Newspaper 'Opinion Leaders' and Processes of Standardization

BY WARREN BREED*

The author hypothesizes an "arterial process" which would bring about a high degree of uniformity among U. S. newspapers, even if economic competition and political diversity could be increased. Better editors and reporters, with professional standards, seem to be the best hope for counteracting this tendency.

MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS HAVE passed since Marlen Pew, on returning from a trip across the country, remarked that "Hundreds of newspapers, though published in cities scattered from coast to coast, were as like as so many peas in a pod."[1] This uniformity, or standardization, of the content of American newspapers has often been noted, and deserves analysis.

Standardization signifies that various papers (1) contain the same or similar items, and (2) that these are styled and arranged in the same or similar ways. One particular aspect of standardization, which will be the focus of the present article, is the tendency of many papers to feature the same stories atop their front pages, to the exclusion of others.

Several factors contributing to standardization come easily to mind: wire services and syndicates, supplying different papers with identical material in great quantities; publicity handouts distributed widely; chain ownership; and the tendency of most publishers to maintain a conservative political policy. The present essay will suggest a series of further factors which have received little attention.

It is true, of course, that these individual newspapers are indeed reporting the events of the same nation and the same world. Thus one would expect that *every* editor would feature an obviously "big" story such as the outbreak of a war, the outcome of a crucial congressional action, or a policy-making speech by the chief executive. Critics of standardization feel, however, that the press often exhibits conformity hardly justified by the value of the particular stories displayed at the top of page one by hundreds of editors.

What seems worthy of study, then, is the *process* by which editors select the top stories they will feature on a given day. If, as may be assumed, individual editors are not entirely dependent on their own personal criteria of selection, how in fact are the top stories chosen? Who, or what, constitute the guides of editors? Certainly editors do not follow

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[1] In *Editor & Publisher*, April 22, 1933, p. 82. Pew was long the editor of *Editor & Publisher*.

governmental leaders' suggestions as to top stories, and would resent such an inference. It is basic in the ideology of the free and responsible press that each editor is free to decide what his paper will feature or ignore. The existence of standardization, however, especially as regards the featuring of certain "top" stories rather than many alternative stories, may have consequences for the working of democracy. These possible consequences will be discussed, following an account of some further and little-recognized factors promoting conformity.

That these factors exist appears evident from the writer's study of the processes of newspaper control[2] (as differentiated from content, audience and effect). During this study some 120 newspapermen—editors and staffers—were interviewed with relation to "control," or editorial production, of the paper. The interviews took a conversational form, and averaged well over an hour each in duration.

Several "standardizing" processes were discerned.

AS THE OBSERVER WATCHES NEWSmen at work, he notices that they are great readers of newspapers.[3] In the newsroom, if a man is not working or chatting, the chances are that he is reading a paper. This rather pedestrian truth entered—and advanced—the investigation, however, only when in an early interview a Michigan editor (30,000)[4] said, in response to the routine question about which papers he read fairly regularly:

> I look at the New York *Times* and the *Herald Tribune*, too, to see how they handle the news.

Fortuitously, the interviewer asked, "Does this help you in playing *your* news?"

> Yes. (Pause.) But we don't necessarily ape them; we always give a local story the biggest play. . . .

This became a consistent pattern in the interviews. An editor would be asked if the "play" of other papers helped him decide which stories were worth page one. Regularly, he would agree, then rapidly would back out, usually to affirm that he didn't copy the other paper, and that local stories, or later big stories, always rated over those featured in the paper read. Two forces seemed to be at work upon the editor: he wanted to acknowledge the aid from other papers, yet as a professional, he wanted to maintain his autonomy.[5]

While it is clear that many editors are independent, or "inner-directed" about their decisions regarding news judgment, it also seems evident that one paper influences another, as regards the journalistically vital matter of page one play. The influence goes "down," from larger papers to smaller ones, as if the editor is employing, *in absentia*, the editors of the larger paper to help "make up" his page.[6] How true this is in any

[2] Warren Breed, "The Newspaperman, News and Society" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Sociology, Columbia University, 1952; and Ann Arbor, University Microfilms). Another phase of the study is reported in Warren Breed, "Social Control in the Newsroom: A Functional Analysis," *Social Forces*, 33:326–35 (May 1955).

[3] Staffers interviewed said they read about five newspapers a day, editors claimed seven. Breed, "The Newspaperman, News and Society," pp. 103, 134. The term staffers embraces reporters, rewrite men, copy readers, etc.

[4] Figures given after a newsman's locality indicate the circulation range of his paper.

[5] This response pattern is analogous to that of congressmen, who displayed some reluctance to admit that opinion polls correctly portrayed and measured public opinion (and, presumably, the influence of polls on themselves and their votes). George F. Lewis, "The Congressman Looks at the Polls," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 4:229–31 (June 1940).

[6] A gross form of influence was seen in the early days of radio in the 1920s. "In the good old days, news commentators got their material largely by buying late editions of the afternoon papers, jotting down a few notes and marching

particular case is an empirical question; some editors are surer of their judgment than others.

The pattern of influences seems to assume an "arterial" form, analogous (although in reverse) to the dendritic geological pattern by which rills, runnels and freshets flow into brooks and streams which in turn join the great river. For instance, we would expect that, say, a county weekly in Iowa will "look up to" the nearest daily for some guidance as to news values. The small daily, in turn, will scan the nearby big-city papers which are checking the Des Moines *Register*'s front page. *Register* editors will be reading papers (we would expect) from such regional centers as Chicago, Minneapolis and St. Louis. In addition, they, together with most other editors, will also see one or two of the near-national papers: the New York *Times*,[7] the *Herald Tribune*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*. These journals are so widely mentioned by newsmen as "papers they see fairly regularly" that they take on new significance as "opinion leaders" for hundreds of smaller papers. Similar patterns could be found in other areas of life, especially other vehicles of mass culture (movies, radio, advertising, etc.), and in business, family and educational activities.[8]

ACTUAL PROOF THAT THE ARTERIAL pattern exists, of course, would require experimental study. The front page of a "big" paper would have to be checked against several "satellite" papers in its area, and an accurate count kept of similarities and differences for equivalent time-intervals. Especially close watch would focus on "breaks" in the news pattern, to see whether the smaller papers "switched" to the play taken by the leader. Distant papers would serve as controls. Short of such an experiment, however, the following evidence can be marshalled to substantiate the arterial hypothesis.

1. *The great amount of newspaper reading by newsmen.* This does not prove influence, but it is logical to expect that newsmen read papers not purely for information alone, but also to apply their reading to their own work. Continued exposure to a set of stimuli predisposes the individual to developing a favorable frame of attention, at least when the source of the stimuli (in this case, other papers) is valued by the individual.[9]

2. *Interview responses.* No editor flatly stated that he did *not* check other papers for their news-play. Most, in fact, tended to acknowledge the arterial effect. Here is what some said:

> Definitely. You want the help of other people—other men who have had lots of experience in preparing their front pages. It's a must. For example, the news editor and I will go to the exchange desk, and compare the handling

up to the microphone." T. R. Carskadon, quoted in George L. Bird and Frederic E. Merwin, *The Newspaper and Society* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1942), p. 542. The pattern also occurs in this form in communities moving from "folk" to "urban" status; the writer once watched a radio news broadcast in Saltillo, Mexico, in which the announcer simply read news from a newspaper.

[7] Thus the *Times*, with some 500,000 circulation, may have far greater national *influence* than the New York *Daily News*, with its 2,000,000 circulation. Also, of course, the two papers are read for different purposes, and the *Times* is probably read more by "important" people (opinion leaders).

[8] For the influence stemming from larger to smaller cities in other ways, see R. D. McKenzie, *The Metropolitan Community* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933), chap. 8. It is quite clear, incidentally, that news, in the American sense, is heavily weighted in favor of urban, rather than rural, activities. The phrase "opinion leaders" was originally suggested in Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet, *The People's Choice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), chap. 5.

[9] For a systematic discussion of this principle and related principles, see Charles E. Osgood and Percy H. Tannenbaum, "Attitude Change and the Principle of Congruity," in Wilbur Schramm, ed., *The Process and Effects of Mass Communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1954), pp. 251–60.

of stories in various papers. (Managing editor, Ohio, 90,000.)

I rely on these other good papers for help in news judgment, and on the better radio broadcasts. (Editor, Ohio, 25,000.)

To a certain extent, you get a consensus, particularly in state stories. I don't check them with that in mind. But if I'm in doubt sometimes, I check an early edition of a (state capital) paper, so I can keep with my hunch, or change. (Editor, Midwest, 30,000.)

Sometimes I will see the (Philadelphia) *Inquirer,* and get ideas for my headlines. (Wire editor, Pennsylvania, 25,000.)

Sure, like everything else, you learn from the good points of others. There's a herd instinct over the American press; they follow a certain line to succeed—the line which seems successful for the bigger papers. (Editor, Midwest, 40,000.)

You always study the other guy's front page. (Editor, East, 40,000.)

A comment by a managing editor to his wire editor, overheard by the researcher while observing city desk action on a Pennsylvania daily (30,000), was: "What did the New York papers do with this story?"

3. *Scattered suggestions from the literature.* Rosten was struck by the influence exerted by such papers as the New York *Times* and *Herald Tribune,* the Baltimore *Sun,* the Washington *Post* and the *Star,* and also by columnists—Clapper, Mallon, Krock, Allen and Pearson. "The influence exerted by writers for the New York *Times,* for example, is thus very great: the facts in a New York *Times* dispatch will be copied widely and incorporated—in whole or in part—into news accounts going to papers all over the country."[10] Elsewhere, Rosten added: "Newspapers supply a reporter with information which he incorporates, consciously or not, into his own dispatches; they influence his personal political attitude and his professional activity."[11] T. R. Cawley of the Gannett group has opined that perhaps what a newsman considers news is "measured by his reading of the big dailies."[12] Smith and Rheuark quote a Pennsylvania editor as saying that "the best news tips come from newspapers themselves. . . . A building boom in Pittsburgh . . . may reveal a tiny boom in the correspondent's own community."[13] Allen, while confining his statement to editorials (but presumably news-play would operate similarly), said "For 40 years the great editorial page of the New York *World* was the textbook of editorial writers throughout the country. It was consciously imitated by newspapers everywhere."[14]

SPECULATION AS TO SOME POSSIBLE reasons why newsmen do so much newspaper reading may add some clarification to the pattern: (1) Many editors require staffers to be acquainted with late developments on reporting for work, ready to "follow up" in later editions what happened in time for an earlier paper. (2) It is professionally advantageous for a staffer to keep up, both on the news itself and on newspaper techniques. (3) Newsmen are not busy at all times during their eight-hour day, newspapers are inevitably present in all newsrooms, and it may "look better" to be seen reading than to be merely sitting. (4) News becomes a "value" to the newsman, a phenomenon he rates highly and identifies with; this is possibly so true that he prefers to read

[10] Leo Rosten, *The Washington Correspondents* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1937), pp. 94-5.

[11] *Ibid.,* p. 169.

[12] In *Editorially Speaking,* Rochester, n.d., IV, pp. 14–17.

[13] C. R. F. Smith and Kathryn M. Rheuark, *Management of Newspaper Correspondents* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1944), p. 55.

[14] Eric W. Allen, "The Editorial Page in the Twentieth Century," in Bird and Merwin, *op. cit.,* p. 310.

papers than, say, to work in his spare office time doing research or planning a local feature. (5) If there are any characteristics common to the emotional and mental make-up of the newspaperman, one may be a tendency to restlessness, a searching for something he cannot pin down. One could "search forever" in newspapers. (6) Reading newspapers probably fills certain needs of relaxation and a sense of adequacy (as when he discovers a story which he could have handled better). In any event, the newsman does much newspaper reading, and one would be hard put to claim he is not influenced by this repeated experience.

There are some situations which limit, or even negate, the working of the arterial effect. The big local story generaly outranks the big national or world story, and here the local editor has his own decision to make about relative newsworthiness. The more recent story is preferred to the top story in the big city paper, which was printed hours earlier and at some distance.

In a city with competing papers, an interesting pattern may occur. If one paper breaks a story of less than paramount interest, the other will sometimes ignore or de-emphasize it. An excellent example was found in Trenton. The researcher, in checking five weeks' issues of both papers, noted that the *Trentonian* in several issues featured, on page one, news of federal aid to a local slum-clearance project amounting to some $700,000. The Trenton *Times* barely noted the development with a few lines at the bottom of its weekly city council stories. City hall reporters on both dailies were aware of this discrepancy. The *Trentonian* reporter, on being interviewed, said that he had "broken" the story (i.e., published it first), figured it was big news, and followed it up. He believed the *Times* was not using it because he was "riding" it. The *Times* reporter corroborated this, indicating that it was *Times* policy not to play second fiddle to the other (much newer and smaller) paper. Thus readers of the two papers received a markedly different version of the slum clearance situation.

The arterial effect can also work in reverse, where the bigger paper is suspect. One wire editor (eastern 30,000) said, "If I see Hearst giving a story a big blast, I'll double check it for a phony angle." Similar attitudes among some Midwest newsmen were voiced concerning the Chicago *Tribune*.

Several kinds of suggestive evidence have been advanced that the arterial process in fact exists. A further set of data which could support the argument deals with the career pattern of newsmen. Respondents were asked where men went on leaving their paper. By far the greatest proportion went to larger papers, or to wire services. The associate editor of a Midwest paper (40,000) said that in 31 years only two departing staffers had gone to smaller papers. Here we have another reason why newsmen follow larger papers: they may work for one some day.

THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH A PHENOMenon prompts the question "Why?" Why is it that many editors seek guidance from larger papers? Here again some tentative suggestions will be essayed, as points of departure for further research.

1. Journalism lacks a body of tested knowledge about news judgment. The learned disciplines—medicine, science, engineering, etc.—have built up, through research, a body of systematic theory and principles. Journalism, with few exceptions, has not. Therefore, what criteria of relative newsworthiness

can the small-city editor apply?[15] Which of the scores of stories reaching his office any day merit page one? At best, he has certain traditional rules of thumb concerning news values (names, money, sex, scandal, war, conflict, etc.). He does know, however, that the New York *Times* employs many experienced specialists to make decisions about relative news importance. It is a short step for him to follow such a paper as the *Times*.

2. Following the news judgment of larger papers furnishes the newsman on a smaller paper a feeling of satisfaction, or a rationalization, that he has performed his job adequately. An eastern staffer said that the wire editor of his paper compared his own news decisions with those of the *Times* as "proof he's O. K." The staffer then asked, "Is this why front pages all over the country look the same?" A second staffer noted that if an editor questions a newsman's judgment, the latter can point to a larger (and thus prestigeful) paper and show that the big-town editors "agreed with him."

3. There is scattered evidence that many papers are understaffed. Costs of publishing are up and profits are down. Staffers consequently have little time to examine each piece of news for its intrinsic worth. Only the big papers employ editors who do nothing but sift and evaluate dispatches. The small-town man, aware of this, places faith in the larger paper and the validity of its news judgment.

4. A final—and more tenuous—line of reasoning to explain the pattern of "follow the opinion leader" would stem from something we might call the drive toward cosmopolitanism. Small cities show signs of yearning to be bigger; small papers often seek to increase their size or appearance of size. They may do this by employing big-city "circus" make-up and featuring world, rather than local, news. No American city is isolated from larger cities. Urbanism, through the mass media, travel and migration has spread its influence widely into non-urban places. Bigness has often been termed an American value. That the small paper may try to simulate the bigger one, then, is not surprising. One hears small-town people speaking apologetically about "our little town," "our little police force," "our little newspaper here in town." Small city institutions *are* small, and in American culture bigness is coveted. From such considerations of American values about bigness and status, it could follow that the arterial pattern is a normal response.

What about the reverse pattern of influence: do small papers influence big ones? Available data indicate that they do not. Newsmen, asked which papers they read regularly, seldom mentioned smaller papers. Frequently one reporter is assigned to check the smaller papers of the surrounding shopping area, to clip items for rewriting. This varies inversely with the number of "string" (part-time) correspondents maintained by the paper. An example of the "big city" orientation of newsmen is the case of the county editor of an eastern paper (30,000). Although responsible for news in the environs, he had never seen a copy of the weekly paper from a town 15 miles away, but he knew well the papers from larger cities.

It seems significant that while news-

[15] Walter Lippmann noted the editor's dilemma in his classic *Public Opinion*, first published in 1922. "Without standardization, without stereotypes, without routine judgments, without a fairly ruthless disregard of subtlety, the editor would soon die of excitement." *Public Opinion* (New York: Penguin, 1946), p. 267. The problem of news judgment has yet to receive adequate study. An interesting empirical study is Walter B. Pitkin and Robert F. Harrel, *Vocational Studies in Journalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), Part I.

men will perhaps not be surprised about a discussion of the arterial pattern, it generally exists below the threshold of their conscious mind. Only one newsman contacted in the survey verbalized a statement of the pattern before it was broached by the interviewer. In much the same way, pre-literate people may be unaware of the functions of some of their folkways.

THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS ENCOURaging uniformity in news selection:

The wire budget. This device is a list of the stories that wire services send to subscribing papers at the start of each news-day, stories they believe will be "tops" that day. National budgets (the United Press uses the term "editors schedule") list some ten stories. These are supplemented by occasional later notes about "upcoming" big stories, and by regional and state budgets. The practice dates from the early 1920s.

Some wire editors use the budget more than others. It would seem that, as with the arterial effect, the smaller and less experienced editors use it most. All editors contacted, however, looked at it each day. Some comments:

> It is used religiously. It immediately enables you to look forward to what's coming—makes make-up easier. You can almost make up your paper without seeing the news—just by using the budget. (Ohio managing editor, 90,000.)
>
> You *know* they're (budgeted stories) important, so you can use 'em. (Ohio editor, 30,000.)
>
> Each day the wire service sends out its budget of the big stuff, and the boss follows that. (Assistant wire editor, eastern, 40,000.)
>
> The managing editor . . . makes up the paper, but doesn't see the story—he depends on me for that. But he makes up the paper without reading the copy —either local or wire stuff. Just uses the budget, and the report on what the city editor has about local stuff. (News editor, eastern, 60,000.)

More independent editors allowed that the budget was a handy device but that they had their own sense of news values and judged accordingly. The comments given above, however, suggest how critical the items listed on the budget can be. One wants to know, who selects the budget items?

Interviews with AP executives in New York disclosed that the decision about budget items is made by the general news editor, who works an eight-hour shift, and his two assistants who take the other shifts. AP bureaus send to New York a budget line or budget offering, suggesting their biggest stories for the day. The general news editor decides which will form the budget.

The service message on page one display. The "service message," or "play message," is close kin to the budget, but less prominent. The New York *Times* syndicate sends to clients a report of the stories it is featuring on page one that night, and also which stories the *Herald Tribune* is featuring. It would be expected that a New England editor, say, who changed his make-up after receiving the *Times* message, would skew his shifts in the indicated direction. Wire services also sometimes transmit notes about the play being given by big papers. One editor (eastern, 15,000) said:

> The UP sends out play messages at night . . . we do some studying and soul-searching if the big papers are playing something up and we've minimized it. (So you do revamp in this case?) Well, we do plenty of analyzing and considering about it.

Clipping and pasting. An "old-timer," a reporter who had drifted from paper to paper in pre-Guild years, made this remark:

> A newspaperman never thinks up anything new; he copies stuff from other papers.

City editors are still observed clipping items from other papers for re-working. Sometimes a reporter will simply re-write the same material with a new twist; sometimes he will use the clip as a point of departure and gather new material on the story. A reporter (eastern, 25,000) said:

> I'm the early man in the morning. I . . . clip the morning paper for each man's beat. . . .

Another reporter (eastern, 60,000) showed a reason for the practice, and criticized it a moment later:

> Around 8 a.m., the local officials aren't on the job yet . . . you can't call them, so we'll just copy it right out of the morning paper. . . . Every morning the boss gives me the morning paper's stories of the day. . . . Confidentially, if nobody's watching, I toss 'em in the wastebasket. Burns me up to think I can't cover my beat. . . .

Local handling of wire copy. Wire stories are seldom changed significantly by local papers. When the copy arrives on a "ticker," the copy editor generally confines his efforts to marking capital letters, and "chopping" from the bottom for space reasons. In recent years wire copy is sent to many newspapers in coded tape form which automatically activates the local typesetting machine; any changes would require considerable work. The technological innovation is thus insuring even closer conformity to the national pattern. On only one paper visited did editors do any considerable altering of wire copy; this was a "liberal" daily near Washington and New York, thus in a position to check wire stories, when suspect, with sources in those news capitals.

IT APPEARS, THEN, THAT STANDARDIzation of newspapers exists. Now we can ask: How does standardization jibe with the ideals of democracy? Specificity requires that we briefly characterize democracy. For the present purposes, the following six characteristics of democracy may suffice:

1. Elective, rather than appointive, officials.
2. Reliance on discussion over policy issues, which in turn means that the channels of discussion must be kept open to all: good government is not an acceptable alternative to self-government.
3. Belief in the essential dignity of the individual, regardless of his status, and the belief that the individual is rational and therefore capable of intelligent discussion.
4. The opportunities and freedoms of the civil liberties, including the freedom of speech and the press, the freedom of the human personality to develop to the fullest, and the freedom from the inhibitions of orthodoxy and conformity.
5. The separation and balance of interests, to the end that no one group dominates the activities of others.
6. The process of peaceful change, in which forms of government and the economy are not fixed, but subject to modification.

It will be seen that standardization, as seen in the arterial effect and other devices short of autonomy, falls short of achieving the level of performance required by the criteria of democracy. In each of the six characteristics, except the first, democratic norms would demand more independence of the individual editor.

Criticisms of the press from the point of view of democracy usually point to the class basis of press ownership ("the one-party press," etc.),[16] or to the increasing number of one-publisher cities

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[16] For an old and corruscating blast on this thesis, see Upton Sinclair, *The Brass Check* (Pasadena: The Author, 1920). For a recent study, see Nathan Blumberg, *One-Party Press?* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1954); the interpretations based on data in this study are open to argument.

news summaries. In a sense, though, each follow-up or story of controversy is a review of the controversy. Given the elements of controversy, these methods can be utilized from day to day.

These structure types allow the continuing practice of another newspaper procedure: the cutting of a story from the bottom up. The important elements are still at the beginning of the story.

Chilton R. Bush, in his latest book on news writing, quotes Herbert Spencer: [14]

> A reader or listener has at each moment but a limited amount of mental power available. To recognize and interpret the symbols presented to him, requires part of this power; to arrange and combine the images suggested requires a further part; and only that part which remains can be used for realizing the thought conveyed. Hence the more time and attention it takes to receive and understand each sentence, the less time and attention can be given to the contained idea; and the less vividly will that idea be conceived. . . .

Further exploration of the relationship between story structure and comprehension is being planned—particularly as to the effect on comprehension of present practices in structuring.

[14] Chilton R. Bush, *The Art of News Communication* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954), p. 12.

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("monopoly").[17] In contrast, the present criticism focuses rather upon editors and the processes of editing, *independent of* the structure of ownership. In other words, the present hypothesis holds that the arterial and other "journalistic" processes would obtain even with competing cities *and* with less oligarchic press ownership and control. All these conditions, separate and combined, are non-democratic. For the future, one can hardly hope for more democratic ownership or for more competition; but one can always hope that the trend toward better reporters and editors will continue, and that this professionalism may reduce the editor's dependence upon arterial aid.

What this analysis reveals is a gap between the ideals and the working of democratic information processes, at the point of the editor's decision as to which stories shall be displayed on page one. While some are undoubtedly independent and use their own news judgment, many "follow the opinion leader." It is also clear, however, that editors of small papers are not necessarily to be blamed for their abdication of autonomy. Rather, a set of institutional conditions causes them to follow the arterial pattern. Under these conditions, editors may actually be serving their readers (but not ideal democracy) better by adhering to the news judgment of specialists in the big cities.

The danger is the potential influence of a small number of persons in deciding what millions of citizens will read. Great responsibility rests upon those few. In effect, editors of large papers, and "general news editors" of wire services, hold more responsible posts than even they perhaps realize, as *absentee* guides of the news display policies of hundreds of newspapers.

[17] See, for instance, Morris L. Ernst, *The First Freedom* New York: Macmillan, 1946), chaps. III and IV. For a strikingly effective rebuttal to this hypothesis, see Stanley K. Bigman, "Rivals in Conformity," JOURNALISM QUARTERLY, 25:127–31 (June 1948), and Raymond B. Nixon, "Implications of the Decreasing Number of Competitive Newspapers," in Wilbur Schramm, ed., *Communications in Modern Society* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1948), pp. 42–57.