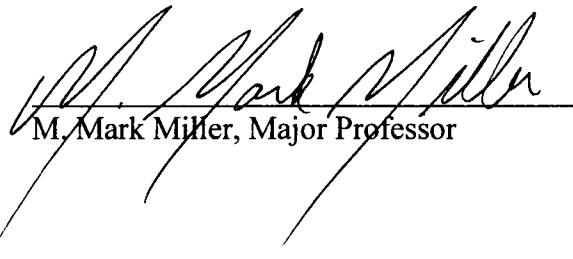


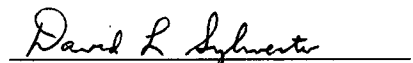
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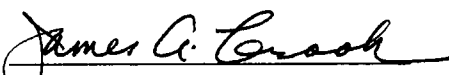
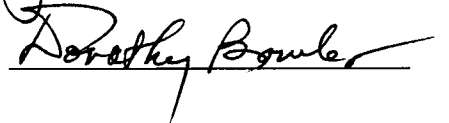
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Bryan E. Denham entitled "Anonymous Attribution and Official News Sources in the Reporting of Bosnia and Somalia: A Study of Conflict Coverage in American Newspapers." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Communications.



M. Mark Miller, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:



Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

ANONYMOUS ATTRIBUTION AND OFFICIAL NEWS SOURCES
IN THE REPORTING OF BOSNIA AND SOMALIA:
A STUDY OF CONFLICT COVERAGE IN AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Bryan E. Denham
August 1996

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ABSTRACT

This study examines source attribution in press reports of military conflict. Several issues in media sociology are addressed: (1) Whether anonymous attribution is more prevalent when American forces are committed to an active area; (2) whether certain types of news sources tend to be veiled more frequently; (3) whether differences exist across news organizations in the use of veiled sources; (4) whether reports originating from American or international locales contain more anonymous attribution; and (5) whether differences exist across Republican and Democratic administrations in the release of anonymous information.

In addition, the study takes a macroscopic look at the extent to which journalists rely on official news sources for information about military conflict. At issue is the homogenous news that can develop when a narrow band of sources provide information to several news organizations.

Reports from the Associated Press, the Los Angeles Times and the Washington Post concerning the military conflicts in Bosnia and Somalia were examined. Nearly 9,000 news paragraphs from the years 1992, 1993 and 1994 were coded for six categorical variables--Administration, Conflict, Dateline, Level of Attribution, Newspaper and Source Type. Among the central findings were significant differences across news organizations in the use of anonymous attribution, a dominance by officials as Western news sources, and consistency across news organizations in the frequency of Source Type.

The study makes a methodological contribution to the mass communication

literature by using logistic regression analysis to test the effects of four predictor variables on an ordinal-level response variable. Specifically, fractions were created in which the number of paragraphs containing anonymous attribution in a given article served as the numerator and the number of paragraphs containing anonymous attribution plus the number of paragraphs identifying the source served as the denominator. The fractions were truncated, rounded down to the nearest whole number, and the resulting values formed the dependent measure. Scholars who examine source attribution in Western newspapers are encouraged to use the method in future analyses.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP	Associated Press
BOS	Bosnian Source
EXEC	Executive Source
GEN	Generic U.S. Official
LEG	Legislative Source
LAT	Los Angeles Times
INT	Other International Source
PRIV	Private Sector Source
SERB	Serbian Source
SOM	Somali Source
UN	United Nations Source
US	United States
US MIL	United States Military
UTK	University of Tennessee
WP	Washington Post

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When the late Richard M. Nixon resigned the American presidency in 1974, two reporters at the Washington Post won accolades for helping to expose corrupt activity in the White House. Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein had investigated a "third-rate" burglary at the Watergate apartment complex, where the Democratic Party had established its National Campaign Headquarters, and by the time their investigation was complete, the White House had been linked to the break-in. Nixon subsequently fired executive counsel John Dean and requested resignations from H.R. Haldeman, his chief-of-staff, and John Ehrlichman, his assistant for domestic affairs. The president resigned shortly thereafter and the two journalists won the Pulitzer Prize.

While Woodward and Bernstein spoke to many Washington insiders during their Watergate coverage, perhaps the most important contact was a person known only as "Deep Throat"--the quintessential anonymous source. Through this contact, Woodward had secured critical information about Watergate, and had the reporter been forced initially to identify the source by name, the balance of the story might have escaped the reporter and the Washington Post. Woodward, of course, did not have to reveal the identity of his contact, and the source continued to provide valuable leads.

But while the Washington Post may have capitalized on information provided by an anonymous source during the Watergate affair, the newspaper was forced to return a Pulitzer Prize in disgrace less than a decade later, when reporter Janet Cooke fabricated a

story about a child drug addict. In her human interest series, titled "Jimmy's World," Cooke did not reveal the identity of her subject, and she ultimately confessed that the boy about which she wrote did not exist at all; rather, she claimed, he was a composite of those she had observed during her research. In the Cooke case, anonymity failed miserably, and a subsequent study by Anderson (1982) found that 87 percent of managing editors nationwide blamed editors at the Post for not verifying the story before publishing it.

Further, while anonymous sources did assist Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein in their Watergate coverage, the practice of basing news articles and books on information supplied anonymously has drawn increasingly sharp criticism from media commentators. For example, in his critique of Woodward's book The Agenda: Inside the Clinton White House, Atlas (1994) asserted that the reader is given no indication of who the central sources of information are, and that in fact the major quotes sound mostly like Bob Woodward. "Invoking his chorus of deep throats," Atlas wrote, "Mr. Woodward supplies his characters with dialogue, motives, even scenes. The result is a kind of historical novel of current affairs" (p. E5).

"We live in a permissive time," Atlas continued. "In All the President's Men, Woodward and Bernstein required *two* sources for anything they went with; with The Agenda it's down to one. Books come denuded of documentation, demanding that we accept their contents on faith" (p. E5).

Kelley (1994) also commented on The Agenda, and she seemed to agree with Atlas:

Mr. Woodward's reporting of high crimes and misdemeanors in the White House in 1972 set the standard for investigative journalism in this country. He became a hero to aspiring reporters, a demigod to journalism professors. He also became a multimillionaire and the model for Robert Redford's character in All the President's Men. Now this paragon of media responsibility seems to have forgotten all that he taught us. With the publication of his book The Agenda: Inside the Clinton White House, Mr. Woodward, aided by Simon & Schuster and the Washington Post, seems to be nailing the lid on the coffin of responsible reporting" (p. A18).

In the journalistic community, then, Woodward appears to have received as much reprimand for The Agenda as Cooke did for fabricating "Jimmy's World" several years earlier (For additional information about Woodward, see Swain and Robertson, 1995).

For practitioners and scholars alike, the Watergate, Cooke and Woodward stories demonstrate both the positive and negative aspects of using anonymous sources. On the positive side, veiled sources can provide information about highly sensitive topics, and if journalists were stripped of their discretion and forced to identify the names of all sources, access to controversial and potentially damaging information would most certainly become a problem. Professional repercussions weigh heavily on the minds of news sources, and in certain parts of the world, the very life of a source can become an issue. Information attributed anonymously, in short, enriches the public discussion and protects the source against professional and personal repercussions (for additional discussion, see Wulfemeyer, 1983; Wulfemeyer, 1985; Wulfemeyer & McFadden, 1986; Blankenburg, 1992; Shepard, 1994).

On the negative side, the public has no way of gauging the legitimacy of the information, thus leading to potential credibility problems (for example, Culbertson, 1980a, 1980b; Feinsilber, 1984; Leslie, 1986; Bernhard, 1987; Mowrer, 1987; Blake,

1988; Kilpatrick, 1988). Al Neuharth, founder of USA Today, contends that if journalists routinely use anonymous sources in their reporting, they will be offered more information than their sources can know or verify, and indeed the journalists themselves will begin to report more than they can know or verify.¹ When a public official is not willing to go on record, Neuharth suggests, the reader or viewer should be suspicious.

In his book Confessions of an S.O.B., Neuharth referred to the Washington Post as the nation's "most overrated" newspaper. He wrote: "Fact and fiction can be comfortable bedmates in the Post's Palace of Malice, the home of 'Holy Shit' journalism. Anonymous or unnamed sources are the key to the Post's brand of journalism" (p.259).²

In the television segment on which Neuharth appeared, media critic Howard Rosenberg of the Los Angeles Times mentioned that anonymous sources often have an agenda of their own, and that journalists must appraise readers and listeners when hidden agendas are likely. An example would be the floating of a political trial balloon by a "Republican senator" or "Democratic congressman." When the media consumer has no

¹ Al Neuharth and Howard Rosenberg were guests on the June 4, 1994 edition of "This Week with David Brinkley" on ABC. Their segment, on anonymous sources, came in the wake of anonymous tips being reported without verification in the O.J. Simpson case. For subsequent example of anonymous sources in the Simpson case, see article in the July 14, 1994 edition of the New York Times, "Blood on glove at Simpson home is called similar to the victims" (p. A12).

² "Holy Shit," Neuharth bemuses, is what Post executive editor Ben Bradlee hoped readers would say when they first saw the daily newspaper. In Confessions of an S.O.B., Neuharth said he believed Bradlee, with "hundreds of political and social contacts," was the legendary "Deep Throat" (p. 262). For additional information on the use of confidential sources by the Washington Post, see Brickajlik (1990).

idea who the official source is--and as the literature indicates, official sources dominate the reporting of public affairs--the source has little to worry about in the way of professional repercussion. If, on the other hand, the official knew in advance that he or she would be identified by name, the official might be more reluctant to test the political waters for partisan gain.

Anonymous sourcing is by no means limited to the political arena; it became an issue in professional football when ESPN reported on argument between Art Shell, then coach of the Los Angeles Raiders, and Jeff Hostetler, the team's starting quarterback. Both Shell and Hostetler denied that the argument contained racial slurs, but three anonymous sources on the sideline said otherwise (Anderson, 1994).

Thus, a fundamental conflict exists with regard to anonymous sources, and not just at the professional level; Strentz (1989) has argued that even high school journalists grant anonymity too often. While information obtained or reported anonymously can enhance the marketplace of ideas and foster public debate, it can also allow public officials and others to shirk responsibility for controversial information and perpetuate the more ominous practice of journalists or their sources fabricating stories entirely.

Given that such problems can arise with anonymous sources, it becomes important to systematically examine the use of these contacts in the American press. The Los Angeles Times and the Washington Post are considered part of the American prestige press, and the Associated Press is widely regarded as the country's most prominent wire service. An examination of their sourcing practices during two periods of military conflict--one in which American forces were committed, the other in which they were not

(at least not at the time of this analysis)--will provide the academy with insight into the sociology of conflict reporting. When American troops are committed abroad--as they were in Somalia--the likelihood of adverse consequences is perhaps its greatest and news media exposure its highest (Pan et al., 1994). The safety of soldiers and the careers of elected leaders are less secure than they otherwise might be, and thus news sources might be more reluctant to offer information on-record, perhaps insisting that quotes be attributed only to an "official." Likewise, members of the American press sometimes have difficulty locating diverse news sources when U.S. forces are not committed to an active area; the journalists have few prior contacts and often must rely on the packaged reports of government press officers. In both cases, the potential for homogenous news is high and use of anonymous sources may be more common than normal (Blankenburg, 1992).

A review of scholarship addressing news sources, anonymous attribution and press coverage of military conflict comes next.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Journalists and Official News Sources

Much has been written about the relationship between journalists and public officials (for example, Sigal, 1973, 1986; Altheide, 1978; Tuchman 1978; Heilmann Miller, 1978; Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Lee & Soloman, 1990; Bennett, 1990), and before further reviewing the literature on both anonymous attribution and the sourcing practices of journalists during periods of military conflict, it is both appropriate and instructive to review broader scholarship addressing media sociology; that is, studies and commentaries that analyze influence on media content. These analyses provide insight into the relationship between journalists and news sources and help to build a conceptual definition of "official sources," thus laying the foundation upon which a more specific discussion of anonymous sourcing can rest.

While there is debate regarding the effects of reliance on "officials sources" by American journalists, few in the academy or the profession would argue that the reliance does exist and that media consumers most commonly receive an "official" version of what has transpired in the policymaking arena (Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke & Roberts, 1978; Shoemaker, 1987; Ericson, Baranek & Chan, 1989). Because elected officials and political appointees usually have a professional interest in keeping their names in the news, public officials typically are more accessible to journalists than those who Gans (1979) once termed the "unknowns." Officials seek to demonstrate to their

constituents that political initiatives are being taken on the constituents' behalf, and by inundating members of the press with news releases and other "newsworthy" materials, as well as being readily available to answer questions, the officials offer journalists convenience and perceived credibility in the way of sourcing.

Nearly three decades ago, journalist James Reston (1967) described the symbiotic relationship between reporters and public officials:

Most of the time, contrary to official mythology, the people who write the news are not the enemies but the allies of officials. They are usually delivering the news as the post office delivers the mail, and when officials and reporters perform this cooperative service, which is what they do most of the time, they are undoubtedly an influential combination (p. 63).

Reston's observations regarding symbiosis are consistent with subsequent scholarship and professional critiques. Heilmann Miller (1978), for example, examined the professional relationship between journalists and congressmen, and after interviewing 190 people, she found substantial interplay:

The interviews revealed that the work of congressmen, aides and reporters is sometimes inherently, unavoidably symbiotic. Reporters assisted officials by the stories they wrote--whether they chose to or not. And reporters were largely dependant on officials and their staffs for information on which those stories were based (p. 3).

Gans (1979) also observed:

(J)ournalists and government are commonly thought to be in an adversary relationship, although government is not an adversary most of the time. As the major source of news, it is in many ways a member of the journalistic team; and even during the Watergate years, journalists continued to cooperate with many segments of the government, including the White House (p. 270).

Finally, Gitlin (1980) suggested that "simply by doing their jobs, journalists tend to serve the political and economic elite definitions of reality" (p. 12). He noted further:

(I)f the story has been generated by certified news sources--especially federal agencies and officials--the news organizations are especially likely to recertify it. The sources then have the chance to perform their repertoires for attention-getting--press conferences, on- and off-the-record briefings, press releases--to satisfy the newsgatherers' thirst for 'new developments,' to keep the story circulating as a 'developing story' (p. 100).

Gitlin's observations give rise to three theories of mass communication cited by McQuail (1987).

The first, Mass Society theory, indicates an interdependence of institutions exercising power in society, thus incorporating media into the sources of social power and authority. News content is likely to serve the interests of the political and economic power-holders, and because media seldom offer a critical or alternative definition of the world, they accommodate the interests of elites and assist in keeping the public dependent. Gans (1979) lent support to Mass Society theory when he observed that "Most news is about affluent people, almost by definition, since the main actors in the news are public officials, whose incomes are in the top 1 to 5 percent of the income distribution" (p. 25). Thus, one can observe not only how news might favor the prominent, but also how the terms "officials" and "elites" tend to be treated synonymously in the literature.

Second among the theories reviewed by McQuail is Classic, or Marxist, theory. Here, media are essentially a means of production and conform to a general type of capitalist industrial form. Because they are in the monopolistic ownership of a capitalist class, they tend to be nationally or internationally organized to serve the interests of that class. Given the consolidation patterns of mass media in recent years, this theory is especially relevant.

Third, Political-Economic theory considers the media institution as part of the economic system with close ties to the political system. The surviving voices, McQuail contends, will belong to those who are least likely to criticize the prevailing distribution of wealth and power. Lee-Gammons (1990) found support for this theory in her study of how television news reports crime; that is, news content was influenced by the prevailing political climate and by a reliance "official" news sources.

Graber (1989) adds further testimony, citing a political model of the relationship between government and mass media:

When the prevailing political environment is capitalist democracy modified by social welfare orientations, as is true in the United States, the ideological base sets the tone for the world view implicit in most fact and fiction stories. Supporters of the prevailing system are pictured as good guys, opponents as bad guys. High status people and institutions are covered by the media; those who are outside the dominant system or remote from the center of power are generally ignored (p. 77).

Thus, public officials often define news events for the general public, and their voices tend to survive the longest in the policymaking arena (Jordan, 1991).

In defending the practice of relying heavily on public officials as news sources, journalists assert that the officials have been elected to represent a broad base of citizens, and that Democracy theory itself justifies official accounts of policy actions (Bennett, 1990). Who, the journalist might ask, is more qualified to address domestic and foreign policy issues, those who have been elected to address those issues in an official capacity or those whose qualifications have never been scrutinized in a public forum?

"Alternative" sources, who generally are not as accessible as public officials, may represent no one but themselves, and they may lack credibility altogether.

Adding further support to official sourcing, Young (1981) has suggested that the American market system of "buying" and "selling" news events controls potential distortions; that is, journalists may obtain information from people who carry political clout, but they must "sell" that information to members of the working class, who are free to expel policymakers and cancel media subscriptions. The market, in short, keeps journalists from exploiting official sources by allowing media consumers to gauge the legitimacy of information and take appropriate action.

While plausible in theory, Young's suggestion may be dubious in practice, especially when one considers the ideas of pluralistic ignorance and mass apathy as they apply to American voters and media consumers. In reviewing the spiral of silence theory, for instance, Glynn and McCleod (1985) suggested that Noelle-Neumann (1974) likely overestimated the ability of individuals to supply meaningful answers to questions involving public opinion and issue positions. And, in an earlier study conducted by Tichenor and Wackman (1973), 66 percent of respondents could not estimate public opinion about certain issues, a finding that strikes a serious blow to the market approach and the contention that average news consumers can gauge the legitimacy of policy information supplied by public officials.

After synthesizing more than 100 studies addressing influences on media content, Shoemaker (1987) advanced a series of theoretical propositions involving reporters and official sources. She suggested that the more a media vehicle is funded by "official sources," the more likely its journalists are to hold values similar to those of the officials; the less likely the journalists are to see their role as an adversary of government; the less

important journalistic objectivity is; and the less important the criterion "newsworthiness" is to story selection. Thus, she found little support for the market theory advanced by Young and arrived at many of the same conclusions as those who had preceded her in the literature.

"With some oversimplification," Gans (1979) wrote, "it would be fair to say that news supports the social order of public, business and professional, upper-middle-class, middle-aged, and white male sectors of society" (p. 61). In reviewing the literature, in fact, one finds this assertion to appear frequently in the words of other scholars, some of whom include Altschull (1984), Entman (1989) and Parenti (1993). Seldom in the literature does one find strong philosophical support for the dominance of officials as news sources, but often does one find discussion of the pragmatic considerations that lead journalists to rely on them.

Journalists operate under deadline pressure on a daily basis, and they often must work on more than one story at a time. As a matter of practice, they do not have the time, nor do they have the resources, to seek alternative voices to every event. And, as Fico (1984), Sigal (1986) and Berkowitz and Beach (1993) have observed, the more practical constraints a reporter operates under, the more narrow the range of sources the reporter will contact. In addition, editors and media consumers demand credible accounts of policy actions, and the prevailing attitude in journalistic circles is that readily accessible sources who have been elected to public office are the most convenient and the most credible. Sigal (1986) explained that "Because of the need for news stories every day, the scarcity of money and staff, and the readiness of government agencies to put out

information in a form ready for transcription, newspapers and wire services allocate more of their national staffs to covering Washington than any other place" (p. 17). He further noted that as a matter of convention, journalists are expected to seek and maintain access to the most senior officials on their respective beats, the idea being that the more senior the official, the more authority and expertise he or she has about matters in the public interest. In short, reporters are implicitly--and sometimes explicitly--motivated by their publishers and editors to gain access to established public officials; and when they gain access and acquire information deemed important by editors and publishers, they stand to reap institutional benefits such as promotions and more prominent assignments. Journalists thus have an intrinsic motivation to seek official accounts of policy actions, and when possible, to locate the most senior sources for comment.

Relying on senior officials does not come without problems, though, as journalists sometimes pass over subordinates who are better advised about certain issues and events (Gans, 1979; Sigal, 1986). And, while a "senior White House official" may be considered more credible or authoritative, the marketplace of ideas is sometimes affected for the worse; that is, senior government officials may keep the news more homogenous and spun in favor of the administration, committee, or cabinet office. As an example, Jennings (1992) found political "elites" to have substantially more constrained and stable sets of political preferences than mass publics did, and thus if one accepts Sigal's (1986) argument that sources make the news, it is easy to see how that news might be very narrow and reflect only the interests of official sources (see Bagdikian, 1985, 1987). In addition, Fredin (1984) has observed that understanding why sources act as they do is not

necessarily independent of the mode by which information is gathered; journalists, then, can lead sources to release information in a certain manner--usually the one with the least potential for repercussion.

Morrison and Tumber (1988) discuss the inherent problems with sourcing and how homogenous news results from a narrow band of sources:

Material, especially hard news, must be sourced, but the problem with sourcing is that it is a spurious way of establishing 'truth.' It is not in any systematic way geared to it. It operates instead as a method of protection and a way of strengthening a story. Providing the source itself is not fictitious, then admittedly it does protect against fabrication. The manner in which a story is strengthened is as often as not by the collecting of another statement in support of the original statement but from a different source. The eliciting of more supportive quotations does not demonstrate truth; rather, that others believed something to be true. Given that the additional quotes, usually few in number, are often drawn from the same circle of participants as the original, they are quite often of little veridical merit (p. 117).

Chafets (1985) observed that while more than 30 Western journalists typically report on the Moslem Middle East, the reporters seldom work autonomously on different stories and usually compete with each other in the same location for what ultimately amounts to the same story. Given the limited number of credible sources, one can sense the development of homogenous news.

As additional examples, Rubin (1987) investigated media coverage of the disasters at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl and concluded that the accompanying flow of information showed the optimistic bulletins of "official sources" to provide too few facts and weakened credibility with both journalists and the public. Glasser (1983) argued that in an effort to remain free from unrecognized pre-judgments, journalists concentrate on reporting rather than on interpreting the news for their public, using themselves largely

as vehicles for the contentions and explanations of their sources. Such reporting becomes problematic because it often involves reporters relying heavily on the prominent and established to define news events. In a study of how the New York Times covered UNESCO during the 15 years prior to analysis, Yang (1986) concluded that the Times relied excessively and uncritically on official news sources and media interest groups. The author posited complexity of the subject matter, defensiveness on the part of journalists, and influences by the editors and publishers as potential explanations for what was determined to be distorted and biased reporting on UNESCO. Beckett (1995) found "state actors" to define drug abuse as a legal/justice problem; she also found more heterogenous reporting in articles that did not rely on official news sources. Finally, Steuter (1990) observed heavy reliance on official news sources by Time Magazine in its reporting of terrorism, thus serving to promote fear among readers and to support violent solutions to the problem.

A study by Olien, Tichenor and Donohue (1989) also demonstrates how reliance on official sources--named or unnamed--can generate problems for journalists and the general public. The researchers studied media involvement in social movements, and they proceeded from the notion that because reporting on social problems has long been considered a key role of journalists, media coverage might be expected to trigger social movements. The authors then discounted this notion with a discussion of journalists' general deference to mainstream values, a deference that leads journalists to side with established authority instead of special interest groups.

The study involved a controversy surrounding the installation of powerlines

throughout rural Minnesota. In brief, the state sought to extend a formidable powerline throughout its rural parts, and angry residents saw this action as (1) a usurpation of local rights through improper application of eminent domain, and (2) as threatening to human and animal health because of the use of untested power transmission. Though obviously controversial, initial coverage of the issue was limited to small weeklies and regional dailies. Metropolitan dailies began coverage only when the bureaucratic confrontation stage had been reached; "official sources" then began to define the issue for larger audiences. Ultimately, media depicted a special interest group suffering a massive defeat, and Olien, Tichenor and Donohue concluded that journalists often serve not as watchdogs for a general public, but primarily as guard-dogs for powerful interests and mainstream values.

"The more closely the concerns and values of social movements coincide with the concerns and values of elites in politics and in media," Gitlin (1980) wrote, "the more likely they are to become incorporated in the prevailing news frames" (p. 284). In his analysis of how the New York Times and CBS News covered Students for a Democratic Society--defined by the author as the central student organization in a rising New Left (during the Vietnam War)--Gitlin reviewed several framing devices that elucidate how mainstream values and voices tend to overwhelm dissention. Among the devices reviewed were Trivialization, a tactic that made light of movement language, dress, style and goals; Polarization, in which news media emphasized counterdemonstrations and balanced the antiwar movement against Ultra-Right and Neo-Nazi groups as equivalent "extremists"; and Marginalization, which showed demonstrators to be deviant or

unrepresentative. When the antiwar movement became more intense, Gitlin observed, new framing devices came along, the first of which involved relying on statements by government officials and other mainstream authorities.

In a separate study addressing the influence of news coverage on social movements, Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986) also observed the tendency of journalists to contact sources from "legitimated" institutions.

The scholarship of Gitlin (1980), Kielbowicz and Scherer (1986), and Olien, Tichenor and Donohue (1989), as well as the more recent work of Hertog and McLeod (1995), demonstrates that to a large extent mainstream media tend to favor official sources in reporting on social movements. Coleman (1994) found the same pattern in a study involving news reports of a community controversy; bureaucratic sources were the most common in the reporting of a proposed copper mine near Indian lands in Wisconsin. This reliance on officials appears to hold true for television news as well as newspapers; Berkowitz (1987), for instance, found no differences across the two media with respect to reliance on government sources for information.

Other studies have demonstrated how a perception of radical political views sometimes leads to negative media portrayals of social activists (Carragee, 1991; Shoemaker, 1984; Murdock, 1981). Thus, Altschull (1984) observed more generally that "It is an enticing myth, this myth of the heroic press fighting the overwhelming power of the mighty and corrupt in the interests of the grateful nation" (p. 115), suggesting afterward that "The press is the piper, and the tune the piper plays is composed by those who pay the piper" (p. 254).

The "fairy tale" about which Altschull wrote came from his chapter involving press financing, a definite influence on media content. "No newspaper, magazine, or broadcasting outlet exceeds the boundaries of autonomy acceptable to the paymasters," Altschull wrote (p. 255). His observations are consistent with Soloski's (1989) research concerning news professionalism. Soloski argued that professionalism itself limits news coverage to items that do not threaten the economic position of the news organization and do not threaten the prevailing politico-economic system in which the organization functions. Thus, while official sources influence content because of their ubiquitous presence, advertisers influence content because they supply up to 80 percent of the revenues for some media outlets (Altschull, 1984).

Still, Gans (1979) maintained:

Journalists are under pressure to censor and self-censor from public officials more often than from business. Private firms can retaliate against harmful news by running self-justifying advertising, but government must defend itself in the same news media that attack it, and defensive statements or denials are never as credible as the initial bad news. Perhaps as a result, public officials are extremely sensitive to news about themselves and are as thin-skinned as journalists when it comes to criticism (p. 260).

Whether or not they are thin-skinned, public officials impact the news and define much of its content. That much has been established in the literature and trade publications.

It is important to address the term "official" at a conceptual level, for it has been defined inconsistently, and sometimes not at all, in the many analyses that have made reference to it. Perhaps because so much has been written about the relationship between journalists and officials, or possibly due to space shortages in the major scholarly

journals, conceptualization has sometimes been lost, leaving readers with the impression that anyone in government who supplies information is an official source, and that official sources all have equal impact on news content. Drawing finer distinctions allows for the acquisition of more information and the development of stronger theories.

For example, one can argue from the literature that "The White House" is an appreciably different term than a "Democratic congressman" or "Republican senator." It certainly differs from a "supporter of the plan" or "congressional spokesperson," and thus failing to explicate the term "official source" represents a failure to seek out important information, such as whether the executive branch shows up more frequently than the legislative branch in certain types of conflict reporting. Clearly, the president cannot be a veiled source if title is involved, but he can instruct aides to release information to the media anonymously (Haldeman, 1994), thus removing from himself direct responsibility for policy action. He also can release information from "The White House" as a political institution, in the process creating the impression that a given decision was not his alone, but rather was arrived at by members of his cabinet and other executive aides. In a study focusing on radio network news, Burriss (1988) found "organizational" to be the most common type of veiled attribution used.

Hallin, Manoff and Weddle (1993) examined national security reporting among 23 reporters at seven major U.S. dailies, and they found nearly half of all executive branch citations to be presented anonymously. Their analysis of stories involving such issues as defense spending and policy, arms control, nuclear weapons and East/West relations revealed too that 32.3 percent of congressional sources were attributed

anonymously, compared to just 11.5 percent of former government sources and 16 percent of nongovernment sources. Overall, the authors found heavy dominance of national security reporting by statist sources, and they noted that different newspapers and different journalists do make decisions about how to use sources.

By almost any reasonable model of what journalists ought to be, government officials would loom large in coverage of military affairs and East/West relations. But their dominance in the reporting we have examined is so extreme that it seems to us it does raise serious questions about the quality of journalism (p. 763).

The Hallin, Manoff and Weddle study illustrates the importance of explicating the term "official source" and examining which types of official sources tend to appear the most frequently and which tend to appear the most anonymously. In addition, the study provides support for hypothesizing differences across individual newspapers with respect to attribution practices, thus allowing the research to test the assertion that source attribution is primarily a function of journalists and the newspapers for whom they work, not the dynamics of individual news events.

Daniels (1994) examined how journalists at the Chicago Tribune, the Boston Globe and the Miami Herald arrived at news decisions in 1989, when United States military forces invaded Panama, students in China rallied in favor of democracy, Communism crumbled in the Soviet Union and Germany razed the Berlin Wall. She concluded that the strongest factors in news decisions varied by individual newspaper; editorial leadership drove the Chicago Tribune, competition for local news impacted the Boston Globe, and ethnicity as represented in a regional battle for Hispanic readers influenced the Miami Herald. Based on proportion and prominence measures, Daniels

concluded that the Tribune outperformed the other newspapers in reporting international events, adding further reason to expect differences across newspapers in the present study. The findings of McCoy (1993), who examined how the New York Times reported the first six months of the Palestinian uprising, or Intifida, also lend support. She found "reporting strategy" as one of the leading influences on news content.

In a pilot study conducted for this dissertation--2,423 paragraphs involving Bosnia and Somalia were coded for six categorical variables--significant differences were found across the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post and the Associated Press in percent of paragraphs attributing an anonymous source. Table 2.1 is a cross-tabulation of Newspaper by Level of Attribution, and it shows that 28.2 percent of paragraphs in the Washington Post contained anonymous attribution. When paragraphs that contained no attribution were eliminated, that figure increased to 40.3 percent. Thus two out of every five sources were unidentified. Of the companies examined, the Associated Press appeared to have the more stringent standards when it came to anonymous attribution. Only 10.7 percent of all paragraphs contained information attributed to an anonymous source, and when paragraphs that did not reference any source were excluded, the percentage increased to a relatively modest 18.2 percent.

In the Los Angeles Times, 17.4 percent of paragraphs contained anonymous attribution, and without the presence of unattributed paragraphs, 28.8 percent referenced a veiled source. The Post, then, used substantially more anonymous attribution than did the Times or the Associated Press.

A source hierarchy appears to exist in American newspapers, with the most

TABLE 2.1
Cross-Tabulation of Newspaper by Level of Attribution in Pilot Study

Count Row Percent	IDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED	INSTITUTION	NO SOURCE	TOTAL
AP	522 44.3	126 10.7	44 3.7	487 41.3	1179
LAT	230 40.9	98 17.4	12 2.1	223 39.6	563
WP	255 37.4	192 28.2	29 4.3	205 30.1	681
TOTAL	1007 41.6	416 17.2	85 3.5	915 37.8	2423 100

established sources considered the most desirable. Rivers (1970) elucidated the hierarchy with a military example, explaining how a message transmitted changes with the source:

The lesser officials are like a captain in Vietnam who is charged with briefing the press. Not quite knowing how truthful the colonel would be were he to deliver the briefing, the captain plays it safe, putting everything in the most positive possible terms to escape censure. The colonel might have been a bit more candid, but he, too, would operate at some distance from the brutal truth, not knowing how candid the commanding general might be in similar circumstances--and *he* can never be certain how close the President might come to the truth if by some alchemy the Commander-in-Chief were to deliver the briefing. One can imagine that on a particular day a President might tell the complete and utter truth about the day's operations. But trying to imagine that a captain at several removes from the ultimate responsibility will be so bold is like imagining February 30th (p.45).

In a Columbia University Media & Society seminar, veteran correspondent John Laurence agreed. As conflict news travels up the ladder, Laurence observed, each officer interprets the news in a slightly different manner. The officers aspire to make themselves

and their country look good, and the ultimate briefing officer has a highly complicated result of what happened in the field.³ Thus, where information is secured can impact what information is secured.

Oftentimes, information is secured through White House sources. Sigal (1986) observed that "The president, by convention, is *the* authoritative source in the United States. He has no peer. Even when it is apparent that he is out of touch, or lying, whatever he says is still presumed to warrant publication and to reflect accurately what the government is doing" (p. 21). Earlier, Sigal (1973) had explained:

(T)he higher up in government a man is, the better his prospects to make news. This convention enjoins reporters on beats in the U.S. government to cover the senior officials in their agency. On the White House beat it means 'covering the body,' following the President's every move. . . . By virtue of his responsibility for public policy, the man in the White House has no peer as an authoritative source (pp. 69-70).

The president, then, is considered by journalists to have the most authority as a news source, and he thus can be expected to be cited more frequently than other officials. He is considered to be the final authority on matters of foreign policy, and what he says will nearly always make the following day's newspaper, regardless of how substantive or informed his comments are. With respect to anonymity, he has a vested political interest in avoiding situations where he, as an individual, could be shown to be entirely wrong about a policy matter, and thus he occasionally will release information in such a way as to convey a sense of collaboration.

³ "The Military and the News Media: The Correspondent Under Fire." Columbia University seminar on Media & Society, 1984.

With respect to the importance of this practice, Reston (1967) observed that the manner in which presidents release information allows them to take advantage of the media where foreign relations are concerned. "Washington reporters also assist the government and influence foreign policy in more oblique ways," he explained.

For example--though officials seldom like to talk about this--reporters are constantly used to transmit to foreign governments, through press, radio, and television, those official views which the Administration in Washington does not want to put in formal diplomatic communications. One reason for this is that the old diplomacy, with its polite but geometric language, has broken down, and the new diplomacy--part secret, part public, part propaganda--has devised new techniques of communication between governments and peoples (p. 65).

Thus, presidents rest atop the hierarchy where perceived authority and credibility are concerned, and they frequently use their position to transmit information abroad.

Jody Powell, who served as press secretary to former President Jimmy Carter, suggested in a 1984 roundtable discussion ("The Military and the News Media") that there is a tendency in journalism to move stories toward the White House when opportunities arise. Conceivably, this allows journalists to personalize arcane issues of foreign policy for media consumers who have limited interest in political affairs. Powell's suggestion is consistent with Sigal's observation about the president being *the* authoritative source in the United States.

Table 2.2 displays the frequency of news sources found in the pilot study. In 2,423 paragraphs concerning the conflicts in Bosnia and Somalia, the Executive branch (excluding U.S. military sources) was clearly a dominant source of news. Among American news sources (686 references), private sector individuals accounted for 11.8

TABLE 2.2
Collapsed Frequencies of Source Type in Pilot Study

Source	Frequency	Percent
Executive	228	9.4
Legislative	45	1.9
U.S. Military	141	5.8
Generic U.S. Official	191	7.9
Private Sector	81	3.3
United Nations	356	14.7
Bosnian	61	2.5
Serbian	85	3.5
Other Regional Sources	61	2.5
Somalian	46	1.9
Other International Sources	213	8.8
<u>No Source</u>	<u>915</u>	<u>37.8</u>
Totals	2,423	100

percent while the Executive branch alone accounted for 33.2 percent. Generic U.S. officials, some of whom undoubtedly worked for the Executive branch, accounted for 28 percent, and U.S. military officials accounted for 21 percent. Legislators appeared as sources in just seven percent of paragraphs.

These findings, coupled with those of Hallin, Manoff and Weddle, lead to additional hypotheses. One can predict that the executive branch will appear more often as a news source in American conflict reports than will other branches of government and private sector individuals.

Examining the conflicts in Bosnia and Somalia leads to an additional hypothesis involving anonymous sourcing, one comparing the use of these sources in a Republican administration (Bush) with a Democratic administration (Clinton). Riffe and Johnson (1995) examined the use of anonymous sources in the New York Times' first-month

coverage of four presidential administrations (Carter, Reagan, Bush and Clinton), and they established some evidence in support of "the traditional tendency of Democrats to be more forthcoming with the press" (Della Carpini, 1994).

"Over two-thirds (68%) of all 378 sources in Carter items were named, compared to 63% of the 351 Clinton sources and just over half the 398 Reagan and 295 Bush sources," Riffe and Johnson concluded (p. 13). Generally supported was "the notion of more, open, named-source coverage from an open administration (Carter's) and less coverage but more veiled sources in a more closed, managed administration (Reagan's)" (p. 14).

Both the Bush and Clinton administrations were confronted by the developments in Bosnia and Somalia, and the findings of the Riffe and Johnson, as well as the article by Della Carpini, offer support for hypothesizing differences across the two administrations with respect to anonymous attribution. Across both conflicts, the study should find more use of veiled American sources during the Bush years than during Clinton's. In addition, because American lives were placed in danger in Somalia, the study should find more use of anonymous attribution in coverage of that conflict than in coverage of the former Yugoslavia, the theory being that as political volatility increases, so does the use of veiled sources. An assumption is made that when U.S. forces are committed to an active area, the situation is more politically volatile than when they are not. Williams (1995) and Denham (1994) both found substantial use of anonymous sources in the reporting of Bosnia, and if the theory holds, even greater use should be observed in coverage of Somalia.

One of this study's central tasks, then, is to examine deeper the official government sources who tend to appear the most frequently and the ones who tend to appear the most anonymously in news articles involving military conflict. All individual news sources can be classified as named or veiled, thus allowing the research to examine whether certain types of officials appear anonymously more frequently than others do, and whether the use of foreign and domestic sources vary by conflict.

To this point, scholarship involving media sociology has been reviewed, and a general discussion of the relationship between journalists and their sources has been offered. The literature has led to research hypotheses involving types of sources used in conflict reporting and whether differences can be anticipated across the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post and the Associated Press with respect to these sources.

A review of the literature addressing anonymous sourcing comes next.

The Practice of Anonymous Attribution

The preceding scholarship has demonstrated that official sources often define what media consumers hear on the radio, view on the television and read in the newspaper, and it further illustrates how distorted news sometimes results, especially during periods of foreign crisis. Now additional scholarship addressing anonymous attribution and related practices such as "masking" and "quote approval" will be reviewed.

In a study involving anonymous attribution during the Persian Gulf War, Blankenburg (1992) found significantly more use of veiled sources in the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times and the Washington Post in February 1991 than in February

1990. "Anonymous attribution rose during the first quarter of 1991 because of the war," he wrote. "Non-war-related stories during the war period had about the same frequency of anonymous attribution as the period a year earlier" (p. 14). Blankenburg explained further:

If nothing else, war is hazardous and stressful to the participants. Knowledgeable sources surely sense the stress (whether on themselves or on others) and have greater reason to be careful of what they say and whether they want to be identified. People or plans may be harmed. So we may propose that anonymous attribution increases with stress on relationships that are affected by disclosures--especially public relationships. The disclosures are stressful because they are unfavorable or untimely. They threaten the status of people or the execution of plans (p. 14).

Blankenburg's analysis of war-related and non-war-related stories served as the empirical components of an article in which he discussed the inherent utility of anonymous attribution. In times of crisis, the author explained, journalists must lower their attribution standards, lest they go without information altogether. If information must be attributed to an anonymous source, the theory goes, so be it; at least the information is made available for the public to consider and scrutinize. If the source had to be identified by name, the contact might abandon the reporter and not provide any information.

But at what point does the information provided by anonymous sources begin to detract from credibility? A problem clearly exists with regard to anonymous information; that is, it may come with a hidden agenda, particularly in times of crisis. And while one can argue that information smacked with a political spin is better than no information at all, one can also argue that misleading the public with bogus or self-serving

communication does little to enhance debate. Relatively few people in society have in-depth knowledge about arcane issues of policy (Price, 1992), and suggesting that newspaper readers and TV news viewers will be able to evaluate esoteric information--regardless of how it is obtained--may be unreasonable. So while information supplied anonymously may contribute to the marketplace of ideas, the capacity of individuals to evaluate that information is a separate issue. If the information is so abstruse as to require a "news consultant," is the information worthy of inclusion in the marketplace at all, particularly if obtained anonymously?

Clearly, the preceding question is a philosophical one, yet its very existence illustrates the importance of studying anonymous attribution in news articles involving military conflict. Given the importance of war information and the relatively few who understand the specifics of military activity, does reliance on anonymous sources not contribute more to the problem than to the solution? Scanlon (1978) studied crisis reporting in Canadian newspapers, and he found a lack of source information problematic; that is, when factual errors were located, they often came without attribution, and thus the sources of error could not be identified.

Smyth (1993) offered the following with respect to reliance on anonymous officials by journalists covering El Salvador:

In the post-cold war era, ethnic rivalry may have replaced ideology as the most likely cause of conflict, but while all else changes, one journalistic habit picked up during the past four decades will, in all likelihood, persist--the habit of relying heavily on the mission, as the U.S. embassy is known, for assessments and information. In an increasingly unfamiliar world, in fact, the temptation to do so will be even stronger" (p. 35).

Smyth then explained how such reliance can result in distorted news and why it thus should be carefully examined:

Following the November 1989 murder of six Jesuit intellectuals, their housekeeper, and the housekeeper's daughter, U.S. embassy officials in San Salvador told Newsweek that they had intelligence information indicating that rightist leader Roberto D'Aubuisson, long identified with El Salvador's death squads, had been planning to kill the priests. . . . The officials said that, on the night before the murders, D'Aubuisson had told advisers that something had to be done about the Jesuits. Newsweek ran the story as an 'exclusive' on December 11, 1989. . . . But it was later shown in court that D'Aubuisson had nothing to do with the murders. . . . No corroboration of the alleged CIA report pointing to D'Aubuisson has ever been provided. . . ." (p. 35).

Smyth further discussed the problem of anonymous attribution by citing a series of press briefings given in early 1991 by William Walker, U.S. ambassador to El Salvador. Walker, reported Smyth, told reporters that United Nations mediator Alvaro de Soto was biased toward leftist guerrillas, unprofessional as a diplomat and generally ineffective. Before Walker would allow his comments to go "on record," however, he insisted that they be attributed only to a "Western Diplomat," thus giving the impression that his views were representative of all diplomats. Actually, reported Smyth, the preponderance of Western Diplomats in San Salvador considered de Soto to be a highly competent professional, and while the anonymous attribution "Western Diplomat" was intended to sound official and build confidence among readers, it actually led to distorted news.

In a study of child sexual abuse as reported by the mass media, Gorelick (1995) concluded that anonymity allowed official news sources to favor certain reporters and to release information that was likely to support the prosecution. Reporters who appeared

sympathetic to the defense were ignored altogether.

Still, anonymous attribution is a common and sometimes necessary practice at American newspapers. Stein (1992) reported on a situation at the Seattle Times in which editors had to decide whether to publish anonymous allegations of sexual impropriety against a United States senator. Eight unidentified women had accused Brock Adams of sexual harassment and physical molestation, and when the Times opted to publish their anonymous accusations on March 1, 1992, Brock immediately halted his re-election campaign.

As is frequently the case with highly sensitive stories, the women spoke to the Times on the condition of anonymity. Executive editor Michael Fancher wrote a brief sidebar and explained why the Times went with the story.

It isn't often that it takes three-and-a-half years to tell one story, and it isn't often that we publish a story based on sources whose names we don't disclose to you. . . . But it isn't often that a United States senator is accused of repeated sexual harassment and abuse of women. Exceptional circumstances sometimes necessitate exceptional responses" (p. 10).

Fitzgerald (1992) reported on an informal survey conducted by Editor & Publisher in the story's aftermath. Most editors who were contacted by the publication agreed that the severity of the charges, one of which included an accusation of rape, warranted the use of anonymous sources. Al Neuharth, however, said the Times could have taken additional measures to get the accusations on-record. Hausman (1992) has also suggested that journalists can make more effort to get controversial information on-record in similar situations. Neuharth said the fact that one woman had previously gone public with her charges was a "saving grace" for the story. And, as Stein reported, "Ben Bagdikian,

former dean of the University of California, Berkeley, School of Journalism, and one-time Washington Post editor, took the view that anonymous sources should not be used in sexual harassment stories when there are no witnesses to the alleged incident" (p. 11).

Indeed, the use of anonymous sources has led to internal disputes between working journalists, and to external confrontations between journalists and public officials. Gersh (1992), for example, reported on several journalists who were subpoenaed by Peter E. Fleming, Jr., then special independent counsel investigating leaks in the U.S. Senate. Among those subpoenaed were two reporters at the Washington Times, Jerry Seper and Paul M. Rodriguez. "Both Rodriguez and Seper wrote about the Ethics Committee's investigation of Charles Keating's dealings with five U.S. senators, and both used anonymous sources," Gersh reported (p. 26). Both journalists took positions of nondisclosure, leading to a stand-off between the journalists and public officials.

Stephens and Scheb (1993) offer additional insight in their segment on confidential sources:

The reporter's greatest asset (aside from the First Amendment) is the confidential source. The institutionalized media therefore argue strenuously that the First Amendment gives reporters an absolute privilege to maintain the confidentiality of their sources, a privilege similar to that claimed by lawyers with respect to their clients. On the other hand, prosecutors tend to argue that the public interest in finding the truth in a criminal prosecution outweighs a reporter's interest in maintaining the confidentiality of sources. While some states have shield laws protecting journalists in such situations, others permit reporters to be held in contempt and confined for refusing to divulge their sources (p. 682).

As Teeter and Le Duc (1995) observe, "Source confidentiality, then, is serious business. Secrecy agreements with sources are not to be entered lightly. Especially

worrisome are situations in which reporters' pledges are broken, either by reporters themselves or by their editors" (p. 612).

The recent case *Cohen vs. Cowles Media* (1991) demonstrates just how important the issue of confidentiality is. In this case, the United States Supreme Court held that a reporter's oral promise of confidentiality amounts to a contract, and if that contract is broken, financial liability may result (Teeter & Le Duc, 1995; see also, Davis, Ross & Gates, 1995).

Thus, one can see how anonymity can breed hostility. In addition, as Weiss (1991) reported, the use of anonymous sources facilitates other questionable practices, one of which includes quote approval. He wrote:

Quote approval is the latest twist in the art of getting someone to talk, and it has gained the same tacit acceptance from journalists that anonymous quotations got twenty years ago. . . . By 'quote approval,' I mean an agreement struck during an interview requiring the journalist to read back what he or she is attributing to the source before the article goes to press (p. 52).

Weiss further discussed how quote approval differs from anonymous sourcing, pointing out that journalists typically grant anonymity to sources who advance the thesis of a story, whereas sources who are the focus of potential criticism tend to demand the approval of quotes. Ultimately, Weiss concluded, quote approval--like anonymous sourcing--can lead to credibility problems. "(W)hen a reporter involves an official in crafting a story, the implicit pact between the independent reporter and the reader is broken. Quote approval can be seen as a form of insider trading--elites sharing the inside dope before passing on a diluted version to the general public" (p. 54).

At an ethics conference, veteran journalist Tom Wicker lent support to this

contention, suggesting that journalists generally become too close to their sources. Ultimately, he said, the sources begin to define an entire news beat (Conn, 1993). And journalists worldwide place a taboo on revealing the names of sources once anonymity has been granted (McMane, 1990).

In a 1988 seminar,⁴ Michael Gartner, formerly of NBC News, agreed with the earlier contention of Al Neuharth regarding anonymous attribution; that is, Gartner suggested that journalists often can acquire information on-record with more effort. Anonymous quotes, Gartner argued, should be banned from the news pages altogether, as they often amount to little more than anonymous cheap shots. Personal attacks, he said, are not part of a critical news story, presumably from which readers stand to acquire legitimate public affairs information.

Jack Nelson, Washington bureau chief of the Los Angeles Times, disagreed with Gartner, contending that a ban on anonymous quotes would eliminate about half the news stories coming out of Washington, D.C. And while an underlying reason for conducting the seminar was an apparent increase in the use of anonymous sources, Ben Bradlee explained that the practice of journalism had changed markedly in previous years, thus leading to the *appearance* of more anonymous attribution. Twenty-five years before the seminar took place, Bradlee argued, journalists would simply report the occurrence of an event and leave it at that; sources were not as central to a story as they were by 1988, and accordingly they often were left out altogether.

⁴ "The other side of the news: Anonymous sources." Columbia University seminar on Media & Society, 1988.

The scholarship of Barker-Plummer (1989) lends support to Bradlee's assertion. Her study, which focused on institutional sources in the Los Angeles Times and the New York Times for the period 1885-1985, found attribution to increase over time. She also found, though, that while journalists attributed more sources, the contacts tended to be "central, official, government sources."

The participants at the Columbia seminar also discussed the following point: Media give government immense power when they act as passive conduits of information obtained anonymously. Reporters, who become "inadvertent law enforcement officers" when prosecutors leak information to motivate certain parties to act, stand to be manipulated on a consistent basis--and according to Gartner, the press *is* constantly being manipulated.⁵

Sometimes, people who manipulate the press with anonymous news tips do not understand the practice of anonymous attribution. Rivers (1967) explained:

A few inexperienced correspondents, and many public officials, simply do not understand the most widely used terminology. 'Off the record' means that the information is for the correspondents' general understanding and is not to be reported in any form. 'Background only' means that information may be reported, but not attributed to its source. 'Not for direct quotation' means that information may be reported and the source named, but the correspondent must paraphrase, using neither quotation marks nor the official's exact words. . . . Too often, officials who actually intend to offer information for 'background only' will say, 'This is off the record,' or 'Don't quote me directly.' Some who want to speak 'off the record' say, 'This is for background only,' thinking that the correspondents will not report the information but will use it only for their background understanding of issues (p. 37).

⁵ See also Kurtz, H. (1993, March 7). Sez who? How sources and reporters play the leak game. Washington Post, p. C5. Byrd, J. (1992, September 20). What's the deal? Washington Post, p. C6.

As Rivers went on to explain, problems arise for journalists when they do not attend an "off the record" briefing but do acquire the briefing information from their peers and publish it as news. Rivers explained how Robert McNamara once held an "off the record" session concerning the "missile gap" issue used by John F. Kennedy in his 1960 presidential campaign. In reality, Rivers observed, there was no such thing as a "missile gap," and had the reporters who attended the McNamara briefing not shared their information with fellow journalists, the revelation would have proven less damaging and embarrassing for the administration. Rivers continued:

The danger becomes clear when a false report traces a path around the wide circuit of the press. The 'answer' to the great question that lingered after the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion of April, 1961--Had President Kennedy promised U.S. air support to the invaders?--seemed to be 'yes.' Some of the invaders told a reporter that air cover had been promised and withdrawn at the last minute. A friend of an editor was in Washington and fell into conversation with a man who identified himself as an Air Force pilot who had been called back after actually taking to the air to fly support for the invasion. The first stories qualified the statements--'according to one of the invaders'; 'according to an Air Force pilot'--but the correspondents who picked up the substance of these stories to use in their own were not nearly so careful about qualifying. The 'facts' were soon being confirmed by sheer repetition (p. 50).

Life magazine, Rivers explained, ultimately published a document showing that Kennedy had never planned on intervening with United States forces. Thus, anonymous information--or in this case, hearsay information--led to distorted news about an American president.

Recently, public officials have found themselves in personally and professionally damaging situations, the result of journalists having "masked" them as news sources (Link, 1994). When a journalist "masks" a source, he or she provide news consumers

with "clues" as to who the source might be. As Savell (1993) has explained, journalists who cannot identify their sources by name seek to provide more complete pictures and allow members of the news audience to judge the sources' authority and credibility.

"Masking," though, can wreak havoc on the reputations of sources if journalists provide too much information, and media companies can spend thousands of dollars in court defending their employees. Savell related the story of Jill Ruzicka, a woman who had provided writer Claudia Dreifus and Glamour magazine with information about therapist-patient sexual abuse. Dreifus had conducted an interview in which Ruzicka had described incest by her father, sexual exploitation by her therapist, and subsequent legal action against the therapist. On a subsequent date, Dreifus had phoned and read Ruzicka a draft of the slated article.

Later, in court, Ruzicka claimed that while Dreifus had identified her only as a "Midwestern attorney" in the draft, the published article contained descriptive phrases that allowed her to be identified. The article, Savell reported, made reference to "Jill Lundquist, a Minneapolis attorney" and mentioned that she had served on the Minnesota Task Force Against Sexual Abuse. As it turned out, Ruzicka had been the only female law student or attorney who had served on the task force, and she denied ever having discussed it with Dreifus.

After two setbacks at the lower-court level and two trips through the appeals process, Ruzicka won the opportunity to present her suit for promissory estoppel to a jury. Dreifus and the magazine publisher were not held liable at the appeals stage, but as Savell summarized, the case did not bode well for journalists or their companies:

In its Aug. 9 (1993) opinion in *Jill Ruzicka vs. Conde Nast Publications Inc. and Claudia Dreifus*, the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that under Minnesota law, journalists (and their publishers) who promise but effectively fail to "mask" or conceal identities of confidential sources may be held liable for breaking their promises" (p. 3).

Legally, then, it appears journalists are wise to avoid "masking" and to grant anonymity when sources who can provide highly sensitive information demand it. With veiled attribution, journalists and their companies are less susceptible to claims such as the above, and the marginal loss of information--for example, going from a bogus name to no name--would hardly seem to detract from credibility, which is already under strain.

With respect to anonymous attribution in the political arena, Wulfemeyer (1985) examined 388 national and international news articles in Time and Newsweek and found that anonymous sources were quoted in 81 percent of the stories, with "official" being the most common type of anonymous reference. Wulfemeyer noted that "the quoting of anonymous sources was a very common practice in the national/international news sections of Time and Newsweek. In the 24 issues analyzed, 1,274 anonymous quotations were identified" (p.85).

Wulfemeyer and McFadden (1986) investigated anonymous attribution in network television news, and their analysis of 416 stories found 55 percent to contain at least one anonymous quote. Overall, 484 anonymous quotes were used in 227 stories, and again the most common term used to describe an anonymous source was an "official."

Culbertson (1978) analyzed 12 issues of both Time and Newsweek and found that 70 percent of Newsweek stories and 75 percent of Time stories quoted anonymous sources. He found some 2,030 anonymous attributions and noted that high status sources

were the most frequently cited.

Consistent with the findings of Blankenburg (1992) and Denham (1994), Wulfemeyer (1985) found more use of veiled sources in articles dealing with international events and issues. This pattern is important because it demonstrates how the political volatility of news and the use of anonymous attribution have varied together in print reporting. Competent sources may be more accessible and more willing to be identified in stories involving highly scrutinized domestic issues than in stories involving politically and emotionally charged matters of foreign policy.

In his study of the New York Times, for instance, Denham (1994) found anonymous attribution in 32 percent of 924 paragraphs involving the Middle East Peace Accords, in 21 percent of 971 paragraphs involving the conflict in Bosnia, and in 17 percent of 550 paragraphs involving the Clinton Health Care Package. Denham investigated the health care issue on two separate occasions, and his second analysis found 15 percent of 376 paragraphs to contain anonymous attribution.

The study demonstrated that sources were less willing to be identified--and probably less accessible--when arcane issues of foreign policy were reported. The author expected to observe more anonymous references in coverage of the Peace Accords and Bosnia because (1) the sources' personal and professional risk was assumed to be greater than it was when a highly debated domestic issue was addressed, and (2) the health care issue lent itself to accessible and competent sources outside of government, whereas the esoteric nature of the Peace Accords and the conflict in Bosnia may have limited journalists' sources.

Wearden (1988) also examined anonymous sourcing in the New York Times, and he found heavy reliance on unnamed officials in front-page stories. He observed the same phenomenon in the Washington Post and four North Carolina dailies.

Whether the observed patterns of anonymous attribution are considered to detract from professional credibility is entirely dependent on individual perspectives and journalistic philosophy. One can argue that attributing information to anonymous sources detracts from journalistic credibility by (1) allowing self-serving officials to define issues without accepting responsibility, (2) allowing these officials to view newspapers and magazines as forums for testing political waters and floating trial balloons, and (3) allowing journalists to extrapolate, even fabricate, information and attribute it to a source who can never be contacted.

But the methodology for examining credibility issues is distinct from studies of media content; that is, frequency of anonymous attribution is examined through content analyses, and credibility issues are explored through survey and experimental research (Hale, 1983; Fielder & Weaver, 1982; Fedler & Counts, 1981; Riffe, 1980; Culbertson & Somerick, 1977; Adams, 1964; Adams, 1962). "To summarize the literature," Hale wrote, "factors other than attribution appear to be more important in shaping reader perceptions of news stories. When statistically significant differences exist, their practical significance is slight; they account for only modest amounts of variance" (p.51). More recently, Wilson, Babcock and Pribek (1996) observed that "Most ombudsmen (65 percent) surveyed said the few complaints they had received about confidential sources accurately reflected the fact that their readers were unconcerned about the issue" (p. 12).

The present study does not explore the credibility issue, but rather examines the use of anonymous sources during two periods of military conflict. It is left to the reader to decide whether the observed frequencies create a problem with credibility. As mentioned in the Introduction, the stakes go up for all parties involved during periods of foreign crisis. Lives are at stake, the reputations of sources are at stake, and the wrong information can lead to serious problems where policy is concerned. As Blankenburg has noted, sources can sense the stress and the importance of the topics on which they comment, and thus the likelihood of their requesting anonymity is probably at its greatest.

The relationship between journalists and military officials is reviewed next.

The Press and Military Conflict

Scholarship addressing in general terms the relationship between journalists and public officials has been examined, and taken collectively, it has supported the idea that reporters and officials function professionally in symbiosis; that is, reporters seek information from representatives of legitimated institutions, and public officials aspire to keep their names in the news and thus have an interest in supplying journalists with that information.

During periods of military conflict, sources may have less interest in keeping their names in the news, and based on several televised discussions viewed for this study, some military officers probably would not mind if journalists elected to forego conflict reporting altogether. The Vietnam War, which television brought to the dinner tables of American families, appears to be at the heart of what Fred Friendly termed "a spirit of confrontation and disgust" between military officials and the journalists who report on

their actions.⁶ Nearly all of the military officers who participated in the seminars suggested that journalists should be permitted in battle locales only when the risk to troops is not the "dominant factor." In short, the success of a military operation and the safety of American troops should guide action.

Rear Admiral James Service provided a succinct rationale for the overall attitude: "Journalists aren't accountable. I am." Service contended that television, in particular, tends to put people "on stage" in military battle, thus leading servicemen to behave in ways they otherwise would not. Members of the press thus can disrupt troop activity and perhaps endanger lives in the event of a poor decision--such as lighting up the beaches of Mogadishu and exposing American soldiers to sniper fire.

While General Alexander Haig tended to agree with his fellow military officers, he also pointed out that American citizens have the right to know what American troops are doing abroad. Through the establishment of appropriate ground rules, Haig suggested, both the media and the military can do their jobs. Journalist John Chancellor added that the American military is an arm of democracy, and that journalists in a democracy are to inform citizens in a timely manner about important events. Chancellor rejected James Schlesinger's assertion that "times have changed" from the days of Ernie Pyle and Edward R. Murrow, and he cited the medal of honor journalist Charles Mohr received from the marines during the Vietnam War.

In Schlesinger's view, journalists write two types of conflict stories: (1) reports of

⁶ "The Military and the News Media: A Question of Access." Columbia University seminar on Media & Society, 1984.

a crusade; and (2) reports on the dead, or the horrors of war. Schlesinger asserted that presenting the horrors of Vietnam did not help the American effort there, and indeed the memory of that war seems to have exacerbated the suspicion between journalists and military officers. Rear Admiral Service suggested that journalists believe military officers are in the field to entertain them and to provide information whenever journalists seek it. Service said he preferred to deal with older journalists rather than younger ones, for the older reporters did not question his decisions in battle. Again, one can see how differences in the reportage of World War II and the war in Southeast Asia adversely affected the relations between military officers and journalists. "What's the point of publishing a photo of a dead pilot everyone knows?" asked Marine Colonel George Connell. In World War II, he tacitly suggested, the photo would not have been published; in Vietnam, and in subsequent conflicts, it likely would have.

In a documentary focusing on the impact of visual images at Khe Sanh in 1968, Rollins, Culbert and Ludington suggested that television coverage made the battle symbolic of the entire war effort.⁷ Though just four American planes were shot down during the siege, the dramatic footage of a plane burning made Khe Sanh a "microcosm" and led to misperceptions about military activity. American forces finally pushed the enemy back, but not in time for Newsweek's "The Agony of Khe Sanh" to heighten the drama and perpetuate the souring relationship between journalists and military officers.

⁷ Rollins, P.C., Culbert, D.H., & Ludington, T. (1983). "Television's Vietnam: The impact of visual images." Visual essay sponsored in part by the Oklahoma Foundation for Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Indeed, "a spirit of confrontation and disgust" still characterizes the relationship between the two, and that spirit demonstrates the importance of examining news sources in military conflict reports. Scholarship indicates strong reliance on official sources, which yields homogenous and sometimes distorted news.

In her study of media bias during the American invasion of Panama, Dickson (1994) found government to define the parameters of dialogue, and she observed steady reliance by the New York Times on Washington political elites and Latin American officials. As well, Shipman (1983) found most of the New York Times' stories concerning El Salvador to originate from government sources, and Steele (1995) found the same in analyzing TV news coverage of the Persian Gulf War. Apart from military activity, Smith (1993) examined news coverage of the Exxon Valdez oil spill and found the majority of sources to represent powerful institutional elites.

Based on these and several of the studies reviewed earlier, one can appreciate how reliance on a narrow band of sources can lead to problems. Sources, Sigal (1986) explained, define the news, and when those sources represent only established government institutions, voices of legitimate dissent are likely to be discounted or ignored altogether. In addition, journalists sometimes engage in their own battle over whether to report autonomously and accurately what they have observed in the field or whether to join "the team" and report information that builds troop morale and keeps those on the homefront satisfied with the war effort. American journalists reporting from Saigon in the early seventies scarcely resembled the "our boys" reporters of yesteryear, the former filing cynical reports about the war and the latter keeping the troops motivated

to destroy the likes of Hitler and Mussolini.

But while the mission of war reporting may have undergone changes from the time American troops stormed the beaches of Normandy to the time they landed in Southeast Asia, in reality American journalists have seldom escaped "official" versions of military truth. Even during the war in Vietnam, which Hallin (1986) termed "The Uncensored War," journalists were limited with respect to news sources. As Emery (1971) explained, despite minimal censorship imposed on the Saigon press corps, journalists missed some of the biggest stories of the war, particularly the massacre of civilians by American troops at My Lai.

Gassaway (1989), who covered Vietnam for the Associated Press, explained that the military did not control news directly so much as it did indirectly; for example, the only people with dependable transportation in Southeast Asia were American servicemen, and journalists sometimes had to rely on soldiers to transport them to battle scenes and camps. "During the Vietnam war," Gans (1979) had written earlier, "the military sometimes kept reporters away from battles which were going badly by withholding transportation to the war zone" (p. 120).

In addition, journalists sometimes were limited to information obtained during "the five o'clock follies," the daily briefings given by American military officers in Saigon. Gassaway described the briefings as a unique blend of propaganda, facts and wishful thinking on the part of military officers, mentioning that American forces nearly always suffered only minimal harm while the enemy inevitably suffered heavy casualties. Gans (1979) noted additionally:

The Washington and Saigon Pentagons were able to saturate the news media with inflated body counts and successes in winning the hearts and minds of the South Vietnamese population, whereas the anti-war movement lacked the resources to rebut more than a fraction of these reports, even when it had convincing evidence (p. 121).

With respect to the military officers who provided daily press briefings, "Most were good, honest men who merely parroted what they were expected to say," Gassaway observed. "When we had a chance to interview them privately, they often would give us additional details in human terms, or even tell us they doubted that the reports were accurate" (p. 330).

Ultimately, Gassaway wrote, there were so many practical limitations to developing a story in Vietnam that journalistic ideology became severely compromised. Deadline pressures, dubious reports from military officers, logistical constraints and even the company for which a journalist worked all affected the quality of reporting. Gassaway recalled the arrival of a New York Times reporter to Southeast Asia, describing how the reporter had gained immediate and superior access to the diplomatic corps and to military officers. In a sense, the Times reporter appeared as much a part of the military institution as he did part of an autonomous news organization. And, if the New York Times really is the American newspaper of record, thus impacting the news agenda of separate organizations, one can see how news throughout the country might have become more homogenized at this time.

Gans (1979) has discussed the ethnocentric nature of war reporting, using the obstacles encountered by investigative reporter Seymour Hersh as an example. Though Hersh had gathered incontrovertible evidence involving the massacre of civilians at My

Lai, he had considerable difficulty moving his story into print. Because American news organizations value the American nation above all others, Gans explained, the organizations may discount accurate and newsworthy stories if those stories cast Americans in a negative light. Later, in a study analyzing the New York Times' coverage of Soviet intervention and withdrawal from Afghanistan, Krishnaiah, Signorielli and McLeod (1993) found news coverage favorable when it involved elements defined as non-threatening based on American foreign policy and unfavorable when it concerned threatening information.

During the Vietnam War, especially the early stages, official news sources did not cast American policy in a negative light, leading Gans and others to explain how source considerations affected news coverage. For example, Chittick (1970) found state department officials to be more likely than journalists or nongovernmental sources to accept manipulation of information to serve policy needs.

Until the Tet Offensive, American journalists relied heavily on military and other government officials to define the news from Southeast Asia. And while journalists were expected to secure this information from senior officials, news organizations themselves began to secure information only from the most senior journalists. Gans explained:

Organizational considerations played a supporting role, for the skew toward official sources was complemented by the practice of top producers and editors placing their faith in the optimistic reports about the war from senior Washington reporters. On the other hand, if the news media had listened more closely to the pessimistic reports from some young Saigon reporters, they would have encountered more pressure than they did from government (p. 280).

Rivers (1967) also explained how organizational considerations led to distorted

news about the Vietnam War. He wrote:

Charles Mohr, who was long the White House correspondent for Time, was sent to Southeast Asia as chief correspondent. For months, Mohr had been filing reports from Saigon, showing that the Diem government was shaky and that the war with the communists was not going well. But Time's editors altered the reports to minimize Diem's failings, and even twisted them to indicate that he was winning. Finally, Mohr wrote flatly that 'the war is being lost,' a conclusion which had been reached by other American correspondents on the scene. Managing editor Otto Fuerbringer not only junked Mohr's report, he set out to counter similar reports that were then appearing in other magazines and newspapers. A young contributing editor, Gregory Dunne, was assigned to the task. He refused. Other editors then fashioned a story aptly summarized by one of its phrases, 'government soldiers are fighting better than ever' (p. 120).

Sobering where journalistic ideology is concerned, the passage was included as Rivers summarized the process of anonymous reporting. Journalists in Southeast Asia frequently filed reports on what they had observed and what skeptical soldiers had told them, only to watch as editors in New York shaped the events as they saw fit and attributed coverage to the magazine as a whole. Hallin (1986) too has explained that while a typical Vietnam news story would be "peppered" with attributions, many of them would appear anonymously. Thus, some news stories about the Vietnam War identified neither the reporters who originally filed them nor the sources who provided the most essential information.

While changes in technology have generated certain changes in conflict reporting (for example, see Banks, 1992; Dufour-Gompers, 1992) coverage of military activity since the Vietnam War has not undergone much adjustment where sources and access to information are concerned. Journalists continue to report official versions of military events, and they continue to lack access to central areas of combat. McMasters (1991)

noted several parallels between reportage of Vietnam and the Persian Gulf War:

In Vietnam, the public was misled about the Gulf of Tonkin, the extent of U.S. involvement in the fighting, the corruption of the Diem government, the unwillingness of South Vietnam troops to prosecute the war and the numbers of enemy casualties. Later, the Pentagon papers revealed how the military had misled the public and Congress about the bombing in Cambodia. . . .Despite official and public acceptance of the way the press was controlled in the Persian Gulf War, the American public again was misled--about the strength and ability of Iraq's forces, about Iraq's nuclear and chemical capabilities, about the readiness of coalition forces before the war started. More importantly, the controls worked with the language used in the daily briefings to sanitize the war. Pentagon spokesmen, all ready to reel off numbers of tanks, planes and buildings 'killed' in the theater, refused to estimate the number of Iraqi casualties (p. 3).

These observations are consistent with the findings of other scholars with respect to conflict reporting. Liebes (1992), for example, has explained that when a journalist's own country is at war, human suffering is sanitized, each side is attributed equal military strength, the journalist's side is personalized while the enemy is demonized, and aggressive actions are decontextualized. In addition, Hallin and Gitlin (1993) have explained how electronic coverage of the Persian Gulf War became largely a celebration of technological advances and public unity. Lawrence (1994) has suggested that because journalists covering the Persian Gulf did not have access to the military front, news organizations turned their coverage to the domestic scene, noting how the conflict had affected military families. In all of these instances, reportage of specific military actions is absent and the public is kept unapprised of important events. Commentary involving the events that have taken place in Bosnia comes next.

Press Coverage of Bosnia

Radojkovic (1994) has explained that after Yugoslavia fell apart politically, the

already decentralized media system fell mostly into the hands of government and political elites. Consistent with other observers (Nadle, 1994; Marquand, 1993), Radojkovic discussed the use of media for transmitting propaganda and maintaining control of the citizenry. Brock (1993) explained further:

Reporters began to rely on aggressive government spokespeople--the government information ministry in Zagreb soon acquired scores of English-fluent publicists, and the Bosnian government also mobilized scores of handlers for the Western media. In that struggle for media attention, the Serbs were handicapped by the media sense that 'the story' lay in the plight of the Muslims (p. 157).

Western journalists, Brock (1993) argued, sought to generate enough political pressure to force a military intervention by United States forces. He cited pack journalism and a lack of transportation to conflict sites as major reasons for distorted news reports. Cohen (1994) also wrote about the logistical problems confronting Western journalists in Bosnia; he noted that casualty figures sometimes became arbitrary because journalists had to rely on second-hand reports from restricted areas.

Among the major errors Brock cited were the August 17, 1992, cover photo of Time magazine and a photo in the January 4, 1993 issue of Newsweek. The Time photo, of a haggard man described as being among "Muslim prisoners in a Serbian detention camp," was actually a Serb who suffered from tuberculosis. And when Newsweek published its photo of several dead bodies and asked "Is there any way to stop Serbian atrocities in Bosnia?", the magazine apparently overlooked the fact that the bodies were those of Serbs. Thus, when Serbian battalion commander Alexander Petrovic blamed journalists as much as military forces for the killing of innocent civilians, his statement could not be entirely dismissed.

As Brock explained, major United States publications have cited unsubstantiated claims of rapes against Bosnian women, while altogether ignoring documented rapes of Serbs. He added:

At the height of the rape story, media gullibility reached new levels. In mid-February 1993, the Associated Press, citing only a Bosnian government source, reported alleged cannibalism by starving Muslims in eastern Bosnia. The story achieved instant headlines in the United States. Receiving little if any play, however, was the vigorous denial the following day by U.N. officials in Bosnia, who rushed to the scene of the supposedly starving villagers and discovered them in possession of livestock and chickens (p. 167).

Rohde (1995) has described how the Bosnian and Croatian governments position themselves as victims, leading Western journalists to present primarily the Croat and Muslim sides of the overall story. Glaberson (1995) wrote about National Public Radio reporter Tom Gjelton, who reported from Sarajevo and chronicled the practices of Bosnian journalists. While officials in the Bosnian government said the Sarajevo newspaper did not lend enough support in the conflict with the Serbs, Glaberson explained that foreign journalists like Gjelton contended that the Bosnian newspaper was too uncritical of the Bosnian side.

Zlatko Dizdarevic, an editor with the Sarajevo newspaper Oslobodenje, wrote about the angry struggle between the Serbs and the Muslims, contending in the Christian Science Monitor (1993) that the war has not been one of hatred, but rather one against democracy. Old-school communists, Dizdarevic wrote, have manipulated the masses and gotten rid of journalists who are not "nationalistic." As an example of how people with differing ethnicities work together in Bosnia, the journalist cited the ethnic breakdown at his newspaper: 30 percent Serbs, 40 percent Muslims, 20 percent Croats, and 10 percent

Jews and others. He also explained that 35 percent of all marriages in Bosnia are mixed.

Still, Western journalists have portrayed the war as one of ethnic hatred, and the graphic visual images that have appeared in newspapers and magazines and on television may have affected government policy in the United States (Goodman, 1994; Krauthammer, 1994; Beschloss, 1993). Others, however, argue that while visual images of the fighting in Bosnia may shock news consumers and American public officials, there is little evidence of policy changes (Strobel, 1994).

Journalists in Bosnia have certainly witnessed hatred, both against civilians and against themselves and the companies for whom they work (Bowers, 1994; Harden, 1992; Landay, 1992). And perhaps their emotional reactions to this hatred have led to some of the news distortions cited by Brock. Journalists reporting from Bosnia have few news sources apart from designated public officials, and if one accepts Sigal's (1986) contention that sources define the news, one can appreciate how news concerning the former Yugoslavia has portrayed Muslims in a relatively favorable manner and Serbs as vicious thugs and pillagers.

As the literature indicates, journalists are motivated to report dramatic news from the military battlefield. Whether it be increasing the sales of their newspapers or winning awards, they are encouraged to report the events they consider dramatic while discounting the ones they deem mundane. They seek to personalize conflict events and secure the reactions of perceived victims.

With respect to anonymous attribution, this study is expected to show fewer American veiled sources in Bosnian stories than in Somalian. When the news reports

examined here were published, American forces had not been committed to Bosnia. Thus, with few exceptions American lives had not been placed in danger. American soldiers died in Somalia, and some observers blasted the media for creating a spectacle of the entire military mission there. The study now addresses that coverage.

Press Coverage of Somalia

In recent years, the African country Somalia has faced severe problems with regard to food supply and poverty. Thousands of people have starved to death, as humanitarian aid from West has been stolen by various clans and redistributed through the black market.

As Tadesse (1990) points out, the forced migration of Somalians, Ethiopians and Sudanese from barren locales to urban centers "bleeds scarce development resources," basically retarding the ability to produce food. And while some might suggest that such problems have always existed in the Third World, only recently have Western news audiences been appraised of just how bad the situation is.

Television news viewers watched as American forces stormed the beaches at Mogadishu in an effort to locate clan leader Mohammed Farah Aidid, one of those responsible for seizing Western supplies before they could be distributed to needy persons (Pringle, 1993). Unfortunately, Aidid escaped capture, and 17 U.S. rangers died in the effort to find him.

As with Vietnam and Bosnia, journalists who reported on the conflict in Somalia faced adverse working conditions from the start. They worked without electricity or telephones, and like the thousands of natives who were starving to death, they had little

access to food and water (Gersh, 1993). Aidid had created a situation so volatile that many journalists were forced to hire armed escorts (Gersh, 1993). For some, including Associated Press photographer Hansi Krauss and Reuters photographer Dan Eldon, protective steps weren't enough; a Somali mob killed both journalists on July 12, 1993 after a United Nations air strike (Editor & Publisher, 1993). Their deaths, along with those of two other Western journalists, prompted CBS, NBC, ABC, the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times and the Washington Post to pull journalists from the region (Kurtz, 1993; see also Squiers, 1993). CNN employees, who earlier had equipped themselves with flak jackets, stayed and spent much of their time sitting in hotel rooms, the streets having grown too dangerous to walk.

Naturally, these barriers did not bode well for the reporting and exposure of human suffering, leading Kurtz to lament that the story "may all but vanish from the media map" (See also Richburg, 1993). But rather than vanish, the story reached a pinnacle on October 5, 1993, when American newspapers published a photo of a dead American soldier being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu (Byrd, 1993). At that point, Americans who had not lost faith in 1992--when 17 U.S. marines died as American forces stormed the beaches a Mogadishu--refused to lend further support to military intervention. "Just get the boys home," Pringle wrote, describing American public opinion. And shortly thereafter, President Clinton did just that.

The withdrawal of United States forces from Somalia triggered debate as to whether the mission had been a success or a failure. Kaus (1994) suggested that "The Somalia intervention, by virtually any moral calculus, was a success" (p. 4), while

Piquard (1993) called the search for Aidid a "fruitless manhunt that cost the lives of 17 U.S. Rangers" (p. 9). Writing in the Los Angeles Times, Jesse Jackson (1993) pointed to the many lives saved by intervention and said the American effort in Somalia was not in vain. But in an earlier, more cynical column, Clough (1992) suggested that American forces had not gone to Somalia for humanitarian reasons, but rather had gone because of political pressure shaped largely by powerful visual images. "Put bluntly, most of the world's political leaders don't regard such horrors as Somalia as high-priority concerns," Clough wrote. "Instead, they perceive them as public-relations problems that have to be managed if, and only if, they happen to catch the public's eye" (p. M2).

According to Clough (see also Freund, 1992), early reports of human suffering in Somalia had been ignored by Western leaders, and only when shocking photographs of starving villagers appeared in national newspapers and on television news did the interest of the Bush administration increase. Somalia then became the "topic of choice." Goodman agreed and wondered how many lives could have been saved had action been taken at an earlier point; alas "the closer to home, the bigger the story" (p. C18).

Veteran journalist Dan Rather (1993) rejected the assertion that Western news media, namely television news, prompted the Bush administration to send forces to Somalia. "To give television credit for so powerful an influence," Rather said, "is to flatter us who toil there--but it's wrong" (p. A22). Jonathan Alter (1992) of Newsweek also rejected the notion that news organizations pushed the U.S. into Somalia. With respect to the landing at Mogadishu, Alter observed, the Pentagon told journalists the week before exactly where U.S. forces would arrive and even made suggestions about

camera angles. The military, in short, sought to show its strength via television.

Rather, along with fellow anchorman Tom Brokaw, had been sent to Somalia to cover the intervention of United States forces there. After U.S. marines stormed the beaches of Mogadishu, many observers wrote about the manner in which Western journalists turned the landing into a television spectacle (see, for example, Richburg, 1992; Shales, 1992; Lancaster, 1992; Barron, 1992; Kurtz, 1992, Pine, 1992; Gordon, 1992; Gersh, 1992; Fineman & Kraft, 1992; Riding, 1992). Media critic Howard Rosenberg (1992) of the Los Angeles Times summed up the observations by suggesting that Western journalists helped turn the landing of military forces in Somalia into a Hollywood circus set for prime-time. He wrote:

The scene was almost surreal. Unloading their gear under the white glare of popping flashbulbs and TV lights that made them easy targets for potential hostile fire, the military men seemed on the verge of being taken prisoner by the media. As choppers flew above, you might have expected Francis Coppola to yell 'cut' (p. A13).

As U.S. forces landed in Somalia, Rosenberg noted, hundreds of deaths had occurred in India as a result of rioting; television news agencies had all but ignored that story. And as Goodman (1993b) predicted, American news agencies largely ignored the Somali dead in reporting from Mogadishu; in fact, they may not have had access to the figures at all. During the first week there, public affairs officers did not have adequate equipment to give press briefings, and thus the briefings were given from the Pentagon (Gersh, 1993). As with Vietnam and Bosnia, then, the band of news sources became and stayed narrow in the coverage of Somalia, much of the news having travelled the path that Rivers (1970) described.

Douglas (1992) offers additional commentary:

Are Americans primarily concerned with domestic affairs? Sure. Do most Americans have any idea what's going on in Somalia or the former Yugoslavia? Not a glimmer. Do the news media and their commentators encourage this catastrophic ignorance and myopia? You bet. . . . By neglecting or oversimplifying international news, and by sensationalizing human-rights disasters, commentators promote an overwhelming sense of resignation among viewers who become convinced that things are too complicated and messy 'over there' and that there is, therefore, nothing to be done; people, especially children, will just have to die (p. 27).

Nearly one year later (1993), her observations were similar: "And what we've been seeing and hearing about Somalia is anything but news or analysis. Instead, the conflict has been cast as a grade-B action movie--the 'warlord' versus the good guys in the Mogadishu Thunderdome, with General Aidid cast in Tina Turner's role" (p. 17).

Indeed, the press received strong criticism for its coverage of Somalia, from its search for graphic visual images to its lack of substantive news reports about policy. Commentators harangued the news media for turning a humanitarian mission into a Hollywood production, and when United States forces left the country, the story all but disappeared.

Summary

To this point, scholarly and professional literature relating to journalists and military conflict has been reviewed. The literature has demonstrated that journalists rely heavily on public officials for information during conflicts, largely the result of practical limitations such as transportation and access to alternative sources, as well as the belief that public officials are the most capable of providing credible reports. A source hierarchy also exists, with the president of the United States considered the preferred source of

information during conflict.

Scholars have consistently found differences across newspapers in conflict reporting, supporting the theory that coverage is largely the result of journalistic discretion and not the dynamics of individual news events. That assertion will be tested in the present study by comparing the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post and the Associated Press.

With respect to anonymous attribution, the author (1994) and others (Blankenburg, 1992) have proposed that as political volatility increases, the use of anonymous sources becomes more frequent. Few studies have tested this theory, and because one of the conflicts examined in the present study involves the commitment of American forces and the other does not, the assertion can be tested here. A key assumption is that when American forces are committed, the situation is more politically volatile than when U.S. forces are not involved. As Goodman (1994) pointed out, "the closer to home, the bigger the story."

This study also facilitates a comparison between the Bush and Clinton administrations with respect to frequency of anonymous attribution. In their study of four administrations (i.e. Carter, Reagan, Bush and Clinton), Riffe and Johnson (1995) found more use of anonymous sources with Republicans in the White House, pointing to differences in the way each party, or at least each administration, handles information. Spear (1984), Hertsgaard (1988) and Haldeman (1994) have written about Republican press strategies, each explaining how White House press officers keep journalists "appeased" by providing them with mundane information on a daily basis. Democratic

administrations, Della Carpini explained, are traditionally more open than their Republican counterparts, and thus more use of anonymous attribution can be expected during the Bush years.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Based on the review of scholarly and professional literature, this study tests three central hypotheses and advances five research questions involving press coverage of Bosnia and Somalia. The hypotheses address anonymous attribution while the research questions address broader issues such as the use of official news sources by Western journalists.

H1: In the aggregate, American news sources will be veiled more frequently in coverage of Somalia--the country where American forces were committed--than in coverage of Bosnia.

H2: Significant differences will be observed across the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post and the Associated Press in the use of anonymous attribution.

H3: Information released from the Executive branch while Bush was president will contain more anonymous attribution than information released from the Clinton administration.

R1: To what extent do officials of legitimated institutions serve as news sources in the reporting of military conflict?

R2: What institutions do these sources most commonly represent?

R3: Under what circumstances do individuals from the private sector serve as news sources?

R4: What impact does Dateline have on the selection and attribution of news sources?

R5: What percent of news paragraphs contain no attribution at all?

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Overview

This dissertation examines the use of anonymous attribution in news reports concerning the military conflicts in Bosnia and Somalia. Several issues involving media sociology are addressed: (1) Whether anonymous sourcing is more prevalent when American forces are committed to an active area; (2) whether certain types of news sources tend to be veiled more frequently; (3) whether differences exist across news organizations in the use of veiled sources; (4) whether reports originating from American or international locales contain more use of anonymous attribution; and (5) whether differences exist across Republican and Democratic administrations in the release of anonymous information.

In addition to the study of anonymous sourcing, the dissertation takes a macroscopic look at the extent to which journalists rely on official news sources for information about military conflict. At issue is the homogenous news that can develop when a narrow band of sources provide information to several news organizations. For purposes of this study, "officials" shall be defined conceptually as representatives of legitimated institutions.

The methodology is based in part on a refereed conference paper (Denham, 1994) and a pilot study of 2,423 newspaper paragraphs downloaded from the Dialogue database (Denham, 1996). In the pilot study, 300 articles from the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post and the Associated Press were downloaded from Dialogue, and the 133

articles that met the conceptual definition of news--that is, articles that reported an issue or event concerning the conflicts in Bosnia and Somalia--were analyzed to establish variable categories for the larger study. The pilot analysis also provided information about sampling (e.g. the approximate number of articles that would be lost to attrition and the average number of paragraphs per article).

The Sample

The Los Angeles Times and the Washington Post were chosen for this study because they have long been considered part of the American prestige press, and because they commission their own reporters to cover military conflicts; the Associated Press was chosen because it is the most prominent wire service in the world. In addition, content from each of the three news organizations was accessible through the Dialogue database; content from the New York Times was not.

For the comparative analysis, a stratified random sample of conflict reports from 1992, 1993 and 1994 was downloaded from Dialogue. Preliminary searches revealed that "Bosnia" and "Somalia" were the most effective search terms, as nearly all coverage focused on some aspect of each conflict. Figures 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 demonstrate why reports from 1992 through 1994 were selected for analysis; coverage of both conflicts peaked in 1993, with extensive coverage in the year prior and the year after. Inclusion of news reports about the 1995 commitment of United States forces to Bosnia would have introduced a problem for the comparative study, as there has been virtually no coverage of Somalia since 1994; even then, many of the articles that mentioned the conflict in Somalia focused primarily on the problems occurring in Haiti, Liberia and Rwanda.

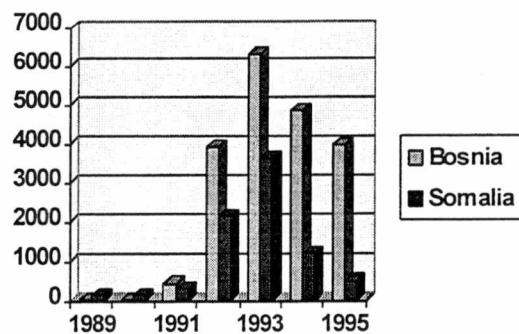


FIGURE 3.1

Bibliometric Search of Associated Press Reports Archived in Dialogue Database.
Each bar reflects the number of records available per year.

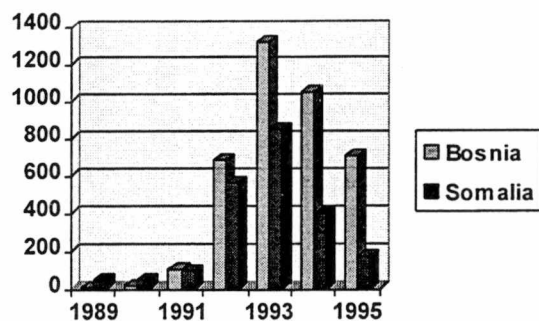


FIGURE 3.2

Bibliometric Search of *Los Angeles Times* Reports Archived in Dialogue Database.
Each bar reflects the number of records available per year.

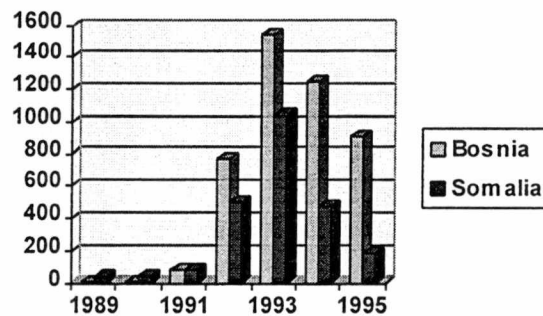


FIGURE 3.3

Bibliometric Search of *Washington Post* Reports Archived in Dialogue Database.
Each bar reflects the number of records available per year.

In a comparative study, it is important methodologically to compare news reports from the same points in time; this eliminates a potentially specious explanation for the study's findings. As well, one of the purposes of this dissertation was to learn more about conflict reporting when American forces were committed to an active area and when they were not.

For randomization, intervals were created in which a population of articles from a given year was divided by the number of articles needed for the sample; a table of random numbers was then used to select one article from each interval. As an example, in 1993 the search term "Bosnia" yielded 6,317 articles in the Associated Press; this represented 42 percent of all AP articles containing that search term between 1992 and 1994. To arrive at the required number of paragraphs--a number based originally on the approximate number of cells in a log-linear model--a total of 164 AP articles about Bosnia had to be downloaded. Forty-two percent of 164 is 69, and 6,317 divided by 69 is

92. Thus, the 1993 intervals were 0, 92, 184, 276, etc., and the random number added to each figure yielded the article to be downloaded. This stratification ensured that (1) articles published throughout a given year would be included in the analysis, and (2) the sample would include an appropriate number of articles from each year. Table 3.1 shows the number of pilot articles gathered for each year across both conflicts, and Table 3.2 shows the same statistics for the dissertation.

As mentioned, data were gathered originally to accommodate a log-linear analysis of six categorical variables with the newspaper paragraph as the unit of measurement. The paragraph had been used in prior studies (Denham, 1994; Williams, 1995; Denham, 1996), the results of which were based on cross-tabulation and chi square analysis. At the proposal stage of the dissertation, however, committee member David Sylwester suggested that a technical flaw might result if an assumption of independence among paragraphs was made. Independence is fundamental to log-linear modeling, and if paragraphs in a news article are not independent from one another, the sample size could be artificially inflated. To resolve this problem, log-linear modeling was dropped and logistic regression analysis was adapted. For this procedure, a new ordinal-level response variable was created using the newspaper article as the unit of measurement. The procedure is explained in detail later in this chapter.

Article Type

Though they were picked up in searches of Dialogue, editorials, letters, columns, articles in a series and news analyses were not analyzed in this dissertation. Inclusion of these articles would have created a statistical fallacy. For example, while a column might

TABLE 3.1
Data Collection for Pilot Study

Conflict	Source	Total Articles by Year		Percent	Pilot #
Bosnia	AP	1992	3,918	26	13
		1993	6,317	42	21
		1994	4,844	32	16
Totals			15,079	100	50
Somalia	AP	1992	2,157	31	16
		1993	3,633	52	26
		1994	1,203	17	08
Totals			6,993	100	50
Bosnia	LAT	1992	683	22	12
		1993	1,320	43	21
		1994	1,051	35	17
Totals			3,054	100	50
Somalia	LAT	1992	563	31	16
		1993	854	47	23
		1994	395	22	11
Totals			1,812	100	50
Bosnia	WP	1992	764	22	11
		1993	1,548	44	22
		1994	1,248	34	17
Totals			3,560	100	50
Somalia	WP	1992	497	25	13
		1993	1,041	52	26
		1994	474	23	11
Totals			2,012	100	50

TABLE 3.2
Data Collection for Dissertation

Conflict	Source	Total Articles by Year		Percent	Study #
Bosnia	AP	1992	3,918	26	43
		1993	6,317	42	69
		1994	4,844	32	52
Totals			15,079	100	164
Somalia	AP	1992	2,157	31	58
		1993	3,633	52	97
		1994	1,203	17	32
Totals			6,993	100	187
Bosnia	LAT	1992	683	22	48
		1993	1,320	43	94
		1994	1,051	35	77
Totals			3,054	100	219
Somalia	LAT	1992	563	31	73
		1993	854	47	111
		1994	395	22	51
Totals			1,812	100	235
Bosnia	WP	1992	764	22	47
		1993	1,548	44	94
		1994	1,248	34	73
Totals			3,560	100	214
Somalia	WP	1992	497	25	54
		1993	1,041	52	111
		1994	474	23	49
Totals			2,012	100	214

contain 20 paragraphs, none of which contains an anonymous source, the column might not reference any source. But the "hard news" article of the day, which also may contain 20 paragraphs, might reference a veiled source eight times. Thus, 40 percent of the paragraphs in the hard-news article would contain anonymous attribution; inclusion of the column would lead to the inference that only 20 percent of "news" paragraphs contain veiled sources. In short, news sources need not be present in opinion articles or in analyses of news events by journalists.

In terms of operationalizing "hard news," articles had to report specific issues and events and not contain editorial commentary. They had to originate from a news desk, be published independent of the editorial page and contain a dateline. No articles identified as "news analysis" were included, nor were any that were clearly features (e.g. a 3,500-word, one-source description of how the conflict in Bosnia had affected a local merchant). Dialogue, in fact, identifies these articles as "Features" in its description of article content. Ultimately, then, since this study sought to examine the extent to which *news* reports about military conflict contain anonymous attribution, including editorials, columns, letters, etc. would have compromised internal validity.

Ideally, only "hard news" articles would have been downloaded from Dialogue; however, search parameters did not allow technicians to gather only these articles. Because certain types of articles in the sample were not analyzed, considerable attrition did occur. Attrition did not pose methodological problems, though, for the analysis focused on articles with specific characteristics and generalized only to "hard news" reporting in the conflict coverage of three news organizations.

The Unit of Measurement

In the 1994 study, which focused on anonymous attribution in the New York Times' coverage of the Middle East Peace Accords, the conflict in Bosnia, and the Clinton Health Care Package, the newspaper paragraph served as the unit of measurement and results were reported in the form of cross-tabulation and chi square analysis. In that study the author suggested that using the newspaper *article* as the unit of measurement (e.g. coding it for the presence/non-presence of an anonymous source) could lead to specious findings. For instance, while 75 percent of news articles might contain information attributed to an anonymous source, 90 percent of all sources in the articles might be identified. Thus, the following sub-headline from Wulfemeyer's 1985 article "How and Why Anonymous Attribution is Used by Time and Newsweek" could have been misleading: "Overall, 80% of national and international stories in Time and Newsweek contain anonymous attribution" (p. 81).

This study seeks to reconcile the ambiguity of coding entire articles for the presence/non-presence of an anonymous source with the problem of assuming independence among paragraphs. After reviewing a series of categorical statistical tests and their fundamental assumptions, the author and committee member David Sylwester developed a method based on logistic regression analysis. The method allowed the study to test the effects of four predictor variables--Administration, Conflict, Dateline and Newspaper--on an ordinal-level response variable.

The Response Variable

To develop a response variable for the logistic regression procedure, fractions

were created in which the number of paragraphs containing anonymous attribution in a given article served as the numerator and the number of paragraphs containing anonymous attribution plus the number of paragraphs identifying the source of information served as the denominator.

To facilitate this procedure the variable Level of Attribution was collapsed from its original four categories: Identified, Unidentified, Institutional, No Source. Institutional sources were collapsed into the Identified category--a procedure which ensured that any error in conceptualization would take place on the conservative side--and paragraphs containing no source at all were discarded for inferential statistics.

The above generated a value between 0 and 1 for every article in the study (n=472). To facilitate data analysis, those values were then truncated, multiplied by 10, rounded to the lesser of two whole numbers (i.e. if $1 \leq \text{ratio} < 2$, then $\text{TRNRATIO} = 1$), and the resulting figures formed the new ordinal-level response variable. So, if the Washington Post really did use more anonymous attribution than the Los Angeles Times or the Associated Press--as observed in the pilot study--then most of its articles would appear to the right on a given number line. For example, consider a Post article with a value of .56, a Times article with a value of .38, and an AP article with a value of .29. Truncate each value, multiply by 10, round to a whole number, and they appear at the following points:

1	<	2	<	3	<	4	<	5	<	6
		AP		LAT				WP		

After all values were rounded, the LOGISTIC procedure in SAS was used to fit

the best model to the data.

Level of Attribution was the only variable in the study that contained subjective components, such that inter-coder reliability needed to be examined. The author and Kristin Hoke, a reporter at WBIR-TV in Knoxville TN, coded 100 paragraphs for Level of Attribution and reached agreement 95 times.

With respect to coding rules, each paragraph was coded for the presence of one source. If more than one news source appeared in a paragraph, the first source mentioned was coded. Given the brevity of newspaper paragraphs and the observations made in the pilot study, the presence of more than one source per paragraph was infrequent and thus not problematic.

If one paragraph attributed information to "officials" (plural) and the next paragraph attributed one of these "officials" by name, the former was coded as "unidentified." If, on the other hand, one paragraph attributed an "official" (singular) and the next paragraph identified this "official" by name, the first paragraph was coded as "identified." This rule was based on an article by Smyth (1993), which explained how semantics can allow journalists to give readers the impression that the contentions of one source are representative of the attitudes of all other sources.

Also in regard to semantics, use of the passive voice was coded as "no source." For example, "It was thought that the two parties would meet later in the month..." does not specify a source, but it does give the impression that the journalist spoke to someone or acquired the information somewhere. An argument could be made for anonymous sourcing, but erring on the side of conservatism, the most appropriate code is "no source."

This code can be thought of as description. The journalist simply described something that happened or who was involved in the happening. Presumably, the presence of a source is not necessary for certain types of information.

The Explanatory Variables

In the pilot study, which was based on cross-tabulation, each paragraph (n=2,423) was coded for the following categorical variables: Administration, Conflict, Dateline, Newspaper, Source Type and Level of Attribution. For the dissertation, Level of Attribution was transformed to the ordinal-level response variable just reviewed. Table 3.3 displays categories for the explanatory variables, as collapsed for descriptive statistics.

TABLE 3.3
Categories for Explanatory Variables and Source Type

Variable	Categories
Administration:	Bush, Clinton
Conflict:	Bosnia, Somalia
Dateline:	U.S. locale, Bosnia, United Nations, Somalia, Other international locale
Newspaper:	Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, Associated Press
Source Type:	Executive, Legislative, U.S. Military, Generic U.S. Official, Private Sector, U.N., Bosnian, Serbian, Other Regional Sources, Somalian, Other international sources, No Source, Institutional

To test whether news coverage of Bosnia and Somalia contained more anonymous information when George Bush was in office, paragraphs were coded first for the variable Administration. All paragraphs from 1992 and those published until Bill Clinton took office in January 1993 were coded "1," and those published after Clinton took office were

coded "2." The LOGISTIC procedure in SAS requires that categorical predictor variables be dummy-coded, and thus new variables coded as "0" or "1" were created. Norusis (1993) explains that "the number of new variables required to represent a categorical variable is one less than the number of categories." Accordingly, the new variable ADMIN1 was created for the logistic procedure (see Appendix for list of dummy variable codes).

For the second variable, Conflict, paragraphs drawn from news articles about Bosnia were coded "1," and paragraphs about Somalia were coded "2." The dummy variable created to represent Conflict was called CONFL1.

The third variable, Dateline, consisted of the following five categories: American locale, United Nations, Bosnia, Somalia, Other international locale. These categories were based on dateline frequencies observed in the pilot study. Among news articles with an American dateline, most originated in Washington, D.C. with a few coming from other parts of the country (e.g. a point of departure for U.S. troops). Because many reports about Bosnia and Somalia originated at the United Nations, it was given a category of its own; this allowed the research to examine how much information reported from that institution contained anonymous attribution. Reports originating from Bosnia--primarily Sarajevo--were coded "3," and reports originating from Somalia--primarily Mogadishu--were coded "4." Because leaders throughout the world made frequent remarks about the conflicts in Bosnia and Somalia, a category had to accommodate the many countries from which those leaders spoke. Other international locales were coded "5." To examine the effects of Dateline on use of anonymous attribution, four dummy variables were created:

DATLN1, DATLN2, DATLN3 and DATLN4.

The fourth variable, Newspaper, contained a category for each organization: Associated Press ("1"), the Los Angeles Times ("2") and the Washington Post ("3"). Two dummy variables (NEWSP1 and NEWSP2) were created for the logistic procedure.

Finally, Source Type contained 12 categories after originally containing 42 in the pilot study. Collapsing did not result in substantial loss of information, as several categories in the pilot study contained zero observations. The categories in Table 3.4 were coded from "1" to "13" in the order in which they appear.

TABLE 3.4
Display of Source Type Operational Definitions

Variable Category	Contents
Executive	All members of Executive branch, all Cabinet members
Legislative	All members of Senate, all members of House of Rep.
U.S. Military	All references to Pentagon, all military personnel
Generic Official(s)	No description other than "U.S. official(s)"
Private Sector	American sources independent of legitimated institutions
United Nations	All U.N. representatives in New York and abroad
Bosnian	All Bosnian sources, official and private sector
Serbian	All Serbian sources, official and private sector
Others in Region	All others (e.g. Croatian), official and private
Somalian	All Somalian sources, official and private
Other International	All sources independent of previous countries
No Source	No source in paragraph
Institution	Institutional source apart from institutions above (e.g. "The French Foreign Ministry")

Logistic Regression Analysis

Logistic regression has been used routinely in the social sciences but never for the study of anonymous attribution in reports of military conflict. The method developed for

this dissertation, then, makes a contribution to the mass communications literature.

In terms of social-science application, Price and Zaller (1993) used logistic regression in their study of public affairs knowledge. Self-reported rates of media use, interpersonal communication and prior levels of political knowledge served as predictors of a categorical dependent measure, news recall. Price and Zaller expanded on the literature and suggested that to understand political effects of news coverage, scholars should travel beyond basic use indices and look more thoroughly at who actually "gets" the news. The researchers found that background political knowledge predicted basic knowledge of current events better than media use, interpersonal communication and educational attainment did. The study's dependent measures were dichotomous (coded 1 for correct description of news event, 0 otherwise), and Price and Zaller thus opted to use logistic regression as opposed to a "straight-line function" of predictor variables.

In a computer-assisted content analysis that focused on the reporting of public opinion polls in prestige newspapers during the 1988 and 1992 presidential election campaigns, Denham and Miller (1994) used logistic regression to analyze the effects of three categorical predictor variables--election year, campaign phase and newspaper--on horserace and issue reporting. Sentences that contained one or more key terms were coded 1 and sentences that contained no key terms were coded 0, thus establishing the dependent variables as dichotomous measures. Logistic regression showed increases in horserace coverage across three campaign phases--pre-convention, convention, post-convention--during both election years. Reflecting this pattern, it also showed decreases in coverage of substantive issue terms across the three phases. Denham and Miller also

found significant differences across election years with regard to substantive issue reporting; that is, journalists in 1992 made substantially more references to substantive issues, at least early in the campaign. Pre-convention efforts were strong enough to establish significant effects for election year as a predictor variable.

The next chapter presents descriptive statistics for each of the variables in the study--as originally coded--and follows with logistic regression analyses on the transformed data.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

This section of the dissertation displays variable frequencies and bivariate findings in the form of cross-tabulation.

Beginning with Table 4.1, it can be seen that 15.4 percent of all news paragraphs about the conflicts in Bosnia and Somalia contained information attributed to an anonymous source. When the category "No Source" was eliminated, 27.4 percent of attributions were anonymous, 63.2 percent were identified and 9.4 percent were institutional. These results are consistent with the findings of the pilot study; in that analysis, 17.2 percent of paragraphs contained information attributed to an anonymous source, and when paragraphs that did not reference any source were eliminated, the figure climbed to 27.6 percent. Thus, both studies found approximately one out of every four attributions to be unidentified.

In terms of the research questions specified earlier, Table 4.1 reveals that among American news sources, the Executive branch accounted for 37 percent of all attributions. United States military sources accounted for 29.4 percent, generic officials 17.5 percent, legislative sources 9.6 percent and private sector individuals 6.4 percent. These findings are consistent with the pilot study and also with scholarship demonstrating heavy reliance on the White House for information about military conflict. Officials of legitimated institutions were clearly the dominant source of news in the reporting of Bosnia and Somalia.

Table 4.1
Paragraph Frequencies of Six Categorical Variables

Variable	Category	Count	Percent
Administration	Bush	2,909	33.1
	Clinton	5,872	66.9
Attribution	Identified	3,120	35.5
	Unidentified	1,351	15.4
	Institution	465	5.3
	No Source	3,844	43.8
Conflict	Bosnia	5,256	59.9
	Somalia	3,525	40.1
Dateline	Washington, D.C.	1,950	22.2
	Bosnia	2,142	24.4
	United Nations	235	2.7
	Somalia	1,998	22.8
	Other	2,456	28.0
Newspaper	Associated Press	3,615	41.2
	Los Angeles Times	2,410	27.4
	Washington Post	2,756	31.4
Source	Executive	659	7.5
	Legislative	171	1.9
	U.S. Military	523	6.0
	Generic Official(s)	312	3.6
	U.S. Private Sector	113	1.3
	United Nations	1,100	12.5
	Bosnian	336	3.8
	Serbian	296	3.4
	Others in Region	204	2.3
	Somalian	196	2.2
	Other International	1706	8.0
	Other Institution	319	3.6
	No Source	3,846	43.8

Figure 4.1 illustrates overall source frequencies for each of the news organizations examined in the study. It shows remarkable consistency in the percent of attributions for each source type across each news organization, thus lending some support to the ideas of pack reporting and homogeneity of news content. As an example, 7.6 percent of all attributions in the Associated Press came from the Executive branch. In the Los Angeles Times, 7.9 percent came from the Executive, and in the Washington Post, 7.1 percent. The figure also illustrates consistency in the form of writing style, as reports from each news organization contained about the same percent of paragraphs that did not reference any source of information. In the Associated Press, 45 percent of all paragraphs did not

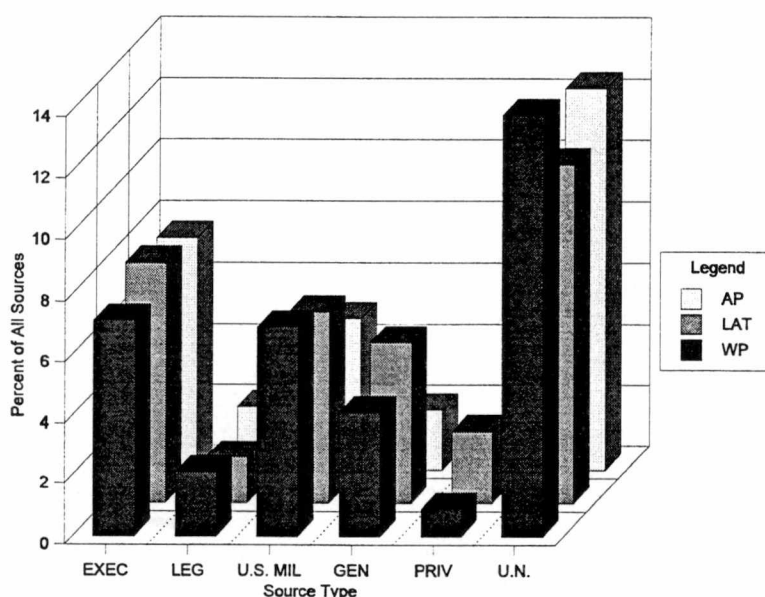


FIGURE 4.1
Display of Newspaper by Source

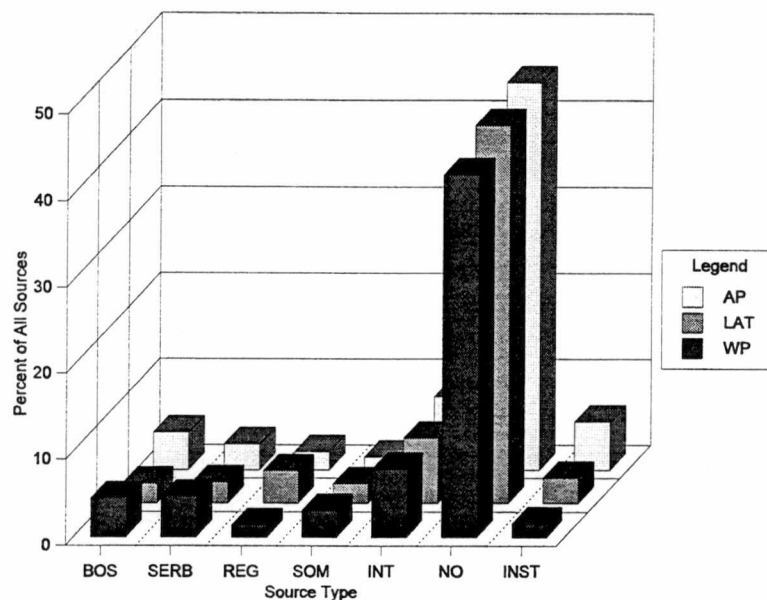


FIGURE 4.1 (Continued)

specify a source; in the Los Angeles Times 43.9 percent of paragraphs contained no source, and in the Washington Post 42.1 percent did not indicate a source. This finding is important both theoretically and methodologically, for it suggests that if differences are observed across news organizations in the use of anonymous attribution, it will not due to differences in writing style.

Table 4.2 is a cross-tabulation of Conflict by Level of Attribution. Unlike the pilot study, it shows nearly identical percentages of anonymous attribution across both conflicts when all sources of information were included. When only American sources were analyzed, there was more use of anonymous attribution in the coverage of Bosnia. Specifically, 61.5 percent of American news sources were identified and 36.3 percent

TABLE 4.2
Cross-Tabulation of Conflict by Level of Attribution

Count Row Percent	IDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED	INSTITUTION	NO SOURCE	TOTAL
BOSNIA	1,796 34.2	805 15.3	336 6.4	2,319 44.1	5,256
SOMALIA	1,324 37.6	546 15.5	129 3.7	1,525 43.3	3,524
TOTAL	3,120 35.5	1,351 15.4	465 5.3	3,844 43.8	8,780 100

were anonymous; in coverage of Somalia, 68.4 percent were identified and 29.1 percent were anonymous. This finding may be explained by the fact that in coverage of Bosnia, the Executive branch accounted for 52.7 percent of all attributions; in coverage of Somalia, it represented just 26.3 percent, compared to U.S. military sources at 42.1 percent.

While the percent of anonymous Executive sources was about equal across the two conflicts (17.2 percent for Bosnia, 15.2 percent for Somalia), the percent of anonymous military sources and private sector individuals was quite disparate. In coverage of Bosnia, 46.9 percent of paragraphs with a U.S. military source contained anonymous attribution. In coverage of Somalia, only 27.6 percent contained a veiled source. Perhaps the presence of military spokespersons in Somalia, whose job it was to brief reporters on the record, simply overwhelmed the occasional tip on Bosnia from someone at the Pentagon. In addition, while private sector individuals accounted for just 2.5 percent of American

sources about Bosnia, they accounted for nearly 10 percent of sources about Somalia. Private sector individuals typically do not have a political need to remain anonymous, and across both conflicts, they were identified 80 percent of the time. Thus, their more frequent use in the coverage of Somalia contributed to the higher percent of identified sources in that reportage.

Ultimately, this means that Hypothesis One, which predicted differences in the use of anonymous attribution across the two conflicts, will not be supported in the logistic regression analyses. The pilot study, which found differences, involved only 133 total articles, and perhaps this was not enough to gain a truly representative sample.

Table 4.2 does not report chi square statistics because of the issues discussed earlier. While cross-tabulation is convenient for displaying descriptive findings, it is not appropriate to make inferences when independence among observations comes into question. As indicated, logistic regression with the article as the unit of measurement will allow statistical inferences to be made.

Figure 4.2 provides an illustration of Source by Level of Attribution. As one would expect, generic references to "officials" were anonymous in most cases (83.7 percent). International sources apart from Bosnians, Serbs and Somalis were veiled 35.6 percent of the time, United Nations sources 31 percent and United States military sources 30.6 percent. Collapsing across all five categories of American sources showed that 32 percent of attributions were unidentified; doing the same to all international categories revealed 28.2 percent. It is important to note here that news sources in different parts of the world sometimes have different reasons for requesting anonymity. While an American source in

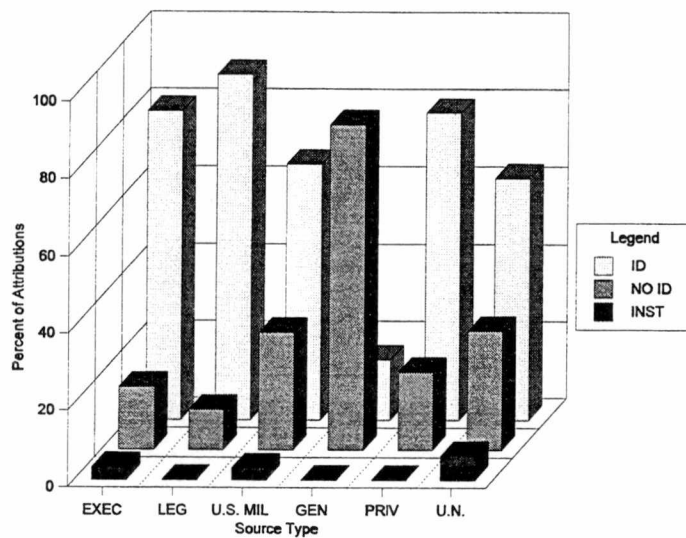


FIGURE 4.2
Display of Source by Attribution

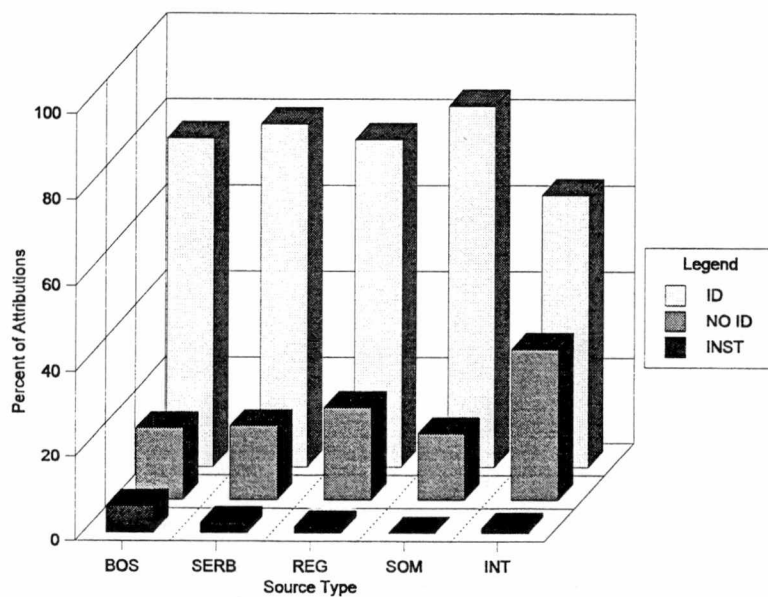


FIGURE 4.2 (Continued)

Washington, D.C. may seek anonymity to avoid political backlash, a Bosnian source in Sarajevo may face more severe repercussions if identified. Thus, while American and international sources were veiled about the same in terms of percent of total paragraphs, the reasons for the anonymous attribution may have been quite different.

Table 4.3 is a cross-tabulation of Dateline by Level of Attribution. It indicates slightly more use of anonymous attribution when sources in America provided information (19.1 percent of all paragraphs). However, the table also reveals that nearly

TABLE 4.3
Cross-Tabulation of Dateline by Level of Attribution

Count Row Percent					
	IDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED	INSTITUTION	NO SOURCE	TOTAL
UNITED STATES	874 44.8	373 19.1	70 3.6	632 32.4	1,949
BOSNIA	686 32.0	298 13.9	168 7.8	990 46.2	2,142
UNITED NATIONS	94 40.0	19 8.1	34 14.5	88 37.4	235
SOMALIA	697 34.9	272 13.6	44 2.2	985 49.3	1,998
OTHER	769 31.3	389 15.8	149 6.1	1,149 46.8	2,456
TOTAL	3,120 35.5	1,351 15.4	465 5.3	3,844 43.8	8,780 100

one half of all paragraphs from Bosnia, Somalia and other international locales contained no source at all; among paragraphs with an American dateline, 32.4 percent contained no source. This finding may reflect the difficulty journalists have contacting news sources in foreign lands. In Washington, D.C., sources have a political interest in making themselves available to journalists, as discussed in the Review of Literature. Thus, it is imperative to consider the environment in which a journalist works, for issues such as source availability may impact the way a news report is written. With a multitude of news sources in Washington, D.C., a journalist may have less difficulty getting a source to say what the journalist himself might assert in a distant country.

In terms of percentages, then, when the category No Source was eliminated, sources in America were veiled 28.3 percent of the time, compared to Bosnia at 25.9 percent, Somalia at 26.9 percent and other international locales at 29.8 percent. When Bosnia, Somalia and other international locales were aggregated, 27.6 percent of news sources were attributed anonymously. Again, while the percentages show little difference in terms of the frequency of anonymous attribution, sources in different parts of the world sometimes have very different reasons for seeking anonymity.

Table 4.4, a cross-tabulation of Newspaper by Level of Attribution, shows findings similar to those observed in the pilot study. News paragraphs from the Washington Post contained the most anonymous attribution, at 21.4 percent, and when paragraphs that did not reference any source were eliminated, that number increased to 37 percent. In the Los Angeles Times, 16.4 percent of all paragraphs contained anonymous attribution, and 29 percent of source attributions were veiled. The Associated Press once again had the

TABLE 4.4
Cross-Tabulation of News Organization by Level of Attribution

Count Row Percent	IDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED	INSTITUTION	NO SOURCE	TOTAL
AP	1,351 37.4	365 10.1	269 7.4	1,630 45.1	3,615
LAT	844 35.0	395 16.4	115 4.8	1,055 43.8	2,409
WP	925 33.6	591 21.4	81 2.9	1,159 42.1	2,756
TOTAL	3,120 35.5	1,351 15.4	465 5.3	3,844 43.8	8,780 100

lowest percent of paragraphs containing information from an anonymous source (10.1 percent), and when paragraphs containing no source at all were eliminated, the number increased to just 18.3 percent--less than half of what paragraphs from the Washington Post contained. Logistic regression will indicate whether these apparent differences, which were predicted in Hypothesis 2, were beyond those that would have occurred by chance.

Table 4.5 is a cross-tabulation of Administration by Level of Attribution. Only American news sources were included, as Hypothesis 3 concerned Republican and Democratic administrations in Washington, D.C. It would have been a stretch to tie the behavior of foreign news sources in a distant land to the press strategy of President Bush or Clinton; it was not a stretch, however, to tie in the behavior of other American news

TABLE 4.5
Aggregated Cross-Tabulation of Administration by Level of Attribution

Count Row Percent	IDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED	INSTITUTION	TOTAL
BUSH	315 68.3	134 29.1	12 2.6	461 25.9
CLINTON	851 64.6	436 33.1	30 2.3	1,317 74.1
TOTAL	1166 65.6	570 32	42 2.4	1,778 100

sources. One can imagine the White House keeping its distance from potentially damaging or embarrassing information, leaving it to legislators or the Pentagon to leak it.

Table 4.5 indicates that Hypothesis 3 will be rejected; that is, with respect to press coverage of Bosnia and Somalia, there is no evidence to suggest that the Republican administration of George Bush in 1992 was more secretive or discreet with information than the Democratic administration of Bill Clinton in 1993 and 1994. In fact, American news sources were veiled more frequently with Clinton in office. The observations of Della Carpini (1994), then, were not supported in this comparison of two administrations; the conclusion is that White House press strategy is a function of more than political attachment. David Gergen, after all, handled information for conservative administrations during the 1980s, and the Clinton administration later brought him aboard to handle some of its press relations.

With respect to percentages, 11.3 percent of executive sources were veiled when George Bush was president; with Bill Clinton in office, 17.5 percent of executive sources were attributed anonymously. During the Bush administration, 23.1 percent of military sources were veiled, compared with 34.7 percent with Clinton as president. Implications for these findings are discussed in the next chapter.

Inferential Statistics

As explained in Chapter III, this study used logistic regression to test the effects of four indicator variables on an ordinal-level response variable.

Before testing the effects of Administration, Conflict, Dateline and Newspaper on the response variable (termed TRNRATIO for the logistic procedure), dummy variables had to be created. As Norusis (1993) explains, "You cannot take a nominal variable like religion, assign arbitrary codes from 1 to 35, and then use the resulting variable in the model. In this situation, you must recode the values of the independent variable by creating a new set of variables that correspond in some way to the original categories" (p. 11).

As advised, then, the independent variables were assigned dummy codes and a logistic model containing all predictor variables was tested. This model did not meet the parallel lines assumption, but it show the indicator variables NEWSP1, NEWSP2 and DATLN3 as significant predictors.

In addition, when the counts in the Response Profile for TRNRATIO (Table 4.6) were converted to percentages, the results revealed that 74 percent of all articles contained at least one reference to an anonymous source. Stated another way,

TABLE 4.6
Response Profile for TRNRATIO as Dependent Measure

Ordered Value	TRNRATIO	Count
1	0	124
2	1	86
3	2	85
4	3	48
5	4	40
6	5	39
7	6	24
8	7	07
9	8	07
10	9	01
11	10	11

approximately one out of every four articles did *not* contain information from a veiled news source. These findings are consistent with those of Wulfemeyer (1985) and Culbertson (1978), both of whom studied anonymous attribution in Time and Newsweek.

Using a stepwise procedure, a second model again tested the effects of all predictor variables on the ordinal-level response variable TRNRATIO. Consistent with the first model, it retained just three variables at .05 significance: NEWSP1, NEWSP2 and DATLN3. Thus, the stepwise procedure indicated significant differences across the three news organizations, and also showed stories with a United Nations dateline to contain significantly less anonymous attribution.

In assessing the fit of a logistic model, a p-value near .50 is assumed to indicate a reasonably good fit to the data. The values in Table 4.7 below indicate the three-variable model to be a good fit; that is, the Residual Chi Square with each variable entered was 4.480 with five degrees of freedom and a p-value of .4826.

TABLE 4.7
Logistic Regression Statistics for Stepwise Procedure
with TRNRATIO as Response Variable

Criterion	Intercept Only	Intercept and Covariates	Chi Square for Covariates
-2 Log L	1883.071	1831.919	57.977 with 3 DF (p=.0001)
Score	.	.	54.602 with 3 DF (p=.0001)

Residual Chi Square = 4.480 with 5 DF (p=.4826)

Stepwise Procedure

Step	Variable Entered	Score Chi Square	Probability Chi Square
1	NEWSP1	40.0094	.0001
2	DATLN3	9.4328	.0021
3	NEWSP2	6.5458	.0105

Analysis of Maximum Likelihood Estimates

Variable	DF	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	Wald Chi Square	Probability Chi Square
INTERC1	1	-1.9425	.1756	122.4307	.0001
INTERC2	1	-1.0661	.1600	44.3895	.0001
INTERC3	1	-0.2661	.1523	3.05304	.0806
INTERC4	1	0.2425	.1524	2.5304	.1117
INTERC5	1	0.7626	.1584	23.1707	.0001
INTERC6	1	1.4727	.1797	67.1438	.0001
INTERC7	1	2.2097	.2232	97.9690	.0001
INTERC8	1	2.5477	.2525	101.8218	.0001
INTERC9	1	3.0316	.3069	97.5855	.0001
INTERC10	1	3.1221	.3189	95.8296	.0001
NEWSP1	1	1.3708	.1974	48.2317	.0001
NEWSP2	1	0.5801	.2187	7.0357	.0080
DATLN3	1	1.4508	.4761	9.2873	.0023

To demonstrate this goodness of fit mathematically, the -2 Log Likelihood Score with one predictor variable in the model (NEWSP1) was 40.729 with one degree of freedom and a p-value of .0001. This indicates a significantly better fit than a model including just the intercept.

At step 2, with DATLN3 included, the -2 Log Likelihood Score was 51.152 with two degrees of freedom. The difference between step 1 and step 2, then, was 10.423 with one degree of freedom, thus indicating the model with two predictors to be a significantly better fit.

At step 3, the -2 Log Likelihood Score was 57.977 with three degrees of freedom, a difference of 6.825 with one degree of freedom from step 2. This indicates a significant improvement when the third predictor, NEWSP2, was entered.

A third logistic model tested for interaction between the significant predictor variables, but it revealed no new findings. The interactive terms NPDATLN1 and NPDATLN2 did not approach statistical significance.

Table 4.8, a cross-tabulation of Newspaper by TRNRATIO, illustrates the differences observed across the Associated Press, the Los Angeles Times and the Washington Post in the use of anonymous attribution. As an example, the table indicates that approximately 34 percent of Associated Press reports contained no anonymous attribution, compared to 25 percent in the Los Angeles Times and 17 percent in the Washington Post. As the values in Table 4.8 increase past five, the Washington Post consistently has higher column percentages, illustrating its more common use of anonymous sources.

TABLE 4.8
Cross-Tabulation of Newspaper by TRNRATIO

Frequency Column Percent TRNRATIO	AP	LAT	WP
0	70 33.98	29 25.22	25 16.56
1	52 25.24	16 13.91	18 11.92
2	35 16.99	22 19.13	28 18.54
3	25 12.14	10 8.70	13 8.61
4	8 3.88	14 12.17	18 11.92
5	9 4.37	13 11.30	17 11.26
6	4 1.94	7 6.09	13 8.61
7	1 0.49	1 0.87	5 3.31
8	0 0.00	3 2.61	4 2.65
9	0 0.00	0 0.00	1 0.66
10	2 0.97	0 0.00	9 5.96
TOTAL	206 43.64	115 24.36	151 31.99

Because several cells in Table 4.8 contained zero observations, the variable TRNRATIO was collapsed into a new response variable called COLRATIO. Additional regressions were run on COLRATIO to generate more stable parameter estimates. Before reviewing those procedures, it should be mentioned again that the significant predictor DATLN3 reflected the modest use of anonymous attribution in stories originating from the United Nations. While only 17 articles in the analysis originated from the U.N., nine of those articles contained no anonymous attribution. Thus, approximately 53 percent of articles with a United Nations dateline contained no veiled sources; this figure compares to 36 percent of articles with an American dateline, 23 percent from Bosnia, 16 percent from Somalia, and 25 percent elsewhere.

For the second series of logistic regressions, TRNRATIO was collapsed into COLRATIO as indicated below.

TRNRATIO Value	COLRATIO Value	COLRATIO Count
0	0	124
1	1	86
2,3,4	2	173
5,6	3	63
7,8,9,10	4	26

The first logistic regression procedure with the new response variable included all explanatory variables, and like before, it showed significant predictive power for NEWSP1, NEWSP2 and DATLN3. It did not, however, meet the parallel lines assumption (Chi Square=52.3426, DF=24, N=472, P=.0007).

Next came a stepwise regression similar to the one performed with TRNRATIO as the response variable. Table 4.9 displays the statistics for this stepwise regression.

TABLE 4.9
Logistic Regression Statistics for Stepwise Procedure
with COLRATIO as Response Variable

Criterion	Intercept Only	Intercept and Covariates	Chi Square for Covariates
-2 Log L Score	1376.116	1320.992	55.124 with 3 DF (p=.0001) 52.128 with 3 DF (p=.0001)

Residual Chi Square = 3.37708 with 5 DF (p=.5829)

Stepwise Procedure

Step	Variable Entered	Score Chi Square	Probability Chi Square
1	NEWSP1	37.6955	.0001
2	DATLN3	9.1692	.0025
3	NEWSP2	6.5723	.0104

Analysis of Maximum Likelihood Estimates

Variable	DF	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	Wald Chi Square	Probability Chi Square
INTERC1	1	-1.9483	.1806	116.4400	.0001
INTERC2	1	-1.0722	.1652	42.1096	.0001
INTERC3	1	0.7612	.1605	22.4834	.0001
INTERC4	1	2.2045	.2244	96.5248	.0001
NEWSP1	1	1.3753	.2039	45.4784	.0001
NEWSP2	1	0.6006	.2269	7.0058	.0081
DATLN3	1	1.4263	.4788	8.8726	.0029

At step one, the computer entered NEWSP1, yielding a -2 Log Likelihood Score of 38.349 with one degree of freedom. At step two, the computer entered DATLN3, and -2 Log Likelihood Score was 48.297 with two degrees of freedom. The difference between

the two scores, 9.95 with one degree of freedom, was significant.

At step three, NEWSP2 was entered and it increased the -2 Log Likelihood Score to 55.124 with three degrees of freedom. The difference in scores between steps two and three, 6.827 with one degree of freedom, was again significant, indicating the three-variable model as the best fit to the data. Its Residual Chi Square statistics (Chi Square=3.7708, DF=5, P=.5829) are consistent with the goodness of fit standards described earlier.

The values in this regression closely resemble those from the earlier stepwise procedure, and when an additional regression tested for interactive effects, the results were same; that is, logistic regression revealed no interactive effects between Newspaper and Dateline.

With regard to the central hypotheses advanced in this study, then, logistic regression found support for Hypothesis 2 and did not find support for Hypotheses 1 and 3. That is, significant differences were observed across the Associated Press, the Los Angeles Times and the Washington Post in the use of anonymous attribution, but no differences were observed across the two conflicts or the two presidential administrations.

Chapter V offers some commentary on both the descriptive and inferential findings and discusses implications for future research in this area of media sociology.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study began with a review of the scholarly and professional literature concerning journalists and public officials, the practice of anonymous attribution, press coverage of military conflict, and the reporting of Bosnia and Somalia. As discussed, scholars have found a steady reliance on official news sources in articles involving military conflict, a reliance that is partially due to the availability of these sources, as well as to their perceived credibility.

Research Question 1 asked "To what extent do officials of legitimated institutions serve as news sources in the reporting of military conflict?" The results here demonstrate not only how strong the reliance on official news sources is, but also how consistently journalists at separate news organizations cite roughly the same percentage of sources from different agencies. While there was bound to be some homogeneity in the choice of sources--a spokesperson at a press conference is *the* source of information for that piece of news--the results of this study appear to lend support to the earlier contentions of Chafets (1985) regarding press coverage of the Moslem Middle East. Chafets suggested that while more than 30 Western journalists typically report on the area, they seldom work autonomously on different stories and usually compete with each other in the same location for what amounts to the same story. While this study did not offer a qualitative assessment of article content, the consistency in percentages of news organization across source type certainly does not contradict Chafets and others who have discussed the ideas of pack reporting and homogeneity of content (Brock, 1993).

As Sigal (1973) explained, sources define the news, and it follows that when several news agencies acquire information from the same sources, the potential for homogenous reporting is high. This is not to chastise journalists or make a normative argument about what kinds of news sources should be contacted for a given report; journalists, after all, operate under a series of pragmatic constraints, and sometimes just locating a source can prove difficult. Nevertheless, it is important sociologically to consider the institutions most commonly represented, for as Graber (1989) explained, "(s)upporters of the prevailing system are pictured as good guys, opponents as bad guys. High status people and institutions are covered by the media; those who are outside the dominant system or remote from the center of power are generally ignored" (p. 77).

Journalists who report from a distant and much smaller country than the United States often do not have access to as many sources as they do in Washington, D.C. This may partially explain why half of all news paragraphs originating from abroad contained no source of information, compared to only a third of paragraphs with an American dateline. In many cases, a Washington policymaker is glad to get his or her name into the newspaper by serving as the "source" of information. As discussed in the Review of Literature, officials have a vested interest in keeping their names in the news and attached to the formation of sound policy. If the policy is not particularly sound, they can provide information under the condition that they be attributed only as "officials" in the morning newspaper. This allowance on the part of journalists can lead to the floating of political trial balloons and personal attacks on political foes.

Morrison and Tumber (1988) have explained that "(t)he manner in which a story

is strengthened is as often as not by the collecting of another statement in support of the original statement but from a different source" (p. 117). In Sarajevo and Mogadishu, journalists had to begin reporting with a much shorter list of sources. And while the ideas of trial balloons and partisan attacks do transcend national boundaries, they likely occur on a much smaller scale, given the political landmine that is Washington, D.C. Thus, the finding that one out of every two paragraphs originating from abroad contained no source of information, compared to one out of every three paragraphs originating from the United States, is important for research in the sociology of conflict reporting. In a distant country, a journalist may have to make an assertion that otherwise would be made by a news source. In addition, Riffe et al. (1993) found a shrinking foreign newshole in the New York Times across a 20-year period, and they explained that American newspaper organizations were sending fewer and fewer journalists abroad. Because television news has supplanted newspapers as the leading source of international news, they observed, print news organizations have opted to cut costs and "borrow" news from foreign agencies (see also Emery, 1989). In their discussion, Riffe et al. cited "reduced independent correspondent access to sources" as a leading contributor to the shrinking foreign newshole.

Consistent with what Sigal (1973) observed--"By virtue of his responsibility for public policy, the man in the White House has no peer as an authoritative source" (pp. 69-70)--this study found consistent reliance on the Executive branch for information about the conflicts in Bosnia and Somalia. Research Question 2 addressed the institutions most commonly represented in the news, and in this study, the Executive branch (not including

the U.S. military) accounted for 37 percent of all attributions among American news sources. U.S. military sources followed at 29.4 percent, Generic U.S. officials at 17.5 percent, legislative sources at 9.6 percent, and private sector individuals at 6.4 percent. As mentioned in the Review of Literature, the president is considered to be the ultimate source of news when it comes to foreign policy, and what he says will nearly always make the following day's newspaper.

With respect to Research Question 3, which addressed the use of private sector news sources, the Los Angeles Times used a slightly higher percentage than the Associated Press or the Washington Post did, and this was probably due to a number of articles that discussed the deployment of military troops from bases in Southern California. Some articles discussed how the deployment would affect families of military personnel, and journalists included quotes from spouses and relatives. Ultimately, though, the use of private sector individuals as news sources was so modest that a detailed discussion is not warranted. Consistent with the literature, Americans from the private sector--individuals who Gans (1979) termed the "unknowns"--rarely showed up in the news about Bosnia and Somalia.

One discussion that is warranted involves the significant differences observed across news organizations in the use of anonymous attribution. Whether addressed in the form of cross-tabulation with the newspaper paragraph as the unit of measurement, or in the form of logistic regression with the entire article as an observation, different news organizations clearly had different practices when it came to veiling sources, thus lending support to one of the study's central hypotheses. This finding is consistent with the earlier

findings of Hallin, Manoff and Weddle (1993), who explained that different journalists at different news organizations make decisions about how to attribute news sources. McCoy (1993) also found "reporting strategy" as a leading influence on news content.

In the Washington Post, when paragraphs that did not reference any source were eliminated, 37 percent of attributions were anonymous. In the Los Angeles Times, 29 percent of attributions were veiled, and in the Associated Press, 18.3 percent. Thus, the AP appeared to have the more stringent standards when it came to anonymous attribution.

While the Washington Post may have a more liberal editorial policy with respect to anonymity--a veiled source, after all, did help collapse an entire presidential administration--its greater use may also be attributed to its status as a leading source of news leaks. Like the New York Times, the Post is read by people who follow electoral politics and public affairs, and officials know they can reach these individuals best through certain media outlets. Despite a large circulation in California, the Los Angeles Times is not a national newspaper; the New York Times is, and the Washington Post is read by national policymakers. A logical extension of this research, then, would be to compare reports from the New York Times with those from the Washington Post.

Associated Press reports reach individuals throughout the United States, but unlike the Post, the AP does not seem to be a major source for news leaks. This may be the result of a more conservative editorial policy regarding anonymous sourcing.

Dateline approached statistical significance as a predictor of anonymous attribution in press reports of Bosnia and Somalia. Specifically, reports originating from the United States contained slightly more use of anonymous attribution than reports

originating abroad. While this difference was no greater than would have occurred by chance, some discussion of anonymous attribution both stateside and abroad is appropriate. As mentioned earlier, news sources in Washington, D.C. may have had entirely different reasons for requesting anonymity than sources in Sarajevo or Mogadishu. In Washington, repercussion comes primarily in the form of political backlash, while in areas of military conflict, the punishment can be much more severe. In the United States, repercussions might include losses in popularity or perhaps even the loss of a job; in a hostile area, the wrong move could cost a news source his or her life. It was the wrong move, after all, that cost the lives of several journalists reporting from Mogadishu. Given the routine killing of civilians in Bosnia and Somalia during this study's period of analysis, then, it isn't difficult to comprehend why someone with sensitive information would request anonymity. A study focusing on issues other than military conflict might provide more insight into the use of anonymous attribution both stateside and abroad.

An earlier study by the author (Denham, 1994) examined anonymous attribution in the New York Times' coverage of the Middle East Peace Accords, the conflict in Bosnia and the Clinton Health Care Package. In that study, there was significantly more use of anonymous sources in coverage of the two foreign policies issues than in coverage of the domestic issue. While various reasons could be offered for the difference, the political volatility of the Peace Accords and the Balkans conflict was likely greater than a domestic issue that had been scrutinized and criticized by hundreds of individuals throughout government and the private sector.

The present study further explored the concept of political volatility by suggesting that anonymous attribution would be more frequent when American forces were committed to an active area than when they were not. But while the hypothesis appeared logical and grounded in earlier studies, it was not supported in the present analysis. This suggests that there was more at work than the political sensitivity of the issues--that news sources had numerous reasons for requesting anonymity, and journalists had numerous reasons for granting it. Given the significant differences observed across newspapers, the lack of difference across conflict is not entirely surprising. Ultimately, journalists appear to have a variety of reasons for veiling news sources.

This study also found no evidence that the Republican administration of George Bush disseminated more anonymous information than the Democratic administration of Bill Clinton. Riffe and Johnson (1995) had found some evidence of differences across Republican and Democratic administrations, and Della Carpini (1994) suggested that Democratic administrations are traditionally more open than their Republican counterparts. That may be the case when more than two administrations are included in the analysis, but in the present study, there was more use of anonymous attribution in the Clinton White House. As discussed earlier, Clinton even hired Republican press strategist David Gergen to help out when the president's original appointees were struggling with the president's image and management of information. Certainly hiring a key member of Ronald Reagan's "Gang of Four" (Hertsgaard, 1988) would not lead to a more liberal policy with information. In this case, it appears to have led to the Nixon strategy of keeping journalists appeased with relatively superficial information, thus discouraging

the search for more serious materials.

Apart from substantive findings, scholars who wish study the use of anonymous attribution in Western newspapers are encouraged to use the method developed for this study. Logistic regression tested the effects of four categorical predictor variables on an ordinal-level response variable, the latter based on the number of paragraphs per article containing anonymous attribution over the number of paragraphs containing anonymous attribution plus the number of paragraphs identifying the source. Those values were truncated, multiplied by 10, rounded down to a whole number, and the resulting values formed the dependent measure. This method reconciles the problem of assuming independence among paragraphs with the problem of coding entire articles for the presence/nonpresence of an anonymous source. It goes a step beyond bivariate cross-tabulation and chi square analysis by allowing the research to test the effects of multiple predictor variables on a single response variable. It also facilitates testing for interactions, and like other non-parametric procedures, logistic regression does not require normality in the explanatory variables.

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APPENDIX

DUMMY VARIABLE CODES

Administration

ADMIN1 = 0 for Bush (1).

ADMIN1 = 1 for Clinton (2).

Conflict

CONFL1 = 0 for Bosnia (1).

CONFL1 = 1 for Somalia (2).

Dateline

DATLN1 = 1 for American (1).

DATLN1=0 otherwise.

DATLN2 = 1 for Bosnia (2).

DATLN2 = 0 otherwise.

DATLN3 = 1 for United Nations (3).

DATLN3 = 0 otherwise.

DATLN4 = 1 for Somalia (4).

DATLN4 = 0 otherwise.

Newspaper

NEWSP1 = 1 for Associated Press (1).

NEWSP1 = 0 otherwise.

NEWSP2 = 1 for Los Angeles Times (2).

NEWSP2 = 0 otherwise.

VITA

Bryan E. Denham was born in Belleville, Illinois on February 8, 1967. He attended elementary school in Belleville and O'Fallon, Illinois, and in 1985 he graduated from Christian Brothers College High School in St. Louis, Missouri. In 1989 he received a Bachelor of Arts in journalism and political science from Indiana University, and in 1993 a Master of Arts in communications from California State University, Fullerton.

In August 1993, he entered the doctoral program in communications at the University of Tennessee, where he studied political communication as a major and applied statistics as a minor. While at Tennessee he taught courses in writing for mass communications and mass communications research methods. He served as the student representative to the College of Communications Research Committee and published his own research and book reviews in the *Newspaper Research Journal*, *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* and *The Journalist*.

The preliminary study for this dissertation won *Outstanding Paper by a Graduate Student* in the Newspaper Division at the 1996 Southeast Colloquium of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. In April 1996 faculty in the College of Communications at Tennessee voted him *Outstanding Ph.D. Student* and also presented him with the *Graduate Student Research Award*. Denham completed the requirements for his Ph.D. in August 1996.