logical conclusion. For example, according to Herman and Chomsky (1988), the mass media's failure to report widespread U.S. involvement in Central America, in particular the arming of Nicaraguan rebels, was a conscious decision made by editors and broadcasters who supported the Reagan administration's policies in the region.

Offering differing points of view, however, is not a normal function of an editorial. Editorials are written to persuade, so the "hidden agenda" that Herman and Chomsky (1988) argue exists may be less obvious. This is an important point because it demonstrates that newspaper owners, while supporting a particular viewpoint or ideology, may attempt to cover up or disguise a vested interest in a subtle manner that may not be obvious to readers. To further explore this possibility, I now turn to research on newspapers.

Newspaper Research

Very few studies in sociology in recent years have concentrated on the mass media in general and newspapers in particular. Gans (1978) is a notable exception. Gans notes that the media are formal, rational organizations that are open to their environment perhaps more so than other social organizations. The relationship between an organization and those who work in it is reciprocal and politically motivated at times. What this means is that individuals remain with the organization, or learn to accept the ideology of the organization, because it contributes to and reinforces their belief system. The ideology of a news organization's owners or publishers therefore may determine how the staff of journalists and editors reports the news and writes editorials. As Gans notes

In the news, ideology is defined as a deliberately thought-out,

> consistent, integrated, and inflexible set of explicit political values, which is a determinant of political decisions (1978, pp. 29-30).

It follows then that the editorial decisions which drive the selection criterion of the news also may determine the ideological viewpoint espoused on the editorial page. However, newspaper organizations differ from other formal organizations, according to Gans, in the unique nature of journalists. Journalists enjoy a certain degree of autonomy not necessarily enjoyed by workers in other complex organizations

> Delegation of power also takes place because the news organization consists of professionals who insist on individual autonomy. Journalists claim freedom from interference not only by nonjournalists but also by superiors; they have the right to make their own news judgments, which is why they cannot be given orders (Gans, 1978, pp. 101).

This is a limited autonomy, though, as Gans later admits. Journalists, for example, are assigned stories and, if they return with the wrong slant or angle on the story, the managers (editors and/or publishers) may rewrite the story, reassign it to another reporter, or kill it. Journalists realize this and, while believing they are maintaining their autonomy or independence, also act in accordance with what will pass the scrutiny of their editors. Furthermore, at the daily "budget meeting" where editorial decisions are made as to what stories go where in the newspaper, the managing editor, executive editor, editorial page editor, and publisher decide what the editorial position of the newspaper will be on any given topic. It is here that the newspaper is

expected to be the most ideologically consistent.

Other constraints also determine the stance of the newspaper on specific stories, and the editorial page as well. Like the electronic media described by Miller (1989) and Marc (1986), newspapers are affected by market conditions, but also have to be responsive to the demands of advertisers. Oftentimes, these same advertisers are members of the corporate board of directors who control the newspaper. Because of this, journalists may consciously or unconsciously produce news and editorials in a manner that avoids upsetting advertisers.

In addition to advertisers, newspaper owners influence editorial stance. A single, locally based owner, and not an absentee/corporate owner, Bagdikian (1989) laments, is better for a community because that owner will concentrate his/her energy, skills, and managerial resources on that one newspaper at the benefit of the community.

> A chain owner does the opposite. With rare exceptions, reinvestment into the long-term health of individual daily papers is a low priority compared to the inexorable demands of its parent firm for maximum profits, often for expansion elsewhere. ... There is no good social or economic reason for a single corporation to control more than one local monopoly (Bagdikian, 1989, pp. 226-27).

Parenti, similarly, notes the danger of corporate chain ownership of daily newspapers:

> Whichever newspaper one reads or television station one views, in whatever part of the United States, one is struck by the indistinguishable and immediately familiar quality of the news and views presented ... One confronts a precooked, controlled, centralized, national news industry that is in sharp contrast to the "pluralistic diversity" of opinion that is said to prevail in the United States (Parenti, 1986, pp. 31).

According to Parenti, "It is oligopolistic [sic], standardized, and most accessible to those who possess vast amounts of capital." The result of this concentration of the media in the hands of a few corporations may be that the media will tend to reflect only corporate concerns, not the concerns of a community.

Additionally, once-independent newspapers might lose their editorial-page "voice" as the chain/corporate owners force political endorsements upon their newly acquired newspapers (Nixon and Jones, 1956, and Wackman, et al, 1975). Incorporation may remove editorial decision-making from the local newspaper and put it in to the hands of the national corporation. Some chains allow limited local editorial autonomy and the newspaper may become a "mini-corporation" in its own right. These newspapers are becoming more and more rare, however, as chain/group ownership has become the norm in the industry.

One constant, however, has been presumption that the editorial page reflects the subjective, ideological component of most newspapers. Here owners and editors articulate the opinion presented in the newspaper. The front page and other spaces for news are the places where editors place the

important news of the day based on what they conceive as objective criteria. The news, accordingly, has to be timely and locally relevant, and have the potential to affect local readers. Now, many newspapers across the country appear faceless and lack the unique qualities that distinguished each from the other. This does not necessarily mean the newspapers have "less ideology," but rather the possible development of a new corporate ideology.

Many newspapers, in fact, no longer have an editorial page and, if they do carry editorials, often times they are canned editorials sent over the wire by the parent company. The New York Times Company, for example, sends out a weekly "News of the Week" feature reported and written by Times staffers. The eight-to twelve-page package is a mixture of news and editorials that newspapers belonging to the New York Times Regional Newspaper Group are encouraged to run each Sunday. These once autonomous newspapers now are provided material for their editorials pages, thus the question arises: Have newspaper editorials been significantly changed by changes in ownership?

However, little research has been conducted dealing specifically with the effects of concentrated ownership on editorial positions of once-independent newspapers. Two exceptions are Thrift's 1977 study of several small, west-coast newspapers' editorial pages, and Meyer and Wearden's (1984) study of changing patterns of ownership in the newspaper industry. In Thrift demonstrated a marked decline in what he termed "editorial vigor" in editorials

in the months following the purchase of newspapers by a chain. Thrift operationalized "editorial vigor" as the capacity for the newspaper's editorial staff to: (1) identify local issues, (2) use an argumentative form, (3) make the context of the editorial controversial, and (4) provide information that tends to mobilize readers. Thrift concluded that independently owned daily newspapers' editorials become less vigorous after purchase by chain newspapers.

> Obviously, chain ownership of daily newspapers is a phenomenon which will continue to be with the newspaper industry. ... And, certainly, the impact is not helpful to readers who seek guidance on local matters when they turn to the editorial pages of their daily newspapers (Thrift, 1977, pp. 331).

Meyer and Wearden (1984) looked at the effects of public ownership on newspaper companies that were once individually or family owned and found slight differences between the corporate-owned and family owned newspapers in terms of editors', publishers', and staff members' judgments concerning the newspaper's day-to-day performance. Day-to-day performance was operationalized as earnings consistency, management quality, community service, and editorial quality. Journalists' and stock market analysts' judgments on each of these categories were compared with some significant differences between the two groups. Not surprisingly, journalists were more concerned with editorial quality while analysts were more concerned with earnings consistency and management quality.

Where Meyer and Wearden did voice concern was in the possible

influence of the new investors in the editorial content of those newspapers.

> The effect of public ownership on editorial quality (rather than attitudes) should also be examined, perhaps via content analysis of publicly owned versus privately owned papers (controlling for other variables known to affect quality). ... The general question of possible effects of public ownership on newspaper companies deserves to remain on the research agenda (1984, pp. 576).

Research concerning changes in newspaper ownership has been limited to the examination of the content of news pages and perceptions of those in the industry to the effect of changes on the editorial package presented by the newspaper. Little research exists on the impact of corporate ownership changes on the editorial page. Meanwhile, sociological research on organizations largely has focused on those who head large organizations, and the corporate concerns of business elites.

We have seen that newspaper research has largely focused on the effects of changes in ownership on news page content. Organizational research in the sociology literature has focused on the ideology of elites and the corporate concerns of those elites. Newspapers traditionally have been social critics with the majority of criticism emanating from the editorial page. It makes sense, therefore, to examine the impact of changes in corporate ownership on the type of editorial that is presented on a daily basis to readers. Two types of editorials are identified here: (1) advocacy editorials that advance, promote, or espouse a certain ideological position, and (2) neutral editorials that

take an ideological middle ground that, in fact, tend to placate the corporate concerns of the organization. It is the neutral editorial that is the focus of this study.

Statement of Hypothesis

Changes in ownership patterns of major metropolitan daily newspapers from that of independent/family owned to corporately owned will result in a higher rate of neutral editorials in those years following public incorporation. This is expected because leaders of newspaper corporations want to protect their interests in the marketplace and more neutral editorials may help serve this purpose.

Chapter Three

Newspapers in the Study

"The American press, with a very few exceptions is a kept press. Kept by the big corporations the way a whore is kept by a rich man." -- Theodore Dreiser (Cirino, 1971)

The New York Times

The New York Times is not the oldest newspaper in the United States or in New York City, for that matter. It has been, however, long considered the nation's newspaper of record. Begun in 1851 as the New York Daily Times, the paper underwent changes in ownership several times before Adolph Ochs, a 38-year-old newspaper owner from Tennessee, took control in 1893 (Cose, 1989). The Daily Times shortened its name to the current Times when Ochs took over and, through shrewd management and daring pricing schemes with advertisers, the Times soon became the dominant newspaper in the city and region. The Times ran into stiff competition from the dozen or so other dailies in New York at that time and even dabbled in sensationalism. After a particularly gruesome slaying that the tabloid the New York Daily News had paid significant attention to, Adolph Ochs was asked why a newspaper of the supposed caliber of the Times also was playing up the murder. Ochs replied: "If a tabloid prints that sort of thing, it's smut; but when the New York Times prints it, it's a sociological study" (Bates, 1989).

Arthur Hays Sulzberger was next in line to head the Times after his marriage to Ochs' daughter. Their son, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, was groomed to take over the lead of the newspaper from the day he was born. Arthur Hays Sulzberger was given free rein to dabble in other jobs, including a stint in the Marines, but he returned to journalism and eventually became publisher of the Times in 1961 (Cose, 1989, and Bates, 1989).

Arthur Hays Sulzberger shook up the management of the Times during the 1960s by bringing the various departments all under his direct control. He had managers of the various departments report directly to his office and hired editors that thought the same way as he. The Times began to turn a modest profit after the 1962-63 newspaper strike that crippled other newspapers in the city and, on December 3, 1968, the Times offered 640,000 shares of Class A stock on the American Stock Exchange. According to Cose (1989), the stock sold out the first day with the Times' trust fund controlling just over 50 percent of the Class A stock. The trust continued to hold 65 percent of the full voting Class B stock. The decision to go public with the newspaper's holdings was not a difficult one. The newspaper had grown stagnant, threatened strikes by the newspaper workers' union had made management more cautious, and the Times' interest in the International Herald-Tribune was straining financial resources the Sulzberger family did not have. In addition, inheritance and estate taxes soon would be due and the family was strapped for cash.

The New York Times weathered the stormy battles of the 1960s with the various newspaper unions and, in 1970, began diversifying (Cose, 1989, and Salisbury, 1980). The company purchased Cowles Communications and with it Cowles' holdings of several Florida newspapers, a television station in Memphis, a textbook company, and several smaller concerns.

The Times reached a crucial turning point in its competition with the Washington Post in 1971 when it first published the Pentagon Papers. The Post also began publishing the documents which had been stolen by Daniel Ellsberg from the Rand Corporation, but it was the Times that took the initial fusillade from the Nixon administration (Squires, 1993).

The mid-1970s saw dramatic changes in the pages of the New York Times. With New York City on the verge of bankruptcy, readers leaving the city, and advertisers unwilling to continue with an uncertain economic future, the Times had to change or go under. The answer was a repackaging of the newspaper. The staid, eight-column format was eliminated in favor of a more modern, easier to read, six-column format, and sections such as Living and Weekend were added (Cose, 1989).

No newspaper is immune to editorial dissent or opposition to change. The management of the Times faced a number of crises during the early and mid-1970s with many confrontations happening on the editorial page staff, as Cose (1989) notes in a telling example of how a publisher can overrule the

wishes of the majority of people working on his newspaper. In 1976, Daniel Moynihan was endorsed by publisher Arthur Hays Sulzberger for the vacated U.S. Senate seat in the Democratic primary. Several blacks on the staff, including newly hired editorial writer Roger Wilkins who had been lured away from the Washington Post, and the editorial page editor John Oakes supported former congresswoman Bella Abzug. According to Cose, Sulzberger ordered the running of his endorsement of Moynihan while Oakes was on vacation. Editorial writers on the Times' staff were outraged:

> Oakes insisted on his right to dissent, and Sulzberger had allowed him to run a short letter of disagreement. Several blacks on the paper had also taken exception to the editorial and approached Oakes and asked permission to voice their protest on his page. Oakes refused, saying that the paper's policies prohibited it. But he agreed to permit Wilkins, who favored former attorney general Ramsey Clark in the race, to write a personal column opposing Moynihan. ... publication was delayed until after the primary--which Moynihan won with 36 percent of the vote to Abzug's 35 percent (Cose, 1989, pp. 243).

Change came quickly in the weeks that followed as Abe Rosenthal, who was soon to be named executive editor of the Times, and others moved to transform the editorial page in an image that was more suitable to publisher Sulzberger. Earnings more than tripled during the 1970s as the corporation's new holdings added money to the Times' coffers and the newspaper solidified itself journalistically with its reporting of the Pentagon Papers and, two years later, Watergate. It further solidified its standing in the history of U.S.

journalism when it began publishing a national edition in 1986 in response, partly, to the added threat of Gannett's USA Today (Cose, 1989, and Bates, 1989).

Sulzberger and Rosenthal, the old guard of the Times, were nearing the company's mandatory retirement age of 65 in the mid-1980s and the process had begun to groom a new leader for the newspaper. A number of candidates came and went and in April 1988, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, remaining true to the tradition handed down to him by those in his family before him, named his son, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, Jr., as deputy publisher (Cose, 1989).

The New York Times consistently ranks in the top ten nationally in circulation (Merrill and Fisher, 1980) and, while other newspapers have suffered slumps in circulation rates during the past decade, the Times' circulation is more than 1 million per day and more than 1.7 million on Sunday. According to Standard and Poor's economic index, the other interests held by the New York Times Company are twenty four daily newspapers, eight weeklies and fifty percent interest in the International Herald Tribune which is co-owned with the Washington Post Company (see Appendix C).

In addition to its newspapers, the publishing division produces the magazines Family Circle, McCall's, and Golf Digest, among others, and the New York Times News Service which is sent out over the wire to subscribers (Editor and Publisher International Yearbook, 1992). The broadcasting properties

include five television stations in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Iowa, Arkansas, and Alabama. More than 75,000,000 shares of Class A Common Stock have been issued with twenty-four percent closely held by family members and institutions holding fifty-one percent. Of the more than 440,000 shares of Class B Common Stock issued, approximately eight-five percent is closely held by the trust.

The Washington Post

The Washington Post is a newspaper that, during the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, struggled to gain its own identity. For years it had played second to the New York Times on its own home turf and at one time was the fifth newspaper in a five-newspaper city (Squires, 1993). That all changed in the early 1970s with the help of reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein who began to unravel the break-in at the Watergate Hotel. Their series of articles would help topple a presidency and gain the Post the recognition it had once held years earlier.

The Washington Post was founded in 1877 and went through a number of owners before settling in the hands of Eugene Meyer in 1933. The Post was a partisan newspaper when it was founded and was strongly Democratic in its news and editorials (Cose, 1989). Through mismanagement and a series of ill-advised editorial practices such as sensationalized headlines and over-blown

coverage, the Post was deeply in debt when Meyer purchased the newspaper for just over $800,000. It was Meyer who gave the Post the editorial voice that many consider the most liberal of the mainstream press in the nation today. In 1946, Meyer turned the newspaper over to his son-in-law Philip Graham and the Post has remained in the Graham family since.

Perhaps the best known members of the Post's staff, in addition to Woodward and Bernstein, are former editor Ben Bradlee and president of the board of directors Katharine Graham, widow of Philip Graham. Graham is a philanthropist well-known in Washington circles who seems to relish her role as the only woman chief operating officer in the Fortune 500 (Felsenthal, 1993). Bradlee, who recently gave up his editorship, is a brusque journalist in the mold of the writers of the early part of this century. He played a key role in the Washington Post Company's acquisition of Newsweek magazine and was a hands-on editor who shaped his reporters and demanded only the best from them. For all of Bradlee's and Katharine Graham's contributions, however, it was Philip Graham who is given credit for saving the Post from the journalistic morass in which it had found itself (Cose, 1989).

Philip Graham's forte was not in the corporate world (Felsenthal, 1993). He was best suited for running a newspaper and, when he committed suicide on August 3, 1963, control of the Post was turned over to his wife, Katharine. Katharine Graham took over control of the Post with the announcement that

the newspaper would not be sold to outsiders and that a future generation of Grahams was being fashioned into the leadership role begun by her father, Eugene Meyer (Cose, 1989). One of the first things Katharine Graham did was to give her unquestioned trust to her editor Ben Bradlee. Bradlee then set about assembling the best writers in the nation for the Post. Change had begun in earnest at the Washington Post.

As older members of the Post retired, however, the management discovered a cash flow problem that would eventually change the face of newspaper publishing in Washington, D.C. Philip Graham had established a practice of giving stock to emplyees as reward for their service (Cose, 1989). When those emplyees retired, however, the Post would buy back the stock, severely stretching the company's available cash. As other newspapers in Washington, D.C., folded (most notably the Herald-Tribune and the Star), Bradlee would hire the best reporters, editors, and writers. These top journalists came at a price. The options for the Post were to sell their holding of a Jacksonville, Florida, television station, or to go public with its stock. The Post chose the route taken by the New York Times and began preparing to offer limited voting stock on the American Stock Exchange.

The stock offering coincided with the release of the Pentagon Papers, however, and the Post was enjoined by the government and forced to halt publication of the report that just days earlier had been published in the New

York Times (Squires, 1993). The Post was able to get a copy of the report because Bradlee knew Daniel Ellsberg when the two worked together at the Rand Corporation and had met secretly a few days earlier with Ellsberg to obtain a copy of the top-secret report. The Post went to court with the Times and less than a month later the Supreme Court refused to block further publication of the report. The Post had hit the big time.

Don Graham was named publisher of the Post in 1979 while his mother, Katharine, retained the title of president of the board of directors (Cose, 1989). Under Don Graham's leadership, the Post began to make changes in the editorial page content of the newspaper. Phil Geyelin had been editorial page editor for a number of years and had made a conscious effort to move away from far-left writings of the previous editors. As Cose (1989) writes

> Some Post editors felt that the page had gone soft, that it was too predictable, too fuzzy, too polite ... Graham replaced editor Geyelin with Meg Greenfield, who intended to make the page livelier and turn up the noise level while tilting away from its knee-jerk support of the Left (Cose, 1989, pp. 78).

The effort, apparently, was a conscious one of tweaking the noses of both those on the right and the left and thereby becoming a truly "Independent Newspaper" -- as the masthead had read for years.

Other changes to come to the Post in ensuing years included the expansion of the company into concerns other than mass media related. In addition to Newsweek, the Washington Post Company also owns cable

systems and only one other daily newspaper, the Everett (WA) Herald. The Post got into the newspaper buying frenzy of the 1970s too late to afford to make any offers on newspapers up for sale, so the company turned its attention to cable television and, for nearly $350 million, purchased a number of cable systems from Capital Cities/ABC (Hertsgaard, 1987).

The Washington Post has endured its share of tough times in its long history and, through shrewd purchasing of other concerns, contractual maneuvering with unions, and strong writing and editing, has become an internationally respected and, more importantly, profitable flagship vehicle for the Washington Post Company. The Post, after the failure of the Washington Star, is the largest newspaper in the two-newspaper nation's capital (Merrill and Fisher, 1980). Its circulation is 838,000 daily and 1,165,000 Sunday and ranks in the top twenty of the largest U.S. newspaper companies (Editor and Publisher International Yearbook, 1992).

The Washington Post Company is now listed on the New York Stock Exchange and, according to Standard and Poor's economic index, the corporation's magazine division's holding, Newsweek, has a circulation of 3,200,000, and its broadcast division operates four VHF networks in Hartford, Conn., Detroit, Mich., Miami, Fla., and Jacksonville, Fla. There are nearly two million shares of Class A Common Stock held by the Graham family which elects seventy percent of the company's board of directors. There are ten

million shares of Class B Common Stock with limited voting rights. There are nearly 2,000 shareholders of record with Berkshire Hathaway Inc. holding seventeen percent of the shares. According to the 1992 Editor and Publisher International Yearbook, the Washington Post Company's assets were $1.5 billion with an approximate net worth of $900,000,000.

The Atlanta Journal and Constitution

Unlike the New York Times and the Washington Post, the two Atlanta newspapers described in this study have gone in a different direction in the past twenty years. Once the preeminent newspapers of the South, the Atlanta Journal and Atlanta Constitution have struggled during the past two decades to find the strong editorial voice they once had under the leadership of editors such as Ralph McGill and Eugene Patterson (Grimes, 1985). The Journal, the city's afternoon newspaper, has steadily lost its dominant circulation position to the morning Constitution, but more importantly, according to Grimes, (1985) the newspapers have seemingly lost the respect of journalists and readers despite their justly deserved reputation as a voice against racial discrimination and for social change. In fact

> One critic charged in 1973 that 'the city of Atlanta far outstrips the quality of its two papers. Since the 1960s The Constitution and The Journal have been getting no better, and certainly worse on the editorial pages, while the city is growing and becoming more important all the time' (Grimes, 1985, pp. 73).

Novelist Pat Conroy claimed the two newspapers have led to the "diminishment of the English language, the debasement of the city of Atlanta. ... I am sorry that we will live and die under the yoke of such banality (Grimes, 1985)"

But such was not always the case for the Atlanta newspapers. At one time the papers and their editors commanded the respect of those in the city and the South. Begun during the post-Civil War reconstruction era, the Constitution was to be a strong, Democratic voice in the South for the next century. Former Gov. James M. Cox of Ohio purchased the Constitution in 1950 from the Howell family who had held the newspaper since 1876 (Martin, 1973). He eventually merged the newspaper with his Atlanta Journal yet kept the editorial staffs separate. The first combined Sunday edition of the two newspapers was published in June of 1950, but it was not until 1968 that the two newspapers merged staffs for combined weekend editions of Atlanta Journal and Atlanta Constitution (Merrill and Fisher, 1980). It is perhaps because of the mergers, split staffs on week days and merged staffs on weekends that results in the two newspapers' perceived lack of identity by readers and journalists alike. But this was not always the case.

The late Governor Eugene Talmadge called the newspapers "those lying Atlanta newspapers" whenever the Journal and Constitution opposed his

political ambitions (Martin, 1973). Curiously, many journalists, as noted earlier, believe the newspapers are conservative in nature in both editorials and news coverage. In the years that Ralph Emerson McGill had control over the Constitution, and later the Journal, this was far from the truth. In 1938 McGill was named executive editor of the Constitution and in 1942 became only the eighth editor of the newspaper (Martin, 1973). The Constitution had been purchased a few years earlier by then Ohio Governor James Cox who added the newspaper to his other holding in the state of Georgia, the Journal. McGill was named publisher in 1960 and continued to exert his influence on the editorial page in addition to writing his daily front-page column. According to Merrill and Fisher,

> (McGill) is known for many innovations at the newspaper, one of them being a new literary form -- the newspaper essay -- which he introduced in order to fight for many kinds of reform (economic, social, racial) in his native Southland (1980, pp. 72).

McGill made his share of enemies both inside and outside of the newspaper during his tenure as columnist and lead editorial writer. After the merger of the two newspapers into the new Atlanta Newspapers, George C. Biggers, president of The Journal, asked Jack Spalding to move over to The Constitution and keep McGill from writing both a column and the lead editorial on the same day (Grimes, 1985). Biggers and Cox perceived McGill to be too liberal a voice for the entire newspaper and, with the blessing of Cox, Biggers limited the

number of editorials McGill was to write.

McGill's death in 1969 left a void at the newspaper that has yet to be filled. Many capable journalists have worked at the Journal and Constitution since; notable among them are Eugene Patterson who went on to become an editor at the Washington Post, and Bill Kovach, who edited the newspapers from 1986-88 after leaving the New York Times. According to Moore

> Kovach told his friends ... how top management had outflanked his reforms, pushing for a more 'USA Today approach.' A week earlier he had resigned. His replacement was Ron Martin of Gannett, who had brought out USA Today. A milestone in the journalism of the South had passed by (Columbia Journalism Review, Jan./Feb., 1992, pp. 30-31).

A number of changes have occurred since the mergers and shuffling about of editors and staff members. Family members have generally held the highest offices in the Cox Enterprises and Cox Newspapers network with the exception of those editors and publishers favored by the Cox family (Grimes, 1985). These chosen few have moved up the corporate ranks to positions of vice chairman or publisher of the corporation other newspapers in Ohio. The Cox Newspaper corporation currently ranks in the top ten of media outlets in the United States with the Atlanta Journal and Atlanta Constitution, as flagship newspapers for the corporation, controlling more than fifty percent of the total circulation of all Georgia newspapers (Editor and Publisher International Yearbook, 1992). The corporation's holdings of newspapers includes several

in Arizona and Florida, and the Cox cable subsidiary operates outlets around the country (see Appendix C).

Summary

Three types of corporate ownership of newspapers are represented in this study. The first type of ownership is represented by the New York Times. Once privately/family held, the Times went public with a stock offering December 3, 1968. The Sulzberger trust holds just over 50 percent of the Class A non-voting stock and continues to hold 65 percent of the full-voting Class B stock. The Times is seen here as one of the most corporately based newspapers in the nation. The second type of ownership -- absentee -- is represented by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. The Journal and Constitution publish separately during the week and merge editorial and business staffs on weekends. The merger of the newspapers took place in 1968 and the newspapers are run by the Cox group -- absentee owners who make up a tightly controlled family corporation. The Cox group does not trade its stock publicly. The final type of ownership is represented by the Washington Post. The Post has been under the control of the Graham family for most of this century and a limited public offering of stock was made in 1972. The Graham family still holds a majority (51 percent) of the voting stock with Donald Graham sitting as the publisher, president, and chief executive officer of the

newspaper.

The New York Times, the Washington Post, and Cox Newspapers (owners of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution), are among those in the top twenty-five elite affiliations identified in a study by Peter Dreier (1982). The Times ranked second out of twenty-five media groups with forty-seven total affiliations (the total number of inside and outside directors belonging to more than one corporation), the Post ranked third with forty-one affiliations, and the Cox chain ranked seventeenth with five affiliations. In addition, the Times ranked first with six total inside and outside directors who had been appointed to high-level positions in the Federal government. The Post tied for third with three Federal government affiliations, and Cox tied for fourth with two affiliations.

The three newspapers in this study are still controlled by the original families, but by varying degrees, despite incorporating during the late 1960s and the early 1970s. The Sulzberger family controls 80 percent of the stock issued when the Times went public in 1968, the Cox family owns 36 percent of Cox Communications stock, and the Graham family controls just over 50 percent of the stock in the Post. The primary difference between the three newspapers and the families that control them is the amount of stock owned by an individual family and/or trusts and that, as Zeitlin (1989) points out, is nearly impossible to determine.

Chapter Four

Introduction to Methodology

Newspapers differ from other large complex organizations in that the products newspapers offer on the editorial page are not physical objects. Instead, what newspapers present as products are ideas about human nature and human interaction. The unique nature of these products does not lend itself exclusively to either a qualitative or quantitative analysis. Therefore, a quantitative analysis by itself would not be sufficient in the same manner that a qualitative analysis by itself also would be insufficient.

A major difficulty faced during the course of this study was how to present the data. It became necessary to analyze the editorials included in this study in three discrete segments. The first element, presented in Chapter Five, quantifies the editorials on the basis of advocacy versus neutrality. The next element, presented in Chapter Six, involves the selection of editorials based on a particular event -- civil rights. This allows for an analysis of how the newspapers dealt with civil rights in both pre- and post-incorporation years, ie., to see if the newspapers became more neutral on a unique topic. The final element of the analysis, presented in Chapter Seven, is designed to place the editorials into historical context and show the subtlety and nuance involved in the writing, reading, and analysis of newspaper editorials.

This final element is important for understanding how the newspapers'

editorials "evolved" during the past thirty years. The difficulty in analyzing editorials lies in discovering the nuance of the advocacy editorial because the risk exists to confuse neutrality with advocacy and advocacy with neutrality. But placed in the context of three-part analysis, the examination and identification of neutral editorials becomes more apparent.

Selection of Newspapers

The newspapers chosen for this study and described in the preceding chapter were selected based on the following criteria: (1) type of ownership, (2) when that ownership changed, (3) chain or corporate size, ie., the number of newspapers in the group and overall circulation base, and (4) the historical importance of each newspaper vis-a-vis the region of the country in which they publish.

A content analysis of the lead editorial immediately underneath the newspapers' masthead was performed. The content analysis was broken down into two parts: a quantitative and qualitative analysis (see Code Sheet, Appendix A). The quantitative analysis deals with: (1) primary domain of editorial, and (2) context of editorial. The primary domain of the editorial was identified as either predominantly political, social, or economic. The context of editorial identified whether the overall context of the editorial was favorable,

neutral, or unfavorable.[1] One of the key points in the determination of the context of the editorial is whether an advocacy position was taken. Many times it is not simply enough to write that change is necessary; the newspaper's editorial writers had to suggest alternative solutions to a specific problem. This is seen as the essence of editorials.

In the qualitative analysis phase of the study, the event, issue, person(s), and organization/institution were identified. The argument presented acted as a summary of the editorial position of the newspaper on any given event (see code sheet, Appendix A).

Data Collection

Data collection took place during winter 1991 and spring 1992. A stratified sample of 2,137 newspaper editorials was selected from a sampling frame of 4,680 editorial pages which represents all Sunday editions of the three newspapers for the thirty-year period. Because the Atlanta Journal-Constitution did not begin publishing a combined Sunday edition until 1968, the Saturday edition of the Atlanta Constitution was used for the period beginning January, 1961, until June 23, 1968.

Stratified samples were drawn from each presidential administration

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[1]For the purpose of this study, only the percent of neutral editorials and primary domains were analyzed. Data also were collected on the several other primary variables and secondary categories of variables. See Code Sheet, Appendix A for a full listing of these variables.

selecting every other week after a random start beginning with the first Sunday after inauguration.[2] Selection of editorials was based on the systematic selection of every third to fourth Sunday editorial based on the length of term of the presidential administration. Because each administration varied in its total duration, the sample for each newspaper was selected based on the criteria established by previous researchers studying newspaper editorials and news stories (Holsti, 1969, Hsia, 1988, and Stempel, 1989). In addition, the actual content analysis was based on the context of the editorial, which is considered a more accurate reflection of editorial content than counting the number of words, sentences, and paragraphs and then determining the number of "pro" or "con" words used in each editorial. Holsti (1969), for example, enumerated certain evaluative adjectives and assigned positive or negative numerical values to each adjective.

The rationale for selecting a contextual reading of the entire editorial over a breakdown in sentences or counting the number of adjectives is that newspaper editorial writers often will use back-handed compliments or damning praise in their editorials. In addition, in determining the social, political, or economic domains, difficulties could have arisen among coders trying to

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[2]Presidential administrations were selected as an independent variable at the onset of this study to determine whether the newspapers had a bias toward Democratic or Republican administrations. For the purpose of this study, this variable was not analyzed. However, the stratified random sample is not affected by the deletion of this variable.

determine, for example, what percentage of an editorial was one domain or another. An editorial also will often contain elements of all three domains, so by getting a feel for the overall context of the editorial, coders were able to successfully identify the various variables included in the study as is shown in the reliability test (Table 4.1).

Nearly all of the data was available in the collection of newspaper microfilm on the campus of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Some problems encountered in the collection of the data for the study included missing issues, illegible pages, and missing sections of certain issues. The Atlanta Journal and Atlanta Constitution presented a special problem because data for the years 1961 to 1964 had to be collected off site at Duke University in North Carolina. The New York Times also presented problems because of on-going newspaper workers' strikes during the mid-1960s. In 1965, for example, the Times did not publish from September 17 to October 19. Two dates included in the study by the stratified selection process that fell within that one-month period were eliminated from the study for all three newspapers.

Training of coders

Several pre-test reliability checks were performed before collection of the entire data set. Two coders were trained during two, two-hour training

sessions. In addition, one coder received an extra hour of training at his request because of a reading problem on his part. According to some researchers in mass communications (see, for example, Stempel, 1989), the major problem encountered in training of coders in qualitative studies is reaching agreement. Because of this, Stempel argues that coders should have similar academic backgrounds, but not necessarily in the same academic field. Therefore, two coders from Virginia Tech's Honors Department were recruited and paid for reading one hundred editorials each. At the first training session, the study was outlined and a background of the history of the project was detailed. The two coders were then read an editorial and were asked to complete a code sheet. A discussion of the important components of the editorial followed in order to establish a common frame of reference.

The two coders were given three randomly selected editorials and were asked to read the editorials and complete the code sheets. Comparisons were then made with little disagreement among the coders. The coders were then given ten randomly selected editorials and were asked to return the completed code sheets in one week. After completion of the code sheets, the results were compared with little significant disagreement between coders. A randomly generated sample of fifty editorials were given to the coders. The coders each read the same fifty editorials. An intercoder reliability check produced the results in Table 4.1. According to Huck, et al, (1974), the most

common method of computing reliability is the percent of agreement between coders. According to the authors, a reliability check should produce an agreement of 80 percent or above. As presented in Table 2.1, each of the variables computed generated intercoder agreement of above 80 percent.

The first reliability check of fifty editorials for each independent coder was conducted at the onset of the project. A second reliability check was conducted approximately two months later using a different set of fifty randomly selected editorials.

With satisfactory reliability results, the remaining data were collected; the editorials were read, analyzed, and entered into the computer by the author; and the statistical analysis phase of the study was ready to be undertaken. The results and discussion of the various statistical analyses are presented in Chapter Five.

Operationalization of Terms

Corporate Ownership: Corporate ownership and control are identified by the issuance of public stock with at least 10 percent of the stock remaining in the hands of one dominant group. The corporation also must have more than two newspapers in its corporate portfolio. In addition, absentee directors must exert control of the editorial content of its newspapers. The New York Times is the corporately owned newspaper in this study.

Family Ownership: Family ownership and control are identified as majority

control of corporate stock with public stock held by one group. While technically a corporation, the Graham family controls more than 50 percent of the publicly issued stock and therefore the Washington Post is considered a family owned newspaper. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution is considered a private, tightly family controlled newspaper.[3]

Ideology: The perspective of manner in which thoughts or ideas are systematized and used to espouse a particular viewpoint via the editorial.

Lead editorial: That editorial directly beneath the masthead of the newspaper on the newspaper's editorial page. The masthead is located in the top left corner of the editorial page and contains the name of the newspaper (for all three newspapers used in this study) and the name of the publisher and editorial board of the newspapers (for only the New York Times and Atlanta Journal and Atlanta Constitution).

Primary Domain: Editorials were identified as dealing with political, economic, and social issues. While some editorials deal with one, two or even all three of the domains, the categories were treated as mutually exclusive based on coders' perceptions of which domain dominated the remaining domains. The political domain is identified as those editorials dealing with the day-to-day

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[3]The use of pre-incorporation, pre-merger, and post-incorporation and post-merger is cumbersome at best. The use of pre-incorporation and post-incorporation from this point on is meant to assume pre- and post-merger for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

operation of government and individuals in government. The economic domain is identified as those editorials dealing with business, the marketplace, employment, etc. The social domain is identified as those editorials dealing with issues such as racism and other social problems.

Context of Editorial: The overall context of the editorial is identified as either favorable, neutral, or unfavorable based on the content of the editorial itself.

Topic: Five items are used to identify the topic of the editorial.

(1) Event: The specific event which is identified in the editorial. This usually is in the lead paragraph of the editorial, for example

> President George Bush's decision to veto Congress' tax bill Tuesday sets the stage for a decisive showdown between the President and members of Congress.

The event would be Bush's veto of the congressional tax bill.

(2) Issue: The issue, using the above example, would be who has the better tax bill, the president or Congress?

(3) Person(s): If no other person was identified in the editorial, the only person to be coded would be President Bush.

(4) Organization/Institution: Two organizations/institutions are mentioned in the example used above: the presidency (administration), and Congress.

(5) Argument presented: The manner in which editorials usually are written allows the coder to identify the argument in the closing paragraph(s). While not

always the case, the editorial writer will offer (1) the event, (2) the issue, (3) arguments for and against, (4) the solution or resolution.

Chapter Five

Quantitative Analysis

Preliminary investigation of the results of the data collected suggests several substantial differences in the use of neutral editorials when controlling for incorporation. In addition, each newspaper has its own distinct style that presented itself in both pre-incorporation and post-incorporation years. Some differences appear to be a reflection of the area in which the newspapers publish, and the sometimes stated and at other times unstated mission of the newspaper. The events occurring globally, nationally, and regionally also may have effected the newspapers and apparently made them either reactive or proactive to certain social events.

Table 5.1 presents percentages for each newspaper controlling for pre- and post-incorporation. The table contains, for each newspaper, the percent distribution of the two major variables: dimension and context. Notable changes occurred in pre- and post-incorporation years for each newspaper but to varying degrees.

While each newspaper devoted more than fifty percent of their lead editorials to political issues, it was the New York Times that devoted more than one-third more of its space to political issues than the other two newspapers. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and Washington Post used just over fifty percent of its lead editorials space to political issues and were more equally

split on the use of economic and social editorials in both pre- and post-merger years. In post-incorporation years, the Times decreased its coverage of political issues by sixteen percentage points while more than doubling its economic coverage. Political issues, however, remained the domain with the greatest coverage by each of the newspapers.

The greatest change for any of the newspapers across the three domains was with the Washington Post which saw a decline in social editorials from thirty-one percent to just over eleven percent in post-incorporation years. During that same period the Post increased its political coverage by fifteen percent points. Given its location in the nation's capitol, it is not surprising to see this change. What cannot be explained so easily is the decline in political editorials by the Times. In addition, each newspaper showed increased interest in economic editorials which may be a reflection of the recessions and oil embargoes of the 1970s.

The least changed of any of the newspapers was the Atlanta Journal-Constitution which devoted nearly the identical amount of coverage of each domain in pre-merger and post-merger years. The two publicly held newspapers changed the most in post-incorporation years; again, however, this change varied between the two newspapers by domain.

Each newspaper showed fluctuation in the use of favorable, neutral, and unfavorable editorials. Based on changes in the percent of favorable editorials,

the Washington Post showed the least change. The favorability of editorials in the Journal-Constitution and the Times decreased by about thirteen percentage points after incorporation.

Incorporation also had some impact on the newspapers' use of neutral editorials as both the Atlanta newspapers and the Washington Post increased their use of neutral editorials. The Times remained stable in its proportion of neutral editorials. The Journal-Constitution tripled the proportion of neutral editorials while the Post nearly doubled its neutral editorials. Thus, the hypothesis of increased neutrality after incorporation is supported for two of the three newspapers.

The effect of incorporation varied for each newspaper across each of the three major variables presented in Table 5.1 and no consistent pattern appeared between privately held and publicly held newspapers. To further examine changes in the newspapers' use of neutral editorials, the data in Table 5.2 were generated. Table 5.2 presents the percent of neutral editorials controlling for all newspapers in pre- and post-incorporation years, the percent of neutral editorials across each of the three primary dimensions, and, lastly, a breakdown of neutral editorials for each newspaper. The data suggest incorporation had a marked effect on the percent of neutral editorials when controlling for incorporation, thus the hypothesis is supported. However, only a slight difference was shown between domains with social editorials receiving the

smallest amount of neutral editorials and political editorials the greatest amount of neutral editorials. The Washington Post had the highest number of neutral editorials during the thirty-year period of the study followed by the Times, and the Journal-Constitution.

This suggests that the privately held Journal-Constitution did not worry about offending readers or advertisers as much as the other two newspapers did. This, perhaps, is a function of the type of ownership of the Times and Post are subjected to in addition to competition faced by those newspapers and the virtual lack of local competition for the Journal-Constitution. Competition is a key alternative explanation is this point is discussed further in Chapter Five.

As noted above, the dimension with the greatest amount of neutral editorials was political with additional differences between social and economic editorials. This may be because of the different nature of the three variables. Political issues often can be considered dichotomous, that is, pro-Democrat or anti-Republican, and social issues often are multifaceted in terms of complexity, ie., social issues may consist of several political and economic elements. If this is true, then the results suggest an interesting aspect of newspaper editorials: social and economic issues are clear cut for editorial writers while political issues may cause concern amongst the writers and they search for a more objective middle ground to avoid charges of bias.

Table 5.3 extends this analysis by examining the proportion of neutral

editorials by time period and dimension for each newspaper separately. This analysis enables us to explore the possibility that the rise in neutral editorials may vary widely by domain and newspaper. Several such interactions are suggested in Table 5.3. For example, for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, the sharp increase in the neutrality of editorials was fairly uniform across each domain. The rate of neutral editorials for this newspaper varied little across the domains after merger, ranging from a low of ten percent for economic editorials and fourteen percent for social editorials. For the Atlanta newspaper the hypothesis of increased neutrality is clearly supported for each domain.

The pattern of neutral editorials for the Washington Post across time periods and domain also provides some support for the major hypothesis. Specifically, rates of neutral editorials tended to increase after incorporation in both the economic and political domains. Unexpectedly, social editorials exhibited less neutrality after incorporation.

The pattern for the New York Times is most divergent from expectations. There was essentially no change in the proportion of neutral editorials in the economic and political domains. The rate of neutral social editorials, however, dropped substantially after incorporation.

To examine the magnitude of difference in neutral editorials across the independent variables, the proportion of neutral editorials within each category of the independent variables was computed. As shown in Table 4.4, these

analyses revealed that there was a statistically significant increase in the proportion of neutral editorials after incorporation. The differences in the rate of neutral editorials were not significantly different across the different domains (social, economic, political) or for the different newspapers.

The possibility that these non-significant differences by domain and newspaper may have been masked by interactions between variables was examined using a logistic regression analysis. Model 1 in Table 5.4 assesses the statistical significance of incorporation, domain, and newspaper on the likelihood of neutral editorials. Model 2 adds the two-way interaction effects between incorporation and domain.

As shown in Table 5.4, incorporation was the only variable that had a statistically significant impact on the likelihood of neutral editorials. After controlling for the domain and type of newspaper, the logistic regression coefficient reveals that editorials became more neutral after incorporation. The interaction between incorporation and domain was not statistically significant. This indicates that the rise in neutral editorials after incorporation was uniform across domains.

The table of means at the bottom of Table 4.4 shows this trend and also indicates very little difference across domains in the rate of neutral editorials. These post-incorporation means ranged from a low of eleven percent for economic editorials and thirteen percent for political editorials.

Summary/Discussion

The results of the data analysis suggest several important changes in the three newspapers with a possible correlation between ownership change and changes in the use of neutral editorials. It was hypothesized that changes in ownership, ie., merger and public incorporation, at the newspapers would generate more neutral editorials. This was hypothesized because the effect of incorporation could be such that the newspapers' owners might be less willing to take an advocacy stand on social, economic, and political issues in order not to upset other board members, advertisers, and readers.

The hypothesis is supported in the following way: incorporation was a statistically significant main effect as shown in Table 5.4. The interaction between incorporation and domain was not, however, statistically significant. The hypothesis also is supported as the Atlanta Journal-Constitution showed increased neutrality in editorials across each domain (Table 5.3), the Washington Post showed increased neutrality in editorials in only the economic and political domains, and the New York Times showed increased neutrality in none of the three domains.

In terms of corporate size, it is possible to "rank order" the newspapers in order of the level of incorporation as seen in total circulation and total number of newspapers held by each parent corporation. Doing this puts the New York Times at the top, followed by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and

Washington Post (see Appendix C for complete media holdings of the three groups). It was expected that the New York Times would increase its use of neutral editorials the most because it is the largest newspaper corporation in this study. It was, however, the newspaper that maintained neutrality in the pre- and post-incorporation years. The only notable change in the newspaper was in its use of neutral social editorials, and that number declined from the pre-incorporation years.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution is the only privately held, family owned newspaper in the study and it had the lowest percentage of neutral editorials. Confounding the generalizations that can be made is that the Washington Post, a family owned, publicly traded newspaper also showed numerous changes in the years following incorporation. Therefore, the effect of public versus private ownership on the newspapers' use of neutral editorials may not be a factor.

The general conclusion that can be reached is that there is an effect of incorporation on these newspapers' use of neutral editorials and therefore the hypothesis is supported. That effect varies by newspaper (eg., public versus private ownership and corporate size) which suggests that the use of neutral editorials changes over time and is the result of perhaps several factors influencing corporate ideology as reflected in the newspapers' lead Sunday editorial. Those factors which were specifically controlled to determine the extent to which incorporation affected the newspapers' use of neutral editorials

were the social, economic, and political domains.

The statistical analysis gives a starting point for further analysis. The qualitative analysis in Chapter Six gives further insight into the changes that took place on the pages of the newspapers' editorial page.

Chapter Six

Qualitative Analysis: Civil Rights Editorials

The very nature of editorials, how they are conceived, written, and presented, requires a detailed qualitative analysis in addition to a quantitative analysis. Editorials are, by design, judgmental and intended to persuade. Therefore, a contextual analysis of selected editorials helps shed light on whether the newspapers in this study changed editorial positions to that of greater neutrality as ownership changed, or whether other factors also affected change, such as change in the communities around the newspapers and society at large. Content analysis as a research procedure must be approached with caution because of the subjective nature of the process (Wright, 1986). The purpose of content analysis is to classify, describe, and analyze the manifest content of the editorials under study.

This chapter deals with a selected social issue during the thirty-year period of this study: civil rights. Civil rights was selected as the topic because it is one of a few issues that has been in the media spotlight throughout the years encompassed by this study and may act as a reference point to determine the degree to which these newspapers became more neutral. A problem civil rights as a social issue, however, is that none of the newspapers seemed to show any movement toward greater neutrality toward the particular events that encompass civil rights. As was shown in Chapter Five, the Atlanta Journal-

Constitution and Washington Post increased the percent of neutral social editorials after incorporation. The New York Times decreased its number of neutral social editorials after incorporation. The social issue domain, therefore, is somewhat problematic.

What may have occurred with each newspaper is, some fluctuations within the social domain itself. In the case of the Atlanta and Washington, D.C. newspapers, for example, the manner in which the newspapers treated other social issues such as education, crime, public moral problems, etc., may have been in the direction of increased in neutrality. In any case, all three newspapers showed varying degrees of support for civil rights issues. Moreover, for the New York Times, the newspaper appears to have been consistent in its support of civil rights issues while decreasing the percent of neutral editorials on other social issues. While the civil rights editorials described below do not tend to support the hypothesis of increased neutrality in post-incorporation years, the editorials demonstrate that incorporation may not have as far reaching impact has originally hypothesized -- at least for social issues.

Each of the newspapers in this study are located in large metropolitan areas with large minority populations. Each of 2,137 editorials was read and each editorial dealing specifically with civil rights was culled for the qualitative analysis. Each newspaper had approximately twelve editorials dealing

specifically with civil rights during the pre- and post-incorporation periods. It is to specific examples of persuasive and neutral editorials I turn.

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

The role that Ralph McGill and Eugene Patterson played in the writing of editorials at the Atlanta newspapers cannot be understated. McGill also was in the forefront as a champion of equal rights during the 1950s and 1960s. According to Grimes (1973), McGill was threatened, harassed, and harangued by members of the Ku Klux Klan and others whenever he wrote of civil rights. Church and synagogue bombings were commonplace in the South during this time period and McGill was quick to decry the racists' terror tactics. He also was quick to point out the great strides Georgia had taken as a leader in the civil rights movement.

With the election of George Wallace to the governor's office in Alabama and attacks against civil rights marchers in Mississippi, the attention of the nation was on the South. The Atlanta Constitution pointed out in 1962 the advances made by Georgia, while other states were battling court-mandated redistricting and desegregation.

> The recent election in Alabama of an extremist governor who is encouraging the lawlessness in Mississippi simply adds to the impressiveness of Georgia's judgment in choosing a progressive governor like Carl Sanders over a man who wanted to follow the Alabama-Mississippi trail of wreckage. ... Georgia has her troubles

> still -- her church-burnings, for instance. But she also has a people who will not stand for it (Atlanta Constitution editorial, September 22, 1962).

The specific wording of the editorial leaves no doubt in the reader's mind the position of the editorial writer. An "extremist governor" who encourages "lawlessness" in another state are negative, value-laden terms that typically are avoided in straight newswriting.

The editorial also noted how Georgia voluntarily had begun to desegregate schools and how state officials had drawn up a plan for legislative reapportionment so that voting districts would reflect the racial make-up of the area.

The editorial writers at the Constitution were not hesitant, however, to chastise the leaders of the civil rights movement when they thought the leaders had strayed from their goals. In the summer of 1965 race riots had occurred in Detroit, Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. The Los Angeles riot was the basis for an editorial calling for black leaders to bear the responsibility for helping to foment the unrest in that city. It was a battle, according to the writer, for the "soul" of the "Negro race"

> Just as surely as the responsible white community bears the primary obligation for taking the soul of the South out of the hands of the bullying white individuals who are blinded by malice toward Negroes collectively, the responsible Negro community must and should recognize its like obligation now and speak with courage to its own irresponsibilities (Atlanta Constitution editorial,

August 16, 1965).

Without using value-laden terms, the editorial writer used a persuasive writing technique that was intended to prod the black leadership to "recognize its like obligation."

Los Angeles stood as a model of how, in the minds of the editorial writer, blacks could get along with whites. As the editorial further notes

> For Los Angeles is not Mississippi, nor is it Harlem. It is one of the nation's fairer cities to its Negro. Not only is de jure segregation virtually unknown there, de facto acceptance of Negroes prevails there, and opportunities are offered there, on a scale few other cities can match (Constitution editorial, August 16, 1965).

Given the recent riots in Los Angeles in the aftermath of the Rodney King incident, the editorial also is telling as to how our conceptions of equal rights and opportunity have not changed in the past thirty years. Even more telling, however, are the subtle changes that occurred in the writing of civil rights editorials in the years following the Journal and Constitution's merger.

Late in 1975 the United States Senate took up the issue of busing to achieve desegregation. An antibusing amendment was added to a measure that would prevent the Department of Health, Education and Welfare from cutting off funds to school districts that were not pressing to desegregate their schools. The writers at the Journal-Constitution saw this not as an issue that would slow the desegregation process, but as a means of preventing a clash

between the legislative and judicial branches of government:

> The antibusing amendment therefore is only a token, but it is symbolically important because of its sponsorship and support. ... By its vote the Senate has recognized the nationwide disenchantment with busing. ... It remains to be seen whether the senators can come up with a better way of attaining the goal (Journal-Constitution editorials, September 21, 1975).

The editorial writers were non-committal in that they did not offer a solution to the problem of desegregation. Again, it was a "remains to be seen" attitude, rather than the use of the persuasive form that leads to the reader to conclude the editorial is neutral.

Less than three years later, the Journal-Constitution editorialized on the busing issue again. This time, however, the busing issue was specifically in Atlanta and dealt with a law suit to force cross-district busing of students to achieve parity in predominantly black districts. The court held that no pattern of discrimination had been established because the districts had a "long history" of segregated schools:

> Massive busing across district lines, particularly when 10 counties are involved, indeed would be a drastic remedy. Though it is still possible, it seems a much less likely prospect as a result of Thursday's federal court decision (Journal-Constitution editorial, March 5, 1978).

The Journal-Constitution editorial reads more like a news story than an editorial opinion as it outlines the history of the suit and concludes without advocating options for change.

As shown in Chapter Five, the Atlanta newspapers increased from no neutral social editorials to fourteen percent neutral editorials in the post-merger years. The above examples are specific cases where, in post-merger years, the editorials writers had an opportunity to take a stand (whether pro-change or anti-change) and failed to do so. It seems highly unlikely that the newspaper, in its pre-merger days, would vacillate on an issue so central to the cause of equal rights -- especially a newspaper that has long called itself the "Voice of the South".

The writing style of the editorials of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution changed from that of a delayed lead, as is shown in the first editorial, to that of a direct lead. The former is more conversational and sets the scene for the reader. The latter is a by-product of a straight news writing style. The direct lead also is more stiff, matter-of-fact in tone and winnows the personality out of the writer and, by extension, out of the newspaper. The Washington Post also showed changes in its usage of persuasive versus neutral editorials and in its writing style in the pre- to post-incorporation years and it is to the Post we now turn.[1]

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[1]The writing style of each newspaper is further discussed in Chapter Six. These brief descriptions are meant as a means of showing for this one topic -- civil rights -- how the newspapers changed writing styles and how these new writing styles may be an alternative explanation as to perceptions of increased neutrality in editorials.

Washington Post

The Washington Post showed notable changes in increased neutrality in two out of three domains, but in regard to civil rights, the newspaper was a strong advocate of equal rights in the pre-incorporation years and what may be termed a "moderate" advocate in the post-incorporation years. This is consistent with the results of the quantitative analysis discussed in the previous chapter as the Post showed a decrease in the percent of neutral editorials after incorporation.

While Congress debated the Civil Rights Act of 1964, for example, racial violence broke out in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and St. Augustine, Florida. The Post was uncompromising in its denigration of those who attacked civil rights demonstrators

> It is the violence of desperate men who know their cause is lost and who are recklessly ready to destroy all they can as they go down. ... These have not been unavoidable clashes between conflicting white and Negro groups. On the contrary, they have been systematic attacks on civil rights demonstrators who have sought to protest publicly against discriminations which are morally wrong - attacks by hoodlum bands countenanced if not encouraged by the local police and, in some degree, attacks by police themselves (Washington Post editorial, June 14, 1964).

The Post's use of an uncompromising tone in its denigration of those who attacked the civil rights demonstrators is shown in the descriptions used by the editorial writers. Those opposed to the marchers are "hoodlum bands"

and "desperate men". The marchers are "demonstrators" seeking to "protest publicly". The use of the persuasive form by the editorial writer is meant to convey support of the demonstrators marching against lawless hoards supported by the police.

Later, in the same editorial, the Post editorial writers encouraged President Johnson to heed the suggestion of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and send U.S. marshals into the regions to ensure the safety of civil rights marchers.

> The remedy is, of course, a drastic one; and the President is understandably reluctant to resort to it. But perhaps the time has come for the Governors of Florida and Alabama to be told in unmistakable terms that they must assure human decency in their states -- or the Federal Government will have to do it for them (Post editorial, June 14, 1964).

Here the editorial writer uses a direct form of advocacy/persuasive writing that commits the Post to the position of the civil rights marchers. The Post's response is measured as is seen in the statement "perhaps it is time," but the writer then resorts to an advocacy statement that the governors of the southern states had better conform or the government "will have to do it for them." In either case, the message is clear and far from a neutral standpoint.

A little more than one year later, the Post was calling again for Federal intervention in the South. The White House had plans for a conference on civil rights for spring, 1966. In November, 1965, planners debated the issue of

voluntary compliance by states in the registration of black voters. In the South, many blacks were reluctant to register to vote because of attacks on them by white segregationists. According to the Post, it would be "naive, or worse" to assume that blacks would go out in any great number to register to vote where they had been beaten, attacked or threatened with economic reprisals if they attempted to register to vote. The Post's recommendation was to send in a Federal task force to protect those who wished to register to vote

> Negro enfranchisement in many parts of the South is likely to come about soon only if the Federal Government takes active measures to facilitate it. One suggested measure is to send mobile registration units, with Federal registration officials, out to the rural areas, away from the feared and hated county courthouses. What's wrong with that? Only by encouraging registration and voting -- by making it at once safe and simple -- will Negroes be able to develop political power (Post editorial, November 21, 1965).

The editorial writer used a persuasive form of writing to point out discrepancies in voter registration and offered solutions to the problem. The editorial writer also was negative in the use of the terms "feared and hated" county courthouses, and offered a positive response to make registration "safe and simple".

It appeared the Washington Post shifted away from its strong advocacy positions of the pre-incorporation years when, in 1977, a reverse discrimination suit was brought against the University of California at Davis by a white student who wanted to enroll in the university's medical school. Allan Bakke

had attempted to enroll at the school and was told that seats in the in-coming class were available on the basis of racial quotas and the white quota had been filled. Bakke sued and the university was ordered to find room for Bakke. Davis officials appealed to the Supreme Court and the Washington Post took a stand that was decidedly middle-of-the-road.

The Washington Post editorial writers noted that the case was complicated by the fact that proponents on both sides of the issue were claiming the case would affect affirmative-action programs. Those who backed Bakke claimed the quotas were reverse discrimination; those who backed the school claimed the quotas were necessary to achieve a necessary balance of minority students at the school.

> What is at issue should not be construed as something pitting the interests of blacks against those of whites. Racial justice, which is at heart what it's all about, can hardly be considered as the exclusive concern of one or the other group. Soundly based affirmative-action programs are in the interest of white and nonwhite Americans. And so is the maintenance of a distinction between going forward with such programs and lapsing into lazy and dangerous, if momentarily convenient, programs that effectively build racial discrimination back into law (Post editorial, September, 16, 1977).

Throughout the editorial, the Post supported the ending of the racial quota system at the school as is seen in the statement that racial justice should not be considered the "exclusive concern" of one group. Instead of offering solutions to the problem, the Post offered a non-committal history of

affirmative action that actually seemed to support Bakke's case.

The Washington Post's editorial writers then chided liberals who had supported the university's quota program. It was a case of individual rights versus group entitlements, according to the Post, and not racially specific programs designed to balance out past injustices:

> We hope and expect the Court can resolve it in a way that will not do violence to the nation's commitment to take race into account to redress generations of racial wrongs or its commitment to preservations of the individual's right to be seen by the state as something more than a racial statistic (Post editorial, September 16, 1977).

What occurred, then, is the lapsing into the style of editorial writing that is "wait and see" and non-persuasive. This wait-and-see style often is a trademark, along with "we hope something -- anything -- will occur", of neutral editorials and can be seen in the lead statement of the example "we hope and expect".

The writing style of the Post is that of telling a story much in the same vein as that of a "straight" news story. There is a lead, such as the introduction of the Bakke case, the body, where alternative positions or the history of the case are presented, and a conclusion which is where the advocacy or persuasive position of the editorial generally comes through. The writing style can mirror that of straight news, although the newspaper also leads its editorials with a bit of sarcasm. The New York Times differed the

most from any of the newspapers in this study in terms of writing style. The Times and the Post were most similar, however, in supporting civil rights issues. It is to the Times that this analysis now turns.

New York Times

The New York Times showed important changes in its use of neutral editorials, but in a direction different from that of the Atlanta newspapers. As shown in Chapter Four, the Times decreased dramatically its use of neutral social editorials and showed only marginal increases in neutral economic and political editorials in the post-incorporation years.

In the pre-incorporation years, editorials dealing with civil rights were both neutral and advocacy. The Times' writing style can be considered "multi-faceted" if not meandering. The editorial writer will identify a specific situation, then bring in several facets in what is seen as an attempt to objectively critique the situation. This was the case when Congress began debate over President Kennedy's civil rights program in mid-1963. The editorial touched on the need for equal rights for all citizens of the United States, not only blacks

> This is a task that far transcends the adoption of a civil rights law. The basic need is for a national assault on poverty and illiteracy, coupled with a reassessment of individual attitudes and practices (New York Times editorial, June 23, 1963).

The editorial writer uses a straight-news style of writing that also

touches on advocacy as is seen in the sentence beginning with "The basic need ...". The editorial borders on neutrality, however, as the writer merely identifies the problem (poverty and illiteracy), yet offers no concrete solutions.

The editorial then abandoned any aspect of civil rights reforms in favor of an assault on Congress for what the Times writers considered to be foot-dragging on Capitol Hill:

> Congress has been the laggard thus far in the great civil rights revolution that is shaking the nation. The President has put forward a bold and inspiring program; it must now be considered with gravity and urgency. We do not agree with all aspects of it, and we certainly believe it should be soberly debated (New York Times editorial, June 23, 1963, emphasis added).

The editorial begins with a strong denunciation of Congress (they are the laggards), support of President Lyndon Johnson (he has put forth a bold and inspiring program), and a call for debate on the issue. The editorial writer then adds the sentence, without further explanation, that places the New York Times squarely on neutral ground if they were challenged: "We do not agree ...". The Times' editorial writer's caveat effectively left an opening for the newspaper to retreat from its position if challenged. The question remains: With which aspects of the civil rights legislation does the newspaper disagree? The reader is left to ponder.

As has been pointed out earlier, it long has been the nature of an editorial to inform and provide alternative solutions to specific problems (Rystrom,

1982). To do otherwise is the essence of neutrality. The New York Times again showed this flair for neutrality following riots in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Springfield. President Johnson, urging calm, said that blacks in the United States had "won their legal rights" but the long history of degradation, coupled with a ghetto existence, was a dangerous situation:

> This is a huge undertaking. The riots in Los Angeles and elsewhere do not merely underline the enormity of the problem. These destructive rebellions threaten to aggravate the sociological and economic infirmities afflicting the American Negro community, setting back its progress toward a better life (New York Times editorial, August 15, 1965).

While offering no solutions, the Times' editorial writer called on blacks to be disciplined while awaiting equal access to education, housing, and jobs. The editorial writer attempts to be somewhat persuasive as the writer notes "destructive rebellions" will set back advances made thus far, and the editorial concludes with the observation that there still are many problems facing blacks in the United States in 1965, and that these problems must be "dealt with firmly and quickly." However, no solutions are offered as to how these problems are to be dealt with and therefore the editorial lapses into neutral because to offer solutions would involve taking steps that would, perhaps, upset the status quo and the white majority.

In the years following incorporation, the New York Times dealt with civil rights issues in a manner that was decidedly different than that of the pre-

incorporation years. The editorial shows, as also was the case with the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and the Washington Post, that editorial writers do not always suggest alternative solutions to a specific problem. Sometimes a call opposing change can be just as advocacy-based as an editorial advocating change. Both are seen as attempts at editorial persuasion.

During the presidential primaries in Florida in 1971, for example, white voters were successful in getting President Nixon to call for an anti-busing moratorium. The Times editorial writers saw this as a retreat from what they called the "second Reconstruction". Mistakes were made, according to the Times, as individual states attempted to deal with various civil rights laws and court decisions. However, "scoundrels came forward to exploit the turmoil by generating fear and hatred."

Voters in Florida had succeeded in temporarily halting the move toward integrated schools by upgrading some segregated schools. The Times' suggestion for change was to eliminate those who would set the country back in its drive for total integration.

> The issue is not how to integrate the schools; it is nothing less than whether the old lingering fears of an integrated America are once again to frighten this country off its only dependable course to internal peace and social justice (New York Times editorial, March 16, 1972).

The Times then pointed out the increased number of black men and women elected to state education commissions, university boards, and all

levels of government as proof that an integrated society can be political reality and that integration has begun to show productive results.

> To stop the movement of increasing integration (via busing) in the schools is to abandon the commitment to an integrated society just when integration has started to show constructive results (New York Times editorial, March 16, 1972).

The advocacy position was that of calling for continued integration because of the "constructive results" that have been shown. Unlike the previous editorial, the writer made clear the position of the newspaper for continued integration via busing -- a position that still has major political and social opposition today.

Finally, in the summer of 1991, the Times lambasted President Bush's opposition to a civil rights bill pending in Congress. The president, along with other Republicans such as Jesse Helms of North Carolina, had opposed the legislation saying the bill promoted quotas in the hiring of minorities over qualified whites. When other Republicans opposed the president's quota stand, the president offered a new tact.

> Now Mr. Bush has come up with another explanation, and this one is a whopper: To protect workers from discrimination, he says, would undermine reform of American education (New York Times editorial, August 4, 1991).

The negative connotation that the president has come up with "a whopper" puts the newspaper in an advocacy position supporting the civil rights act while also making an evaluation of the president.

In addition, opponents of the bill said that employers could demand, for example, a high school diploma in order for someone to work for them. The Times editorial pointed out that the Supreme Court, in previous civil rights cases before it, had held that employers would have to show certain educational qualifications were a necessary prelude to employment. The Times found the president's reasoning illogical.

> According to Mr. Bush's logic, allowing discriminatory hiring practices would increase educational achievement. How? It's in the national interest that everyone graduate from high school - and the bill wouldn't let employers insist on a high school diploma as a qualification for any job, even shoveling coal or emptying trash cans (Times editorial, August 4, 1991).

The newspaper concluded with a harsh attack on Bush and noted that former Chief Justice Warren Burger in 1971 charged that any employment practice which operates to exclude blacks based on education is prohibited. The Times concluded, "the President now disputes that reasoning with a new fable, about how racially biased hiring policies enhance education. Congress has a date with reality when it returns in the fall." The editorial writer's use of "new fable" and challenging Congress to pass the bill when it returns to session, puts the newspaper directly on the side of advocating support of the bill.

Summary

It was hypothesized that changes in ownership patterns at these three newspapers from that of independent/family owned to corporately owned would result in a higher rate of neutral editorials in those years following incorporation. The quantitative analysis supported the hypothesis; the analysis of civil rights editorials lends some support to the hypothesis, yet this is a qualified support. It probably is because of the nature of civil rights that the editorials did not show a notable or important change from advocacy to neutrality.

For the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, the increase in more neutral editorials was the most obvious of the three newspapers. The New York Times and the Washington Post showed less change toward neutrality when dealing with civil rights issues, or what I have termed here as "moderate" change.

The examination of civil rights as an issue that spans the duration of the thirty-year study gives some support to the quantitative analysis and the support of the hypothesis for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. The hypothesis, when comparing the three newspapers' changes in post-incorporation years, is not supported for the Washington Post and the New York Times. Further reading of political, economic, and social issues, and the subtle changes in styles at the newspapers in Chapter Seven gives additional insight into how

changes in ownership patterns may have influenced the use of neutral editorials at the three newspapers.

Chapter Seven

Editorials in Pre- and Post-Incorporation Years

In the previous two chapters editorials were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to examine how changes in ownership patterns at the three newspapers may have, by varying degrees, affected the newspapers' use of neutral editorials. The purpose of this chapter is to further examine the newspapers' use of persuasive/advocacy editorials and neutral editorials in the pre-incorporation and post-incorporation years. In analyzing the editorials, however, a third type of editorial presented itself: the apathetic editorial. Neither advocacy nor neutral in nature, these torpid editorials are a natural consequence of editorial writers hard pressed to produce a lead editorial 365 days per year. Naturally, there would be some days when nothing of consequence happened, but the editorial writers had to fill space. This type of editorial often leaves the reader wondering: "Why was this written?"

The unique or peculiar histories of the newspapers also emerge when editorials other than just civil rights editorials are analyzed. These editorials -- social, political, and economic, are presented in pre-incorporation and post-incorporation years and allows the reader to develop a "feel" for the newspapers' histories and perhaps how the newspapers developed into the corporate vehicles they are today.

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Pre-Incorporation Years: Ralph McGill and Eugene Patterson wrote the vast majority of the editorials that appeared on the Constitution's editorial page during the years 1961-1969. In 1968, following a dispute with the publisher, Patterson left for the Washington Post where he stayed for a brief period before moving on to the board of the St. Petersburg Times. A short while afterward, McGill died and a new team took over editorial control of the newspapers.

McGill's editorial skill was that of an orator and advocate. His particular passions were civil rights and politics (Martin, 1973). McGill was considered a liberal during the 1950s and 1960s mainly for his support of civil rights. Politically, however, he was a long-time Republican. His political standing did not mute his opposition to what he considered political malfeasance -- no matter the political party of his target.

In 1961, for example, Georgia state Rep. Culver Kidd sent a memo to state employees at the Milledgeville State Hospital asking them to donate $10 to his election campaign for lieutenant governor. The request was in direct violation of state law prohibiting state employees from participating in politics and stated in a not-so-subtle manner.

> "I realize that state employes [sic] are forbidden to participate in politics, however, I feel like your help in this campaign is not politics, but like taking an insurance policy to take care of yourselves and your families' future. (Constitution editorial, April 8, 1961).

The letter suggested further that contributors make the donation in the name of a family relative ("your child or any relative or friend who does not work for the state").

The Constitution's attack on the representative was scathing.

> In other words, if you work at the State Hospital you are supposed to buy "insurance" by investing in Rep. Kidd's campaign, then hide behind the rompers of children or the coattails of relatives or friends after doing so. ... How low can political pitches be? (Constitution editorial, April 8, 1961).

The editorial further denigrated this "smelly kind of 'insurance'" and questioned whether Kidd was really a serious candidate for showing his contempt for the law. The use of the phrases "hide behind the rompers" and "how low can political pitches be" are examples of the colorful writing style that was once the trademark of many newspapers in this country. The editorial writers obviously are taking an advocacy position by criticizing the actions of the politician.

Later that year, the Constitution did a series of articles outlining the adminstration of the State Welfare Department. Not surprisingly, the series drew fire from the administrator of the department who let loose with a volley of obscenities at a press conference when the administrator spotted the Constitution's reporter at the news conference. The editorial staff's response to the fusillade was equally as harsh and showed the fighting spirit of McGill.

> We consider it neither right nor manly for this public official to abuse a reporter of this newspaper with the unacceptable profanity Mr. Kemper has used. If he intends to

> curse his critics instead of doing his job, the people will come to their own conclusions about the man. But if he is unable to restrain himself from using his powerful position in the government to abuse and curse newspapermen, we request he lay off our working reporters henceforth and take it up with the editors who sent them (Constitution editorial, July 22, 1961).

The circumstances bring to mind a scene of the angry state official storming into McGill's office and the two men fighting it out then and there. Again, the challenge to the politician to visit the editorial offices of the newspaper and the note "if he intends to curse his critics instead of doing his job" shows a position of advocacy.

The Constitution's devotion to fighting for the underdog and for the civil rights movement earned McGill and his staff the Pulitzer Prize in 1967. McGill often would take on the Ku Klux Klan in his front-page signed editorial and continue his attack on the editorial page. Late in 1965 the House Committee on Un-American Activities turned its attention away from the perceived "Communist threat" and began hearings on the KKK. The Klan had been accused of holding training camps for new members to learn the methods of fire bombing and dynamiting cars and buildings. The Constitution editorial of October 30, 1965 stated

> (T)he evidence being delivered to the congressional committee is having the salutary effect of removing the cotton veil from the Klan. The KKK, we have been told, has been gaining considerably in membership of late. Many of the new Kluxers, we are sure, have been suckered into the Klan because they are disturbed by racial change and believe the KKK is a respectable

> way to reverse the tide of events. History will show whether the tide can be reversed. The HUAC hearings, thread by thread, are unraveling any mask of respectability the Klan may wear (Constitution editorial, October 30, 1965).

McGill's attacks on the Klan on both the editorial and front page drew the wrath of the Klan and constant threats. According to Martin (1973) McGill wrote, in an especially vitriolic attack on the Klan, "It takes real daffiness to join the Klan and pay ten dollars for a bedsheet and a hood and go around speaking of Brother Kipgrapp and Brother Dragon and Brother Kleagle. Yes sir, I think that is even more ridiculous than the stuff that Adolf Hitler and Ill Doochey give their people. The Klan breeds crime and intolerance and bigotry and never a single good thing." As a result of this and other editorial swipes at the Klan, McGill and the Constitution were the constant target of Klan parades and harassment in the years that followed.

These examples of editorials from the pre-incorporation years at the Constitution show the strong advocacy position taken by the newspaper's editorial writers on various topics. In the post-incorporation years, changes began to take place in the advocacy positions once taken at the newspaper.

Post-Incorporation Years: On June 23, 1968, the first combined Sunday edition of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution was published with Jack Tarver taking the title of president of Atlanta Newspapers, Inc. In October 1968 Reg Murphy took over as editor of the Constitution when Eugene Patterson left for

the Post. The newspaper underwent several changes in staff, style and design in the coming years. Perhaps the biggest change for the lead Sunday editorials was in the writing itself. The editorial took on the appearance of being written "by committee." In other words, the strong editorial voice of McGill and, by association, Patterson, was lost. McGill's editorials were short and to the point. The lead Sunday editorials in the post-merger years began to take on the look and feel of editorial essays with what can be called "suggestions" for change as opposed to demands for reform. It also appears a conscious effort was made to duplicate the style of the New York Times in this new essay style. In any case, the changes at the Journal-Constitution were consistent with changes at other newspapers across the United States as merger mania took place.

In the years following the merger, the combined newspapers' editorial page also took on more and more of the cluttered look of the Journal. It wasn't until August 1, 1982, that the editorial pages underwent a major facelift with Jim Minter as editor and David Easterly as president of Atlanta Newspapers, Inc. Like the New York Times and the Washington Post, the Atlanta newspapers -- reconstituted as the Journal-Constitution --showed a noticeable decline in the number of advocacy editorials and an increase in neutral editorials. These neutral editorials were noncombative and disinterested in taking a stance on any given topic. They also usually ended with the non-

committal: "It remains to be seen if this happens" or "We hope this isn't the case."

An example of the former occurred in the Journal-Constitution following a press conference by Nixon late in 1973 as the embattled president sought to deflect attention away from his troubles with Watergate toward his achievements abroad, especially with the Middle East. (It was the famous press conference where Dan Rather received applause when he arose to ask Nixon a question and Nixon asked Rather, "Are you running for something?" To which Rather replied, "No, sir, are you?") Nixon attacked the electronic media for what he perceived to be its seemingly endless assault on the Watergate cover-up in the aftermath of his "Saturday Night Massacre." Instead of centering its attention on the question of the president's legal standing for firing special prosecutor Archibald Cox, the Journal-Constitution dealt with the president's outline of his meeting with Soviet President Leonid I. Brezhnev in the wake of war in the Middle East. According to the Journal-Constitution:

> If Mr. Nixon's Russian detente leads to a Middle East cease-fire that is durable, and if it leads to a genuine peace in the Middle East, it should be accepted that these gains offset other faults. But all of that remains to be seen (Journal-Constitution editorial, October 28, 1973).

The editorial writer poses the problem as one of letting the politicians decide what is right for the two countries. Persuasive editorial writing makes suggestions for change, not taking on a "wait and see" posture. Further, what

the editorial writer seems to be suggesting, is if the president is successful with foreign policy affairs and can bring peace to the Middle East and detente with the Soviet Union, then any illegalities of Watergate should be forgiven. These illegalities are termed "other faults". But, of course, all of that remains to be seen.

On social issues in the post-merger years, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution still was for change, but also followed a moderate course. For example, in 1984 the city of Atlanta's fire and police departments' promotion tests were declared to be racially biased because no black officials scored high enough to be promoted to the rank of lieutenant. After bickering over the details of the exam for nearly two years, Mayor Andrew Young rejected the results and called for a new test to be designed so that blacks would do better. The newspaper opposed the new testing scheme and called for the promotion of the most qualified police and fire fighters.

> We don't begrudge the mayor's desire to see a police force and a fire bureau and other city offices reflecting the racial balance of this city; in fact, we'd like to see that, too. But we believe that the first priority, especially in something as critical as public safety, is to have the best possible people in the jobs, and not least in supervisory positions (Journal-Constitution editorial, April 27, 1986).

Apparently the newspapers' editorial staff did not care that the test had been determined to be racially biased from the onset by an independent panel of experts. With the black population of the city of Atlanta at approximately

50 percent in the early 1980s, it is somewhat surprising that the newspapers did not recognize the racially exclusionary testing that existed and call for a change in the testing procedure. One reason could be because the white power structure in Atlanta remains dominant and the newspaper's publisher is loyal to that power structure. This example points out a problem with some advocacy editorials. The editorial advocates the hiring of competent individuals, but it is an obvious shift away from affirmative action programs the newspaper once would have supported.

The above examples also point out many substantive changes in the Atlanta newspapers prior to and after the merger with the Cox newspaper chain. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution was not unique in these changes in editorial policy. But, the change in ownership of the newspaper from an independent newspaper to that of flagship of the Cox Newspaper Group, unquestionably changed the types of editorials if not also the substance of those editorials to that of greater neutrality. The net result of the merger of the two Atlanta newspapers appears to be one of a softening of editorial positions. Changes also occurred at the Washington Post during the years after incorporation. It is to those years prior to incorporation at the Post that I now turn.

Washington Post

Pre-Incorporation Years: Like the other newspapers in this study, the Washington Post showed a significant shift in its lead Sunday editorials from that of advocacy to greater neutrality in post-incorporation years. The Washington Post, as noted earlier, differs from the other newspapers in this study in that the Graham family still maintains a majority share of voting stock. The Post underwent personnel changes throughout the thirty-year period, but few of these changes affected the look of the editorial page.

Following the death of her husband, Philip Graham, in August 1963, Katharine Graham took control of the newspapers and, with the help and guidance of executive editor Ben Bradlee, made the Post into a worthy competitor of the New York Times. Katharine Graham had become one of the most powerful women in Washington, D.C., and, counting among her acquaintances and good friends the Reagans, the tag line "An Independent Newspaper" may have become a misnomer. It was Bradlee, according to Hertsgaard (1989), who kept the editorial staff insulated, to a certain degree, from Katharine Graham and, later, from her son Donald Graham. As Cose (1989) notes, the editorial page was not under the direct control of Bradlee, but his influence was felt by Philip Geyelin who took over the editorial page when long-time editorial writer J. Russell Wiggins retired.

The Post was a newspaper seeking its identity in the early 1960s as it

competed against the Times, the Washington Star, and other smaller dailies in its circulation area. A number of its early editorials dealt with social issues such as race relations and public welfare. Early in 1962, for example, the District of Columbia commission had ruled that welfare funds would be cut off to families where an unemployed male lived. The intent of the ruling, according to the commissioners, was to force unemployed males to find a job. The effect of the ruling, instead, was to force the male to leave his family so that the family could continue to receive welfare relief. While the commissioners squabbled over rule changes and who would lead the commission, twenty families were eventually denied relief. The Post was sarcastic in its commentary

> The District's public welfare program suffers from one very bad regulation. It suffers from a lack of funds. It suffers from a lack of leadership in the District Building and in the Welfare Department. Leadership on this issue in the District Building is welcome indeed (Post editorial, March 18, 1962).

When not using sarcasm as an editorial device, the Post's writers could be brutally blunt. The writing style was one of quickly identifying the problem, saying where the antagonists had gone wrong, and offering a solution to the problem.

The Post also did not shy from battles with the judiciary as is evidenced by the now-famous Pentagon Papers case and numerous other frays. One case held the attention of the editors of the Post for nearly one week during mid-

1969. A judge in Maryland fined another judge accused of assaulting a woman with whom he was having an affair. Having pleaded guilty, the man was fined $300. That same day, the sitting judge sentenced a man to six months in jail for distributing what the judge considered to be obscene material. The obscene material was a small underground newspaper with a cartoon lampooning the sitting judge. The Post pointed out the discrepancy in the sentences and was warned by the judge to cease its haranguing against the judge. The Post's response was unmerciful.

> (O)ne is drawn to the conclusion that in Maryland if one wants to assault a woman it is advisable first to get a judgeship and that if one wants to peddle cartoons one had better not lampoon judges. Judge William J. O'Donnell ... said that, in earlier editorial comment on the case The Washington Post had come "perilously close to contempt of court." What did he expect in the light of such a prosecution? Reverence? (Post editorial, July 6, 1969).

Later in the same editorial the Post called for a judicial review of the entire Maryland court system that would "throw some light on the inferior courts of a State in which justice has been administered more in the interest of the judges than of the judged."

Post-Incorporation Years: The Washington Post was in the forefront of the investigation of the Watergate break-in and ensuing cover up by the Nixon White House. Katharine Graham took particular delight in the fall of the president and the Post was caustic in much of its coverage of the Nixon administration (Cose, 1989). Graham's personal antagonism toward Nixon was

no secret (Hertsgaard, 1989) and the Post's editorials reflected that antagonism. It could be argued that much of what the Nixon administration itself did brought on attacks in the press, but this too seems to be a result of Nixon's paranoid view of those who opposed him (Colodny and Gettlin, 1991).

It wasn't only Nixon who drew the Post's fire, however. Early in 1973, for example, Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz accused what he call the "urban press" of unfairly giving estimates of the rate of food price increases on an annual basis. The Post editorial writers simply had multiplied the one-month January increase of 2.3 percent by twelve and had drawn Butz' complaint. The Post was less than remorseful in its response.

> The Secretary denounces all of this wanton multiplication as unfair, immoral, and further evidence of the urban press's hostility to his farm policies. To demonstrate our sympathy for Secretary Butz in his present embarrassments, we shall refrain in this instance from multiplication in public. We continue to feel, of course, that it is permissible for consenting adults to indulge in arithmetic in private. If any reader over the age of 18 wishes to write us privately, we shall be willing to send him, in a plain envelope, the number at which one arrives when multiplying a monthly rate of 2.3 per cent by 12 (Post editorial, February 25, 1973).

Butz' complaints may have been an attempt to deflect attention from President Nixon's problems because by this time Watergate had become a full-blown scandal for the White House. And, for nearly one year until Nixon's resignation in August 1974 the Post's lead Sunday editorial dealt with Nixon.

It also was about this time the Washington Post's editorials became much longer and the writing style appeared to change from of sarcasm to contemplative story-telling as the newspaper became more of an advocate. The editorials reviewed in a meticulous manner the background of the situation or issue, current changes in the situation, and the Post's suggestions for change or maintaining the status quo. With the appointment of Archibald Cox as special prosecutor, the Post reflected on the president's situation and what lies ahead for the nation

> Of President Nixon's Watergate crisis ... it seems to us there are perhaps three alternative ways for it to turn out. The first, and far and away the best, outcome, we believe, would be for the whole story to be dredged up in a way which would clear President Nixon convincingly of any complicity, identify and bring to justice those guilty of crimes, remove from office those proven to be unfit, and set in motion the kind of reforms in the President's manner of doing business that are so urgently needed to restore the public's confidence in the political process and the conduct of government (Post editorial, May 20, 1973).

Despite Katharine Graham's dislike for the president, the editorial was even tempered and almost apologetic. The remaining two alternatives suggested by the Post editorial writers are (1) there could be any outcome and the public would be left satisfied that justice had been served and, (2) the whole affair could continue to be covered up, the presidency crippled, and Nixon forced to resign or be impeached.

The newspaper supported Jimmy Carter in his re-election run against

Ronald Reagan in 1980 and then supported Mondale against President Reagan in 1984. The Post broke with tradition, however, in 1988 with an editorial titled "No Endorsement". In it, the writers detailed the shortcomings of Vice-President George Bush and Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis and suggested both political parties change their selection process. The editorial was not among the 2,137 in the sample but stands as an example of neutrality or ambiguity while at the same time criticizing both political parties.

Despite protestations from the Reagan administration, the Post was not all that unfriendly to the administration. Katharine Graham is close friends with the Reagans and apparently this friendship directed editorial policy at the Post as top officials often met for lunch with Donald and Katharine Graham and twenty or so of the top editors at the newspaper's office (Hertsgaard, 1989). Why, then, did the Post oppose Reagan in both the 1980 and 1984 elections? The answer may be that editors at the newspaper, and perhaps even the Grahams, made a conscious effort to appear opposed to the Reagan administration while still supporting it. For example, there was a feeling of an "inner circle" according to one journalist interviewed by Hertsgaard, where editorial policy, and therefore corporate policy, was directed not by news judgment but instead by economics. According to the journalist the meetings were "not about getting news stories. It's about getting to know those people (politicians and cabinet members) and getting a feel for who they are. ... The

talk may be bullshit, but it takes on a different meaning when said over the intimacy of the luncheon table. The ambience is, 'We're all insiders here.'" Finally, it may be that the top echelon at the Post understood that political endorsements do not carry any persuasive powers.

An interesting example of how servile to the Reagan administration the Post had become in some instances occurred in late 1985 when the newspaper received information on accused spy Ronald Pelton. The Post had the story in December, 1985, but at the government's request did not publish details of the government's case against Pelton until May, 1986 (Hertsgaard, 1989). Shortly afterward, CIA Director William Casey chastised the Post for what he called "speculating and reporting details beyond the information actually released at the trial" (Post editorial, June 1, 1986). The Post never mentioned the fact that the editors had held on to the story until after the trial had begun and instead editorialized that the newspaper was capable of policing itself without government help.

> Responsible journalists, moreover, are not promiscuous in the exercise of this right. They do consider "competing interests." Sensitive information that comes this newspaper's way is regularly and conscientiously screened for its possible value to an enemy. You will not be surprised that there are cases at the margin where the judgments of an independent newspaper and an official agency differ. But you are entitled to know -- and to expect -- that even as journalists rise to protest the very hint of official "cautions," they apply cautions of their own (Post editorial, June 1, 1986).

Apparently the public's right to know does not include the Post's admission that it had withheld publication of the story for more than six months.

Finally, the Post took an amazing step away from rational thought in September, 1991, during the Senate confirmation hearings of Robert Gates to head the CIA. Four years earlier Gates had drawn opposition from the majority of news organizations and the Post itself for the same position in the CIA because of his role in the Iran-contra affair. As if to soften the mistakes, if not misdeeds, by the Reagan administration and now the Bush administration, the Post concluded that there was enough blame to go around and Gates should not be singled out for culpability: "The Iran-contra affair marked a woeful lapse in congressional oversight as well as in executive policy." Amazingly, the Post's recommendation for approval of Gates for the position was based on two premises: (1) his pledge to work with Congress and, (2) the support of President Bush. The Post noted Republican committee chairman David Boren's response in its endorsement of Gates.

> One of the vital things he (Boren) learned was reflected in Mr. Gates's pledge to respect the law and, specifically, the law compelling consultation with Congress. ... (Gates) is the familiar adviser and clear choice of a president who has been at the CIA himself and will have his own thoughts on reform, and the disqualifying revelations that were rumored to be imminent at the hearings have not materialized (Post editorial, September 22, 1991).

A movement of open hostility toward the Nixon adminstration to a large

measure of trust apparently had occurred in the fifteen years since Watergate at the newspaper. The result was the Washington Post was the only newspaper in this study to support the Bush administration.

One reason stands strikingly clear for this shift in editorial focus -- the New York Times. As noted earlier, the Post struggled for many years to become the leading newspaper in its own home town. With the demise of the Washington Star and the Post's role in Watergate, the newspaper suddenly found itself in direct competition with the Times and considered by many to be the home-town newspaper for members of Congress. But the New York Times has long been considered the nation's newspaper of record and it is to the Times I now turn.

New York Times

Pre-Incorporation Years: Given the New York Times' location in the communication and economic capital of the world, it came as no surprise that the newspaper would devote a great deal of attention to international issues. The Times differed from the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and the Washington Post in a number of ways perhaps most notably in its competition with other newspapers. This competition occurs not only in New York City, but nationally and internationally as well. The newspaper long has been considered the nation's newspaper of record and a great many newspaper editors around the

nation will wait to see what the Times is running on its front page before deciding what they will run on their own front page.

The editorial page of the New York Times has changed little in the past 100 years. The page had been under the direct control of a member of the Sulzberger family up until 1972 when Max Frankel took over for John Oakes, a cousin of Punch Sulzberger (Cose, 1989). According to Cose, Sulzberger had decided that the editorial page in 1972 had become too predictable and too antibusiness. In the years prior to the shake up on the editorial page and prior to the newspaper's public offering of stock in 1968, the Times dealt with recurring themes of the 1960s, for example NATO and France's desire to pull out of the organization under the leadership of DeGaulle, Vietnam and the on-going Paris peace talks, and Israel and Egypt's peace talks and the battle for control of the Suez Canal. The threat of nuclear weapons and mutually assured destruction also was a recurrent theme of the editorial writers of the Times as was issues dealing with Latin America and the United States' role in helping developing nations.

The New York Times' editorials also differed from the Journal-Constitution and Post in the actual writing style. The Times uses a indirect approach to editorials that is commonly referred to as a delayed lead. Often, the editorial writer will give: (1) an historical background, (2) a discussion of what is presently occurring, (3) what is right/wrong with what is occurring and,

in the case of the Times, (4) suggestions for change that is historically based on what the Times has written in the past. Up until 1972, for example, the New York Times had about a dozen editorial writers, each with a specific expertise. The Journal-Constitution, conversely, had Ralph McGill and Eugene Patterson. While the Journal-Constitution and the Post also were easily identified as editorializing on the primary domains of economics, politics, or social issues, the Times often included all three domains in the same editorial.

An editorial dealing with U.S. relations with Latin America in the early 1960s provides an example of how the writer tied together social, economic, and political issues to describe how the United States should provide moral leadership in Latin America under the auspices of the Alliance for Progress. The editorial was identified as "political" by the three coders.

> Thus a dilemma arises that is reflected in United States relations with Latin America. We cannot, or should not expect the Latin-American nations to conform to North American concepts of what is right politically, economically and socially. We must expect that in the convulsive struggles to achieve social justice, economic development and political democracy, many Latin-American nations will use methods and concepts that are different from ours and may be even temporarily harmful to us (Times editorial, April 19, 1964).

While oftentimes the lead Sunday editorial of the New York Times used delayed leads or drifted from one topic to another and combined aspects of political, economic, and social issues, other times the editorials could be brutally direct. In the summer of 1964 the Republican party held its convention

in San Francisco and Barry Goldwater won the party's nomination. The Times was not amused.

> (Goldwater) is not the man for the modern, progressive Republicanism that until last week had controlled the party for a generation and had represented its broad rank and file. He is not the man for the problems of the age we live in. He is not the man to guide the destinies of the United States for the next four years. He is on the contrary a man whose foreign policy is unthinking and whose domestic policy is unbelievable (Times editorial, July 19, 1964).

The Times, like the other newspapers in this study, did not always maintain what some would consider to be a strict "liberal" or Democrat line. In 1966, for example, with U.S. involvement in Vietnam increasing, Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara spoke in Montreal on the problems of U.S. national security and the need for more of the nation's youth to participate in the military if the need should arise. The Times applauded McNamara's suggestion of mandatory national service.

> We warmly welcome his endorsement of the principle of two years of national service for all of the nation's youth. Service in the Peace Corps or in community work in this country cannot be equated in hardship and danger with combat duty, but at least universal service would reduce the inequities that have developed under Selective Service (Times editorial, May 22, 1966).

Post-Incorporation Years: During the late 1960s and early 1970s the war in Vietnam held much of the attention of the New York Times. There were continual calls for a halt in the U.S. war effort and the Times based its 1972

editorial endorsement of George McGovern on what it called Richard Nixon's "spectacularly failed" programs both abroad and at home.

> For four years the war has continued, the most divisive force in the nation's life. Instead of bridging the racial gap, he has widened it by repeated demagogic appeals to white racial feeling on the welfare and busing issues. ... So far as this being an "open Administration," it is undoubtedly the most closed Administration -- the most secretive, the most removed and remote from the public, the most hostile to criticism -- of any American Administration in modern times (Times editorial, October 22, 1972).

The persuasive ability of the nation's "newspaper of record" was shown when President Nixon won re-election in 1972 election by the largest margin in modern politics. During his administration, President Nixon and the Times battled over other issues -- the most famous of which is the Pentagon Papers. Following Nixon's resignation, the Times, like the Post, called for a time of national healing and supported some of the policies of the Ford administration. The support was far from gregarious as can be seen in a lead Sunday editorial dealing with Ford's first year in office. Despite disagreeing with Ford's pardon of Nixon, the Times noted that "No scandal has marred his Administration" (New York Times editorial, August 10, 1975). In addition to that luke-warm endorsement, the Times did applaud Ford's ability to work with Congress in a manner that Nixon found difficult, especially toward the end of his tenure as president.

Mr. Ford moved promptly and effectively to end the rancor,

> distrust and governmental paralysis that marked the last month of his predecessor's scandal-tainted Administration. He revived the press conference as a regular event, reopened lines of communication with blacks, women's groups and universities, restored an amiable give-and-take spirit across party lines with opposition Democrats in Congress, and made himself available for advice and consultation from a much wider circle of people (Times editorial, August 10, 1975).

In other words, the editorial writer was supporting the president for things a president is supposed to be doing as opposed to not fouling up relations with those with whom the president is supposed to work.

The New York Times took a decidedly conservative approach to a matter dealing with the First Amendment when it supported the government's claim against a monthly journal preparing to publish an article on how to make a nuclear bomb. In 1972 the Times had gone to the Supreme Court to have an injunction removed against the newspaper after it was enjoined from publishing the Pentagon Papers. Apparently prior restraint did not apply to other news organizations seeking to publish sensitive material.

> Judge Warren accepts the "heavy burden" of the Constitution. But he also wants time to think "before I'd give the hydrogen bomb to Idi Amin." This seems to be a legitimate contest of concerns. Under the circumstances, a week or two of enforced restraint for a monthly journal seems a tolerable price (Times editorial, March 3, 1979).

The Times also addressed the issue of government control of the mass media in a May 7, 1979 editorial that was particularly telling in terms of how many owners of media outlets view themselves as being different from other

corporations. The issue involved Chief Justice Warren Burger's concurring opinion on a case in Massachusetts where state law forbade corporations from lobbying voters during statewide referenda. The Supreme Court struck down that law saying corporations enjoy the same free speech as individuals in a free society. In a footnote the Chief Justice added that the state may in some instances be allowed to control the free speech of corporations and that the government may have to decide which corporations are media and which are not. Writing in the late 1970s, the Times then took a giant leap of logic by asking "Is it really so difficult to pick out the press in a gallery of corporations?" The answer, now in the 1990s, is an unequivocal "Yes." But, the Times answered its own question later in the same editorial with a paragraph that is eerily ironic.

> The Chief Justice may be right to foresee a potential connection between the rights of Exxon and the rights of The Times -- in the public mind if not in the Constitution. That might be particularly so if The Times should one day acquire oil tankers while Exxon acquires a newspaper or decides to publish handbills at election time. ... It remains possible to distinguish a company that sells newspapers from a company that sells oil and even from its own parent companies or subsidiaries that mash pulp or bind encyclopedias (Times editorial, May 7, 1979).

Now, with interlocking directorates, multinational corporations, absentee ownership, national and international chain ownership of the mass media, it no longer remains possible to distinguish one company from the next. The New York Times Company has become one such indistinguishable corporation.

Finally, the New York Times continued its opposition to Republican administrations' policies of cutting welfare programs for the poor and elderly in a March 18, 1990 editorial criticizing George Bush. But, in an interesting turn, the newspaper also accused the American people of turning their backs on the poor and needy and buying into years of Republican economic plans.

> (T)he President claims the nation cannot afford expensive public programs while the Federal deficit remains so high. That proposition lacks both logic and evidence. Even worse, many people believe it, thoughtlessly. Americans may not want to help the poor or rebuild schools. but they surely can afford to do both (Times editorial, March 18, 1990).

As the above examples suggest, the New York Times editorial writers' style is that of presenting a position in argumentative form: summarizing the problem, presenting both pro and con issues, and defending its editorial position in an advocacy manner. The Sunday Times often presents a single editorial and usually are written by a single staff writer. The editorial writing staff of the New York Times is the largest of the three newspapers in this study with individual writers specializing in singular topics.

Summary

The three newspapers in this study varied greatly in the amount of change that took place during the past thirty years. The New York Times for example, has changed its design only once in the past three decades (Cose,

1989), and even this change was a subtle as the newspaper increased the number of columns on news pages and added a science and technology section, and localized "neighborhood" sections. Other changes at the three newspapers were more obvious.

The Constitution, for example, was a reflective, hard-hitting, and proactive newspaper in the years prior to its merger with the Journal. In the pre-merger years the newspaper's editorials pushed for change. In the post-merger years, the apparent corporate concern for maximized profits resulted in muted editorials non-offensive to the greatest common denominator -- advertisers.

The writing style of the newspapers' editorial writers has changed little at the New York Times and Washington Post, but the ideological orientation of the writers, editors, and publishers appears to have changed in both a quantitative and qualitative manner.

The changes at the three newspapers varied considerably when controlling for political, economic, and social domains. Other factors obviously were at work including competition from other media. It is to these and other confounding influences that I now turn.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions/Implications

All one has to do is look at the 1992 presidential campaign to see that journalists love polls and statistics. So, how would the New York, Washington, and Atlanta newspapers report the results of this study? The New York Times in its stoic and stodgy manner would have several lines in its headline:

Newspaper Study Finds Major Differences

Corporate Ownership Seen As One Contributor

Sociologist Says More Work Needed on Study

The Washington Post, following its tradition, would declare:

Sociologist Finds Obvious; Newspapers Different

Washington Post Exclusive By Bob Woodward

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution would report the story as:

Yankee Sociologist Says Southern Newspapers Tops; Atlanta Journal-Constitution Leads 30-year Survey

Summary of Findings

The main hypothesis of this study was that changes in ownership patterns of major metropolitan daily newspapers from that of independent/family owned to corporately owned will result in a higher rate of neutral editorials in those years following public incorporation. As shown in Table 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4, the data support the hypothesis when the three newspapers are taken together. Examined separately, however, a different pattern emerges. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution had notable increases in the percent of neutral social, economic, and political editorials in the post-incorporation years. The Washington Post only had notable increases in the percent of neutral economic and political editorials while showing a decrease in the percent of neutral social editorials in post-incorporation years. The New York Times only had minor increases in the percent of neutral economic and political editorials, but

showed a dramatic decrease in the percent of neutral social editorials in post-incorporation years.

In Chapter Six, civil rights editorials for each newspaper during both pre-incorporation and post-incorporation years were examined. Again, the results varied by newspaper. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution showed a marked increase in its use of neutral editorials when dealing with civil rights issues in

the post-incorporation years. The Washington Post and the New York Times showed "moderate" decreases in their use of neutral editorials dealing with civil rights in the post-incorporation years. These results are consistent with the quantitative results discussed above.

Finally, in Chapter Seven, a number of editorials were selected to demonstrate how the newspapers approached various issues in either an advocacy or neutral manner in the pre- and post-incorporation years. These editorials were chosen to illustrate how the editorial writers used persuasive or non-committal writing techniques. The editorials also revealed how the majority of editorials across each domain were advocacy by nature.

The major question addressed in this study was the degree to which incorporation affected the newspapers' use of neutral editorials. Three conclusions may be made in regard to the effect of incorporation. The first is that the New York Times emerged as the most corporately structured in the traditional sense of the three newspapers. While the Sulzberger family and family trusts hold vast amounts of corporate voting stock, no one member owns more than five percent of the stock. Therefore, the effect of incorporation on the Sulzberger realm is real and the power of the family on the ideological orientation the newspaper espouses is diluted. In addition, the lack of change in ownership pattern for the newspaper cannot account for the Times' not following the hypothesis of an increase in neutral editorials.

Regionality, the newspaper's owners' stated mission, and the newspaper's history as the nation's newspaper of record all are additional factors affecting the ideology espoused on the editorial page.

The second conclusion concerns the Washington Post, which remains as the newspaper with the most individual control. The Graham family still controls fifty-one percent of the Class A voting stock and the newspaper became more stringent in its editorial-page policy in the years following incorporation. The Post followed the hypothesized move to increased usage of neutral editorials. This probably can best be explained by the lack of competition the Post now enjoys in Washington, D.C. Competition from the Washington Times appears to be perfunctory at best and the Post all but ignores the avowedly conservative railings from the Times.

Finally, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution is the only privately owned, family held, newspaper in the study, but followed the same track as the Post. The Journal-Constitution has undergone several leadership changes in the past few years which may correlate with the changes at the Washington Post. What bears further study is whether Cox Enterprises elects to go public with a stock offering and what that effect would have on the firm's newspapers' use of neutral editorials.

All three newspapers showed change in their usage of political, social, and economic issues in their lead Sunday editorials. The main reason for this

change is seen in the impact of other media on the newspaper industry as mentioned above. The industry became stagnant in the 1970s as cable television began to make new inroads. Circulation did not keep pace with changes in readership patterns and this naturally demanded that the newspapers change their appearance and their content. USA Today and its colorful graphics and shortened stories also had a significant impact on newspapers across the country. The crisis that faced many newspapers, including those in this study, passed in the 1980s and circulation figures did not decrease recent years (Editor and Publisher International Yearbook, 1991). The problem for many other newspapers is that their circulation figures did not follow the growth in population of the United States.

One constant in the newspaper industry has been the willingness of newspapers to editorialize on just about any topic imaginable. Incorporation is one factor that may have an impact on this constant as newspapers move to more neutral editorials to assuage advertisers and readers.

When the three newspapers are considered together the main hypothesis is supported, ie., changes in ownership patterns at these three newspapers from that of independent/family owned to corporately owned will resulted in a higher rate of neutral editorials in the years following incorporation. When the newspapers are examined separately, however, support for the main hypothesis diminishes considerably. A number of

alternative explanations show why this occurs. Those alternative explanations are competition from other media, changes in the newspapers and their surrounding communities, and autonomy of journalists.

Alternative Explanations

Competition: Newspapers, as complex organizations, are subject to the same internal and external pressures as other organizations, but newspapers differ from many other social organizations in that, as part of the mass media, there is a public trust involved. If the use of more neutral editorials in a newspaper changes because of the type of ownership, the news and opinion of the newspaper staff as reflected in editorial page content also change and the next logical step would be to study the impact of these ideological changes on audiences. While it may be expected that private corporations do not want to upset their economic viability by advocating certain causes, the mass media in the United States traditionally have been expected to be advocates or watchdogs. So, while incorporation may help the economics of some corporations, and saved some newspapers, the apparent result for many newspapers is an ideological mush.

Competition may be the key, or perhaps more accurately, lack of competition from other newspapers, and this presented a special problem in this analysis. Each newspaper is the dominant newspaper in its city and region.

The Times has the most competition with newspapers such as the New York Post, Newsday, Village Voice, and newspapers in New Jersey and other surrounding areas taking some readers from the Times. The missions of the Times and the many New York tabloids, however, are obviously different. But there is an important difference in the competition that the Times faces and the competition facing the Journal-Constitution and the Washington Post. The Times is the nation's newspaper of record. Other newspapers, newsmagazines, television networks, and other news outlets study the New York Times' and set their agendas accordingly. In fact, the influence of the Times is such that the Times' staff transmits over the wire the schedule of news stories that will appear on the ensuing day's front page of the Times. Many newspapers adjust their front page layouts based on what the Times' editors feel are the top stories of the day. In other words, competition for the New York Times comes only in the form that the Times is the top newspaper in the country and therefore must always be on top or ahead of other news outlets in the country.

Competition for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution and Washington Post is perfunctory at best with only the recently begun Washington Times (owned by the Rev. Sun-Myung Moon) showing any challenge to the Post's circulation power base. The Journal-Constitution's only competition is from itself when, during the weekdays, the reporting staffs are separated.

In short, there may be some correlation between competition and the use of advocacy or neutral editorials, ie., as competition decreases, neutral editorials increase. In addition, incorporation correlates with the size of the newspaper, the size of the newspaper correlates with corporate monopolies, and monopolies are inversely related to competition. Some studies have attempted to explore the apparent correlation between competition and its impact on the media, but these studies have only looked at news pages and not editorials (Meyer and Wearden, 1984, and Thrift, 1977). The key may be in increased competition from other media, most notably television.

Television without question has had the greatest impact on newspapers and the future of newspapers. According to Leo Bogart (1992), the daily household penetration of newspapers has declined from a post World War II high of 1.4 newspapers per household to a current low of .7 newspapers per household. Despite the decline in the number of people reading newspapers, advertising has increased resulting in a greater "bulk" in daily newspapers. The New York Times, for example, has increased its average of 71 pages per weekday in 1977 to 113 pages in 1987; the Sunday New York Times increased from 648 pages to 1,037 during the same time period. According to Audit Bureau of Circulation, the three newspapers in this study increased their circulation an average of 5-7 percent during the past four years.

According to Bogart, most newspaper readers see television as the

primary source of information on major issues and newspapers as the major source of information on local issues. But the regional focus of the editorials in the newspapers in this study actually moved away from covering local issues. Newspapers, to compete in today's information society, need to redirect their focus on what constitutes "big news" or news that will have an impact on their readers. With less and less adults reading newspapers on a daily basis, and reader loyalty unpredictable at best, the new breed of publishers now taking over have to look to new ways of maintaining readers (Blankenberg, 1992). One way to maintain readers, the author argues, is by offering a product that is cogent, intelligent, and consistent.

Newspapers and the messages conveyed in their pages are not as ephemeral as television messages and this should be in newspapers' favor. The act of reading a newspaper or newsmagazine should make the messages consumed more central to the reader. Unfortunately, it appears most newspaper owners and publishers still favor the bottom line over manufacturing a product that is useful.

Changes in Size and Society: It probably would be impossible to find one thirty-year period in United States history with no significant social and economic change. The question that needs to be addressed here is whether newspapers are a reflection of the society in which they operate or they are an integral component of that society. During the past thirty years in this country

we have experienced political scandals such as Watergate, Iran-Contra, and the Pentagon Papers, economic recessions and upswings, oil embargoes, wars and other armed conflicts, and social upheavals such as the civil rights movement, busing, and abortion. Newspapers, like other complex organizations, change with society and newspapers have to act to maintain economic viability. In other words, as the world becomes more complex, so do newspapers and this may be one additional explanation for changes in editorial content. If a newspaper is, in fact, an integral part of society and plays an important role as social critic, it should give us cause for concern that the number of neutral editorials is on the rise.

The newspapers and the regions in which they publish have changes much in the past thirty years. Circulation for many newspapers, however, has not kept pace with population growth. For the New York Times, circulation has increased from 1.2 million in 1960 to 1.7 million in 1992 (Gales Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media, 1993). The population of New York City and its surrounding area, however, nearly doubled during the same time period (U.S. Census Bureau). During the thirty-year time period of this study, the population increased from approximately 10 million in 1960 to 18 million in 1990.

For the Washington Post, circulation kept pace with the increase in population. This was due, in part, to the demise of competing newspapers in

the District of Columbia area, most notably, the Washington Star. The circulation of the Post more than doubled in the thirty-year period growing from approximately 500,000 in 1960 to more than 1.1 million today (Gales Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media, 1993). The population in the District of Columbia and its surrounding area also nearly doubled during the same period growing from approximately 2 million in 1960 to just under 4 million today (U.S. Census Bureau).

Finally, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution showed only a modest increase in circulation from 1960 to 1990. In 1960 the two newspapers' combined circulation was approximately 500,000. By 1993, the circulation was approximately 700,000 (Gales Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media, 1993). The area surrounding metropolitan Atlanta, however, nearly tripled during the same time period. In 1960 the population was approximately 1 million; by 1990, the region had grown to approximately 2.8 million (U.S. Census Bureau).

What these figures suggest is that as the community surrounding the newspapers grew, the newspapers also had to change to keep pace with the diversity of new readers coming into the circulation area of the newspapers. These changes were most obvious in the layout, design, and packaging of the newspaper (see for example, Hiebert, Ungurait, and Bohn, 1992). Newspapers during the 1960s and 1970s, for example, began packaging news in different

sections to appeal to the broadening market of readers. Sections for "Women" were created and were later given more "politically correct" titles as "Life Style" or "Living".

The New York Times, as the largest newspaper in this study operating in the largest area, changed the least of the three newspapers. The explanation for this is that the population for New York City and its surrounding areas nearly doubled from 1960 to 1970 (growing from approximately 10 million to 18 million), but the population has remained steady at 18 million since 1970 (U.S. Census Bureau). The changes seen at the New York Times may or may not have occurred prior to incorporation in 1968 as the region began growing.

The Washington Post' circulation increase followed the increase in population in the region during the thirty-year time period for the study and the Post showed more editorial page change than the Times, but less change than the Journal-Constitution.

The newspaper that showed the most change was the Journal-Constitution. If population growth and the concomitant growth in the diversity of the people entering the region does play a important role in changes at a newspaper, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution stands as a prime example because the population around Atlanta, as noted earlier, nearly tripled during the thirty-year time period.

Finally, the fact that the Atlanta Journal-Constitution remains as a

privately held newspaper concern also may play an important role in the changes that occurred at the newspaper. The fact that the other newspapers in this study changed the least during the time period after going public with stock offering may suggest that these other alternative explanations play a highly important role in the development of a newspaper as it changes with its surrounding community.

Another important occurrence that coincided with changes in the regions was a decline in competition from other newspapers. As competition waned, monopolies and corporations grew and took complete control of most of the readership areas in the U.S. But this does not explain why some newspapers would increase the number of neutral editorials. It would make more sense to assume that with competition newspapers would be more cautious in espousing an ideological viewpoint, not less cautious. The New York Times has the most competition of the three newspapers in this study, so it makes sense that it would change the least of the three newspapers. This is because of its long-standing tradition as the newspaper of record. Readers gain comfort from seeing the same package every day of the week. Ideological flip-flopping would cause some readers to look for other news sources in New York such as Newsday, the New York Post, the Village Voice, and newsmagazines.

So why then the notable changes in the uses of neutral editorials on the pages of the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, the New York Times, and the

Washington Post? Lack of competition for the Atlanta and Washington newspapers may be a factor, but this flies in the face of common sense. If a newspaper is the only (or major) source of advertising for local businesses, those businesses would not have the economic clout to force change on the pages of the newspaper. Advertising is the life blood of a newspaper and it does make sense to keep advertisers happy. It could be argued, for example, that if a newspaper continuously hammers away at some issue that displeases advertisers and the advertisers threaten to leave, who would be hurt? Not a newspaper in a non-competitive market because the newspaper has a secure enough advertising base, in most cases, and the advertiser would have no alternative -- that is, inexpensive -- means of getting information out to consumers. However, larger circulation means a more diverse audience is being reached, and editorials continually representing one standpoint are bound to anger someone. Therefore, size of the newspaper equates to a more diverse audience and hence an increase in neutral editorials.

Who holds the power in the corporation also is problematic because, as noted earlier, sometimes it is impossible to determine who owns what trust, who owns the largest shares of the corporation (for the privately held group, at least), and what may be the impact of interlocking directorates. These are all questions that undoubtedly have an impact on ideology of corporations and help add to the complexity of this study.

Autonomy: One additional alternative explanation has to deal with the manner in which journalists, including reporters, editorial writers, editors, and publishers, view the reporting of the news. It was noted in an earlier chapter that journalists strive for some degree of objectivity in the reporting of the news and that the editorial page was where subjective reporting is expected. It is possible that, in their efforts to become more and more objective on the news pages, journalists have become more neutral on the editorial page. This blurring of the distinction between news and editorial comment may be a further result of the effects of incorporation on the ideology of the entire news package presented by newspapers.

Implications for Future Research

Three questions need to be addressed as to the implications of this study: (1) What is the future of newspapers in the United States? (2) How can sociological theory be applied to further the study of newspapers? (3) What impact will future changes in ownership patterns of newspaper have on democracy in the U.S.?

It was stated at the onset of this study that the goal of the research was an exploration into the means of determining the effects of incorporation on the ideology of complex organizations such as newspapers. No study, no matter how elaborate the methodology that guides it, can conclusively state that one

facet of an organization's history -- such as changes in ownership structure -- may be the sole factor in internal and external variations in that organization. Other factors, such as the political, economic, and social environment in which the newspaper publishers also plays an important role.

It was further proposed at the onset that only one newspaper's editorial page and front page would be studied to determine the effect of changes in ownership on the ideological orientation of that newspaper. That proposal was abandoned in favor of a more robust comparative analysis. This, too, helped to strengthen the study. The editorial page is just one snapshot of the entire newspaper and is a unique snapshot at that. It is the place where subjectivity takes the place of objectivity with no apologies from the journalist. But, what of the front page, the middle pages, the fronts of other sections, the selection criteria for news placement, news selection, photograph selection, headline size, etc.? These are all subjective in nature and contribute to the entire package of what makes a newspaper a vital part of the democratic process in the United States today. Future newspaper research needs to look at the entire newspaper as a package.

As noted earlier, the trend in the past thirty years has been toward corporate, chain, and group ownership of newspapers in the United States. Researchers still dispute whether those changes in ownership patterns are good -- for example, saving a small newspaper that otherwise would have folded --

or bad -- for example, removing the local "hometown flavor" that once was the press in America. In any event, the manner in which we study newspapers must change if we are to better understand the effect newspapers have on audiences, and, more importantly, the effect monopolies and large-scale, multinational corporations have on the ideology presented to readers on a daily basis.

Sociologists in the past have been content to study the effect of changes in ownership on readers' perceptions of what may or may not be important to readers. This is an important field that deserves continued inspection. However, this research suggests that antecedent to the effects of one aspect of the mass media on audiences should be the effect of corporatism on the presentation of media imagery.

What the mass media produce, of course, are images (Gamson, et al, 1992), and the more cohesive the image makers are in society, the more power they wield. Imagery may be seen as a means of transmuting reality rather than transmitting facts or information (Baudrillard, 1988) and therefore those who produce that imagery gain more and more control. This line of thought has led to discourse on the social construction of reality in post-modern theory and the role the media play in the construction of that reality. As Luke (1989) notes in his review of Baudrillard:

> (A)dvanced capitalist society is now experiencing an implosive

> reversal as power, expressed in the form of packaging and making choices, circulates between the masses and their institutional coordinators. The mass media are at the core of this social implosion of advanced capitalism. Politics, like the media, reflect the desired choices of the audiences in the places of power; yet the choices they are given flow out of the limited alternatives established in these same places of power (Luke, 1989, pp. 34).

The implications for future research in this field are interesting and lead to the question of community power, ideological hegemony, and the concentration of ownership in the mass media. The question is the focus of the work of Bagdikian (1990), and Entman (1989), who study ownership patterns of the media and the potential for impact on a democratic system. Bagdikian's argument is that concentrated ownership of the mass media narrows political discourse. Entman argues the owners and publishers of the mass media are driven by the same economic forces that stress maximization of profits. The marketplace will decide, not competition between newspapers or newsmagazines or television stations, what product is presented and pleases the audience. It seems that the "audience" in this latter form of reasoning is merely advertisers and not those who rely on the media for news and information. As Gamson, et al (1992) note, Entman ignores the larger issue of corporate control of media imagery.

In the past twenty five years the move toward corporate ownership of the mass media has rightfully continued to draw the attention of researchers. Government deregulation during the 1980s is seen as one cause of what only

can be described as a feeding frenzy by corporations who rush to buy up not only small, failing newspapers and other media outlets, but also larger, profitable media giants such as Warner Brothers (now Time-Warner) and Capital Cities (now, owner of ABC).

This study adds to the body of research in media sociology in that it attempts to fill a void left by other researchers, the majority of whom study only news pages and not the editorial page. Lacy and Fico (1990), for example, review the work of media researchers who study group versus independent owners of the newspapers and find that most researchers study only newspaper content in terms of "quality". Since a newspaper's "quality" is such a subjective measure, the researchers apply objective measures such as news-to-advertising ratios, amount of graphics, story length, and reporter workloads. Few studies have looked at the effect of changes in ownership from the perspective of the editorial page.

It is on the editorial page that the newspaper's and, by extension, the owner's subjective ideology is played out on a daily basis. This study has sought to explore to what extent changes in newspaper ownership from independent to corporate has influenced changes in neutral editorials. Underlying the study was the notion that corporate elites maintained the same outlook on society and that the ideological hegemony of those elites was, in some respects, designed for those elites to maintain their power base in U.S.

society. What the move toward expanded corporatism means for democracy in the U.S. is less freedom and less freedom of choice. More neutrality in editorials means the diminishment of the exchange of conflicting viewpoints. Some researchers suggest, however, that the issue may not be so clear cut. Media elites seek to protect their interests, but do so oftentimes in a public manner that dilutes their hegemonic influence:

> But what kind of hegemony is it when one can frequently observe instances in which elites have been forced to defend supposedly hegemonic ideas, sometimes even unsuccessfully, against the attacks of challengers? The very act of having to defend one's premises and assumptions, even if the challengers are a minority lacking significant political power, would seem to belie the existence of hegemony (Gamson, et al., 1992).

This is where the authors err because they assume hegemony in the above form as an ideal type. Newspapers differ from other complex organizations in that they are in competition with other news organizations. For example, a television newscast with a "conservative" slant to it could bring charges of "liberal bias" against a newspaper in a competing market that reported the same story with a different angle. What usually occurs, however, when such charges are made against one media organization is that the objective reality of a situation collides head-on with the reader's subjective interpretation of the event.

Some media critics have suggested that the concept of hegemony is too rigid and should be made more flexible to allow for variations in form

> The hegemony model of culture and the media reveals dominant ideological formations and discourses as a shifting terrain of consensus, struggle, and compromise rather than as an instrument of a monolithic, unidimensional ideology that is forced on the underlying population from above by a unified ruling class. ... different classes, sectors of capital, and social groups compete for social dominance and attempt to impose their visions, interests, and agendas on society as a whole. Hegemony is thus a shifting, complex, and open phenomenon, always subject to contestation and upheaval (Kellner, 1990).

In addition, competition plays an important role in the formation and maintenance of differing ideologies. With increased ownership of newspapers in the hands of fewer and fewer groups that can determine ideological orientation, the day of a unified ruling class that is monolithic and can control the underlying masses is nearer at hand. Lack of competition and the exchange of opposing viewpoints is the result and U.S. society will be the weaker because of it.

This study examines the organizational structure of different types of newspapers and the effect of changes in organizational structure on those newspapers' ideological orientation. Sociological theory fails to explain why some newspapers are affected in one manner by incorporation patterns while others are affected in a different manner. What was observed during the course of this study is that those changes are not as clear cut as originally was hypothesized. While one can not generalize these results to the entire population of newspapers and the corporations which own them, this study is

a link in a growing body of evidence that suggests the problem is sociological theory itself.

The key may lie in relative autonomy. The degree of freedom given to journalists by publishers and editors to operate and produce somewhat unencumbered suggests differences and similarities in newspapers from other organizations. The correlation is this: the more freedom given to workers at newspapers, the more ideologically diverse they will remain. Less freedom yields ideological uniformity that dulls the editorial process and the ensuing social discourse that editorial process is supposed to stimulate. This notion of autonomy is not, of course, limited to newspapers or other media. What may occur is journalists experience less autonomy after incorporation because a more diverse audience and management demands for conformity yields a narrower range of editorial positions.

One indicator of the failure of sociological theory in the study of organizations is that little research appears to exist concerning autonomy as an organizing principle amongst professionals and non-professionals. Many studies exist detailing the effects of professional autonomy and perceptions of bureaucratic control (see, for example, Meiksins and Watson, 1989, and York and Henley, 1986). In addition, Sutton (1984) studied functionalist theories in the sociology of science and found that some organizations violate professional norms of autonomy and professional recognition. The problem as it applies to

journalists lies in the perceptions journalists have of themselves as professionals.

Sutton's study and an older study by Breed (1952) are interesting because they point out two situations that journalists and especially editorial writers encounter on a daily basis: (1) violation of professional norms of autonomy and, (2) lack of professional recognition. In the first case, editorial writers may be told from what ideological perspective on a topic they should write. Journalists are used to the freedom of creating a story based on their experience of what makes a good story readable. When the editorial writer is told the editorial he or she has written does not conform to the ideological position of the newspaper conflict may arise. If the editorial writer refuses to alter the editorial, it will be rewritten and the writer reassigned. If the writer capitulates, the ideological diversity of the newspaper suffers. In the second case -- the lack of professional recognition -- editorial writers have to become used to anonymity in their writing because the editorials they produce are, by and large, unsigned and the opinion of the newspaper. Promotions on the editorial page are rare with a "glass ceiling" above the editorial writers. This is because advancement on a newspaper is limited to a finite number of positions. Many editorial writers aspire to become columnists, but, again, the space available also is finite. Therefore the reward for the editorial writer has to be professional recognition within the confines of the newspaper itself or

from newspapers' statewide and national organizations.

Another failure of sociological theory is that autonomy as an organizing principle has not been applied to those individuals who consider themselves to be professionals but are, in fact, quasi-professionals. Professionals have codes of ethics, standards of performance, and rules governing conduct, etc. Journalists may argue they are professionals, but in reality they are tradespeople because there is no cohesive pattern of checks and balances for "professional" violations.

Autonomy is a fundamental feature of organizations and because it is so important in newspapers, it may moderate the ideology that is presented and may improve or diminish the commodity journalists produce. Because of this, sociological theory, and its application to media sociology, is insufficient and new ways to look at the organizational structure of newspapers have to be developed if we are to better understand how ideology in organizations is developed, maintained, and presented.

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Table 4.1 Results of inter-coder reliability tests.* Percent agreement between coders.

	First Test	Second Test
Primary Categories		
Deals with administration (Yes or No)	92	84
Primary domain (Political, social economic)	87	84
Context of editorial (Favorable, neutral unfavorable)	82	82
Area (Local/Regional, national, international)	92	92

*For each reliablity test, each coder read the same 100 editorials.

Table 5.1 Descriptive statistics for three newspapers, pre- and post-incorporation, by major variables.

	Atl.		N.Y.		Wash.	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Variable						
Domain						
Political	53	52	78	62	51	66
Economic	25	27	10	21	18	23
Social	22	21	12	17	31	11
Context						
Favorable	54	40	49	36	42	36
Neutral	4	12	12	11	8	15
Unfav.	42	49	39	53	50	49

Table 5.2 Percent of neutral editorials by major variables.

	Percent Neutral	N
Incorporation		
Pre	.08	681
Post	.12	1456
Domain		
Social	.09	401
Economic	.10	460
Political	.12	1276
Newspaper		
Atlanta	.09	723
New York	.11	703
Washington	.12	711

Table 5.3 Percent neutrality for each newspaper, pre- and post-incorporation.

	Atl.		N.Y.		Wash.	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Domain						
Social	.00	.14	.25	.08	.23	.15
Economic	.04	.10	.05	.07	.12	.17
Political	.06	.11	.11	.13	.08	.15
Ratio High/Low	6.0	1.4	5.0	1.9	4.0	1.1
Across Domains	.04	.11	.12	.11	.08	.15

Table 5.4 Logistic regression testing for main effect of incorporation.

	Model 1	Model 2
"Main" effects	Slope [SE]	Slope [SE]
Incorporation	.270 [3.27]*	.240 [2.31]*
Domain		
Social	-.081 [-.84]	-.23 [-1.18]
Economic	-.072 [-.81]	-.06 [-.30]
Newspaper		
Washington	.069 [.84]	.08 [.94]
Atlanta	-.114 [-.11]	-.11 [-1.28]
Interaction		
Merger X Domain		
Social	---- ----	.20 [.91]
Economic	---- ----	-.01 [-.06]
R-Squared Anova		

*p<.05

Summary table, percent neutral editorials by two-way interactions.

	Mean	Ratio High/Low
Pre-incorporation		
Social	.06	1.5
Economic	.08	
Political	.09	
Post-Incorporation		
Social	.12	1.2
Economic	.11	
Political	.13	

Appendix A
CODE SHEET

Date _____

Newspaper: Atlanta 1 New York 2 Washington 3

Headline on editorial _____

President: JFK LBJ NIXON FORD CARTER REAGAN BUSH

Deals with administration: Yes 1 No 2

Primary Dimension/Institution of editorial:

Political 3 Economic 2 Social 1

Secondary Category(ies) of editorial:

	Yes	No
Politics and government acts	1	0
War and defense	1	0
Diplomacy and foreign relations	1	0
Economic activity	1	0
Agriculture	1	0
Transportation and travel	1	0
Crime and court activity	1	0
Moral problems/human relations	1	0
Accidents and disasters	1	0
Science and invention	1	0
Health, medicine, social welfare	1	0
Education and classic arts	1	0
Popular amusements	1	0
General human interest	1	0

Context of editorial: Favorable 3 Neutral 2 Unfavorable 1
Area. Local 1 Regional 2 National 3 International 4
Status Quo. For Change 0 Against Change 1
Topic. Event:_____
Issue:_____
Person(s):_____
Organization/Institution:_____
Argument presented:_____

Appendix B
Instructions for Coders

The identification numbers and date of the editorials have been provided for you. Before reading the editorial check to make sure the date matches the editorial you are about to read. Follow these instructions closely and circle the items that pertain to the corresponding categories.

1. Newspaper. Circle the number that corresponds to the newspaper you are reading. The newspaper name is located on the masthead of the editorial page. The masthead usually contains the name of the newspaper, the publisher, editor, date, etc.

2. Locate the lead editorial. This is the first editorial on the top right-hand column on the editorial page and it is located directly beneath the newspaper's masthead.

3. Headline on editorial. Write the headline in the space provided. Generally, there will be only one or two lines for the editorial. Write the complete headline including kickers (small headlines above the main headline). Example:

Carter's dilemma ------- Kicker
More Mush From the Wimp ----- Headline
(This is an actual Boston Herald headline)

4. Read the entire editorial to get a feel for what is being said, argued, etc. At the bottom of the Code Sheet is an area designated "Topic". Write the event in the space provided.

5. Write what event occurred. The event is generally located in the lead paragraph of the editorial. For example, in the case of an editorial arguing either for or against increased military spending, the event could be a speech by Ronald Reagan.

Event: Speech by Reagan outlining need for increased spending

6. The issue is the pro or con arguments made by individuals concerning the event. For example, if Congress opposed the amount of money asked for by Reagan in his defense spending bill, then the issue would be how much money is needed for defense.

Issue: Congressional members say Reagan wants too much money

7. Identify the persons mentioned in the editorial in the order of their importance to the editorial. For example, the main individual mentioned in the editorial may be President Jimmy Carter, but the editorial also may mention his predecessor Richard Nixon. You would write Carter's name as the main character in the editorial and Nixon afterward.

Person(s): Carter, Nixon

8. Identify the organization/institution mentioned in the editorial. For example, if the editorial deals with U.S. and Soviet relations and an upcoming summit meeting, the organization/institution would be U.S. and Soviet administrations. If the editorial deals with the White House and, for example a budget fight with Congress over the defense budget, you would write:

Organization/Institution: Presidency, Congress, U.S. military

9. Argument presented. This is generally located in the final paragraph of the editorial as the writer attempts to summarize what they have written. The argument presented is what the newspaper's editorial writer has written, not whether you agree or disagree with the position taken. Summarize in a sentence or two what the main points of the argument are. For example, in an editorial dealing with social spending cuts by the administration, the newspaper may point out the increased number of individuals on unemployment. You could summarize the argument presented as follows:

Argument presented: Military spending is up and the deficit continues to grow at unprecedented rates. The administration needs to cut back on defense spending and stimulate the economy to get more workers back into the workforce.

10. After reading the entire editorial, fill out the bottom portion of the code sheet beginning with the event, etc. This will help you identify the primary and secondary dimensions of the editorial.

11. Deals with administration. Generally, it should be straightforward whether the editorial deals with the presidential administration. If the editorial deals with the administration of the mayor's office of New York City, you would circle No. We are only interested in whether the editorial deals with the presidential administration in power at the point in time. If, for example, the

editorial states somewhere in the editorial that the Bush administration's latest tax cut proposal has met with opposition, then you would circle Yes (1).

12. Primary dimension/institution of editorial. There is bound to be some crossover in this variable. Often times editorials will begin with a statement that, for example, the economy is running out of control, we're heading for a recession, etc. If that's all the editorial discusses, then you would circle Economic (2). However, if the editorial chides the administration for doing nothing to control the economy, and points out weaknesses or suggests changes, then you would consider this a Political dimension. Issues dealing with matters of public welfare (crime, illiteracy, abortion rights, etc.) may be considered falling under the Social category of this variable. It is your overall impression of what the editorial's concern that will determine the primary dimension/institution of the editorial.

13. Secondary categories of editorial. The following operationalizations of the fourteen categories will help you determine which categories are mentioned in the editorial. Just because an editorial mentions a secondary category as defined here, does not necessarily mean you should circle that category. Often times an editorial will mention several of the below categories; the secondary category must be significant enough in relation to the primary dimension for you to consider it. In addition, rarely will the categories be mutually exclusive. Do NOT overcode. Make the editorial fit the secondary category.

Politics and government acts: Government acts and politics at local, state and national level.

War and defense: War, defense, rebellion, military use of space (land, air, sea, outer space). Includes both foreign and domestic stories.

Diplomacy and foreign relations: Both foreign and domestic items dealing with diplomacy and foreign relations. All issues dealing with nations other than the United States. Includes actions by the United Nations.

Economic activity: General economic activity, prices, money, labor, wages, natural resources, employment and unemployment patterns and market conditions.

Agriculture: Farming, farm prices, and economic aspects of agriculture.

Transportation and travel: Transportation and travel, including economic aspects.

Crime: All crime stories including criminal proceedings in court.

Public moral problems: Human relations and moral problems including alcohol and drug abuse, divorce, marriage, sex, race relations, and civil court proceedings. A decision by a politician does not represent a public moral problem. For example, a decision to cut welfare spending, while having moral undertones, does not represent a public moral problem. An editorial discussing the rise or fall of alcohol or drug abuse would be considered a public moral problem.

Accidents and disasters: Both human-made and natural accidents and disasters. The potential for a disaster or accident to occur does not represent an accident or disaster. The accident or disaster must have had occurred to be considered in this category.

Science and invention: Science other than defense-related and other than health and medicine.

Public health and welfare: Health, public welfare, social and safety measures, welfare of children.

Education and classic arts: Education, classic arts, religion, and philanthropy.

Popular amusements: Entertainment and amusements, newspage sports, TV, radio, and other media.

General human interest: Human interest, weather, obits, animals, cute children, and juvenile interest.

14. After reading the entire editorial and deciding the primary and secondary dimensions the overall context of the editorial must be decided. Beware of damning praise and back-handed compliments. For example, if the editorial clearly states Nixon is a crook and should resign immediately, the context would be Unfavorable (1). Another example: "Once again, through masterful understanding of the political mind, the Reagan administration has achieved a major coup: the reduction of social welfare programs." It is your impression of the attempt at satire that would determine whether this is a favorable or unfavorable editorial. If the editorial vacillates, however, the context would be

neutral. For example: The Carter administration is doing all it can to end the energy crisis, but the American public doesn't seem willing to cooperate. It is our hope that those Americans ... . This could be an example of a Neutral (2) editorial.

15. Area of editorial. The overall geographic region with which the editorial deals is considered the area. An editorial in the Washington Post, for example, discussing the D.C. mayor's race, would be considered Local (1), if the editorial includes NOVA, it would be considered Regional (2), if the editorial includes issues of national concern, it would be considered National (3), and any editorial mentioning U.S. relations with foreign nations or simply an editorial dealing with, for example, Cuba, would be considered International (4).

Appendix C

Total media holdings by each group in study.

New York Times, Inc.

27 daily newspapers
9 non-daily newspapers
17 magazines
5 television stations
2 radio stations

Cox Newspapers

18 daily newspapers
47.5 % interest in one daily
24 radio/television stations
24 cable systems
41 automobile auctions

Washington Post Co.

2 daily newspapers
1 weekly magazine
3 television stations
co-owner of Los Angeles Times-Washington
Post News Service, Inc.

Note: The Washington Post Co. and New York Times Co. are part owners of the International Herald Tribune which is printed in Europe. Source: 1991 Editor and Publisher International Yearbook.

Appendix D

Corporate boards and titles held by firm.

Cox Enterprises, Inc.:
James C. Kennedy, chairman and chief executive officer
Board of directors:
James C. Kennedy, Barbara Cox Anthony, Anne Cox Chambers, Thomas O. Cordy, John R. Dillon, Carl R. Gross, Ben F. Love, Paul J. Rizzo.
Atlanta Newspapers:
Jay R. Smith, publisher
Dennis Berry, president
Atlanta Constitution:
Ron Martin, editor, John Walter, Jr., managing editor, Cynthia Tucker, editorial page editor.

The New York Times Company:
Arthur Ochs Sulberger, chairman and chief executive officer
Board of directors:
Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, John F. Akers, William R. Cross, Jr., Richard Gelb, Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., Marian S. Heiskell, Ruth S. Holmberg, Walter E. Mattson, George B. Munroe, Charles H. Price II, George L. Shinn, Donald M. Stewart, Judith P. Sulzberger, Cyrus R. Vance.
The New York Times:
Lane R. Primis, president and general manager, Arthur Ochs Sulzberger, publisher, Max Frankel, executive editor, Arthur Gelb, managing editor, Jack Rosenthal, editorial page editor, Leslie Gelb, deputy editorial page editor.

The Washington Post Company:
Katharine Graham, chairman of the board, Donald Graham, president and chief executive officer.
Board of directors:
Katharine Graham, James E. Burke, Martin Cohen, George J. Gillespie III, Ralph E. Gomory, Ronald Graham, Nicholas Katzenbach, David R. Keough, Anthony J.F. O'Reilly, Barbara Scott Preiskel, William J. Ruane, Richard D. Simmons, George W. Wilson.
The Washington Post:
Thomas Ferguson, president, Donald E. Graham, vice-president and publisher.

Source: 1991 Editor and Publisher International Yearbook.

VITA

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EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology, spring, 1993, Department of Sociology, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA. Dissertation title: "The Effect of Changes in Corporate Ownership on Three Metropolitan Daily Newspapers' Editorials, 1961-1992". Areas of study and research interests: organizations, media sociology, popular culture, political sociology, and stratification.

Master of Arts, Journalism and Communication, 1985, the University of Florida, Gainesville, FL. Thesis title: "The Effect of Education on Communication Students' Standards of Ethics". Areas of study: media effects, media and society, media management, law and ethics.

Bachelor of Arts, Journalism, 1979, Oakland University, Rochester, MI. Areas of study: news writing, editing, reporting.

PRESENTATIONS/PAPERS

Many articles, columns, etc., as a newspaper journalist, 1979-85.

"The Effect of Education on Journalists' Ethics," paper presented at annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 1986, Gainesville, FL.

"A Multidimensional Model of Media Ideology," paper presented at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University's Department of Sociology's monthly faculty forum, 1991.

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND

January 1993 to May 1993: Adjunct Professor of Sociology, Radford University, Radford, VA.

September 1987 to 1992: Graduate assistant and graduate instructor, Department of Sociology, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA. Duties: Teach courses in department as needed, assist faculty in conducting research, and data analysis. Instructor, Summer 1989, 1990, 1991. Curriculum vita follows.

August 1985 to August 1987: Instructor of Journalism, Radford University, Radford, VA. Duties: teach introductory to advanced journalism and mass communication courses, advise journalism students, advise student newspaper, serve on departmental and university committees.

September 1983 to August 1985: Copy editor, the Gainesville Sun, Gainesville, FL. Duties: prepare copy for publication in daily newspaper, layout, edit, and design special sections, handle wire copy and copy from staff reporters.

January 1981 to August 1983: Sports editor, the Jupiter (FL) Courier-Journal. Duties: assign stories for staff reporters, layout, edit and design pages for publication, write stories and three-times per week column.

May 1979 to January 1981: General assignment reporter, the Jupiter (FL) Courier-Journal. Duties: cover assignments as directed by editor. Beats included city, county, and state government, education, police, sports, and features.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Courses taught in Department of Sociology, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University: minority group relations, introduction to sociology, gender relations, social organizations, social problems, social change.

Courses taught in Department of Sociology and Anthropology and Department of Communication, Radford University: introduction to sociology, news writing, advanced reporting, editing, magazine editing, introduction to mass communication, feature writing, internship adviser.

Courses taught in College of Journalism and Communication, University of Florida: advanced journalism seminar,

introduction to news writing.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Born, August 26, 1957.
Witness to (along with some others) Denny McLain's 30th victory over California Angels, fall 1968. Scored winning touchdown versus West Junior High, Rochester, Michigan, fall 1969. Final score Central 6, West 0. Met Lisa Schillinger, soon-to-be wife, in German I class, fall 1972. Sang in choir with Madonna, 1972-75. Accepted to University of Michigan but did not attend, spring 1975. Near hole-in-one, Bald Mtn. Golf Club, eighth hole, 1977. Acquired first basset hound, Klem, fall 1979. Evicted from first apartment, fall 1979. Met Perry Como with Klem, summer 1981. Acquired second basset hound, Mookie, spring, 1982. Trip to Scotland with wife, Lisa, 1983. While playing for Blacksburg Rugby Football Club, scored three tries against Lynchburg Rugby Football Club in 36-0 win. Played scrum half for Blacksburg Rugby in Commonwealth Cup against Darden Business College (UVA) in 41-0 win. Almost scored a try.