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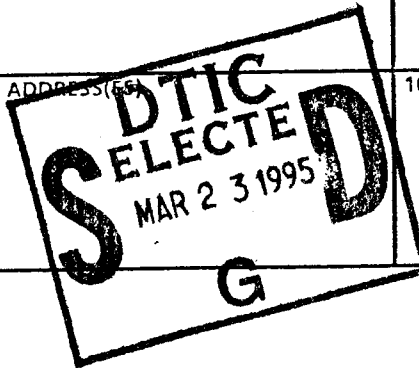
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ANTHONY DICKSON ROAKE
Information Subsidies and the Influence of Military Public
Affairs on the Local Newspaper
(Under the direction of GLEN T. CAMERON)

This study examines the beat reporter-source relationship between a local newspaper and a United States military installation. A comparison of information subsidy use by two mid-sized Georgia newspapers was accomplished through content analysis. Military base-related news items in the Augusta Chronicle and the Macon Telegraph were compared with information subsidies from nearby military installations. Results indicate: military beat reporters who spend more time on the beat use more information subsidies; military base agenda is reflected in the local media agenda; information subsidies concerning controversial issues are initiated by the beat reporter but are used less than routine subsidies.

INDEX WORDS: Agenda, Beat Journalist, Content Analysis, Influence, Information Subsidies, Journalist, Media, Military, Newspaper, Public Affairs, Public Relations, Reporter, Source

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INFORMATION SUBSIDIES AND THE INFLUENCE OF
MILITARY PUBLIC AFFAIRS ON THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER

by

ANTHONY DICKSON ROAKE

B.S., Murray State University, 1983

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment
of the
Requirements for the Degree
MASTER OF ARTS

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1995

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MILITARY PUBLIC AFFAIRS ON THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Overview

"Journalists write the words that turn up in papers or on the screen. Not government officials, not cultural forces...but flesh-and-blood journalists literally compose the stories we call news" (Schudson, 1991, p. 141).

Journalists have always flown the flag of objectivity and strived to project themselves as serving the public and reporting the available news. However, researchers have found that newsgathering is not the learned, objective task that journalists would like to believe it is. There are many influences on the people who construct the news on any given day. From the journalist's own personal beliefs and values to the values of the community in which the newspaper resides, innumerable factors influence the gathering of news information.

David Manning White's study of "Mr. Gates" (1950) is generally considered the beginning of modern studies on the influences on news content. White's study focused on the subjective value judgements of a single journalist and the influence those judgements have on news content. As researchers explored the gatekeeping concept, other

factors, such as the news organization itself and social forces, were found to influence news selection (Gieber, 1964). These examinations began to reveal the many influences that affect the individual gatekeeper and, ultimately, the content of the media. As researchers looked at who and what influences the news, the philosophical view of some researchers changed from seeing the news being a reflection of an existing reality to the news being a newsgathers' construction of reality (Molotch & Lester, 1974; Tuchman, 1978).

Researchers have found that there are many levels of influence on the gathering of news and on media content (Gans, 1979; Shoemaker, 1991; Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). Some of these levels of influence can have more impact on media content than others (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). These levels will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

These levels of influence are yet to be fully understood since there are aspects that have not been studied. This study looks at two aspects of higher level influences on local newspaper newsgathering. The first aspect is the impact of news organization constraints placed on newspaper journalists by multiple reporting duties. The second aspect is the impact a large, local federal organization has on the local newspaper.

Local newspapers assign reporters to specific beats and journalists may be assigned to cover several beats.

While it is not the purpose of this study to examine why newspapers assign several beats to one reporter, the influence this action has on the coverage of a specific beat is examined.

Many communities in the United States contain organizations which are local representatives of federal agencies. One of the largest and most visible representatives of the federal government in a community is the military base. The Department of Defense has Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps facilities scattered in metropolitan and rural communities throughout the continental United States. For example, the U.S. Air Force alone has 89 major installations and 107 minor installations in the United States and its possessions (Mehuron, 1993). This study analyzes the content of two local newspapers for all information released from nearby military bases.

The remaining sections of this chapter discuss the concepts of information subsidies and the economics of news reporting. These concepts are the premises which drove this study and are factors which possibly affected the use of source information by the newspapers studied. This chapter also contains sections which provide background on beat journalists, military public affairs officers, and community and military base relationships. Information in the military base and military public affairs sections is

drawn from the author's two years of personal experience in the field of military public affairs and ten years of professional and personal relationships with public affairs officers at several military bases. These sections will help in understanding the environment and situations which may affect the data set.

Information Subsidies

Gandy (1982) defined the term "information subsidy" as:

An attempt to produce influence over the actions of others by controlling their access to and use of information relevant to those actions. This information is characterized as a subsidy because the source of that information causes it to be made available at something less than the cost a user would face in the absence of the subsidy. (p. 61)

For example, if a media outlet cannot acquire government information on its own due to the excessive cost of gathering that information (in manpower and time), then the outlet would be more likely to accept information subsidies from government public information officers.

Gandy's concept of information subsidies proposed that the value of the information subsidy is very subjective and is determined by the perceived utility of the information and the credibility of the source. In the relationship

between journalist and source, the source controls the information and determines when and where to release it. The journalist accepts the information subsidy from the information source when that source is determined to be credible and reliable and the information cannot be acquired by an easier, more economical method. So, by providing an information subsidy, the cost of gathering and interpreting the information is born by the source and the time and effort spent by the journalist is reduced.

Journalists receive a large daily dose of information subsidies from public relations personnel in the form of press releases, press conferences, fact sheets, tips, story pitches, monitored interviews, and numerous other forms of written and oral material. "Public relations has become a booming industry, partly directed at providing the news media easy access to image-promoting information and raising the cost of discovering what might prove embarrassing" (McManus, 1988, p. 24).

United States military public affairs personnel are like other public relations practitioners in that they are interested in promoting their base as a positive part of the local community and avoiding or minimizing controversy when possible. Military public affairs offices offer information subsidies to local media in an attempt to get the information to the public. This study addresses the possible impact the local reporter/military source

relationship has on newspaper acceptance of information subsidies.

Economic Logic of News Reporting

Important to this thesis is another concept closely related to information subsidies. Sigal (1973) described newspapers as "business firms trying to earn a profit" (p. 8). The profit motive is the basis for an economic theory of news selection proposed by McManus (1988). News organizations, like other profit-minded organizations, are driven by a motive to maintain the economic status of the organization. News is a commodity that is bought and sold in transactions between news consumers, news producers and advertisers (McManus 1988, 1992). Newspapers fill their pages with information that attracts the kinds of readers that advertisers want to reach.

This may be an overly simplistic view of a very complex process, and it is not the purpose of this thesis to try to explain the relationship between newspapers, readers and advertisers. However, McManus' proposition that the way news is gathered and selected is influenced by this economics-driven process.

McManus noted how news organizations can be active or passive in gathering news, with active gathering being more expensive in time and resources. "All else being equal, the more active, complex and local the news coverage, the

greater its cost" (McManus, 1988, p. 19). Journalists and editors try to strike a balance between their ideal of objectivity in news selection and passively accepting information from special interests because the costs of gathering the information prohibit their spending time and resources to dig up the information.

This economics-based view of news selection does not mean that journalists and editors sell their souls to the news organization in gathering news. Journalists have a professional role with an unwritten code of public service and objectivity as a guide. Journalists have ways of compensating for the dilemma of being objective in the face of news organization policy (Breed, 1955; Sigal, 1973). However, it will be shown in the next chapter that the policies of a news organization do have an influence over the way in which news is gathered. This thesis will look at an aspect of news organization policy in the form of additional duties and their influence on the local beat reporter. This structural influence could be a result of economic driven policy within the news organization.

The Beat Journalist

Brooks, Kennedy, Moen and Ranly (1992) consider the beat to be the backbone of local community newspaper coverage. It is the beat reporter who "keeps the paper's readers abreast of what government, business or some other

powerful institution is doing" (p. 294). Indeed, "at most newspapers, as much as 90 percent of all local news comes from regular beats and sources" (Harriss, Leiter & Johnson, 1992, p. 23).

Beat journalists are different from general assignment reporters. Where general assignment reporters cover just about anything and are handed their daily assignments by an editor, beat journalists choose stories from information that comes from their beat (Sigal, 1973; Fishman 1980; Izard, Culbertson & Lambert, 1983). Beat journalists are assigned to report on a specific bureaucratic organization or a general topical area that reliably provides newsworthy information on a recurring basis. Beat journalists spend their day in a set of established routines which enable them to gather information from their sources in a quick and efficient manner.

Physical constraints and organization of the newsroom determine the amount of work each beat reporter has in a particular day. Beat reporters may be assigned to cover parts of several beats (Harriss et al., 1992). And, it is common for beat reporters to write five or more stories each day (Schulte & Dufresne, 1994).

More often than not, the beat is focused on bureaucratic organizations that would cost too much in time and effort to cover if not for an official within the organization whose job it is to provide information in a

ready form to the media (Fishman, 1980; Sigal, 1973). Brooks et al. (1992) note how the traditional beats covering the "cops, courts and city hall" have expanded to cover many topics and issues. "Increasingly, assignments are being made more on the basis of issues and less on the basis of institutions" (p. 294). However, as Schulte and Dufresne (1994) point out, "communities whose economic survival depends on one or two major employers...may assign a full-time reporter [to cover those institutions]" (p. 14). Local newspapers with a military base located in their readership area usually have a reporter who covers the military base. The journalist may be called the 'military beat reporter' or may cover the military beat along with other beats. This study looks at the difference in information subsidy acceptance between a military beat reporter who spends the majority of his/her time on the military beat and a reporter who covers the military base in addition to other reporting duties.

Military Bases and the Community

A military base can be an influential presence in a community. It can have a large economic impact on the surrounding area. The base hires large numbers of local people and is often one of the largest employers in the local area. The military base establishes contracts with local companies for services and supplies. The military

personnel stationed at the base spend their paychecks in the local community and are tied to the community in various ways through social contacts, church and civic organizations and business contacts.

Any threat to the base in the form of civilian job eliminations, military personnel cuts or base closure is big news in the community. The last few years have seen the numbers of military and civilian personnel reduced during a Department of Defense drawdown. For example, the U.S. Air Force alone cut 83,700 military positions and eliminated 36,300 employees between October 1990 and October 1994 (Bird & Watkins, 1994). Many local communities have made and are still making overt efforts to prevent their local military base from being selected for closing.

The two bases selected for this study and their surrounding communities feel the threat of possible base closure or realignment from the Congress appointed 1995 Base Realignment and Closure Commission (Daniel, 1994; Garber, 1994; Savage, 1994). The local chambers of commerce for each area are making efforts to influence a favorable decision from the Base Realignment and Closure Commission.

Military Public Affairs

Gandy (1982) pointed out that government information workers are primarily engaged in public relations and the information they put out is largely promotional. He suggested that the Department of Defense is the most publicity conscious of all cabinet-level departments.

Most sizable military bases have a public affairs office whose function, among other things, is to field all media queries and publicize base activities. If a base is too small for a public affairs office, it has a person whose full or part-time job is media relations.

The majority of Department of Defense public affairs personnel, both military and civilian, attend the Defense Information School in Indianapolis, Indiana. A portion of the course teaches them how to work with the media. The Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps each have service specific nuances in conducting public affairs, but by and large they all use the same general methods taught at the Defense Information School in working with the media.

Military installations are different than other local organizations in that media access to the organization is limited. Most military bases are closed to general access by the public. When media visit a base, they are usually escorted by a public affairs person during their visit.

As a federal agency, the military base can withhold certain types of information from the media for reasons of

national security. The media have an equalizer in the Freedom of Information Act which the media can invoke when they feel the base is not forthcoming with information.

Military public affairs personnel may differ from other government public relations workers in that they work within a military command structure. The top commander of the base and his or her use of public affairs usually sets the tone for the relationship between the public affairs office and local journalists. There is usually a base policy that all information to the media must go through the base public affairs office and the military command structure inherently enforces this policy. In large government agencies and corporations, non-subsidized information can be gathered by reporters through 'leaks' and contacts with sources within the organization. These anonymous source leaks are uncommon at the local base level.

Consequently, the public affairs office controls nearly all base information going to the media. This control means the public affairs office can control the price of information. Base information cost is high because the media must expend inordinate amounts of time and effort to get information from sources other than the base public affairs office. The base public affairs office regulates the price of the information by giving and withholding information subsidies.

The closed nature of the military base and the limited number of information outlets from the base make it well suited for examination of the information flow from source to reporter and how that information is used by the local media. Military base information flows from one primary source: the base public affairs office. This simplifies tracking the information going out of the military installation. Most military installations document their contact with the media in a somewhat standardized manner due to the centralized training public affairs officers receive at the Defense Information School. By capturing all the information flowing from the base, an accurate picture of the base agenda can be compared with the local newspaper to see which portions of the base agenda are presented to the public in the newspaper agenda.

Purpose of the Study

The concept of information subsidies needs to be tested on a local level to see if its theoretical value holds up in the day-to-day relationships among local newspapers and their local sources.

This study takes a novel look at an aspect of news organization influence on media content. It examines the influence of news organization structure, in the form of the diversity of beat reporter duties, on the acceptance of information from a bureaucratic source. It compares the

impact of the diversity of reporting duties of military beat reporters on news content in two mid-sized Georgia newspapers, The Augusta Chronicle and The Macon Telegraph.

The relationship between the local news reporter and the source needs to be thoroughly examined to identify, account for and understand the many influences that come to bear on the news reporter and, ultimately, news content. A unique journalist-source relationship is examined in this study. Past studies of the information influence of bureaucratic organizations have looked at state government (Atwater & Fico, 1986; Dunwoody & Shields, 1984; Turk, 1986; Turk & Franklin, 1987) and the executive branch of the federal government (Turk, 1987). Some studies have looked at information distributed by federal agencies and its impact on local and national news (Blount, 1992; Sigal, 1973). And there have been several studies of local government source influence on local news (Burd, 1980; Fishman, 1980; Gieber & Johnson, 1961; Gossin, 1990; Weaver & Elliott, 1985). The relationship between local media and the local representative of a federal agency is a relationship not found by this author in previous studies.

By focusing on these two previously unexamined areas, this study adds to existing knowledge concerning influences on the content of news and the relationships between news organizations, their employees, and their sources.

This study will hopefully have not only heuristic value for the study of media influences, but practical value as well. An underlying purpose of this study since its conception has been to help local beat reporters and military public affairs officers better understand the dynamics of a relationship they live in daily.

The following chapter reviews academic literature concerning the influences on newspaper content including the news organization structure itself and the influence of organizations external to the newspaper. Chapter 3 describes the methods and procedures used for this study. Chapter 4 reports the results of the study. Chapter 5 discusses the implications of the findings and limitations of the study and suggests areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Mass communication research on media content has focused on several different possible influences on media content. These influences have ranged from the personal beliefs of the individual reporter to the social environment in which we all work and live. This chapter looks at past research in areas of influence on media content which apply to this thesis.

This chapter will first look at economic and social theory that undergirds the perspective of this thesis on the influences on newsgathering. It is important to look at this theory to understand the factors that drive news organizations to operate the way in which they do.

A concentric theoretical model proposed by Shoemaker and Reese (1991) will be used to show the different levels of influences on the media and how the levels affect each other. Previous literature that applies to these influences will be reviewed and the final section will put forth the hypotheses this thesis will test.

Theoretical Underpinnings

DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989) stressed to researchers that it is important to clarify the theoretical assumptions that guide their research and develop a clear relationship between their study and the underlying theoretical assumptions.

A study of the influences on media content cannot be done without first considering the concept of gatekeeping. Gatekeeping is deciding what information to include in the news and what to discard. Studying the influences on media content involves closely scrutinizing the gatekeeping process. Shoemaker (1991) noted that gatekeeping decisions are made subjectively and are influenced on many levels.

These levels of influence include:

1. The individual level. Personal values, beliefs, opinions and ethics influence what journalists select and report as news.
2. The communication routines level. Media worker decisions are influenced by the patterned, routine work activities they do each day.
3. The organizational level. The news organization as a social system influences those who work within it.
4. The extramedia, social/institutional level. Other social institutions can affect the media gatekeeping process. These institutions include sources, audiences, markets, public relations and other media.

5. The social system level. Culture, societal interests, societal structure, and ideology influence and are influenced by the news items which are used by the gatekeepers.

Gatekeeping is a concept that has been used in studies of mass communication to more fully understand the process that journalists and editors go through in selecting news. Schudson (1991) said that the gatekeeping metaphor is lacking because it treats news as something that is selected by the journalist from the available news events of the day. It assumes that a reality exists out there to be conveyed to the public through the media and influences on gatekeeping can change the perspective of this reality. In reviewing the work of social scientists who study the news, Schudson identifies three perspectives on newsmaking which go beyond the concept of gatekeeping.

The political economy perspective is a Marxist view in which Schudson said there exists a "ruling directorate of the capitalist class that dictates to editors and reporters what to run in their newspapers" (p. 143). This is a "big picture" viewpoint which looks at the relationship between the social institutions of the media, business and government. However, it does little to explain the day-to-day newsgathering practices of journalism.

Another lesser used perspective is the cultural approach to news construction. This perspective views news

content as the result of cultural influence. Journalists and sources are part of a culture, a system of symbols, in which they work. Schudson pointed out that this perspective is useful in understanding nebulous concepts such as how journalists know news when they see it or perhaps how journalists come to trust one source more than another.

The third perspective Schudson identified is the social organization view of newswork. This perspective treats news as the construct of social and organizational forces. These forces influence the way news is gathered. Schudson pointed out two theoretical sources of this perspective. The social constructionist view of society sees the bureaucratic structuralization of society reflected in the structure of newsgathering. Gaye Tuchman's (1973) examination of media routines followed this view when she noted that news media beats are attempts to cover unexpected events on a routine basis.

Organizational or bureaucratic theory looks at news as "the social manufacture of an organizational product, one that can be studied like other manufactured goods" (Schudson, 1991, p. 149). This theory holds that the news organization has an influence on news gathering that supersedes the influence of the individual journalists and that the 'reality' that journalists report is a socially constructed reality. Schudson pointed out that there is

debate over a socially constructed reality. But other researchers show support for organizational influence over the influence of the individual reporter (Shoemaker & Reese, 1991).

The social organization perspective was used as the theoretical basis for this thesis. The concepts of information subsidies and information economics discussed in chapter 1 can fit into the perspective of social organization of newswork. The structure of the news organization and its economic ties to the community in part determine the resources that are deployed to gather news. The concept of information subsidies proposed by Gandy (1982) suggests that the acceptance of information subsidies by a news organization is related to the amount of newsgathering resources the organization has.

The economic theory of news selection outlined by McManus (1988, 1992) fits well within the social organization perspective since the profit-motives of organizations are one of the many social constructs of society that possibly affect news content.

The perspectives on newsmaking outlined by Schudson inherently show that there is disagreement among researchers on any single set of influences on media content and that influence happens at many different levels. The next section will utilize a convenient model of the hierarchy of influences on media content to discuss

in depth the previous literature on the influences that this study examines.

Influences on Newspaper Content

Shoemaker and Reese (1991) take a humanistic view of influence on media content. They use media content as a starting point and work backward to construct a hierarchical model to show how these influences impact each other at different levels (See Figure 1). The levels of influences in this model are: individual level, media routines level, organization level, extramedia level and ideological level

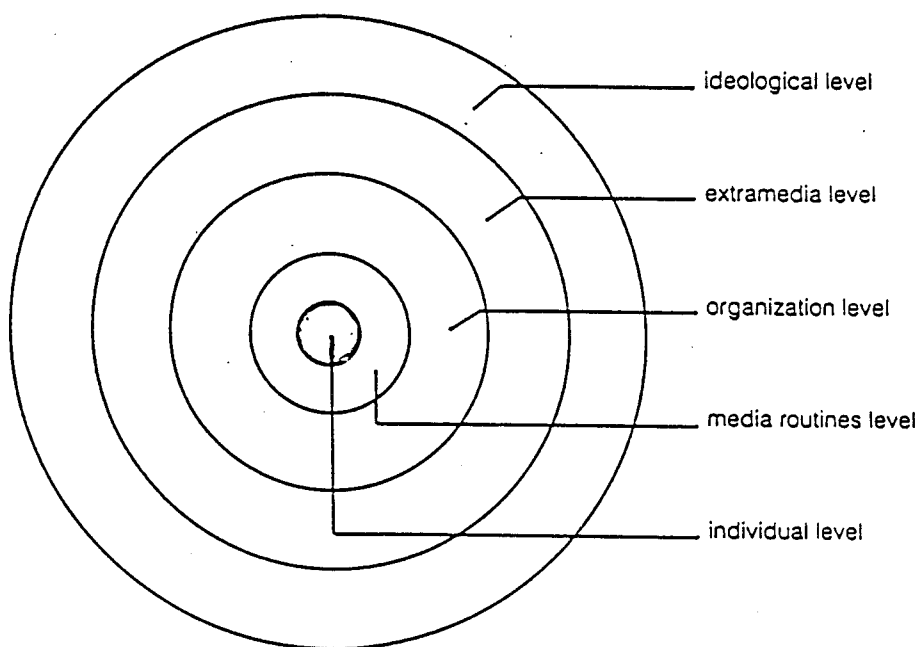


Figure 1. Hierarchical model of influences on media content.

Note. From Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content (p. 54) by P. J. Shoemaker and S. D. Reese, 1991, New York: Longman.

the ideological level. These levels form concentric rings with each ring affecting the levels inside it as they all influence media content.

This is an important concept in understanding why journalists and editors gather and use certain information and not other information. Each level cannot be looked at without considering the influences of the other levels.

This study examines influences within the media routines and organizational levels. However, these levels cannot be examined without also considering the extramedia and ideological levels.

The literature concerning the individual level will not be reviewed since this thesis concerns itself only with higher levels. Also, past research has indicated that the organization influences media content more so than the individual reporter and may actually override reporter values, beliefs and attitudes. (Bergen, 1991; Gans, 1979; Shoemaker & Reese 1991).

Media Routines

Events that could potentially become news are occurring all around the reporter on a daily basis. News organizations have a need to maximize the predictable and minimize the unpredictable (Tuchman, 1973). Beats and bureaus are media routines which are responses by journalists and editors to the need for reliable

information on a regular basis to fill the white space reserved in the newspaper for news.

Military public affairs offices have contact with local media on a daily basis. Local reporters on the military beat are always on the lookout for news from the base. For example, when the author was a public affairs officer at a base in Florida, he was often called by beat reporters who would simply ask if there was anything interesting going on. The beat system is a way to routinely access potential newsworthy events. Researchers who have studied media routines find that the routines of the beat have been established so that reporters may efficiently access information and events on a dependable, recurring basis (Fishman, 1980; Lacy & Matustik, 1983; Sigal, 1973).

Does this daily, routine access of the beat affect the way in which news is portrayed? Gandy's (1982) concept of information subsidies indicates that a newspaper without the resources of a beat reporter in a particular area would accept more subsidized information from that area (p. 62). In the absence of a beat reporter, the newspaper would rely more on information subsidies from public relations personnel in that area.

Sigal (1973) examined the difference between beat and general assignment reporters at the New York Times and Washington Post. He found that general reporters relied

much more heavily on subsidized information than beat reporters but they did no less reporting on their own initiative than the beat reporters did. Sigal felt that "the variation from beat to beat [in reporter reliance on subsidies] is more pronounced than the differences among reportorial types [general reporter versus beat reporter]" (p. 127).

On a local reporting level, research indicates that the social, close-contact nature of the beat leads the reporter to an in-group mentality and makes them unwitting supporters of the source. One study of local newspaper reporters showed that although beat reporters were aware of source attempts to influence their reporting, the close identification with their beat and sources led to collaboration and cooperation in getting the source agenda to the public (Gieber & Johnson, 1961). Another study found that local newspaper reporters tend to rely on the sources' definition of the phenomena they report (Fishman 1980).

However, Lacy and Matustik (1983) found that the amount of experience a reporter had on a beat was inversely related to the percentage of story ideas that came from the beat. This finding suggests that the influences of the individual and/or the media routine are not constant and may change over time.

Organizational Constraints

The line between the influence of media routines and the influence of the news organization is blurred because often it is the organization structure or policy that shapes the news gathering routines of the journalist. Gaye Tuchman identifies a 'news net' that is spread by the news organization to capture a portion of information and events that occur daily (1978). The beat and the bureau are a part of this net structure along with wire services and serve to gather the daily catch of information necessary to keep the news organization in business.

Each news organization is different in its own way and has an organization chart and organization policy that affects only its workers. Researchers have found that the particular policy and structure of a news organization affects the way information is gathered by its reporters.

Shoemaker (1991) calls the process of learning the norms and values of the organization "organizational socialization." The journalist learns the editorial policies of the organization and learns from observation what is newsworthy and acceptable to editors and peers.

Breed (1955) first looked at the organizational socialization of the newspaper reporter and identified ways in which the reporter adopts the policies of the news organization. He noted that there was no formal method of inducting the reporter into the policies of the

organization. The reporter learns policy through observing other workers, reading others work and interaction with editors, older staffers and newspaper executives. Through these actions the reporter learns what is acceptable and what is not.

Another way the reporter is affected by the organization is through the organization structure which is controlled by management. Sigal (1973) identified the handling of staff as a factor in affecting newsgathering. The structuring of the reporting staff is driven by many factors; economics, time and news space being among them.

In 1960, Walter Gieber revealed through interviews that understaffing at the medium-sized newspapers he studied created pressures which prevented journalists from spending adequate time on a story. He found that "if a reporter establishes a set of attitudes concerning his work, he acts in accordance with them" (p. 205). He noted that at one newspaper the journalists had such a lack of direction from management and were so preoccupied with workload and space restrictions that they lost "all interest in gathering more than routine information" (p. 205).

Research suggests that if a newspaper has adequate resources, then reporters will be allowed to make the extra effort required to follow up on potential stories. But if resources are not available, then reporters may be

allocated to selecting and processing existing messages (Shoemaker, 1991). Grusin (1990) studied police beat reporters and found that when a newspaper combined beats, it had a negative effect on reporter routines. The additional reporting duties resulted in journalists relying less on personal contacts and depending more on phone conversations and public information officers to keep abreast with events at law enforcement agencies.

A newspaper recession in the late 1980's caused by a decrease in newspaper advertising affected the incomes of some newspapers (Morton, 1990). Some newspapers have tightened budgets and cut newsgathering staff in order to increase profits for their shareholders (Kwitny, 1990).

Research shows that newspapers with larger staffs and with higher proportions of those staffs devoted to newsgathering have more reporters devoted to covering specialized areas (Griswold, 1991).

External Influences

To the extramedia information source, the organizational driven routines discussed in the previous sections present an opportunity to get the source agenda into the media. The structure of the news beat legitimizes the institution that hosts the beat (Fishman, 1980; Tuchman, 1978) and defines who is considered to have

authoritative knowledge in any particular field (Griswold, 1991).

The reporters' need for hard, accurate facts leads them to organization and agency bureaucrats because they, of all people, should know what their organization is doing (Fishman, 1980). They're perceived as being reliable and knowledgeable which are traits reporters require of sources (Gandy, 1982).

Gans (1979) identified six unspoken criteria which journalists use to evaluate and select their sources: past suitability, productivity, reliability, trustworthiness, authoritativeness and articulateness.

Government agency representatives tend to meet the criteria required of media sources and recognize the importance of the media as a channel of potential influence perceived as highly credible by the public (Gandy, 1982).

Government officials use the reporters' need for information to their advantage and try to confine newsgathering to routine channels such as press releases, news conferences and approved coverage of official proceedings and events (Sigal, 1973). The source controls the cost of the information to the reporter by controlling the release of information and raising the cost of gathering information that might prove embarrassing (Gandy, 1982; McManus, 1988).

How does the relationship between beat reporter and source affect the reporter and newspaper content? In his study of newspaper reporters and government officials at the national level, Sigal (1973) found that reporters rely on government sources for access to information but reporters pay a price for that information in becoming dependent on the sources. Newspaper reporters at the national level gradually absorb the perspective of the agency on their beat. As a consequence of the beat itself, journalists must learn the lingo and nuances of the agency they cover. The beat insulates the reporter from other contrasting perspectives.

Studies have shown that newspapers tend to rely heavily on routine channels of information (Brown, Bybee, Wearden & Straughan, 1987; Sigal, 1973). Routine channels include official proceedings, press conferences and press releases. These forms of information subsidies are predominantly under source control.

Research indicates that information given out by sources is reflected proportionately in published stories (Dunwoody & Shields, 1984). Between one-quarter and one-half of the information subsidies received by the media is used (Berkowitz, 1989; Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1985; Turk & Franklin, 1987). There is some debate on whether government organizations are more successful in the rate of

acceptance of subsidies than other types of organizations (Berkowitz, 1989; Turk, 1986).

Reliance on sources is not necessarily tied to the number of beats a newspaper has. Lacy and Matustik (1983) found that for the local newspapers they studied, the dependence on organization sources for story ideas was consistent while the dependence on beats for information varied widely among the papers.

Weaver and Elliott (1985), in their study of local newspaper coverage of a city council, suggested that influence by a prominent local news source on the local press agenda may be greater than national level source influence on national media.

Ideological Influences

It is not intended for this thesis to explore the ideological impact of the military base presence in a community. The ideological influence on media content is only mentioned here to show the possible impact of ideological attitudes of the community on local newspapers.

The newspaper is an integral part of the community's civic and business structure. It is tied to the community through economics. The newspaper draws its income from the community through advertising and subscriptions, it hires employees, and it gathers operating resources from the community.

Research has shown that newspapers downplay negative information about the community and support the pro-growth ideology of urban planners and chamber of commerce boosters (Burd, 1980). Dennis McQuail (1976) reviewed British and United States sociological writing on the press and found that there is "support for the proposition that the local press devotes itself to representing the local community in the most favorable light, reinforcing its values and discouraging conflict" (p. 27).

In many towns the local newspaper and editor are an integral part of the local community economic development effort. Hawthorne's (1993) recent study of an Iowa economic development effort revealed the large, conscious, active part the press played in the economic development campaign.

Hypotheses

In preparation for this study, the author contacted several newspapers in the southeast with a military base in their readership areas. All were found to have a reporter assigned to cover the military base, however the amount of time spent covering the base by each military beat reporter varied widely. Each military beat reporter had other beats to cover in addition to the local military base. These other assignments affected the amount of time each reporter spent on their military beat.

Gandy's (1982) concept of information subsidies would indicate that a local newspaper lacking the resources to adequately support a military beat would tend to accept information subsidies from the base more than a paper with an established full-time base beat reporter.

There is research at the national level (Sigal, 1973) and the local level (Gieber, 1960; Grusin, 1990) that supports this statement. The research shows reductions in staff increases the workload for reporters and can prevent reporters from spending adequate time on producing stories (Gieber, 1960; Shoemaker, 1991) and cause reporters to rely more on phone contacts and public relations personnel for information (Grusin, 1990).

This led to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1a: Newspapers with a military beat reporter who has additional reporting duties accept more information subsidies per military installation than newspapers with a military beat reporter whose primary job is covering a military base.

However, research indicates that an alternate hypothesis should be proposed. Resources of extramedia sources are also prominent factors in media acceptance and use of information subsidies (Gans, 1979). Beats tend to favor resource-rich organizations that are bureaucratically

organized and can supply the reporter with recurring, reliable information at a low cost to the reporter. Resource-poor groups are underrepresented and must have something unusual occur to be deemed newsworthy. Military bases are resource-rich bureaucratic organizations that have assigned people to distribute information to the media. Research has shown that reporters go to sources who can guarantee reliable information to fulfill deadlines and story quotas (Fishman, 1980).

Most newspaper reporting at the national level relies on routine channels of information controlled by the source, such as news releases and press conferences (Sigal, 1973). Sigal found that national reporters relied on government access to information and gradually absorbed the perspective of the agency on their beat which sometimes resulted in dependency on source resources.

On a local level, Lacy and Matustik (1983), found a significant relationship between the number of hours spent working a beat and the percentage of story ideas and news copy from the beat. Most reporters must produce a certain amount of copy each day. Lacy and Matustik suggested that "the result is that beats change from a system of checking organizations for story ideas that may or may not be newsworthy, to a system of finding readily available ideas to meet story quotas and deadlines" (p. 15).

The close relationship the beat reporter has with the base public affairs office and the limited access to the military base, combined with pressure to produce copy each day, suggests that a military beat reporter would tend to accept more information subsidies from the base than a general reporter. Therefore, an alternative hypothesis to the one above is proposed:

Hypothesis 1b: Newspapers with a military beat reporter whose primary job is covering a military installation accept more information subsidies than newspapers with a reporter who covers the military installation in addition to other beats.

Acceptance of base information subsidies by the media would indicate the agenda of the base would be passed through the media to the newspaper readership. Some researchers give support to this supposition. Gieber and Johnson (1961) felt that the beat journalists' close identification with their beat and sources can lead to collaboration and cooperation in getting the source agenda to the public. Weaver and Elliott (1985), in comparing their study with previous research, suggest that a prominent local organization will have more of an influence on the local press agenda than national organizations have

on the national press. The following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: The agenda of issues presented in information subsidies from military public affairs offices (military agenda) influences the agenda of issues portrayed in local newspaper content (media agenda). The media will reflect the priorities exhibited by the military public affairs offices.

Military public affairs offices send out releases daily which contain routine, non-controversial information. From the perspective of the public affairs office, these periods of handing out routine information are punctuated by issues which are seen as negative and potentially damaging to the base. The base responds to the controversial issue by sending out subsidies with the base position on the issue.

Do newspapers accept these subsidies on controversial issues more than routine information or do they treat them with more suspicion? The symbiotic relationship described by Gans (1979) between national television and newsmagazine beat journalists and their sources gives an insight into how a journalist might respond. Gans suggested that beat reporters, being on the inside of an agency, must often concentrate on stories which please their sources, since

angering them may endanger the rapport established between reporter and source. Sigal (1973) noted that this is a price reporters pay for access and that government agency officials at the national level "employ a variety of tactics...to confine newsgathering to routine channels" (p. 54).

But what about the local newspaper reporter? Reporting textbooks warn future journalists about the dangers of being absorbed into the mindset of the beat (Brooks et al., 1992). Military beat reporters are certainly susceptible to the pressures of the beat since the base is a large, influential presence in the community and there is usually no other source to base information other than through the public affairs office. Indeed, the base may push for acquiescence from the reporter. The author has observed two instances where a military commander threatened to bar a reporter from the base because of perceived 'negative' reporting.

The basic nature of the journalists' profession and the modern day professional guidance of public affairs practitioners indicate that a reporter would use controversial subsidies more than routine subsidies.

Reporters are trained to question and seek out information. This is evident in reporting textbooks which encourage reporters to aggressively seek access to information (Brooks et al., 1992; Killenberg, 1992).

"Those [journalists] who resignedly settle for news releases and tamely submit to agency rules on access to records and meetings only encourage public officials to keep the peoples business private" (Killenberg, 1992, p. 122). By seeking information not readily offered by military base public affairs personnel, journalists would encounter issues seen as controversial by the military base staff.

Modern public relations guidance advises public relations practitioners and organizations to respond to controversial issues quickly and honestly (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 1994). Military public affairs officers also learn this basic tenet in Defense Information School. "The underlying principle of DoD [Department of Defense] Public Affairs is 'maximum disclosure with minimum delay'" (Defense Information School, 1991, p. 175).

Journalistic ethics requires reporters to gather all facts to a story and report all sides (Harris et al., 1992; Izard et al., 1983). Ethical considerations would suggest that newspapers would use information subsidies concerning controversial issues since they come from the public affairs office and would contain the base's position on the issue.

The journalists' training along with the professional guidance of public affairs practitioners and journalists suggest the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Local newspapers use military base information subsidies concerning controversial issues more than they use routine information subsidies from the base.

A major function of public relations personnel in all sectors of business and government is to distribute information concerning the positive aspects of their organizations. When controversy arises, carefully selected words that reflect the organization's position are cautiously distributed to the media.

Reporting textbooks emphasize techniques to be used by beat journalists in digging up information not routinely handed out by sources (Killenberg, 1992). This digging for information would uncover issues that perhaps the public relations practitioner would have wanted to remain covered. The author has observed occasions where the media brought a controversial issue to the public affairs officer's attention and the public affairs officer was then placed in a reactive mode by responding to media questions. The basic training journalists receive along with the author's past public affairs observations suggest the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Subsidies of routine information are initiated most often by the base public affairs

officer whereas subsidies of controversial issues are initiated most often by the journalist.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study used the content analysis method to obtain data needed to determine support or non-support for the hypotheses proposed in this study. This chapter discusses how two mid-sized newspapers and their nearby military bases were selected for study. Also discussed is how information subsidies and newspaper content were gathered and measured. Finally, the chapter discusses the reliability of the coders.

Selection of Newspapers

A comparison between two newspapers showing a dichotomy in the duties of the military beat reporter was desired. One newspaper would have a military beat reporter who spent the majority of his or her time covering the military base. The other newspaper would have a military beat reporter who had other reporting duties as well.

The selection of the newspapers for study involved several steps to eliminate the possibility of confounding variables. First, newspapers with a circulation of over 50,000 and located in a southeastern United States city

near an Army, Air Force, Navy or Marine Corps base were listed as possible candidates for selection.

The candidates were narrowed based on four criteria:

1. Similar newspaper circulation size.
2. Similar military and civilian population sizes at the nearby military base(s).
3. Physical distance of the military base from the city in which the newspaper was located.
4. Broadsheet versus tabloid publishing format.

Newspaper directories (Anderson, 1994; Reilly, 1993; Salk, 1993) and a military base directory (Evinger, 1991) were used in narrowing the selection to four newspapers.

The Augusta Chronicle, the Fayetteville Observer-Times, the Macon Telegraph, and the Pensacola News-Journal were contacted by telephone. The military reporter at each newspaper was asked to estimate the percentage of time he or she spent covering the local military. As a check of this estimation, the reporter's editor was contacted separately and asked to estimate the percentage of time the military reporter spent covering local military issues.

Two Georgia newspapers, the Augusta Chronicle and the Macon Telegraph, were selected for study. The military reporter at the Augusta Chronicle spent approximately 90% of her time covering Fort Gordon, an Army base. She had the additional duty of being general reporter for two

outlying rural counties which consumed the other 10% of her time.

The military reporter at the Macon Telegraph spent approximately 25% of his time covering Robins Air Force Base. He was based at a bureau office in Warner Robins, a town just south of Macon, with another reporter. Robins Air Force Base is adjacent to the town of Warner Robins. Covering the base was just a portion of his total job which included covering the city and county government in Houston county in which Warner Robins and Robins Air Force Base were located.

Both newspapers had a morning distribution. The Macon Telegraph had a weekday circulation of 74,282 and a Sunday circulation of 103,673. The Augusta Chronicle had a weekday circulation of 74,313 and Sunday circulation of 100,833 (Anderson, 1994).

Both newspapers published readership-area-specific supplements which were inserted into the paper each Wednesday. The supplements that were delivered to the area surrounding the military base were included in the study. The weekly area-specific supplements that were included in the study were the Houston/Peach (counties) Neighbors section of the Macon Telegraph and the Richmond County Chronicle section of the Augusta Chronicle.

There were notable differences in the two newspaper supplements. The back page of the Richmond County

Chronicle supplement was called the Fort Gordon Chronicle and contained only information related to the military base. The Houston/Peach Neighbors supplement had no such base-specific section. Another difference in the supplements was that the Richmond County Chronicle supplement was printed in broadsheet format and the Houston/Peach Neighbors supplement was printed in tabloid format.

The military bases were each located 15 miles outside of the city limits of Augusta and Macon (Evinger, 1991). Robins Air Force Base was located next to the town of Warner Robins which was served by a small daily paper, the Warner Robins Daily Sun. The Daily Sun had a daily circulation of 10,075 (Reilly, 1993)

The work populations of the military bases were similar. According to each base public affairs office, in 1994 Fort Gordon had 16,523 workers (11,925 active duty military and 4,598 civilians) and Robins Air Force Base had 18,024 workers (4,760 military and 13,264 civilians).

The Data Gathering Period

A content analysis of information subsidies given out by each base and of newspaper articles related to the base was accomplished. Coders determined which subsidies resulted in articles in the newspapers.

Subsidies and newspapers were collected for an eight-week period. A similar study involving newspaper use of subsidies from state government agencies showed a short time lag between receipt and use of information subsidies by newspapers (Turk, 1986). Turk's study demonstrated that an eight-week data gathering period provided a large enough volume of data for statistically significant analysis.

For this study, the data gathering periods for the information subsidies and the newspaper articles were staggered for one week to allow for subsidy receipt and newspaper publication. Coding of information subsidies from the bases began with subsidies dated Monday, August 22, 1994 through Sunday, October 16. Coding of the newspapers began a week later with the Monday, August 29, 1994, issue through Sunday, October 23. All issues of the Macon Telegraph and the Augusta Chronicle within this time period were coded, along with their Wednesday, military-base-area supplements. One supplement, the August 31, 1994, Richmond County Chronicle supplement of the Augusta Chronicle, could not be obtained and is missing from the data set.

Measurement of Information Subsidies

Information subsidies were defined as any information transmitted to the two newspapers through contact with the base public affairs officers. The method of transmission

could be written, oral, pictorial or a combination. Written subsidies included news releases, photocopies of documents or reports, written answers to reporter questions, fact sheets, brochures, press kits or publicity packages. Oral subsidies included oral news releases, oral answers to reporter questions and interviews arranged by public affairs personnel. Pictorial subsidies were photographs.

Each military base had a main public affairs office that kept at least a loose track of all information coming from the base. Each base had other smaller public affairs offices for certain organizations on base. These smaller offices worked independently with the media but always kept the main public affairs office informed about their work with the media. The public affairs offices were staffed by military and/or civilian employees. (In the following text, military employees are designated by rank and civil service employees are designated by their government service pay scale.)

Fort Gordon had three public affairs offices. In the Fort Gordon main public affairs office were two civil service employees who worked with the media the majority of the time. A GS-9 was head of media relations and the Director of Public Affairs, a GS-11, worked with the media occasionally when the office was busy or when her level of attention was needed on an issue.

The base hospital had a public affairs office staffed by two civilians, a GS-11 and a GS-6, who both worked media issues equally. The 513th Military Intelligence Brigade had a public affairs shop staffed by three active duty Army personnel. An Army Sergeant 1st Class handled media relations.

Robins Air Force Base had four public affairs offices. There was a large main public affairs office with 10 people. The main office had one civilian, a GS-12 pay grade, who handled media relations. At the time of this study, the media relations person had an assistant who was a college student in a two-year training program. The Director of Public Affairs, an Air Force Major, got involved with media relations occasionally when an issue required her attention. The Headquarters of the United States Air Force Reserve had its own public affairs shop with a mixture of 20 civilian and military personnel. One active duty Captain had primary responsibility for media relations. Two civilians in the office also handled media relations as needed, which was rare. This public affairs office was different than the others in that it worked national issues almost exclusively and rarely dealt with local issues.

The 5th Combat Communications Group had a full time Air Force public affairs staff sergeant. This person handled all public affairs responsibilities for his unit,

but his duties rarely brought him in direct contact with the Macon Telegraph.

The Museum of Aviation was an organization with close ties to Robins Air Force Base and was located on Air Force property. The buildings were built by the museum foundation and were donated to the Air Force. The museum foundation, a private organization, occupied space in the buildings and carried out fundraising and promotional activities that benefited the Air Force and the community. Prior to the museum foundation's hiring of a public relations person in 1994, the main base PA office handled media relations for the museum. At the time of this study, the public relations person handled media relations for the museum but still worked closely with the main base public affairs office. For the above reasons, it was decided to include information from the Museum of Aviation public relations office as a part of this study.

All information subsidies directed from the above mentioned offices to the Augusta Chronicle or Macon Telegraph were coded.

The Air Force Reserve Band was based at Robins Air Force Base and had a publicity unit of four military musicians who worked publicity as an additional duty. These band members worked publicity and marketing in advance of band performances. They worked with national, regional and local media throughout the United States.

Although they sent information to the Macon Telegraph before occasional band performances in the local area, it was determined not to measure information from their office. Since this was a marketing rather than a public relations office, it was decided to treat information from this office as coming from a source outside official base channels.

To capture the information subsidies from each of the public affairs offices, existing media query forms in use by some of the offices were modified. Fort Gordon and Robins Air Force Base had different versions of the media query form and these forms were used in various ways by the different public affairs offices. The two forms only needed to be modified slightly so that all necessary information could be gathered (see Appendix A).

Each public affairs office filled out one of the forms whenever contact was made with the Augusta Chronicle or the Macon Telegraph. Each office also provided copies of any written or pictorial information subsidies. Content information logged on the form for each information subsidy included:

1. Date of subsidy.
2. Whether the subsidy was initiated by the public affairs office or was provided in response to a journalist's request.

3. Method used to transmit the subsidy. The public affairs offices were surveyed and methods used included: telephone, fax machine, mail/distribution, news conference, hand delivered/in-person, or by a public affairs office mediated interview of another person.

4. Issue or topic of the subsidy. Prior to the measurement period, each main base senior public affairs officer was queried to determine the most prominent national and local military related issues at that time. The resulting list of issues was placed on the media query form.

5. The controversy of the information in the subsidy. A 7-point bipolar scale was used to capture the opinion of the public affairs officer as to the amount of controversy contained in the information in the subsidy. This scale was separated from the main part of the form as the author collected them. This was done to prevent impacting the coders as they gave an independent rating of controversy on a similar scale as they coded each subsidy. The opinions of the public affairs officers were then used to corroborate the independent rating of subsidy controversy by the coders on a similar scale.

The information subsidies were collected weekly by the author who would discuss the subsidies with the public

affairs officer and ensure all the needed information was filled in on each subsidy.

The query forms and any attached information to the forms were used by the coders to code the information concerning the subsidy (see Appendix C for the subsidy codesheet). The information on the query form was transferred to the subsidy coding sheet. In addition, the following items were coded on the subsidy coding sheet:

1. The office that the subsidy originated from.
2. The newspaper which received the subsidy.
3. The type of subsidy. Types included: written or oral news release, photocopy of document or report, written or oral answers to reporter questions, fact sheet, press kit, brochure, or photograph.
4. The coders impression of issue controversy. Measured on a 7-point bi-polar scale.
5. The coders impression of the positive or negative slant of the subsidy. Also measured on a 7-point bi-polar scale.

Measurement of Newspaper Content

Media agenda was defined as the editorial content of the two newspapers. Editorial content included: news articles, feature stories, photographs, editorials, columns, and letters to the editor. An article with an accompanying photograph was treated as one news item.

Advertising was excluded. The Augusta Chronicle published a weekly personality profile of a Fort Gordon employee. This feature was excluded from measurement because the newspaper solicited nominations for the profile section from the general public.

Both newspapers printed short notices of military promotions and awards given to military members from the local area. The military personnel in these notices were not necessarily stationed at Fort Gordon or Robins Air Force Base. Award and promotion notices were sent by base public affairs offices to central military "home town news information" processing centers. These centers sent the notices to newspapers designated by the military member receiving the award or promotion. It was decided to exclude these notices from measurement in the study.

The home-delivery edition of each paper delivered to the military base and surrounding area was analyzed for an eight-week period. A total of 112 newspaper issues were studied; 96 Monday-through-Saturday issues and 16 Sunday issues.

The main public affairs office at each base did their own clipping of newspaper items which contained information about the base. The author collected copies of these clippings and also read each newspaper to ensure no military base related news items were missed. Each news item (article and/or photograph) that contained information

related to either of the two military bases was coded for the following information (See Appendix D for details of the newspaper codesheet):

1. The newspaper in which the news item appeared.
2. The date the news item appeared.
3. The section, page number, and number of pages of the section in which the news item appeared.
4. The type of news item. Article, photograph or article and accompanying photo.
5. The size of the news item in column inches.
6. Source of the news item. Article sources: military beat reporter, other staff writer, wire copy, special contributor, syndicated or regular local column. Photograph sources: staff photographer, official military photo or wire photo.
7. Gender of the author/photographer.
8. Issue(s) of the news item. These were the same issues as listed on the media query forms.
9. The type of news item. Article: hard news, feature, sidebar, opinion/editorial, or regular column. Photograph: hard news, feature, or grip-and-grin.
10. Locus of news item. Local, state, national or international.
11. News value of the news item. Timeliness, proximity, human interest, controversy/conflict,

prominence/importance, unusual/bizarre or usefulness.

12. Type of conflict. Government vs. individual, government vs. advocacy group, government vs. general public, government vs. government, or individual vs. individual.

13. The coder impressions of the positive or negative slant of the news item. Measured on a 7-point bipolar scale.

14. Whether the news item was related to a subsidy and if so, which subsidies were related to the article. Coders read the news item and then reviewed all the previous subsidies and determined if the news item contained all or part of a subsidy.

15. Information from the subsidy codesheet was transferred to the newspaper codesheet for those subsidies related to the article.

Coding Aids

Detailed instructions were given to the coders and each item of the coding sheets were reviewed with the coders before coding began (see Appendix B for coder instructions). The instruction sheets contained definitions for certain variables to give clarification and guidance.

To facilitate agreement between coders on the measurement of column inches of news items, a list of

conversion formulas was provided to each coder. These formulas were used to convert wide newspaper columns to the size of standard text columns (6 columns per page in broadsheet format and 5 columns per page in tabloid format). Guidance was also given for measuring photographs in standard text column inches (see Appendix E for conversion formulas).

Coders and Reliability

There were two coders, one was the spouse of the author, the other was a freelance writer and friend of the author. Coders were trained together by the author using the coder instructions (Appendix B), the codesheets (Appendixes C and D), and the column inches conversion formulas (Appendix E).

The coder instructions (Appendix B) outline the procedure the coders went through in coding the subsidies and news items for each week. While the staggered subsidy and newspaper data gathering periods required only subsidies to be coded during the first week (August 22-28, 1994), the author also had the coders code military related news items for that week as a trial session. Coding procedures and concerns about variables were ironed out after coding the first week of information.

The coders worked independently. After coding a week of subsidies and news items, the coders came together and

reconciled any differences in coding. Many of the differences in coding entries were found to be simple mistakes in entering responses. By reviewing the subsidy or news item in question, all disagreements were quickly

Table 1

Weekly Coder Agreement Percentages

<u>Week</u>	<u>Subsidies</u>	<u>News Items</u>	<u>Combined</u>
1	97.33	(83.46)*	97.33
2	98.7	93.71	96.95
3	98.43	94.48	96.22
4	98.72	95.66	96.95
5	97.62	94.77	96.48
6	98.41	96.22	97.19
7	98.01	95.04	96.23
8	98.48	95.19	96.44
9	-	97.98	97.98
10**	-	94.86	94.86

* Trial session for coders. This data was not used in study.

** A tenth week of coding was necessary due to late collection of six of the eight Wednesday supplements to the Augusta Chronicle.

reconciled by the coders. The reconciled data became the master data set and these values were entered into a numerical computer file for analysis using SPSS statistical software.

Intercoder reliability was checked for all weeks using a percentage agreement. Percentage agreement was used due to the simplicity of the coding design which used only two coders and nominal variables. The amount of interpretation required by the coders was low, therefore it was determined that more complex formulas for measuring reliability were not necessary. Wimmer and Dominick (1994) note that when little coder judgement is needed, coding assumes a mechanical or clerical quality and a high degree of reliability is expected. Scalar variables were not included in the check for reliability and will be discussed later. Table 1 shows reliability results for each week. There was a total of 15,688 comparisons with 565 disagreements between the two coders. This yielded a 96.4% agreement between the coders for the entire data set. A reliability check was performed for each variable. All variables had at least an 87% agreement between coders except for three. The three variables were: type of article (71.4% agreement), news value of the news item (57.1%) and type of conflict (71.4%). These three variables were removed from the study.

Of the remaining 36 variables, only three variables were below a 90% agreement between coders. These variables were: source of the article (87%), article column inches (88%), and the number of subsidies to which a news item was related (88.3%).

Four variables required the coders to respond subjectively on a 7-point bi-polar scale. Because the answers to these questions were scalar, it was decided to average the responses of the two coders rather than to arrive at a reconciled scale point. For each variable, the responses were averaged for each case and the mean was entered in the final data set. The four scalar variables were: subsidy issue controversy, subsidy slant, story slant and photo slant.

The subsidy issue controversy variable had a 61.8% agreement between coders. Over a total of 131 cases, the mean difference between the coders was .57 points.

The subsidy slant variable had a 31.3% agreement between coders. The mean difference between the coders was .84 points over 131 cases.

There was a 31.3% agreement between coders on the story slant variable. Over a total of 112 cases, the mean difference between the coders was .74 points.

The photo slant variable had a 77.7% agreement between coders. The mean difference between the coders was .23 points over 112 cases.

Data Analysis

The reconciled data on the master coding sheets were analyzed using SPSS/PC+ (version 2.0) computer software on a DOS-based personal computer. Statistical analyses performed were basic summary statistics, cross-tabulations, two-tailed t-tests and correlations. Statistical results for each variable are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter, a summary of the news item and subsidy characteristics is given. Then the statistical results affecting the specific hypothesis proposed in chapter 2 are presented.

News Item Characteristics

A total of 112 news items were identified by coders as containing information about Fort Gordon and Robins Air Force Base. Forty military base related news items were found in the Macon Telegraph and 72 were found in the Augusta Chronicle. Of the 112 news items; 75 were articles, 9 were stand-alone photographs and 28 were articles with one or more accompanying photographs.

Military base related articles ranged in size from .5 column inches to 41.4 column inches. Over 80% of the articles were under 15 column inches in length with the average size being 10.98 column inches. Graphics accompanied 25 of the coded articles. The graphics ranged from 1 to 20.5 column inches. The mean size of the graphics was 3.8 column inches. Forty-four percent of the graphics were between 1 and 2 column inches in length.

Photographs were an average of 14.13 column inches in length. Notable was the large modal value at .75 column inches. This value represented 21.6% of the 37 photographs coded. These photographs were small head and shoulder portraits of the key persons cited in the articles.

Article characteristics.

Nearly 41% of the 103 articles coded were written by the two military beat reporters of newspapers studied. Over 20% were written by other people employed by the newspapers. Thirty-five percent of the articles did not have a byline identifying the author. The remaining 4% were written by authors outside the newspaper.

Coders tried to determine the gender of the author simply from the byline. The Augusta Chronicle military beat reporter was female and the Macon Telegraph military beat reporter was male. Gender of the author could not be determined on over 44 (39%) of the articles coded. Forty-one articles were identified as being written by a female author. Only 18 of the articles were written by a male.

The locus of the articles was overwhelmingly local. Over 93% of the articles originated in the local area. Due to military activities in Haiti during the period of study, another 4.8% of the articles originated outside the United States. The national category rounded out the locus of the articles at 1.9%.

Subjective measurement of the positive or negative slant of the articles was accomplished by the coders with a seven point bi-polar scale. Coders responded on the scale which ranged from negative (1) to neutral (4) to positive (7). Results revealed that the coders viewed the articles as being predominantly positive towards the military base. The mean value was 4.6 with a standard deviation of 1.4. Sixty-four percent of the articles were coded above the 4 value. Over 21% of the articles were viewed as being neutral in slant. The remaining 15% were viewed as negative towards the base.

Photograph characteristics.

Of the 37 photographs coded, 54.1% were taken by newspaper staff photographers, 40.5% were not credited to a source and 5.4% were wire photographs.

Over 51% of the photographs were hard news photographs, 40.5% were feature photographs and 8% were grip-and-grin photographs.

Like the articles, the locus of the photographs coded was predominately local. Seventy-three percent of the photographs originated from the local area while one photograph (2.7%) was taken outside the United States. The location of 9 photographs (24.3%) could not be determined.

Also like the articles, the slant of the photographs were more positive than negative although with a higher

percentage of neutral photographs (48.6%). The mean value was 4.5 with a standard deviation of .99. Nearly 46% of the photographs were coded as being positive towards the military bases.

News Item Location

The distribution of military base-related news items in their placement in the newspaper indicated a heavy placement in the area-specific Wednesday supplements. The supplements contained 42% of the news items. The first section of the newspaper contained 31.3% and the second section contained 16.1% of the news items.

A large number of news items were placed towards the front of the section they appeared in. In measuring the newspaper section page on which the news item first appears, nearly 35% of the news items were located on the first page of the section. Page 12, at 15.2%, had the second highest content of news items. The remaining news items were distributed between page two and page eighteen in the sections of the newspaper.

It could be argued that the items found on the back of the Wednesday supplement of the Augusta Chronicle were actually on the first page. This is because an interview with the editor of the Augusta Chronicle military reporter revealed a unique practice at the newspaper every Wednesday. The supplement delivered to Fort Gordon and

surrounding area, the Richmond County Chronicle, is reversed as it is placed in the center of the newspaper. So when a reader reaches the supplement, the last page of the supplement is the first page seen. The last page of each supplement is dedicated to Fort Gordon related information. In the eight Augusta Chronicle supplements coded, the number of pages varied between 10 and 14. If the news items appearing on the last page of the Augusta Chronicle supplement were counted as appearing on page one of the supplement, then nearly 42% of all military related news items in both the Macon Telegraph and the Augusta Chronicle were on page one of the newspaper section in which they appeared.

Military related news items appeared in 53 issues of the total 112 newspaper issues examined during the eight week period. News items appeared in 22 issues of the Macon Telegraph and 31 issues of the Augusta Chronicle.

The average number of pages in a Macon Telegraph newspaper containing one or more military base related news items was 36.5 pages for the weekday (includes Saturday) editions and 58.4 pages for the Sunday edition. The average Augusta Chronicle that contained coded items was 48.3 pages for the weekday editions and 64.67 for the Sunday editions.

Subsidy Characteristics

A total of 131 information subsidies were given out by the military bases. Fort Gordon released more information than Robins Air Force Base during the data gathering period. Fort Gordon gave 85 (65%) information subsidies to the Augusta Chronicle compared to the Macon Telegraph's receipt of 46 (35%) subsidies from Robins Air Force Base. The number of information subsidies from the different base public affairs offices varied greatly (See Table 2).

Table 2

Information Subsidies by Public Affairs Office

PAO Office	Subsidies from office
Robins AFB	
Main	26.7% (35)
AF Reserve	4.6% (6)
Museum	3.1% (4)
5th Combat Communications Group	.8% (1)
Fort Gordon	
Main	52.7% (69)
Hospital	9.9% (13)
513th Military Intelligence Brigade	2.3% (3)
Total	100.1% (131)

The public affairs offices initiated more information subsidies than the journalists of the two newspapers. The public affairs offices initiated 61.5% of the subsidies and journalists initiated 38.5%.

Information subsidies could be of one or more subsidy types. Of the 131 subsidies coded, 21.4% (28) were determined to be of more than one subsidy type. The written release was used in 45.8% (60) of the subsidies. Oral answers to reporters questions, a subsidy type initiated by the journalist, was identified in 41.2% (54) of the subsidies. All other subsidy types (oral news release, photocopy of document or report, written answers to reporters' questions, fact sheet and photograph) were each found in less than 9% (12) of the subsidies. None of the subsidies were a press kit or brochure.

Information subsidies could also be transmitted by more than one method of transmission. Of the 131 subsidies, 81.7% used only one method of transmission, 16.8% used two methods of transmission and 1.5% were transmitted to the journalist using three different methods. The telephone was used in 53.4% (70) of the subsidy transmissions. The fax machine was used in 33.6% (44) of the subsidies. Sending the subsidy through the mail was used in 14.5% (19) transmissions. Over 12% (16) of the subsidies involved hand delivery. Over 6% (8) of the subsidies were transmitted at least partly through a

public affairs office arranged interview. No subsidies were transmitted through a news conference.

Of the 107 subsidies that used only one method of transmission, the telephone was used to orally transmit 46.7%. The fax machine was used to send 24.3% of the subsidies. Mail delivery was used to send 15.9% of the subsidies. Over 10% were hand delivered and 2.8% were transmitted through an interview arranged by the public affairs office.

Hypothesis Tests

The coders identified 68.8% (77) of the 112 news items as containing information derived from information subsidies. Table 3 shows how these news items were distributed between the two newspapers.

Table 3

News Items Containing Subsidy Information

	Related	Not Related	Row Totals
Augusta Chronicle	57 (74%)	15 (42.9%)	72 (64.3%)
Macon Telegraph	20 (26%)	20 (57.1%)	40 (35.7%)
Column Totals	77 (68.8%)	35 (31.3%)	112 (100%)

Of the 77 news items related to subsidies, 40 news items contained information from only one subsidy, 16 contained information from two subsidies and 21 contained information from three or more subsidies.

Hypotheses 1a and 1b asked which newspaper accepts more military base information subsidies, a newspaper with a military beat reporter who has additional reporting duties (Macon Telegraph), or a newspaper with a military beat reporter whose primary job is covering a military installation (Augusta Chronicle). To test the hypotheses, a new variable was created from information on the coded data sheets which operationalized whether a subsidy was accepted by the newspaper. The variable contained a yes/no

Table 4

Subsidy Use

	Augusta Chronicle	Macon Telegraph	Row Total
Subsidies Used	61 (77.2%)	18 (22.8%)	79(60.3%)
Subsidies Rejected	24 (46.2%)	28 (53.8%)	52(39.7%)
Column Total	85 (64.9%)	46 (35.1%)	131 (100%)

χ^2 13.279 significant at .0003

$\lambda = .192$

answer for all subsidies, with 'yes' indicating the coders identified part or all of the subsidy in a news item.

As illustrated in Table 4, a Chi-square analysis showed a significant difference between the subsidy acceptance level of the two newspapers. The Augusta Chronicle accepted more than twice as many subsidies as it rejected while the Macon Telegraph rejected more subsidies than it accepted. Support was demonstrated for hypothesis 1b; that more military base subsidies are accepted by a newspaper with a military beat reporter whose primary job is covering a military installation. The opposite hypothesis 1a was not supported.

The second hypothesis examined whether the military agenda is reflected in the media agenda. Military agenda was operationally defined as the information subsidies put out by the public affairs offices while media agenda was operationally defined as the news items published in the two local newspapers. A total of 131 subsidies were given to the two newspapers and 79 of those subsidies (60.3%) were used in news items. Out of the 112 news items coded, 77 of the news items (68.8%) contained information from one or more information subsidies.

The issues of the news items were examined to see if they reflected the issues presented in the subsidies. Early in the study, the head public affairs officer at each base was asked about local base-related issues that would be potentially newsworthy during the data gathering period. News items were coded for these local issues and current national issues (See Appendix B for definitions of the issues). Issues that appeared in either a news item or a subsidy were included in analysis. After coding, the

"other" category was examined for issues that were not identified at the beginning of the study by the author or the public affairs officers. Issues that were identified in more than two news items were taken out of the other category and included in the list of issues during data analysis. Tables 5, 6, and 7 show the Pearson correlation coefficients for the news item issues and the subsidy issues. These correlations show a positive linear relationship where it is expected between the news item and subsidy issues. The correlations not only show a relationship between the same news item and subsidy issues, they also show a relationship between issues that would be expected to be related, such as "Base Realignment and Closure actions" and "military draw down."

The third hypothesis states that newspapers use subsidies concerning controversial issues more than they use routine information subsidies. To measure the controversy of a subsidy, the two coders subjectively rated each subsidy as controversial or routine on a seven-point bi-polar scale. The two coder values were averaged and this value was used in the master data list. As a validity check, public affairs officers were asked to respond to the controversy of a subsidy on a seven-point bi-polar scale that was placed on the subsidy log sheets.

The coders rated all 131 subsidies. Controversy ratings by the public affairs officers were gathered for only 88 (67%) of the subsidies. The smaller number of ratings from the public affairs officers was caused by a concern to maintain measurement reliability for the variable. Occasionally, written subsidies collected from the public affairs offices were unaccompanied by a media

Table 5

Issue Relationships for Both Papers

News item issues	Subsidy issues								
	Base Realignment and Closure actions	Deployments	Environmental	Military drawdown	Contracts	Civilian personnel cuts	Other	Calendar of events	Haiti
Base Realignment and Closure actions	.5133 p=.000	-.1187 p=.152	-.0680 p=.278	.3774 p=.000	.2571 p=.012	-.0333 p=.387	-.0981 p=.198	-.1310 p=.128	-.0845 p=.232
Deployments	.0550 p=.317	.8359 p=.000	-.0904 p=.217	-.0049 p=.483	-.0631 p=.293	-.0443 p=.351	-.2679 p=.009	-.1741 p=.065	.4642 p=.000
Environmental	-.0617 p=.297	-.0956 p=.204	1.0000 p=.000	-.0797 p=.245	-.0382 p=.371	-.0269 p=.408	-.1623 p=.079	-.1055 p=.181	-.0680 p=.278
Military drawdown	-.0694 p=.274	-.1076 p=.176	-.0617 p=.297	.4285 p=.000	-.0430 p=.355	.4353 p=.000	.0424 p=.357	-.1188 p=.152	-.0766 p=.254
Contracts	-.0430 p=.355	-.0667 p=.282	-.0382 p=.371	-.0556 p=.316	1.0000 p=.000	-.0187 p=.436	.0611 p=.299	-.0736 p=.262	-.0475 p=.341
Civilian personnel cuts	-.0430 p=.355	-.0667 p=.282	-.0382 p=.371	-.0566 p=.316	-.0267 p=.409	.7024 p=.000	.0611 p=.299	-.0736 p=.262	-.0475 p=.341
Other	-.0430 p=.355	-.1667 p=.074	-.1433 p=.107	-.1129 p=.164	.0833 p=.236	-.0702 p=.272	.7586 p=.000	-.2760 p=.008	-.1780 p=.061
Calendar of events	-.1188 p=.152	-.1840 p=.055	-.1055 p=.181	-.0398 p=.365	-.0736 p=.262	-.0517 p=.328	-.0163 p=.444	.6298 p=.000	-.1310 p=.128
Haiti	-.0897 p=.219	.5908 p=.000	-.0797 p=.245	-.1159 p=.158	-.0556 p=.316	-.0391 p=.368	-.2361 p=.019	-.1535 p=.091	.8537 p=.000

Note: Where p=.000, the actual p-value was less than .0005.

Table 6

Local Issue Relationships for the Augusta Chronicle

News Item issues	Subsidy issues				
	National Science Center	Arson Fire	JWID	Soldier service center	Other
National Science Center	.8537 p=.000	-.0333 p=.387	-.0333 p=.387	-.0475 p=.341	-.2016 p=.039
Arson fire	-.0391 p=.368	1.0000 p=.000	-.0132 p=.455	-.0187 p=.436	-.0795 p=.246
Telemedicine	.1514 p=.094	-.0231 p=.421	-.0231 p=.421	-.0329 p=.388	-.1396 p=.113
Joint Warrior Interoperability Demonstration	-.0391 p=.368	-.0132 p=.455	1.0000 p=.000	-.0187 p=.436	-.0795 p=.246
New soldier service center	-.0391 p=.368	-.0132 p=.455	-.0132 p=.455	.7024 p=.000	-.0795 p=.246
Other	-.2085 p=.034	-.0702 p=.272	-.0702 p=.272	.0833 p=.236	.7586 p=.000

Note: Where p=.000, the actual p-value was less than .0005.

* The issue "telemedicine" was identified by coders in news items related to subsidies, but was not identified as a primary issue in any subsidies.

Table 7

Local Issue Relationships for the Macon Telegraph

News item issues	Subsidy issues			
	Air Show	Museum of Aviation	Mili- tary ball	Other
Air show	.8052 p=.000	.4577 p=.000	-.0766 p=.254	.0054 p=.481
Museum of Aviation	.1758 p=.063	.9065 p=.000	.1444 p=.105	.0424 p=.357
Military ball	-.0617 p=.297	.3166 p=.003	1.0000 p=.000	-.1827 p=.056
Golf tournament	.2553 p=.013	.6926 p=.000	-.0531 p=.323	.1471 p=.101
Other	-.1433 p=.107	-.1780 p=.061	-.1614 p=.080	.7586 p=.000

Note: Where p=.000, the actual p-value was less than .0005.

* The issue "golf tournament" was identified by coders in news items related to subsidies, but was not identified as a primary issue in any subsidies.

query form and the public affairs officer was not immediately available to supply the missing data. A lag time of one to five days occurred between the subsidy collection date and follow-up phone contact to gather the missing information. It was unknown what effect this lag time may have on the opinion of the public affairs officer and therefore the subjective rating of the controversy of the subsidy. It was decided to measure only those public affairs controversy ratings that were accomplished at the time the subsidy was sent to the media to maintain reliability.

The scale mean for controversy determined by the coders was 2.3 while the scale mean determined by the public affairs officers was 3.2. The averaged coder scale results were heavily weighted towards the routine end of the scale. Sixty-five percent of the averaged coder scale responses were below the 1.8 value while 65% of the public affairs officer results were below the mid-scale value (4.0).

A t-test of the averaged coder scale measures revealed no significant difference between the subsidies used and subsidies rejected ($t=.39$, $p=.697$, $df=129$, two tailed). The same t-test was performed on the public affairs officer measures and again revealed no significant difference ($t=1.04$, $p=.302$, $df=86$, two tailed).

The fourth hypothesis suggests that subsidies of routine information are initiated most often by the public affairs office while subsidies of controversial issues are initiated most often by the journalist. Of the 131 information subsidies handed out by the two military bases, 61.5% were initiated by the public affairs office and 38.5%

were initiated by the journalist. The averaged coder controversy scale ratings were compared for subsidies initiated by the journalist and subsidies initiated by the public affairs office. The mean controversy rating was 1.8 for subsidies initiated by the public affairs office. The mean controversy rating for subsidies initiated by the journalist was 2.9. A t-test revealed a significant difference between the two variables ($t=-3.57$, $p<.0005$, $df=128$, two tailed).

The controversy scale ratings by the public affairs officers were also examined. The mean controversy rating for public affairs office initiated subsidies was 2.7. The rating for journalist initiated subsidies was 3.6. A t-test revealed a significant difference between these variables ($t=-2.02$, $p=.047$, $df=85$, two tailed).

CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

This chapter reviews the findings of the content analysis and the theoretical and practical implications of those findings. It also discusses the limitations of the study and makes suggestions for further research.

Theoretical Implications

Hypotheses 1a and 1b were in part a test of Gandy's (1982) information subsidy concept and also a look at the news organization's influence on media agenda through personnel workload. Hypotheses 1a and 1b read:

Hypothesis 1a: Newspapers with a military beat reporter who has additional reporting duties accept more information subsidies per military installation than newspapers with a military beat reporter whose primary job is covering a military installation.

Hypothesis 1b: Newspapers with a military beat reporter whose primary job is covering a military installation accept more information subsidies than

newspapers with a reporter who covers the military installation in addition to other beats.

Hypothesis 1b appeared to be supported and hypothesis 1a was not supported. The Augusta Chronicle, with a military beat reporter who spent 90% of her time covering a military base, accepted over three times as many subsidies as the Macon Telegraph, which had a reporter who spent 25% of his time covering a military base. In fact, the Macon Telegraph rejected more subsidies than it accepted.

In rejecting hypothesis 1a, the findings appear to refute Gandy's (1982) contention that a lack of resources would result in a more accepting attitude by the newspaper towards information given out by public relations practitioners. In fact, this study could possibly be used to support the opposite of Gandy's contention. News organization influence, in the way of additional beat reporting duties, appears to affect the acceptance of source information, but not in the way it was inferred in hypothesis 1a. There is certainly more to the acceptance or rejection of information subsidies than just a lack or abundance of resources. Support for hypothesis 1b indicates other news organization influences such as size of newshole, political motives of the publisher, or many other factors may have affected military base subsidy use.

The support shown for hypothesis 1b suggests that at the local level, the influence of the source is similar to that noted by Sigal (1973) at the national level. The closeness of the local or national beat journalist to the source may result in an increased use of source resources. Some people may view this as a dependency on source resources. This study certainly gives teeth to warnings found in textbooks about getting too close to the source. Others may view the increased use of source resources as a natural outcome of a cultivated relationship between two people who are mutually dependent on each other.

The results indicate that amount of time spent on the beat affects the way the beat is used as a resource. This research joins Lacy and Matustik's (1983) research in suggesting that the amount of time spent on a beat is related to the amount of news copy that comes from the beat.

Hypothesis 2: The agenda of issues presented in information subsidies from military public affairs offices (military agenda) influences the agenda of issues portrayed in local media content (media agenda).

The findings appear to support Hypothesis 2. There was no one test that could be done for this hypothesis.

The newspaper's use of subsidies and the relationship between the issues in the subsidies and the issues that appeared in print had to be considered.

The study results for the two newspapers taken together show that more subsidies were accepted than rejected and subsidized news items appeared in the newspaper twice as often as unsubsidized news items.

An examination of the issues put forth in the information subsidies and the issues found in the news items show a definite relationship between the issues. Issues that would be expected to be related were found to have a positive linear relationship. And where issues would be expected to be unrelated there were no relationships found.

Support of hypothesis 2 indicates that the local media reflect the priorities put forth by the military public affairs office. It suggests that public affairs offices are successful in their goal of passing their agenda to the local public through the newspaper.

Hypothesis 3: Newspapers use subsidies concerning controversial information more than they use routine information subsidies.

Hypothesis 3 was not supported by statistical tests of the data. Summary statistics of the data show that the

newspapers together and separately used a higher percentage of the routine subsidies as compared to the controversial subsidies. Since hypotheses 3 and 4 examine subsidy issue controversy, hypothesis 3 results will be discussed with results from hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 4: Subsidies of routine information are initiated most often by the PAO whereas subsidies of controversial issues are initiated most often by the journalist.

Analysis of the data shows support for hypothesis 4. This confirms what is normally suspected in the mutually beneficial but sometimes adversarial relationship that exists between the beat journalist and his/her public relations sources as outlined by Cutlip et al. (1994).

Taking the results concerning hypotheses 3 and 4 together, it appears that controversial subsidies are initiated by the beat reporter but these subsidies are ultimately used less than the routine subsidies the beat reporter receives daily. This indicates a possible reporter mistrust of base public affairs office information concerning a controversial issue. The reporter may put out more effort to dig up information about a controversial issue. Indeed, the reporter obviously has some time

already invested in the issue because he/she is the one who initiated the subsidy from the military base.

Practical Implications

The findings of this study suggest three statements concerning the relationship between the military beat journalist and the military base:

1. Military beat reporters who spend more time on the beat use more information subsidies from their beat.
2. Local media reflect the agenda put forth by the military base.
3. Information subsidies concerning controversial issues are initiated by the military beat reporter but these subsidies are ultimately used less than routine subsidies.

The influences of media routines and the source appear to affect the selection and acceptance of military base information subsidies by the military beat reporter. Previous research indicated there may be many factors working against a reporters' training and instinct to aggressively seek information (Gans, 1979; Gieber & Johnson, 1961; Fishman, 1980; Sigal, 1973). Reporting textbooks (Brooks et al., 1992) refer to the acceptance and use of source information as negative and warn journalists about possible absorption of the attitude and mindset of the beat. This study could be viewed as yet another

warning to beat reporters to be wary and avoid becoming simply an advocate of the beat.

This study could also be viewed in a less negative light. The results of this study are an indicator of the outcome of a cultivated relationship between reporter and source. The cultivation is accomplished by both reporter and source to establish a relationship that is mutually beneficial to both parties. The journalists' increased acceptance of information subsidies could be a natural outgrowth of this close contact as the journalist comes to view the source as trustworthy and reliable.

This study adds to previous research documenting the influences that affect media content. These influences indicate that the media is not the independent, objective, "fourth branch of government" as many journalists tout it to be. The body of research on media influences suggests that the structure of present-day journalism be evaluated and perhaps changed if institutions of mass media are to hold onto their claim of independence.

Military public relations practitioners appear to be successful in their efforts to get their organization's messages to the public through the media. This success isn't the direct result of public affairs office actions. It is a cumulative result of many influences that come to bear on the military beat reporter as he or she goes about the beat. However, as the influences on media content are

identified and if journalists do not change their practices, military public relations practitioners will be able to tailor their subsidies to meet the needs of the media and will continue to be successful in their efforts.

Limitations

This study was limited in that it looked at a selective sample of only two newspapers in the population of newspapers which are located near military installations. This limits generalization of the results to the entire population.

It was difficult to control for all possible confounding variables when identifying the two newspapers for this study. An attempt was made to select two newspapers which were as similar as possible except for the variables studied. The size of the newshole of each newspaper was not measured prior to this study due to time and economic constraints.

It is suspected that the military reporter at the Augusta Chronicle had more space to fill than the military reporter at the Macon Telegraph. The Augusta Chronicle had a weekly supplement page dedicated to military base related news. It was the military reporter's responsibility to fill this page each week. This dedicated military page is a possible influence that was not controlled for in this

study and may be a news organization influence on the media content of the Augusta Chronicle.

Another possible confounding variable was the existence of a small daily paper, the Warner Robins Daily Sun, in the Macon Telegraph readership area. It is unknown what effect this newspaper had on the Macon Telegraph's coverage of Robins Air Force Base. In order to have a complete comparison of two similar newspaper beats, other newspapers in the readership area should be examined and possibly included in the study to determine the impact they may have on the coverage of the beat.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study examined what happens in the relationship between the local newspaper, the beat reporter and one source. Future studies could focus more on why beat reporters and newspapers accept or reject information subsidies. Using qualitative research methods such as intensive interviews or focus groups in addition to quantitative methods would add tremendously to the depth of understanding of the reporter-source relationship.

Military bases should be utilized in the future for reporter-source relationship studies. Military installations provide a unique opportunity for researchers in that office structure, record keeping and training of public relations practitioners is somewhat uniform. Future

studies should go beyond just a comparison study of two newspapers and look at a more representative sample of the population of newspapers with military beat reporters.

Future comparison studies should look beyond a particular region of the country and search nationwide for newspapers with similarities to keep confounding variables at an absolute minimum. A pilot study to identify and control for confounding variables is also suggested.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
MEDIA QUERY FORMS

APPENDIX B
CODER INSTRUCTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CODERS

1st Week:

Look at subsidies for the week and code information concerning each subsidy using the Subsidy Codesheet as a guide. The subsidies will be marked with identification numbers. Follow the numbers in numerical sequence.

2nd week - 9th week:

1st Step: You will be provided photocopies of newspaper clippings taken from each local newspaper in addition to the newspapers the clippings come from. The newspaper articles will be marked with identification numbers. Follow the numbers in numerical sequence. Use the photocopies and the newspapers to gather information to answer the questions on the Newspaper Codesheet. Code information concerning the newspaper article using the Newspaper Codesheet as a guide.

As you code newspaper articles, try to match articles to the previous week's subsidies that may have generated the articles. If a subsidy generated an article, then transfer the necessary subsidy information from the Subsidy Codesheet to the Newspaper Codesheet.

2nd Step: Look at subsidies for the week and code information concerning each subsidy using the Subsidy Codesheet as a guide.

3rd Step: Go back through the newspaper articles that were not successfully matched to previous week subsidies and try to match them to the current week subsidies. If a subsidy generated an article, then transfer the necessary subsidy information from the Subsidy Codesheet to the Newspaper Codesheet.

****If any information is missing for any codesheet question, place a "9" in all the blanks for that question****

****If you are asked to specify information, write down the requested information on a separate sheet of paper and annotate the corresponding subsidy ID number or article ID number along with the question number****

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE SUBSIDY CODESHEET

Questions 1 - 8 and 10 are answered by getting the information from the query form that is provided by each base public affairs office.

9. Type of subsidy -- Look at the query form and any attached information and determine the type(s) of subsidies given to the local newspaper.

Definitions of the types of subsidies:

Written news release -- Usually has the words "news release" in the header of the first page. Written in a ready-to-publish form so that it looks and reads like a news story found in the newspaper.

Oral news release -- Contact is initiated by the public affairs office (PAO) and information is passed from the PAO to the reporter orally.

Photocopy of document or report -- Self-explanatory.

Written answers to reporter questions -- Attached to the subsidy form will be the reporter questions along with the answers to the questions.

Oral answers to reporter questions -- The subsidy form will indicate the reporter had questions and responses were given to the reporter by phone, in person or during an interview.

Fact sheet -- A fact sheet summarizes key points about an organization, concept, event, military hardware, etc. An official military fact sheet or a typed sheet of paper with the words "fact sheet" in the heading might be attached to the subsidy form.

Press kit -- Provides information in various formats and can contain one or more of the other types of subsidies. The information in the press kit is usually related and given to the reporter in person when the reporter visits the base or sent to the reporter prior to the visit.

Brochure -- Could range from a slick glossy brochure to a office-made, folded, single-sheet brochure.

Photograph -- Self-explanatory.

11. Issue controversy -- After looking at the subsidy, determine if the issue or topic of the subsidy is of a controversial or routine nature. Two spaces are provided for this question to allow a decimal place. Example: 5.4 is entered as 54.

12. Subsidy slant -- Determine whether the tone of the subsidy provided to the newspaper has a positive or negative slant towards the base from which it came. Two spaces are provided for this question to allow a decimal place. Example: 3.7 is entered as 37.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE NEWSPAPER CODESHEET

Questions 1 - 9 are answered from information found on the photocopied article or in the newspaper it came from.

10. Size of article text -- Use a ruler to measure the length of columns. Estimate to nearest quarter inch. Use the attached conversion formula table when the article text width is larger than the standard text width. The standard newspaper page width for the papers you will be coding is six columns wide. Supplement pages are five columns wide.

11. Size of photo -- Use a ruler to measure the top-to-bottom height of the photo. Multiply the height times the number of standard column widths the photo covers. The standard newspaper page width for the papers you will coding is six columns wide. Supplement pages are five columns wide.

12. Size of graphics -- Use a ruler to measure the top-to-bottom height of the photo. Multiply the height times the number of standard column widths the graphic covers. The standard newspaper page width for the papers you will coding is six columns wide. Supplement pages are five columns wide.

13. Source of article -- Determine article source from byline at beginning of article.

14. Source of photograph -- Determine photo source from photo credit at bottom of photo.

15. Gender of author -- Try and determine from author's name.

16. Issue(s) of the story and/or photograph -- Read the article and mark what you believe the main issue or issues of the article are. Listed below are definitions of some of the issues:

Base Realignment and Closure actions -- The BRAC committee is a committee appointed by Congress to select bases and units for closure or realignment. The acronym (BRAC) or the full name of the committee will be used in the story concerning its actions.

Deployments -- Deployments are when people or entire units from a base are sent (deployed) on a military related mission to some world hot spot. The mission can be military or humanitarian.

National Science Center -- A tenant organization located on Fort Gordon which is partially supported by the Army.
 Fire Department grievance -- The Fort Gordon fire department filed a grievance early in 1994. At the beginning of this study the courts had not given a decision on the grievance.

Mass Casualty Exercise -- When the base and local disaster preparedness organizations (hospitals, ambulance services, police, fire department, etc) practice a large emergency disaster scenario where many casualties are involved. People are sometimes used as actors to play the role of casualties.

Environmental -- Any environmental related activities happening on base or lack of these activities.

Arson fire -- A fire on Fort Gordon in early 1994 was suspected to be started by arson. Police are still looking for suspects.

Military drawdown -- Any action as a result of budget cuts or the reduction in force which affects the military base in some way.

Air show -- Robbins AFB has scheduled an air show in October.

Contracts -- Organizations on Robbins AFB let many contracts each year for goods and services. Fort Gordon also lets contracts though not as many as Robbins AFB. These contracts occasionally become newsworthy because of the large dollar amount or a controversy in some aspect of the contract or contractor.

Museum of Aviation -- A museum located on Robbins AFB which is supported in part by the U.S. Air Force.

Civilian personnel cuts -- Cuts as a result of budget cuts, unit realignment or base closure.

Airspace disputes -- Can be anything related to airspace around the base. From local citizens claiming air traffic from the base is creating noise or disrupting business to disputes concerning placement of towers or large buildings.

Unit movements -- Permanent or semi-permanent relocation of entire units from other bases to Fort Gordon or Robbins AFB, or unit movement from Fort Gordon or Robbins AFB to another location.

17. Type of article -- Definition of article types:

Feature -- An article that focuses on an individual aspects of a person, place, thing, family, military unit, etc.

Sidebar -- An article that accompanies a usually larger main article. The sidebar focuses on and elaborates on some particular aspect mentioned in the main article.

Opinion/editorial -- Usually on the opinion page. Can be the views of the newspaper, letters from readers, or the views of a guest writer.

Regular column -- Usually on the opinion page but can be in other parts of the paper. The author writes the column on a regular, recurring basis.

18. Type of photo -- Definition of some of the photo types:
 Feature -- Photo focuses on a particular person, place, thing, unit, family, etc. Caption of photo will help you determine if photo is a feature photo.
 Grip-and-grin -- Photo shows an award being given or someone being congratulated or two or more well known people together usually in a ceremony setting.
19. Locus of story -- Where is the setting of the story?
20. Locus of photo -- Where is the setting of the photograph?
21. News value of story and/or photograph -- Why was the story or photograph chosen by editors to go into the paper?
 Timeliness -- Is it was breaking news? Is the story important because it is brand new or it just happened?
 Proximity -- Is the story important because of its geographic or psychological closeness to the newspaper readers?
 Human Interest -- Does the story have a strong human element? Does it illustrate an issue through the people affected?
 Controversy/conflict -- Is the story controversial? Does the conflict in the story make it important to the readers?
 Prominence of subject -- Is the story important because of the conspicuous nature of the subject?
 Unusual/bizarre -- Is the story important due to bizarre or unusual nature of the story itself or the subject of the story?
22. Type of conflict -- Is there an element of conflict in the story? If so, who is the conflict between?
23. Story slant -- Determine whether the tone of the story has a positive or negative slant towards the local military base. Two spaces are provided for this question to allow a decimal place. Example: 3.7 is entered as 37.
24. Photo slant -- Determine whether the tone of the photo has a positive or negative slant towards the local military base. Two spaces are provided for this question to allow a decimal place. Example: 3.7 is entered as 37.
25. Is story and/or photo related to a subsidy? -- If it appears the story is a result of a subsidy, code questions 26 through 32 using information directly from the subsidy.

26. through 28. Self-explanatory.

29. Issue(s) of the subsidies -- Transfer this information from all subsidies which are related to the story and/or photo.

30. Initiator of subsidies -- Did PAO initiate all of the subsidies related to the story and/or photo? Did the journalist? Was it a combination of both?

31. Method of transmission of subsidies -- Review the subsidies and indicate all methods of transmission used for all subsidies related to the story and/or photo.

32. Type of subsidies used in story and/or photo -- Look at the subsidy codesheet and indicate all the types of subsidies used in the subsidies related to the story and/or photo.

APPENDIX C
SUBSIDY CODESHEET

SUBSIDY CODESHEET

Variable Number / Variable Name / Column Number			
1.	Coder	Charlene Roake (1) Donny Seagraves (2)	[1]
2.	Subsidy ID (001-800)		[2-4]
3.	Place of origin	Robins AFB - Main PA (1) Robins AFB - AFRES PA (2) Robins AFB - 5th CCG PA (3) Fort Gordon - Main PA (4) Fort Gordon - Hospital PA (5) Fort Gordon - MI Brigade PA (6) Robins AFB - Museum PA (7)	[5]
4.	Date of subsidy - mmdd (example: 0925 for Sept. 25)		[6-9]
5.	Newspaper which received subsidy	Macon Telegraph (1) Augusta Chronicle (2)	[10]
6.	Journalist who received subsidy	Military reporter (1) (Macon Telegraph: Steve Elkins) (Augusta Chronicle: Kelly Daniel) Other staff writer (2)	[11]
7.	Method of transmission	No Yes	
	Phone	0 1	[12]
	Fax	0 1	[13]
	Mail/Distribution	0 1	[14]
	News conference	0 1	[15]
	Hand delivered	0 1	[16]
	Interview	0 1	[17]

8.	Issue of subsidy			
		No	Yes	
	Homosexuals in the military	0	1	[18]
	Base Realignment and Closure actions	0	1	[19]
	Deployments	0	1	[20]
	National Science Center	0	1	[21]
	Fire Department grievance	0	1	[22]
	Mass casualty exercise	0	1	[23]
	Environmental	0	1	[24]
	Arson fire	0	1	[25]
	Military drawdown	0	1	[26]
	Gulf War health problems	0	1	[27]
	Air show	0	1	[28]
	Contracts	0	1	[29]
	Museum of Aviation	0	1	[30]
	Civilian personnel cuts	0	1	[31]
	Airspace disputes	0	1	[32]
	Unit movements	0	1	[33]
	Other - specify if yes	0	1	[34]
9.	Type of subsidy	No	Yes	
	Written news release	0	1	[35]
	Oral news release	0	1	[36]
	Photocopy of document or report	0	1	[37]
	Written answers to reporter questions	0	1	[38]
	Oral answers to reporter questions	0	1	[39]
	Fact sheet	0	1	[40]
	Press kit	0	1	[41]
	Brochure	0	1	[42]
	Photograph	0	1	[43]
	Other - specify if yes	0	1	[44]
10.	Initiator of subsidy			[45]
		PAO (1)		
		Journalist (2)		
11.	Issue controversy			[46-47]
		1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7		
		Routine	Controversial	
12.	Subsidy slant			[48-49]
		1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7		
		Negative	Neutral	Positive

APPENDIX D
NEWSPAPER ITEM CODESHEET

NEWSPAPER CODESHEET

Variable Number / Variable Name / Column Number		
1.	Coder Charlene Roake (1) Donny Seagraves (2)	[1]
2.	Article ID (001-800)	[2-4]
3.	Name of newspaper Macon Telegraph (1) Augusta Chronicle (2)	[5]
4.	Publication date - mmdd (example: 0925 for Sept. 25)	[6-9]
5.	Total number of pages in newspaper (001-800)	[10-12]
6.	Type of military base related news item Article (1) Photograph (2) Article and accompanying photo (3)	[13]
7.	Number of pages in section which article and/or photograph appears (01-80)	[14-15]
8.	Section in which article appears Section A (1) Section B (2) Section C (3) Section D (4) Section E (5) Section F (6) Section G (7) Supplement (8)	[16]
9.	First page on which article and/or photo appears (01-80)	[17-18]
10.	Size of article text in column inches,	[19-22]

rounded to nearest 100th
 Example: 36.74 = 3674 (0000-8000)
 No article (9999)

11. Size of photograph in column inches, rounded to nearest 100th [23-26]
 Example: 36.74 = 3674 (0000-8000)
 No photograph (9999)
12. Space occupied by graphics in column inches, rounded to nearest 100th [27-30]
 Example: 36.74 = 3674 (0000-8000)
 No graphics (9999)
13. Source of article [31]
 No author given (0)
 Military reporter (1)
 (Macon Telegraph: Steve Elkins)
 (Augusta Chronicle: Kelly Daniel)
 Other staff writer (2)
 Wire copy (3)
 Special contributor (4)
 Syndicated column/feature (5)
 Regular column (6)
 Other - specify (7)
 No article, photo only (8)
14. Source of photograph [32]
 No source given (0)
 Staff photographer (1)
 U.S. military official photo (2)
 Wire photo (3)
 Other - specify (4)
 No photo, article only (8)
15. Gender of author [33]
 No author given (0)
 Male (1)
 Female (2)
 Neutral/organization (3)
 Gender unknown (4)
 No article, photo only (8)

16.	Issue(s) of the story and/or photographs		
		No	Yes
	Homosexuals in the military	0	1 [34]
	Base Realignment and Closure actions	0	1 [35]
	Deployments	0	1 [36]
	National Science Center	0	1 [37]
	Fire Department grievance	0	1 [38]
	Mass casualty exercise	0	1 [39]
	Environmental	0	1 [40]
	Arson fire	0	1 [41]
	Military drawdown	0	1 [42]
	Gulf War health problems	0	1 [43]
	Air show	0	1 [44]
	Contracts	0	1 [45]
	Museum of Aviation	0	1 [46]
	Civilian personnel cuts	0	1 [47]
	Airspace disputes	0	1 [48]
	Unit movements	0	1 [49]
	Other - specify if yes	0	1 [50]
17.	Type of article		[51]
	Hard news (1)		
	Feature (2)		
	Sidebar (3)		
	Opinion/editorial (4)		
	Regular column (5)		
	Other - specify (6)		
	No article, photo only (8)		
18.	Type of photograph		[52]
	Hard news (1)		
	Feature (2)		
	Grip-and-grin (3)		
	Other - specify (4)		
	No photo, article only (8)		
19.	Locus of story		[53]
	Local city/town/base (1)		
	State (2)		
	National (3)		
	International (4)		
	Location nonspecific (5)		
	No story, photo only (8)		
20.	Locus of photo		[54]
	Local city/town/base (1)		
	State (2)		
	National (3)		
	International (4)		
	Location nonspecific (5)		
	No photo, story only (8)		

21. News value of story and/or photograph [55]
 Timeliness (breaking news) (1)
 Proximity (geographic
 or psychological) (2)
 Human Interest (3)
 Controversy/conflict (4)
 Prominence/importance (of subject) (5)
 Unusual/bizarre (6)
 Usefulness or relevance (8)
22. Type of conflict No conflict present (1) [56]
 Government vs individual (2)
 Government vs advocacy group (3)
 Government vs general public (4)
 Government vs government (5)
 Individual vs individual (6)
23. Story slant [57-58]
 No story, photo only (88)
- 1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7
 Negative Neutral Positive
24. Photo slant [59-60]
 No photo, story only (88)
- 1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7
 Negative Neutral Positive
25. Is story and/or photo related to a subsidy? [61]
 No (0) Yes (1)
 ***If the story is NOT related to a subsidy, place
 9 in the remaining spaces ***
26. How many subsidies is story and/or photo [62]
 related to? (1-3)
27. If story and/or photo is related to a subsidy, [63-65]
 which subsidy is related?
 List most prominent subsidy ID number first
 from subsidy codesheet (001-800)

28.	Does story use additional subsidies?			[66-68]
	List subsidy ID number.			
	First additional subsidy (001-800)			
	No additional subsidy (000)			
	Second additional subsidy (001-800)			[69-71]
	No additional subsidy (000)			
29.	Issue(s) of the subsidies	No	Yes	
	Homosexuals in the military	0	1	[72]
	Base Realignment and Closure actions	0	1	[73]
	Deployments	0	1	[74]
	National Science Center	0	1	[75]
	Fire Department grievance	0	1	[76]
	Mass casualty exercise	0	1	[77]
	Environmental	0	1	[78]
	Arson fire	0	1	[79]
	Military drawdown	0	1	[80]
	Gulf War health problems	0	1	[81]
	Air show	0	1	[82]
	Contracts	0	1	[83]
	Museum of Aviation	0	1	[84]
	Civilian personnel cuts	0	1	[85]
	Airspace disputes	0	1	[86]
	Unit movements	0	1	[87]
	Other - specify if yes	0	1	[88]
30.	Initiator of subsidies	PAO (1)		[89]
		Journalist (2)		
		Both (3)		
31.	Method of transmission of subsidies	No	Yes	
	Phone	0	1	[90]
	Fax	0	1	[91]
	Mail/Distribution	0	1	[92]
	News conference	0	1	[93]
	Hand delivered	0	1	[94]
	Interview	0	1	[95]

APPENDIX E
COLUMN INCHES CONVERSION FORMULAS

FORMULAS FOR NEWSPAPER COLUMN INCHES CONVERSION

FOR TEXT:

Standard number of newspaper text columns (main paper): 6
 Standard number of newspaper text columns (supplement): 5

Formula for column inches: $Q/R \times y = x$

Q = number of standard columns covered by the wide text
 R = number of wide columns
 y = total column inches of wide columns
 x = total standard column inches

Example:

Three wide columns cover the space of three-and-a-half standard columns. Total column inches of the wide columns is measured to be 7 inches.

$$Q = 3.5 \quad R = 3 \quad y = 7$$

$$3.5/3 \times 7 = 8.17 \text{ standard column inches}$$

NOTE: Round resulting number (x) to nearest 100th

ANTICIPATED COMMON CONVERSION FORMULAS FOR WIDE COLUMNS TO STANDARD COLUMNS:

5 wide columns into space of 6 columns: $1.2 \times y = x$

4 wide columns into space of 5 columns: $1.25 \times y = x$

3 wide columns into space of 4 columns: $4/3 \times y = x$

2 wide columns into space of 3 columns: $1.5 \times y = x$

1 wide column into space of 1.5 columns: $1.5 \times y = x$

FOR PHOTOS AND GRAPHICS:

Multiply the height of the photo or graphic (to the nearest quarter inch) by the number of standard text columns the photo or graphic covers. Examples:

Example 1: Photo is three inches in height and covers

two-and-a-half standard text columns. $3 \times 2.5 = 7.5$ column inches.

Example 2: Graphic is 1.25 inches in height and covers one-and-a-half standard text columns. $1.25 \times 1.5 = 1.875$ (or 1.88) column inches.