

**NEWSPAPER JOURNALISM IN A TIME OF INDUSTRY CHANGE:
AN EVALUATION OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE WATCHDOG ROLE
OF PRINT JOURNALISTS**

by

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September 1, 2011

A dissertation submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate School of
the University at Buffalo, State University of New York
in partial fulfillment for the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Communication

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Acknowledgements

I could not have written this dissertation without the guidance, advice and support of many people.

Thank you to my dissertation adviser, Dr. Mary Cassata, for her patience, encouragement, wisdom and guidance. At my darkest hours, I did not think I could do this. Dr. Cassata always believed I could. This research process has brought me much more than a degree. It has given me a mentor and a friend whom I will always cherish.

My committee -- Dr. Frank Tutzauer and Dr. Junhao Hong -- made suggestions that strengthened this dissertation and exhibited infinite patience with me and the process. Thank you for teaching and guiding me.

I could not have done this without the support, encouragement, and advice of Dr. Tom Feeley and Rose Gryckiewicz. They may be "behind the scenes players," but their roles in the completion of this project were center stage. I could not have finished this program without them.

Thank you to my parents, David and Linda Ducey, for raising me to believe that although I was from a rural town in the middle of nowhere, there was not anything I could not do if I tried. Thank you to my sister, Christine, my father-in-law and my mother-in-law, Paul and Ann Archer, and my dear friends Dr. Monica Brasted and Dr. Kate Madden for all that they did to keep me on track.

And, last but certainly not least, thank you to my wonderful husband, William Archer, for watching our daughter so I could work on this, encouraging me when I thought I could not do it, offering advice, and being the greatest husband a gal could have.

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Abstract

This study examined the state of the watchdog function at daily newspapers in the United States following the elimination of thousands of journalism jobs and massive changes in the industry. The watchdog function is the ideal that the press should hold those in power, particularly government officials, accountable for their actions. Five hundred journalists from the Top 100 circulation daily newspapers were invited to take an internet survey. Results showed that 93.6% of journalists responding (n=94) believed that newspapers overall were good watchdogs for the public, and 77.8% of journalists (n=72) believed they themselves were good watchdogs. However, qualitative responses to survey questions indicated that some journalists were troubled about the state of the watchdog function because they were not able to do as much of that type of journalism as they had in the past. Journalists cited lack of staff and lack of time as the top two issues hurting watchdog journalism. To offer views of how those outside the newspaper industry evaluate watchdog journalism, samples of college students (n=55) and senior citizens (n=38) were also surveyed. On a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 meaning the best possible job with the watchdog function, college students and seniors rated newspapers' watchdog performance at least one point lower on the scale than journalists did.

This study sheds new light on the state of the watchdog function of newspapers specifically in the area of what journalists viewed as the problems hurting the watchdog function and how problems in the industry have impacted them. For example, one journalist stated he was not as aggressive with sources as he had been in the past because the state of the newspaper industry meant he could end up needing a job and working for his sources one day.

Chapter 1: Introduction

"The world that we have to deal with politically is out of reach, out of sight, out of mind.

It has to be explored, reported and imagined." (Lippmann, 1922, p. 18)

To state that the newspaper industry has undergone massive changes in recent years could be construed by some as an understatement. As the industry continued to struggle with how to make money online and how to recover from declining advertising revenue and circulation (Meyer, 2004), thousands of journalists lost their jobs. According to the American Society of Newspaper Editors (2011), daily U.S. newspapers eliminated 13,500 jobs from 2007 to 2010. The Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (2011) stated that American newspaper newsrooms were cut 30% since the year 2000. Other sources tracking newspaper job losses put the overall number of jobs lost much higher than the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Paper Cuts, a web site by journalist Erica Smith that has been tracking newspaper job losses since 2008 and has been widely cited in journalism publications such as the *World Editors Forum* and *American Journalism Review*, stated that more than 33,362 people were laid off or bought out of their newspaper jobs between 2008 and 2010. That is more than double the number of lost jobs that the American Society of Newspaper Editors stated. Paper Cuts reported that 15,992 newspaper employees were laid off or bought out of their jobs in 2008; 14,780 newspaper employees faced a similar fate in 2009; and 2,828 lost their jobs in 2010 (Smith, 2008.; Smith, 2009; Smith, 2010) .

The economic problems of newspapers have caused some to say that newspapers are dying or are even dead (Britt, 2008; Meyer, 2004; Who killed the newspaper? 2006). But newspapers as a whole remained profitable, with profits around 5% (Edmonds et al.,

2011). The problem is that a 5% profit is only a quarter of the profits that newspapers were making in the 1990s (Edmonds et al., 2011). Many have offered their views on what will happen next to newspapers. Perhaps among some of the most well-known views were those of John S. Carroll, a longtime newspaper editor and Knight Visiting Lecturer at Harvard University's Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and the Public. Carroll gave a speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in 2006 that was "widely read among newspaper people" (Baker, 2007). Carroll (2006) argued that the problem was bigger than merely the financial condition of the press:

... There's a more subtle problem, a crisis of the soul. Every journalist believes that he or she works, ultimately, for the reader -- not for the editor, or for the publisher, or for the corporation, or for those opaque financial institutions that hold the stock. We all know journalists who have lost their jobs on principle. ... We work, however, with large organizations that hold a different view of duty. Our corporate superiors are sometimes genuinely perplexed to find people in their midst who do not feel beholden, first and foremost, to the shareholder. (p. 3)

Carroll (2006) said this difference between journalists and their owners was important because "it inhibits us when we ought to be bold" (p. 4). Among his expressed worries was a fear that news as we know it will change, and not for the better. He said, "Newspapers dig up the news. Others repackage it" (p. 6). Historically, newspapers have "dug up the news" because they had the staff to do so, he argued. That has changed as the ownership of newspapers has changed. Newspaper owners used to view serving their communities as part of their mission, along with making money. Now, companies and

stockholders see the sole mission of newspapers as being making money (Carroll, 2006). Carroll said he longs for owners who see the community-side of journalism.

Carroll has not been alone in his concerns. Entman (2010) argued that newspapers and, more importantly, their owners, driven by profits and not the ideals of democracy, have hurt the watchdog function, a key component to democracy, by leading news audiences away from true political journalism and toward other "news." The watchdog function is the idea that journalists should hold the powerful accountable so the public is informed about what is going on. Entman (2010) urged even non-profit news organizations to get their watchdog reporting out to mass audiences. And it appears if they do so, it will matter. Surveys by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press have consistently shown that Americans value the watchdog role of the press. In 1985, 67% of survey respondents said press criticism of political leaders did more good than harm, compared to 62% of survey respondents in 2009 (Pew Research Center, 2009).

The watchdog function of the press has been a topic of discussion not just among scholars in recent years. The public and the media have also been talking about it, although the words "watchdog function" might not have been uttered. The media have been criticized for failing to investigate the need for the Iraq War and the U.S. government's plans for Iraq once the war ended. Those critics were, indeed, referring to the idea of the watchdog function. Kovach and Rosenstiel (2007) defined the watchdog function simply by stating that journalists should be "independent monitors of power" (p. 140). The notion goes back centuries to the 1600s in England when the press wanted to show the public what the government elites were doing (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007).

It became rooted in the Libertarian Theory of the Press and in the very way that journalists have come to view themselves (Becker, Cobbey, & Sobowale, 1978; Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes, & Wilhoit, 2006).

The Federal Communications Commission, which regulates broadcast media including TV and radio stations, released a June 2011 report that addresses concern for the investigative nature of journalism. The report stated, "The independent watchdog function that the Founding Fathers envisioned for journalism -- going so far as to call it crucial for a healthy democracy -- is in some cases at risk at the local level" (Waldman, 2011, p. 5) The report specifically addressed newspapers, noting that the job cuts at newspapers have "undermined their ability to perform their role as the nation's watchdog" (Waldman, 2011, p. 34). Through dozens of examples, including fewer entries in journalism contests that spotlight investigative journalism, declining membership in an investigative reporting association, and interviews with dozens of journalists, Waldman (2011) argued there is less newspaper "watchdogging" and that the decrease hurts us all because newspapers have traditionally "carried the heavier burden of reporting -- especially the investigative, enterprise and beat reporting" (p. 11).

Several non-profit online journalism sites, including ProPublica, California Watch, Fair Warning, the Rocky Mountain Investigative News Network, the Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism and the Huffington Post Investigative Fund, have arisen in an attempt to fill what their journalists see as a void in investigative journalism, otherwise known as watchdog journalism (Drew, 2010). ProPublica, which won a 2011 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting for its coverage of the Wall Street economic crisis,

is perhaps the most well known of these (The 2011 Pulitzer Prize Winners, 2011a) .

ProPublica's "About Us" page (2011) states:

Investigative journalism is at risk. Many news organizations have increasingly come to see it as a luxury. Today's investigative reporters lack resources: Time and budget constraints are curbing the ability of journalists not specifically designated "investigative" to do this kind of reporting in addition to their regular beats. This is therefore a moment when new models are necessary to carry forward some of the great work of journalism in the public interest that is such an integral part of self-government, and thus an important bulwark of our democracy.

California Watch, founded in 2009, asserted that its journalists report stories designed to "hold those in power accountable, while tracking government waste and the misspending of taxpayer resources" (California Watch, 2011). Likewise, the other investigative journalism non-profit sites aimed to fill an investigative journalism need.

That need has been explored by several other scholars and reporters. Vashisht and his students at Arizona State University (2006) surveyed investigative reporters and editors who were both members of Investigative Reporters and Editors, a group dedicated to investigative journalism, and worked at one of the top 100 newspapers in circulation (Vashisht, 2006). From the 86 journalists who responded, Vashisht and his students (2006) learned that 16 percent of newsrooms of the respondents no longer had investigative teams. Enda (2010) argued that the decrease in the number of reporters covering government agencies in Washington, D.C., led to a lapse in holding companies like Toyota and Upper Big Branch responsible for their actions. More than 1,000

consumers complained to the National Highway Safety Administration that their Toyotas had acceleration problems that led to accidents, and despite more than 1,000 safety violations in a five-year period, in 2010 29 coal miners died in the Upper Big Branch mine in West Virginia. Enda (2010) reported that consumer advocate Ralph Nader believed that "the failure of the Washington press corps to cover departments, agencies and bureaus--the guts of the federal government--has cost American lives" (p. 7). *The New York Times* highlighted an experienced newspaper journalist who lost his newspaper job at *The Chicago Reader* and ended up providing better insight than any other reporter on a high-profile Chicago trial -- by using a blog on a public radio station's web site (Carr, 2010). Carr's former editor at *The Chicago Reader*, Michael Lenehan, told the *Times*: "I think it especially poignant that it comes to a resolution now and he ended up writing for the public radio outlet because there is not a newspaper in town that will pay him to do the job" (Carr, 2010, ¶6).

A 2010 Gallup poll about how Americans think the press did as a government watchdog during the first year of President Barack Obama's administration showed "most Americans appear unimpressed" (Saad, 2010, ¶1). Results showed that 34% said the press was doing an "excellent" or "good" job as government watchdog, 37% said a "fair" job, and 27% said the press was doing a "poor" job (Saad, 2010). In this same survey, 43% of respondents said the coverage of the Obama administration was similar to coverage of previous administrations, while 31% said the press was doing a worse job covering Obama. If Pew Research Center studies are any indication of the *value* Americans place on watchdog reporting, journalists had better keep holding those in power accountable for their actions. Pew has found "strong support" for the watchdog role of journalists in their

surveys in the American public (Pew Research Center, 2009). In 2009, 62% of Americans surveyed by Pew said that "press criticism keeps political leaders from doing things that should not be done" (Pew Research Center, 2009). In 1985, when the poll started, the percentage was 67%.

And despite mainstream news stories and blog posts about "the death of newspapers" (there's even a web site called "Newspaper Death Watch" that is operated by a former print journalist), it may be too early to call the coroner. While print newspaper circulation has been declining for about 20 years, the decline has slowed (Pew, 2011) and is partially being made up for by the increase in visits to online newspaper sites (Pew, 2010c). Roughly one-third of Americans surveyed in 2010 said they went online for news "yesterday", and 17% said they read something on a newspaper's web site "yesterday" (Pew, 2010c). But only 26% of Americans polled said they read a print newspaper "yesterday," down more than 10% from 2006. The good news is Americans are spending more time overall with the news (Pew, 2010c). Americans spent about 70 minutes daily getting the news in 2010, "one of the highest totals of this measure since the mid-1990s and it does not take into account getting news on cell phones or other digital devices" (Pew, 2010c, ¶). Of that 70 minutes, 57 minutes was spent with traditional news sources like newspapers, TV and radio.

Purpose of the Study

Staff cuts and uncertainty in the newspaper industry must be having some kind of impact on journalists, their concept of what they do and the way they feel about their profession. I believed there was a need to examine what journalists think they are doing

well and where they may be failing at being watchdogs in the current newspaper environment. The main part of this study focused on an online survey of journalists at the top 100 U.S. daily newspapers. Journalists were asked a mix of multiple choice and qualitative response questions about the watchdog function at newspapers in general, at their newspapers and in their jobs. My intention with the qualitative questions was to provide the journalists with an opportunity, in their own voices, to explain and/or expand upon the topic at hand. They were free to say whatever they wanted to in the qualitative responses, and my goal was to get better insight through these answers. To provide a potentially balancing viewpoint to what the journalists say, two additional surveys were done as part of this dissertation. A sample of college students and a sample of senior citizens were asked many of the same survey questions that the journalists were asked about the state of the watchdog function at newspapers.

I did a pretest of the current study of journalists in 2008. Newspaper, TV and radio journalists in Buffalo, NY, were surveyed via the Internet to ascertain how they felt local and national media were doing acting as watchdogs, meaning informing the public about what is going on in government and holding government officials accountable (Ducey, 2008). A sample of 39 journalists took the survey, for a response rate of 35.8 percent. They were also asked to cite examples of what they considered to be good and bad watchdog journalism. This study found that overall the sample of journalists thought both the local and the national media were doing a fairly good job acting as watchdogs for the public. However, it should be noted that nearly 59 percent of the Buffalo sample thought that the Buffalo media rated a 7 or higher on a scale of 0 to 10 for holding government/government officials accountable, and nearly 67 percent rated the Buffalo

media as a 7 or higher for informing the public about the government. Both of these items might be thought of as part of the watchdog role. Meanwhile, the ratings for how the national media are doing fulfilling their watchdog role were not as high. Approximately 44 percent of respondents rated the national media as a 7 or higher in fulfilling the watchdog role. This indicates they might think local journalists might be doing a better job in the watchdog role than national journalists.

During the 2008 study, several journalists cited job cuts as a key reason they could not do all the watchdog journalism that they wanted (Ducey, 2008). One journalist emailed me to suggest investigating areas such as bias, personal relationships and "no touch topics" in the newsroom as reasons for not pursuing watchdog journalism. I included these suggestions in the survey of journalists used for the dissertation research.

The current study addressed the following hypotheses and research questions:

H1: Newspaper journalists will believe that, as a group, they are doing a good job fulfilling the watchdog function.

H2: Newspaper journalists will believe that, as individuals, they are doing a good job fulfilling the watchdog function.

H3: Newspaper journalists will believe that the organizations for which they work are doing a good job fulfilling the watchdog function of the media.

Surveys have indicated that journalists believe that the watchdog function is important to journalism (Pew Research Center, 2008; Weaver & Wilhoit, 2006). Because of this, journalists will believe that overall they are doing a good job with the watchdog function, despite the fact that there have been tens of thousands of newspaper jobs eliminated. Being the watchdog is part of the very essence of who many journalists think

they are. It is ingrained in them as professionals and part of the role conception they have for themselves and others in their field. Therefore, Hypotheses 1-3 were posited.

H4: Newspaper journalists will cite time restraints as a major reason for journalists' failure to do watchdog journalism.

Journalism today is in a state of change. There are fewer staffers available to do more work. “Convergence journalism” is the buzz phrase used to describe this change, which refers to increasing demands on the media as a whole and often journalists individually to write and package stories for multiple platforms. This means that while ten years ago a journalist might only write for a newspaper, in today’s culture of “convergence” that same journalist might be expected to write both for the newspaper and for the online edition of the newspaper. Given the increasing demands on journalists and the decreasing staffing of newspapers, regardless of their desire to do watchdog reporting, they might feel they simply do not have the time to do the research necessary for these stories.

RQ1: What stories will newspaper journalists cite as examples of good and bad watchdog journalism?

Journalists have been critical of the coverage many of them did – or in this case, did not do – leading up to the war in Iraq. Because of this spotlight on watchdog journalism and the value placed upon watchdog journalism by journalists, journalists will be aware of examples of what they believe to be good and bad watchdog journalism.

RQ2: Are there any major differences in responses based upon the experience level or gender of the newspaper journalist?

It is possible that those journalists with greater experience or different backgrounds might have different views about what is going on in the field. For that reason, RQ2 is posited.

Contextual Surveys: Because the Pew Research Center and Gallup have conducted national surveys of Americans focusing on their views related to the watchdog function, I did not think it was necessary to duplicate what they had done. However, I did want to include the voices of readers in the discussion. Therefore, I conducted two small surveys of college students and senior citizens in upstate New York to include readers' voices in this issue and provide further context to what the journalists say. A discussion of the results of these contextual surveys and how they differ from the views of journalists is included in Chapter 5.

American Newspapers and Watchdog Journalism

In the past 40 years, Americans have witnessed what some might argue are the *best* and *worst* examples of watchdog journalism. The best example is Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's coverage of the Watergate scandal in *The Washington Post*. In June 1972, a surveillance team known as the "plumbers" had been approved by President Nixon and broke into Democratic National Committee Headquarters in the Watergate apartment complex (Fellow, 2010). Their plan was to plant listening devices in the office, but they were caught. With the help of an anonymous source known as "Deep Throat," Woodward and Bernstein broke one of the biggest political stories of all time and became famous themselves. They reported that the Watergate incident was not isolated and detailed the spying and dirty tricks being done by the Nixon administration. Because of the scandal, Nixon eventually became the only U.S. President to resign. And Woodward

and Bernstein became examples of what watchdog, investigative journalism was supposed to do: Shed light on wrongs, on the powerful abusing their power. Ironically, there are roughly as many reporters in 2011 as there were when Watergate was reported in 1973, despite the 50% increase in size of the U.S. population (Waldmann et al., 2011).

A major failure of the watchdog function happened following the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, during the months preceding the 2003 launch of the war in Iraq. Documentaries such as journalist Bill Moyers' *Buying the War* and stories in trade journals read by journalists would later be published to document the failure of the press to uphold its watchdog role. As *American Journalism Review's* editor Rem Rieder (2004) wrote about journalism coverage of the alleged "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq and the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse scandal, " ... this was a significant failure on the part of the press, and it's important not to lose sight of what happened, and why. There are important lessons to be learned, lessons that might prevent a similar breakdown in the future" (p. 6).

Outline of the Dissertation

The remaining chapters of the dissertation are structured as follows: In Chapter 2, the theoretical basis of this study will be addressed, with an examination of agenda-setting and the related theories of gatekeeping, priming, and framing, as well as journalistic role conception. Then, some of the previous research on the watchdog function will be addressed, followed by a discussion of the hypotheses and research questions. Chapter 3 will outline the methods used in this study. Chapter 4 will detail the results of the hypotheses and research questions. The final chapter, Chapter 5, will

include a discussion of the findings, their implications and their limitations. Chapter 5 will also include details of possible future research related to this study.

Chapter 2: Theory and Literature Review

Scholars have been researching theories about influences on media content for decades. What determines what we see in the media? Who or what has the power to guide media content? Studies and/or theories that seek to understand or explain influences on media content are often classified as media sociology (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Media sociology scholars have examined influences on media content at the micro level (the level of the individual) and the macro level (the level of social structures) (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Two of these theories -- the agenda-setting function of the media, with the related ideas of gatekeeping, framing and priming, and journalistic role perception --are relevant to this study and will be explained in the following pages.

Agenda-Setting

"We shall assume that what each man does is based not on direct and certain knowledge, but on pictures made by himself or given to him." (Lippmann, p. 16, 1922)

Agenda-setting theory is often summarized with a quotation from Bernard Cohen (1963): "The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about" (p. 13). Cohen's ideas are themselves rooted in Walter Lippmann's *Public Opinion* (Baran & Davis, 2000; McCombs & Bell, 1996; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). In that seminal work, the Pulitzer-prize winning journalist argued that the media create our "pictures" of the world, but that those pictures are not necessarily accurate or complete (Lippmann, 1922).

Regardless, Lippmann posited that for us, the consumers of mass media, these "pictures" are reality and we base our decisions upon them. McCombs (2004) described agenda-setting as "a theory about the transfer of salience from the mass media's pictures of the world to the pictures in our heads" (p. 68).

The first notable empirical test of these "pictures" came when McCombs and Shaw (1972) studied voters in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Their stated goal was "to match what Chapel Hill voters said were key issues of the (1968 presidential) campaign with the actual content of the mass media used by them during the campaign" (p. 177). The study combined a content analysis of local media coverage of the campaign and interviews with 100 registered voters not yet committed to a candidate. McCombs and Shaw (1972) found a strong correlation between what voters thought were the major issues of the campaign and what the media indicated were major campaign issues. The authors noted this correlation does not prove agenda setting, but it does, however, indicate that it could be occurring. This work has been cited in academic articles more than 2,500 times since its original publication (Google Scholar, 2010).

As a practical matter, agenda setting means that the stories that get covered and the placement of those stories give the audience cues about what the media think is important. For example, a story on page one with a big, bold headline is, hypothetically, telling the reader not only is this story important, but it is one of the most important items of the day. It is, as Cohen (1963) said, telling readers "what to think about" (p. 13).

Since the Chapel Hill study, agenda-setting has been studied in numerous ways (McCombs & Bell, 1996). A few examples include McCombs's and Shaw's replication in 1977, Palmgreen's and Clarke's (1977) examination of differences in agenda setting for

local and national issues, Brosius's and Kepplinger's (1990) longitudinal international study that compared story coverage on major German TV newscasts with national opinion poll data, and Althaus and Tewksbury's (2002) exploration of differences in agenda setting in online versus traditional media stories.

Proponents of the theory maintain that one of its strengths is its clear linking of audience perceptions of the public agenda and the audience's media exposure. That linking is made possible by the ability to clearly define and measure variables in the agenda-setting hypothesis (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). Current studies continue to find that link, even in so-called "new media" such as the Internet. In 2007, Coleman and McCombs showed that even though young adults might be getting their news online, the agenda-setting effect remained. The agendas of young people correlated with the mainstream media agenda that was determined by content analysis.

Critics of agenda-setting argue that the similarities between media coverage and what the audience pays attention to or says it thinks is important could be explained: The media are simply good at knowing what their audience wants, and it is the audience, not the media, that is driving the coverage (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). But McCombs and Shaw (1972) have counter-argued that it is highly unlikely that the media are that good at matching the coverage. Others say that while studying agenda-setting is valuable, it simply does not go far enough as it looks only at political issues. Some scholars say it is too simplistic to simply focus on agenda-setting; we also need to focus on *who* is choosing the media agenda.

Gatekeeping

The "who" gets at the idea of gatekeeping. In gatekeeping, "the media gatekeeper must winnow down a larger number of potential messages to a few" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 105). In other words, the gatekeeper selects what stories we see and what stories we do not see. But, as Lowery and DeFleur (1995) noted, "gatekeepers do not act in a vacuum" (p. 277). Instead, the scholars argue, gatekeepers apply "criteria" to determine what is news, or what is important. One such criterion is a group of standards known to journalists as "news values." News values are standards and/or values that journalists apply when deciding what is news. Examples might be timeliness, impact, and proximity (Mencher, 2006). Another criterion that influences gatekeeping is the medium in which the gatekeeper works (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). Those in television commonly have only a few minutes to explain the important news of the day, while those in writing-based media such as newspapers, magazines, and online publications commonly have the luxury of more space. A third criterion that influences journalistic gatekeeping is the selection of stories available to a gatekeeper on a given day (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). The same story might be a front page story on one day because it is a slow news day and buried inside the paper two days later because a better story exists for the front page that day.

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) broadened gatekeeping influences even further. They noted the individual preferences of a gatekeeper, the organizational practices of a company, and the standards and/or practices of the field of journalism are all important influences on gatekeeping. But so are other factors such as external relationships with advertisers, sources, the community, and the government (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

For example, if a newspaper wants to woo advertisers from stores coming into a planned new mall, gatekeepers might publish more stories on the mall and its stores, and also place those stories in more prominent places (ex. the front page). As Lowery and DeFleur (1995) noted, "the causal chain that sets the media agenda is a complex one indeed" (p. 278).

Priming and Framing

Adding to the complexity is the idea of priming -- an extension of agenda-setting that is related, yet separate. Grossberg, Wartella, Whitney, and Wise (2006) refer to priming as "a close cousin" of agenda-setting (p. 369). Iyengar and Kinder (1987) developed the idea of and tested for priming as well as for agenda-setting. They (1987) argued that television viewers do not take the time to consider "all that they know" when they are evaluating complex political issues (p. 4). Iyengar and Kinder assert viewers could not do so even if they wanted to. Instead, what happens is priming occurs, meaning that viewers only draw upon the thoughts and/or memories that "come to mind" (p. 4). The scholars said they believe that television has the most power in determining what comes to mind. "By priming certain aspects of national life while ignoring others, television news sets the terms by which political judgments are rendered and political choices made" (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987, p. 4). Their agenda-setting experiments showed that viewers who watched a newscast edited to highlight a particular problem assigned that problem more importance to the nation than those who had not watched the same video. Their (1987) priming experiments showed viewers taking what they call a "second

step" of applying the agenda to a political figure and judging that figure in light of that agenda (p. 95).

Experiments have shown that agenda-setting is different for politically involved versus non-politically involved people (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987, p. 95). Agenda-setting influenced those uninterested and/or uninvolved in politics more than it influenced the politically involved. However, in priming experiments, both the politically involved and the politically uninterested were affected the same (Iyengar & Kinder, 1987).

Iyengar and Kinder (1987) asserted that this equalization might occur because the politically interested may be more likely to look at how the news influenced the president.

While this early priming research focused on television, priming research has since been done on newspapers, online media and even video games. Although much priming research focuses on politics, violence and sexuality are also topics of concern for priming researchers. Much debate exists about what variables might influence priming's affect the most. Some critics argue that effects attributed to priming might actually be due to something else (Lenz, 2009). For example, Lenz (2009) asserted that sometimes campaign effects that scholars have said are due to priming may be due to learning and opinion change instead. Lenz (2009) posits that what has been viewed as priming may, in fact, actually be message receivers learning a position or view and adopting it as their own. Others argue that the traditional view that priming may affect the less-educated more than the highly educated is wrong and that it is the respect for the media, not the education-level, that matters (Miller & Krosnick, 2000).

If, as Grossberg et al. (2006) asserted, priming is the "close cousin" of agenda-setting, one might argue that a third area of research that is often linked to agenda-setting and priming -- framing -- is the distant cousin. Scheufele and Tewksbury (2007) argued that while agenda-setting and priming rely on seeing the media's agenda and then using it to make decisions about political issues, framing is rooted in the idea "that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences" (p. 11). Some have argued that priming and framing are closely linked because they both rely on the idea that "predispositions, schema, and other characteristics of the audience ... influenced how they processed messages in the mass media" (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 11).

Sociologist Erving Goffman is often cited as the person who developed framing as a theory about the way that people make sense of the world (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Baran & Davis, 2000). Goffman (1974) posited that people make sense of what is happening by using preconceived expectations that he referred to as frames. Goffman (1974) argued that these frames vary in their level of organization, with most falling into the less organized category of "a lore of understanding, an approach, a perspective" (p. 21). These frames help the user to understand and orient what is happening, what she sees and what she thinks. Goffman (1974) wrote that the individual "is likely to be unaware of such organized features as the framework has and unable to describe the framework with any completeness if asked, yet these handicaps are no bar to his easily and fully applying it" (p. 21).

At its root, Goffman's framing is a microlevel process. However, a macrolevel framing process also happens (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). At the macrolevel,

framing refers to ways information can be presented by the media -- ways that draw upon these frames or schema the individual has to make the information easier to understand (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Framing has been studied in print, online and broadcast media in the United States and abroad. Experiments have been conducted in which the same information is presented to participants in two different ways, or frames (Entman, 1993; Kahneman & Tversky, 1984), and one set of information is overwhelmingly chosen. Framing research has included most recently a framing analysis of *The Washington Post's* publication of Iraq torture photos (Porpora, Nikolaev, & Hagemann, 2010), an analysis of race relations (Entman, 2001) and a look at how the political leaders and the media frame U.S.'s foreign policy (Entman, 2004).

Journalistic Role Perception

"A good journalist will find news oftener than a hack. If he sees a building with a dangerous list, he does not have to wait until it falls into the street in order to recognize news." (Lippmann, p. 215, 1922)

Some scholars have argued that journalistic role perception is a vital influence on what media consumers see. "Professional roles ... determine what the communicator thinks is worth transmitting to his or her audience and how the story should be developed" (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p. 103). But unlike careers in medicine, the law, or even hair dressing, there is no examination or certification process to become a journalist. What a journalist is -- or is not -- comes from the standards and/or perceptions of the occupation. The role that a journalist plays is embedded in the idea of role theory.

Role theory "explains roles by presuming that persons are members of social positions and hold expectations for their own behaviors and those of other persons" (Biddle, 1986, p. 67). Biddle (1986) posits that while there are at least five different perspectives used by role theorists, they all agree that in the end, role theory is about "playing" or fulfilling an expected role or social position. The differences tend to center on the differences in definitions of terms such as role conflict and role playing as well as disagreements on how personal attitudes and behaviors fit in (Biddle, 1986).

In the early part of the 20th century, little research was done on journalists themselves. Research tended to focus on the messages and receivers, not the journalists themselves (Johnstone, Slawski, & Bowman, 1976). A few exceptions included 1930s research done specifically on Washington, D.C., newspaper correspondents and Cohen's (1963) assignment of roles that he argued journalists play in foreign policy (Johnstone et al., 1976). Cohen (1963) argued that when it came to foreign policy, journalists were either observers, participants or catalysts (p. 4). Johnstone et al. (1976) are known as the first to do a "wide-ranging survey" of U.S. journalists (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996; Zelizer, 2005). They interviewed some 1,400 journalists about their jobs, education, and professionalism and tried to categorize journalists as either neutral or participant, but they found many journalists said they were both (Johnstone et al., 1976). Journalists in a "neutral" role use "objectivity, factual accuracy, and the verification of information" to essentially watch and transmit what is going on in the world to the public (Johnstone et al., 1976, p. 523). In the "neutral" role, the news is obvious. Conversely, journalists in a "participant" role use their skills to dig for and discover the news. The news, or the "real story" as Johnstone et al. (1976) describe it, is not always immediately evident.

Weaver and Wilhoit have spent 25 years studying, tweaking and updating the Johnstone study. In their 1982-83 study, they added questions about the “adversarial stance” to the Johnstone role conception questions (Weaver et al., 2006). The adversarial stance referred to a change in journalism. No longer were journalists simply looking at the politics and government dealings. They were also looking at the private lives of those in power. That, coupled with instant coverage of world events due to improvements in technology, created what Weaver and Wilhoit saw as a new stance in journalism. The three role conceptions the duo studied in their updating of the original Johnstone study were adversarial, interpretive, and disseminator. As Johnstone, the duo found many journalists shared attitudes of the last two.

Ten years later, Weaver and Wilhoit (1996) updated the study again. The world of journalism had changed yet again into what the authors called a “climate of cynicism” (Weaver et al., 2006). The public was cynical and Rush Limbaugh had risen to fame and was criticizing what he saw as the liberal press. Some began calling for “public journalism,” an idea that journalism should include the voices of the average person and mobilize people to get involved in their communities and government. In their survey of journalists, the disseminator and interpretative roles were again the most popular. The adversarial role received some support and a new role, the “populist mobilizer,” also received support.

The duo’s most recent survey was conducted in a different atmosphere once again. September 11, the War on Terror and the boom of the Internet had changed the focus of journalists and, indeed, of the United States (Weaver et al., 2006). The interpretative role conception (the role most closely aligned with the ideals of the

watchdog function) – which involved investigating government claims, explaining complex problems, discussing government policies while they were being developed, and analyzing international developments -- got the strongest support. Support for the disseminator role “declined sharply” (p. 142). The disseminator role included concepts such as getting news out quickly, providing entertainment, focusing on a wide audience and avoiding facts that cannot be verified. (It should be noted that avoiding unverified facts and getting the news out quickly were also important to journalists overall.) The adversarial and populist mobilizer roles got less support than the first two. As in previous studies, an individual journalist often identified multiple roles as being important.

Although Weaver and Wilhoit are probably the most famous researchers of journalistic role perception, they certainly are not the only ones. Other studies included an examination of copy editors' roles (Keith, 2005); the link between role perception and job satisfaction of editors (Akhavan-Majid, 1998); and the Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism's annual State of the News Media report, which examines what has gone on in journalism as a business and field (www.journalism.org). In 2001, and again in 2007, Kovach and Rosenstiel published a book called *The elements of journalism: What newspeople should know and the public should expect*. They stated that they wrote this book, in part, because of an increasing public distrust of journalists and increasing distrust of journalism by politicians. Although the list is about journalism, one could easily argue it is also about the individual journalist. An examination of "the elements of journalism" (Kovach & Rosentiel, 2007) listed below will make this point clearer.

- *Journalism's first obligation is to the truth.*

- *Its first loyalty is to citizens.*
- *Its essence is a discipline of verification.*
- *Its practitioners must maintain an independence from those they cover.*
- *It must serve as an independent monitor of power.*
- *It must provide a forum for public criticism and compromise.*
- *It must keep the news comprehensive and in proportion.*
- *Its practitioners have an obligation to exercise their personal conscience.*

(pp. 5-6)

Scholarship about journalistic role perception is sure to continue, particularly in light of political debates on Capitol Hill about who exactly is -- and is not -- a journalist as it relates to legal protection afforded by a proposed, but still unpassed, national shield law (Pincus, 2007).

Theory Similarities and Differences

"Every newspaper when it reaches the reader is the result of a whole series of selections as to what items shall be printed, in what position they shall be printed, how much space each shall occupy, what emphasis each shall have. There are no objective standards here. There are conventions." (Lippmann, p. 223, 1922)

Theories of agenda-setting and journalistic role perception are similar because they attempt to explain what influences the media content we see. In agenda-setting, scholars are examining the macro level. That means they are looking at the media in terms of a social system, not in terms of individual journalists (Shoemaker & Reese,

1996). They are looking at what role the media institution plays in what people think about. The theory of agenda-setting has, in turn, led to research in other related areas including priming and framing. Entman (2007) proposed studying all three of the closely related ideas -- agenda-setting, priming, and framing -- together under the unifying concept of bias to try to prove and/or disprove a media "slant." This indicates that there is no one clear theory or answer to what influences the media content we see.

Likewise, in journalistic role perception, scholars are examining how what journalists think about themselves and their perceived responsibilities and/or expectations in the role of journalist influences what we see in media content. For example, if a journalist sees the adversary role of his or her job to be of vital importance, does that affect what stories he chooses to do or where that story is played? Journalistic role perception is made up of many parts, including education, professional ethics, and responsibility, to name just a few. To date, research has not indicated that any one part is more important than the others.

These two overarching theories of agenda-setting and journalistic role perception are intertwined. At its simplest level, the journalist as gatekeeper decides what stories run and where. Those decisions influence the agenda-setting function -- what the media tell us to think about. Of course, it is clear that far more variables than simply role perception play into agenda-setting, and indeed, into gatekeeping, framing, and priming. The previously mentioned research indicates that. But the theories, while different, share a symbiotic relationship that takes them beyond merely being hypotheses about influences on media content. They share common variables and interact with one another. For example, how a journalist views herself and her role may directly affect how she views

stories and their importance, which, in turn, influences agenda-setting, priming, and framing. These interactions, with their complexities, continue to be studied by scholars throughout the world.

Past Research on the Watchdog Function and Journalists

When two periodicals in mid-17th century England emphasized investigating and making the workings of government available to all, not just to the elites, early watchdog journalism was born (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2007). The idea continued and grew and was embedded in the Libertarian Theory in the often cited and debated *Four Theories of the Press* more than 50 years ago (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1963). The authors (1963) argued that since the Renaissance, “basic theories of the press” have existed (p. 2). Siebert (1963) stated that under Libertarian Theory, which developed in the 17th and 18th centuries, the press was free to tell people information and let *the people decide* what it means. Siebert (1963) argued that although the ideas of Libertarian philosophers differ, they agreed that people are rational and capable of making their own decisions. Under this theory, society is used as a means for the individual to achieve happiness, and reason is used to find truth. (This simplification of Libertarian ideals and ignoring of differences formed the basis of one of the critiques of this work.) This new way of thinking about the individual led to a shift in how the press was viewed. Instead of needing to be controlled, the press was free to print information and entertain, and the individual was expected to be able to evaluate what was important. However, to protect the individual in certain circumstances, such as obscenity, laws were enacted, Siebert (1963) noted. The marketplace determined which press survived.

Some scholars have used Siebert's Libertarian Theory as a jumping off point for their research into the watchdog function. For example, Becker, Cobbey, & Sobowale (1978) cited the watchdog function of the press as a "central element" of Libertarian Theory without question in their study of criticism of the press during Watergate (p. 423).

Heider, McCombs, and Poindexter (2005) found that the public surveyed in their study found the watchdog function of journalism far less important than journalists did. Only 49% of 600 survey respondents thought that being a watchdog was "extremely important" (Heider et al., 2005). Accuracy, unbiased reporting, caring about the community, community knowledge and offering solutions to problems were more important to the public than journalists' being watchdogs. Heider et al. (2005) noted that the public's response of 49% saying being a watchdog was "extremely important" compared to 70% of journalists reporting in a 2003 Weaver and Wilhoit survey that being a watchdog was extremely important to them. In a different study, Stone, O'Donnell, and Banning (1997) found in their telephone survey of 480 Illinois residents that the frequency of newspaper readership did not impact support for the watchdog function of the media; instead, education and age were found to impact support. More educated and younger survey respondents showed stronger support for the watchdog function of the press than other groups (Stone et al., 1997).

As previously discussed, many studies have evaluated how journalists view themselves, or their journalistic role conception (Weaver, Beam, Brownlee, Voakes, & Wilhoit, 2006; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986; Weaver & Wilhoit, 1996). Some have even looked at how important journalistic ideals such as truth, fairness, accuracy and the watchdog function have been to the individual journalist (Johnstone, Slawski, &

Bowman, 1972; Plaisance & Skewes, 2003; Weaver et al., 2006). Far more rare are studies or surveys asking the journalists themselves how they feel they are doing living up to the ideal roles or standards of the field and asking them to give examples to back up what they are saying.

The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press and the Project for Excellence in Journalism conduct surveys and interviews on the state of journalism. When researchers asked newspaper and broadcast reporters "what the press is doing especially well" (p. 16) for their 2008 report, only 15% of national journalists and 16% of local journalists said they thought the press was "doing especially well" at "serving as watchdog" (pg. 16). Yet many in the public -- the community that journalists are trying to serve -- appear to believe that the press is responsible for good in the government. Sixty percent of Americans surveyed in 2005 said that the press kept "political leaders from doing things that should not be done" (Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 2005, p. 11).

Next, the methods used in my study will be detailed. The results will follow. Last, the implications and limitations of the study and future areas of research will be discussed.

Chapter 3: Methods

The major part of this study was an online survey of reporters and editors at the top 100 U.S. daily newspapers based on circulation. An Audit Bureau of Circulation list of the top 100 U.S. daily newspapers based on circulation for the six months ending September 30, 2010, was used. (See Appendix B for a complete list of newspapers.) "Reporter" was defined as anyone responsible for researching and writing news copy for the paper. "Editor" was defined as anyone who was responsible for the assigning and/or proofreading of news copy for the paper. Participants were randomly selected and invited by e-mail to visit a Survey Monkey web site link to take part in an online survey. E-mail addresses were obtained from publicly available sources. In the vast majority of cases, e-mail addresses were obtained from the newspaper sites themselves, either in a staff directory or from a news story. In a few cases, that was not possible, so e-mail addresses were found from the professional networking site Linked In or other publicly available sources. Initially, two reporters, two editors and one reporter or editor from each newspaper, for a total of five journalists per newspaper, were invited to participate. The fifth journalist -- the one reporter or editor -- was assigned randomly (for example, paper one gets an editor in spot five, paper two gets a reporter.). Out of the 500 e-mail requests sent, 44 resulted in issues that had to be resolved. Those issues included 2 replies that the person does not participate in surveys, 28 emails bouncing back with failure to deliver notices, and 14 auto-replies that stated the journalist would be out of the office longer than the length of time the survey would be open. If e-mail addresses resulted in a failure-to-deliver notice, attempts were made to resolve the address problem. In cases where

people notified me they would not participate, where people were out of the office during the time of the survey or where e-mail address problems could not be solved, I sent journalists from the same newspapers where the problems originated e-mail invitations.

The survey was online for two and a half weeks. One week after the initial invitation was sent, a reminder e-mail was sent. That e-mail reminded them about the survey and stated that I would not be requesting their help again but hoped they would take the time to help a former journalist (myself) and fill out the survey.

The online survey itself had a total of 34 questions. Of the total, 30 were multiple choice questions and four asked for a qualitative response. Participants could choose to answer or ignore any questions they wished. All responses were anonymous.

Because previously research indicated it would be likely the journalists would state that they are doing a good job with the watchdog function and because journalists would be evaluating themselves and their colleagues, two additional surveys were added to provide the opportunity for potentially different views from the audience that newspapers try to serve. Samples of college students and senior citizens were asked their opinions, as news consumers. Because they are part of the public that journalists attempt to inform, their opinions about newspapers and watchdog journalism were relevant to this study.

Other Contextual Surveys

As I discussed in Chapter 1, I wanted to include some readers' voices in the study, so I gave non-probability samples of upstate New York college students and senior citizens many of the same survey questions that I gave to the national sample of

newspaper journalists. This research sought to discover what, if any, differences might appear in the answers of those who consume -- as opposed to *produce* -- the news. The findings of the college student and senior citizen surveys will be discussed in Chapter 5. What follows are the details of how I did the two contextual surveys.

Survey and sample of college students. A convenience sample of 55 journalism and broadcasting majors at an upstate New York college was asked to take a paper version of the survey. The survey was the same as the online survey aimed at journalists with a couple of exceptions. Questions about what job the respondent had at the newspaper and how long the respondent had been at the newspaper were removed. In their place, a question about the age of the respondent was added. The paper survey for college students had a total of 33 questions. All responses were anonymous.

Survey and sample of senior citizens. A random sample of senior citizens at two upstate New York senior citizen centers was asked to participate in a paper survey of 33 questions about the watchdog function and newspapers. The survey was the same survey administered to the college student sample. At the first senior center, only six participants completed the survey and three participants answered some of the questions on the survey. Approximately 30 other seniors looked at the survey, but declined to fill it out. Several senior citizens said they did not know anything about how newspapers were doing because they could not read newspapers with their poor eye sight. Two other seniors wanted to talk about the shrinking size of their local newspapers, but did not want to talk about quality of coverage. A half-dozen others could not get past the required Institutional Review Board statement on the first page. One senior said, "Newspapers aren't what they used to be," and complained about the size of the type, the size of the

paper, delivery errors and the lack of "news" in the newspaper. At a second senior center that had far fewer people, only one senior citizen completed the survey. The senior center director at the first location said that in her experience, the seniors there were typically able to handle very simple multiple choice questions, but found questions with more than a few choices for answers or answers that they had to write themselves difficult to fill out. The current survey involves an 11-point scale and qualitative answers. After contacting the Indiana University Center for Aging Research, I was referred to a 2001 University of Maryland Center on Aging-directed study in which scholars were urged to use simpler and fewer questions on surveys for seniors, as well as encouraged to have interviewer-administered surveys for senior citizens in order to aid those who have vision problems or issues with hand-writing (New England States Consortium, 2001).

Because of the difficulty in getting senior citizens to fill out the surveys at the first two senior centers, what the Pew Research Center refers to as mixed-mode surveying was implemented (Pew Research Center Methodology, 2011). Pew (2011) noted that because of declining response rates and other issues, "there has been a rise in mixed-mode surveys" in which multiple ways are used to contact and survey respondents. In the current study, two additional modes were used to get more responses. A snowball sample of senior citizens was used. Two senior citizens who took the paper survey themselves were asked to pass the survey along to other senior citizens in their neighborhood and/or their social groups. A total of 19 surveys were completed via snowball sampling.

Additionally, interview-administered surveys were given to 14 senior citizens at a third senior center in upstate New York. As Fowler (2010) wrote in *Survey Research*

Methods:

Respondents who are not very well educated, whose reading and writing skills in English are less than facile (but who can speak English), people who do not see well, people who do not use computers very much, and people who are somewhat ill or tire easily all will find an interview-administered survey easier than filling out a self-administered form. (p. 71)

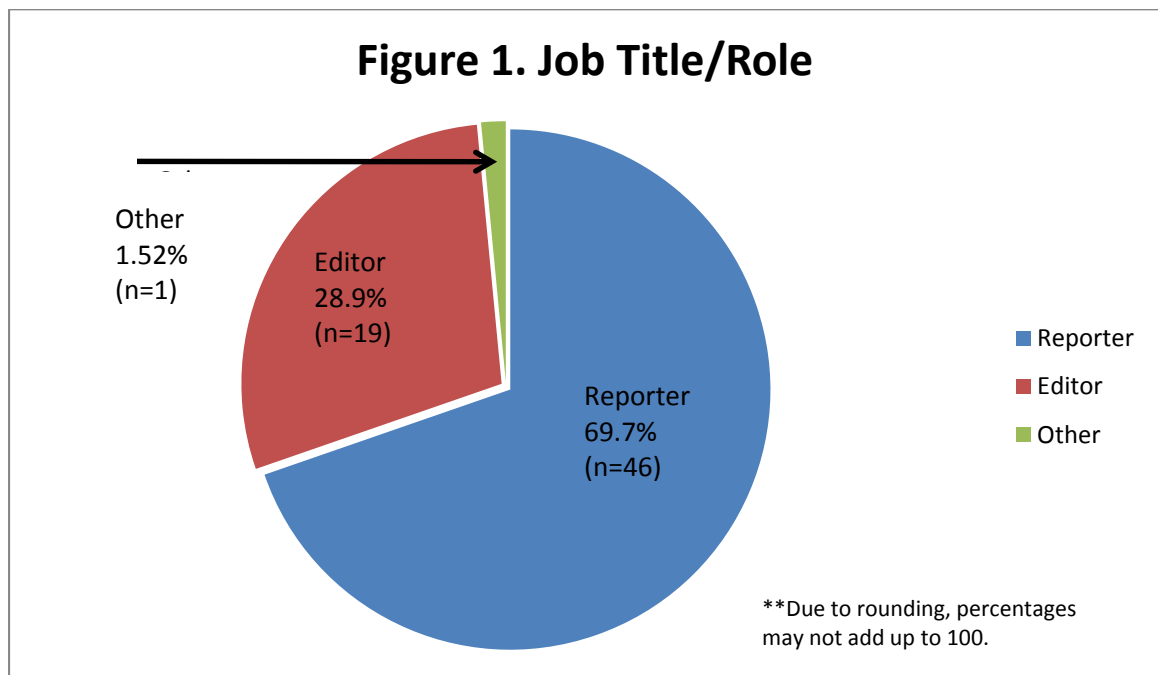
As needed, questions and answers were simplified or removed based on the needs of the particular senior being interviewed. For example, instead of asking seniors to use an 11-point scale to evaluate how much they think an item helps journalists, I would ask them if they thought something helped journalists and why/why not. In the end, a total of 38 senior citizens participated in the survey.

In the next chapter, the results of the journalist survey will be detailed. All results for the hypotheses and research questions will be specified. That will be followed by the final chapter, which includes a discussion of the findings, an examination of the results of my surveys asking the college students and senior citizens the same questions as the journalists, an analysis of the limitations of the study, and a list of suggestions for future research.

Chapter 4: Results of Journalist Survey

A total of 95 journalists, 19 percent of those invited to participate, started the online survey; 65 journalists (68.4% of the 95 who started) completed the survey. The question with the highest number of responses had 94 answers. The question with the lowest number of responses, a follow-up question asking for a qualitative example of a newspaper's failure of the watchdog function, had seven responses.

Of the 66 journalists who chose to identify their role at the newspaper, the majority -- 69.7% -- said they were reporters (See Figure 1). Three of the respondents chose "other" as their job category. One specified the job title columnist, another said copy editor and a third wrote "have filled most jobs in the newsroom over the years." For the purposes of this study, the copy editor was identified as an editor and the columnist was identified as a reporter. The person who claimed to have filled multiple roles stayed in the "other" category.



The mean number of years the 65 respondents who answered the question had been journalists was 24.45 years. The median number of years for the same group was 26 years. (See Table 1 for a complete listing of the respondents' answers.)

The breakdown between those identifying themselves as male or female is nearly even. Of the 65 respondents who answered the question, 50.8% (n=33) said they were female and 49.2% (n=32) said they were male.

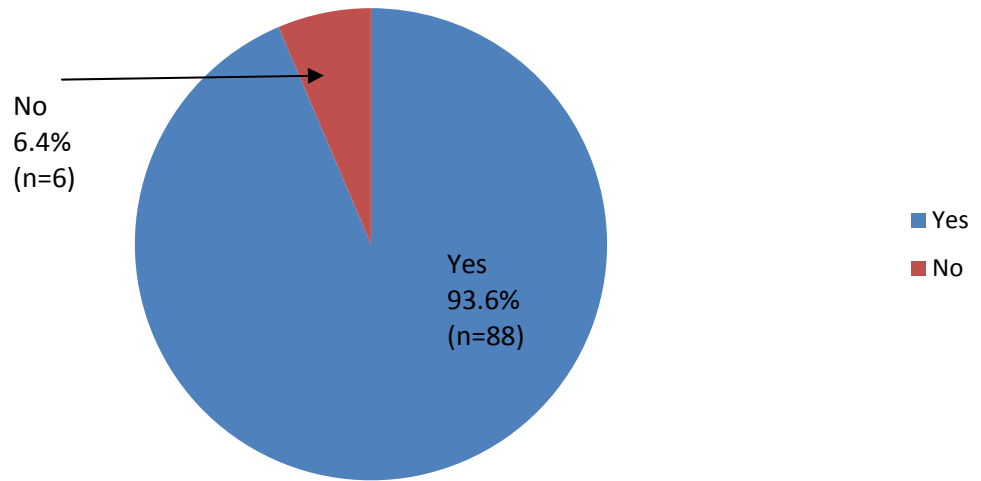
Hypothesis 1 looked at how newspaper journalists believed they were doing overall. Hypothesis 1 stated that newspaper journalists will believe that, as a group, they are doing a good job fulfilling the watchdog function. Hypothesis 1 is supported (See Figure 2).

To answer this hypothesis, respondents were asked if they thought newspapers overall were good watchdogs for the public. "*Watchdog*" was defined as the press's responsibility to monitor the government and those in power, hold government officials and those in power accountable and tell the public what is going on in government. A total of 94 respondents answered this question, and the overwhelming majority -- 93.6% (n=88) said yes, newspapers overall were good watchdogs for the public. Only 6.4% of respondents (n=6) said no, they did not think newspapers overall were good watchdogs for the public.

Table 1. Years as a Journalist

Years	Frequency	Percentages
3	3	4.6
4	2	3.1
5	1	1.5
6.5	1	1.5
7	2	3.1
10	1	1.5
11	1	1.5
12	1	1.5
13	1	1.5
14	1	1.5
15	2	3.1
16	1	1.5
18	1	1.5
19	2	3.1
20	2	3.1
21	1	1.5
22	2	3.1
25	6	9.2
26	2	3.1
28	3	4.6
29	1	1.5
30	6	9.2
31	2	3.1
32	5	7.7
33	1	1.5
34	1	1.5
35	4	6.2
37	2	3.1
38	2	3.1
39	1	1.5
40	2	3.1
42	1	1.5
45	1	1.5

Figure 2. Are Newspapers Doing a Good Job Fulfilling the Watchdog Function?



Also related to Hypothesis 1 was a question asking the respondents to rate how newspapers are doing fulfilling the watchdog function on a scale of 0 to 11, with 0 meaning the worst possible job, 5 meaning neutral, and 10 meaning the best possible job. The average answer of the 65 respondents who answered the question was a rating of 7.57 out of 10 (Table 2) . No journalist rated the newspapers from 0 to 3. Only 16.9% of respondents rated them a 5 or lower.

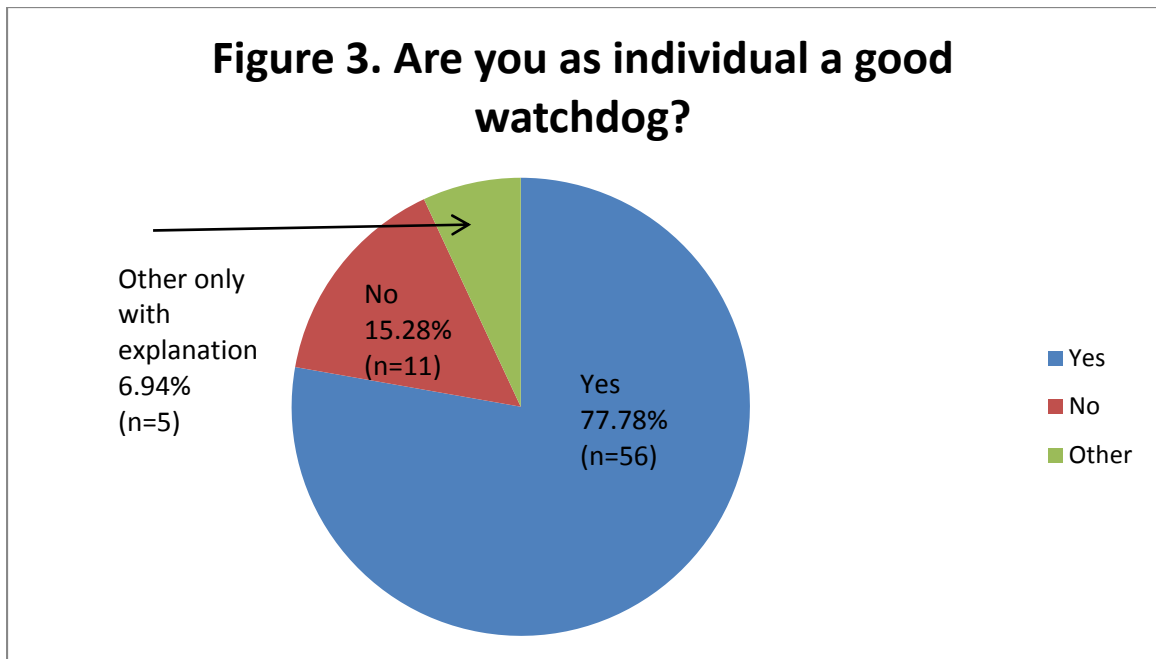
Table 2. Frequencies for Ratings of Newspaper Watchdog Fulfillment
(0=worst job, 5=neutral, 10=best job)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals
0%	0%	0%	0%	4.6%	7.7%	23.1%	36.9%	20%	1.5%	1.5%	100.0% *
(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(3)	(5)	(15)	(24)	(13)	(1)	(1)	(n=65)

*rounding may make total appear larger than it is

Hypothesis 2 examined how newspaper journalists believed they were doing themselves in fulfilling the watchdog function. Hypothesis 2 stated that newspaper journalists will believe that, as individuals, they are doing a good job fulfilling the watchdog function. Hypothesis 2 is supported (See Figure 3.).

To answer this hypothesis, respondents were asked if they, as individuals, were good watchdogs for the public. Again, *watchdog* was defined as the press's responsibility to monitor the government and those in power, hold government officials and those in power accountable and tell the public what is going on in government. A total of 72 respondents answered this question, and 77.78% of them said yes, they thought that as individuals they were good watchdogs for the public. Only 15.28% said they thought they were not good watchdogs, and 6.94% did not choose either category, instead using the "other" choice to explain why they did not choose yes or no (See Table 3.).



These "other" answers had two common themes. Three of the five explained they had time limitations. One wrote, "Sometimes you do, and other times you don't. There are

competing demands on your time and watchdogging [sic] is not always going to win."

Another respondent said, "I tried at least in the Latino area, but when you have to do two stories per day [it] is hard. Simply, there is no time." The second limitation detailed was job role. For example, one journalist wrote, "As a mere copy editor, I can't be better at this than the paper that has me on staff."

Table 3. Explanation of Individual Watchdog Choice

Are you a good watchdog?	Explanation
Other only	"Sometimes you do, and other times you don't. There are competing demands on your time and watchdogging is not always going to win."
Other only	"At times. Doing these stories is difficult given pressure to do daily work and limited resources."
Other only	"Sometimes, but I am not an investigative reporter at this time. I do cover government and produce explanatory stories that let readers know how their tax dollars are being used. That also is a 'watchdog' function."
Other only	"As a mere copy editor, I can't be better at this than the paper that has me on staff. An assignment editor or beat reporter has such an option."
Other only	"I tried at least in the Latino area, but when you have to do two stories per day [it] is hard. Simply, there is no time."

Other respondents -- 16 -- felt the need to expand upon their "yes" and "no" answers to the individual watchdog question (See Table 4.). Again, themes emerged. The first theme was the importance of the watchdog function to some individual journalists. Journalists cited both examples of watchdog journalism stories they had been a part of

and little ways that they think they are watchdogs. For example, one editor who said his/her job did not directly involve the watchdog role wrote of contributing as a watchdog by saying this, "... I try to stay alert to what is going on in my town (a suburb of where the paper is based) and alert the editor in charge of my area if I hear about anything fishy." Other journalists were far more direct in about how important they think being a watchdog is to them as individuals. One stated, "I can do more. I should do more. This is why I stay in journalism. If I wanted a fun job, I'd go get paid for real. The public service is the point for me." It is a sentiment echoed by several other answers. The second theme in the statements was the increasing demand on journalists' time elsewhere. Writing stories for the web as well as the print edition, filming video in addition to writing, and having to report more stories each day were cited as reasons that individuals did not have time to pursue watchdog reporting. One wrote, "I'm grabbing whatever stories I can write quickly. That's my charge from my bosses. I look as deeply as I can, but it's nothing like we did 10 years ago."

Table 4. Expanded Qualitative Answers on Individual Watchdog Choice

Are you a good watchdog?	Explanation
Yes	"I see that as the major task for journalists -- shine the light into the dark corners and let residents/taxpayers/voters know what is going on. If we don't, what credible source of information will people have?"
No	"I'm grabbing whatever stories I can write quickly. That's my charge from my bosses. I look as deeply as I can, but it's nothing like we did 10 years ago."

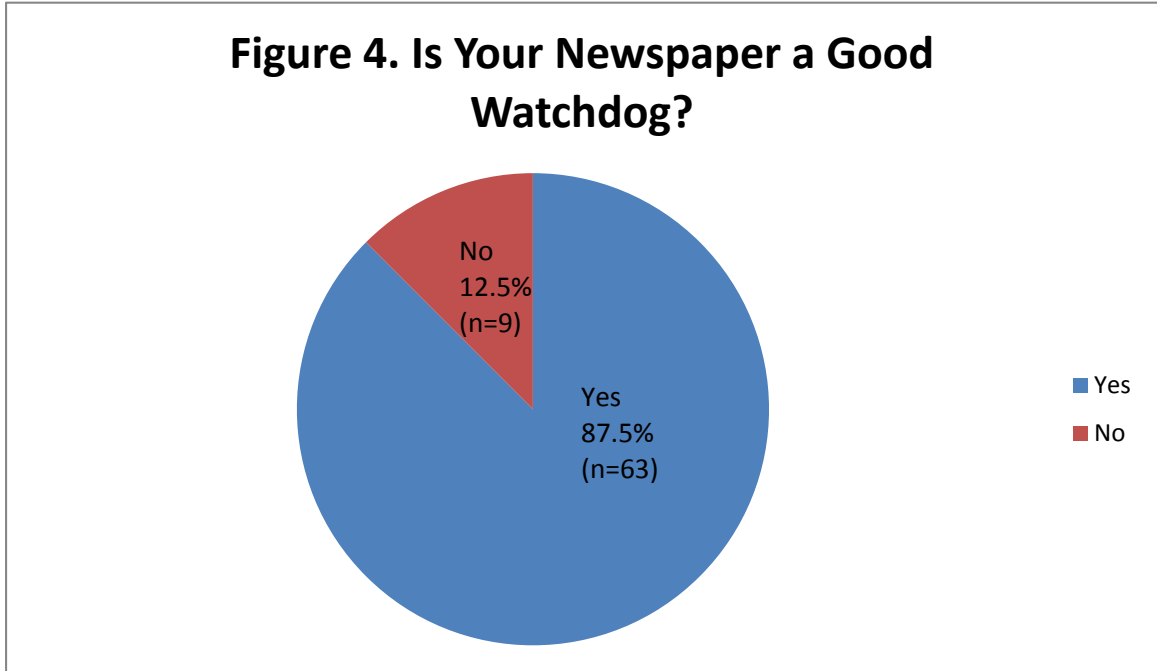
No	"Lot of effort and time on pursuing sure stories needed to fill news space, often not enough time left to spend in research on watchdog type stories that may or may not pan out."
No	"My current beat doesn't fit into that category."
Yes	"Despite a devastated and overworked staff, while my group cannot spend weeks sifting through records we do have the skills to draw logical conclusions and follow things up."
Yes	"I am a copy editor so this is not really my role in the process, but I try to stay alert to what is going on in my town (a suburb of where the paper is based) and alert the editor in charge of my area if I hear about anything fishy."
Yes	"Though I'd say we have less time to pursue such stories due to smaller staffs and increased demands (filing stories for the web as well as the paper)"
No	"As a business reporter, we don't do a lot of watchdog stories."
Yes	"Yes. I cover state government and try to dig into budgets and issues. But my time is limited and I feel more pressure to produce daily copy."
Yes	"I can do more. I should do more. This is why I stay in journalism. If I wanted a fun job, I'd go get paid for real. The public service is the point for me."
Yes	"I do my best to provide an ongoing voice on the actions of local government."
No	"Not an investigative reporter."
Yes	"Exposed Ponzi schemes in Florida. Exposed telemarketing scams in Florida. Questioned lack of regulatory oversight of high-risk banking in Florida and lack of policing of home mortgage foreclosure seizures by banks."

Yes	"I try to keep my eyes and ears open, develop sources, and write what I learn. I'm aware, though, that I don't make enough time for reports of this sort, in exchange for covering and filing news for the daily and weekend papers. It's my intent to try to improve on this over time."
Yes	"Not a writer, but I think my sense of story selection does some good."
Yes	"We just spent countless man-hours assessing an allegation that a public official frequented an escort service. We pushed for records that normally aren't public and were able to determine that there was no evidence to support the claim."

Hypothesis 3 examined how newspaper journalists believed the newspapers for which they worked were doing as watchdogs. Hypothesis 3 stated that newspaper journalists will believe that the organizations for which they work are doing a good job fulfilling the watchdog function. Hypothesis 3 is supported (See Figure 4.).

To answer this hypothesis, respondents were asked if their newspapers were a good watchdog for the public. Of the 72 journalists who answered that question, 87.5% answered "yes," their newspapers were good watchdogs. Only 12.5% answered "no," they did not believe their newspapers were good watchdogs.

Figure 4. Is Your Newspaper a Good Watchdog?

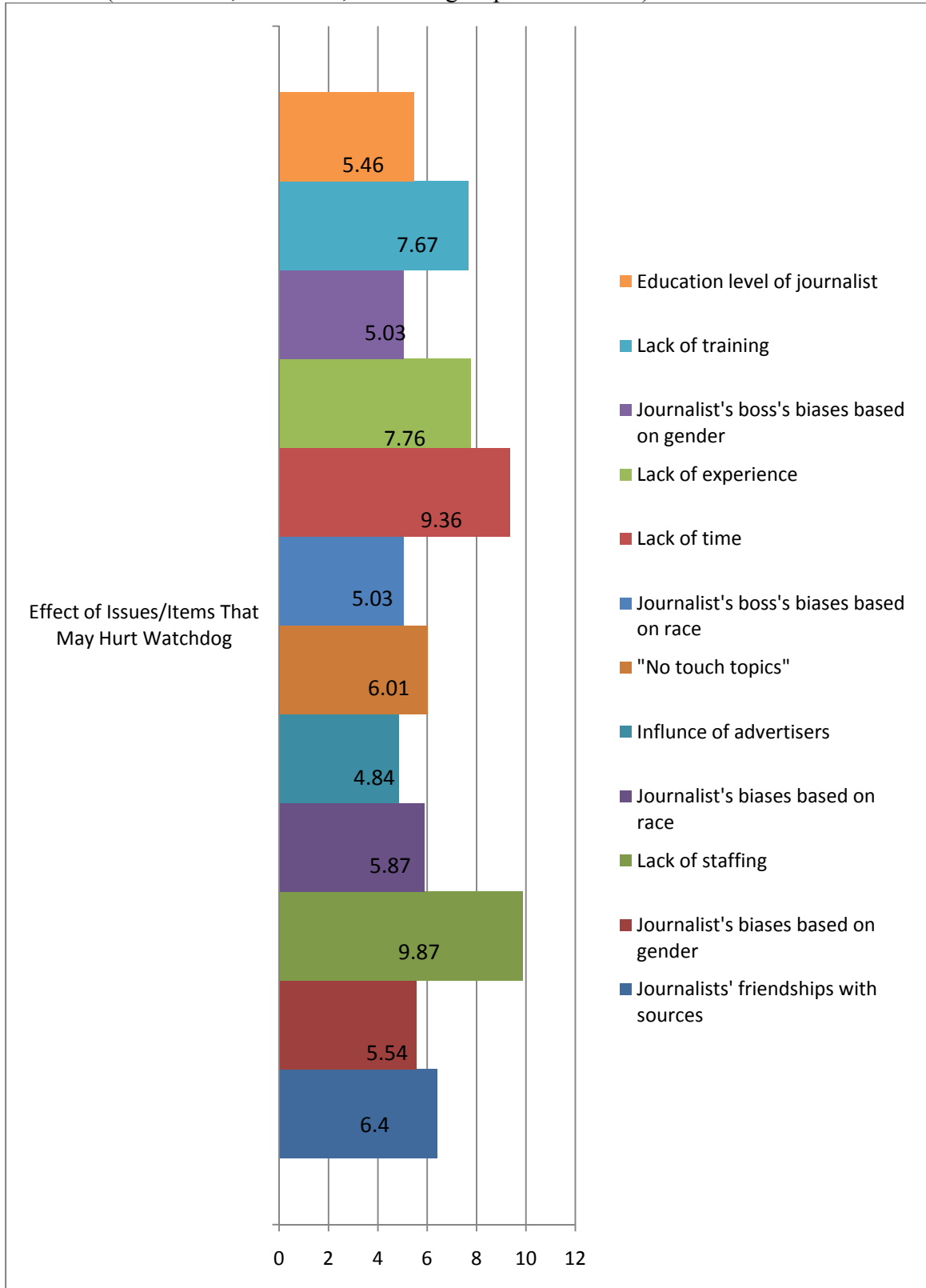


Hypothesis 4 examined the reasons that journalists would give for failing to be good watchdogs. Hypothesis 4 stated that newspaper journalists will cite time restraints as a major reason for journalists' failure to do watchdog journalism. Hypothesis 4 is supported (See Figure 5.).

To answer this hypothesis, respondents were asked a series of questions about items or issues that might hurt journalists' ability to act as watchdogs for the public. The highest number of respondents for an item was 70. The lowest number of respondents was 67. Respondents rated each item on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning the item had no effect at all on hurting journalist's watchdog ability and 10 meaning the item had the strongest possible effect on hurting journalists' watchdog ability. "Lack of time" had an average rating of 9.36 on a scale of 10. The only item with a higher value on the scale, meaning journalists believe it had a stronger negative effect on the watchdog function, was "Lack of staffing" with an average rating of 9.87 out of 10.

Figure 5. Mean Rating for Effect to Hurt Watchdog Journalism

(0=no effect, 5=neutral, 10=strongest possible effect)



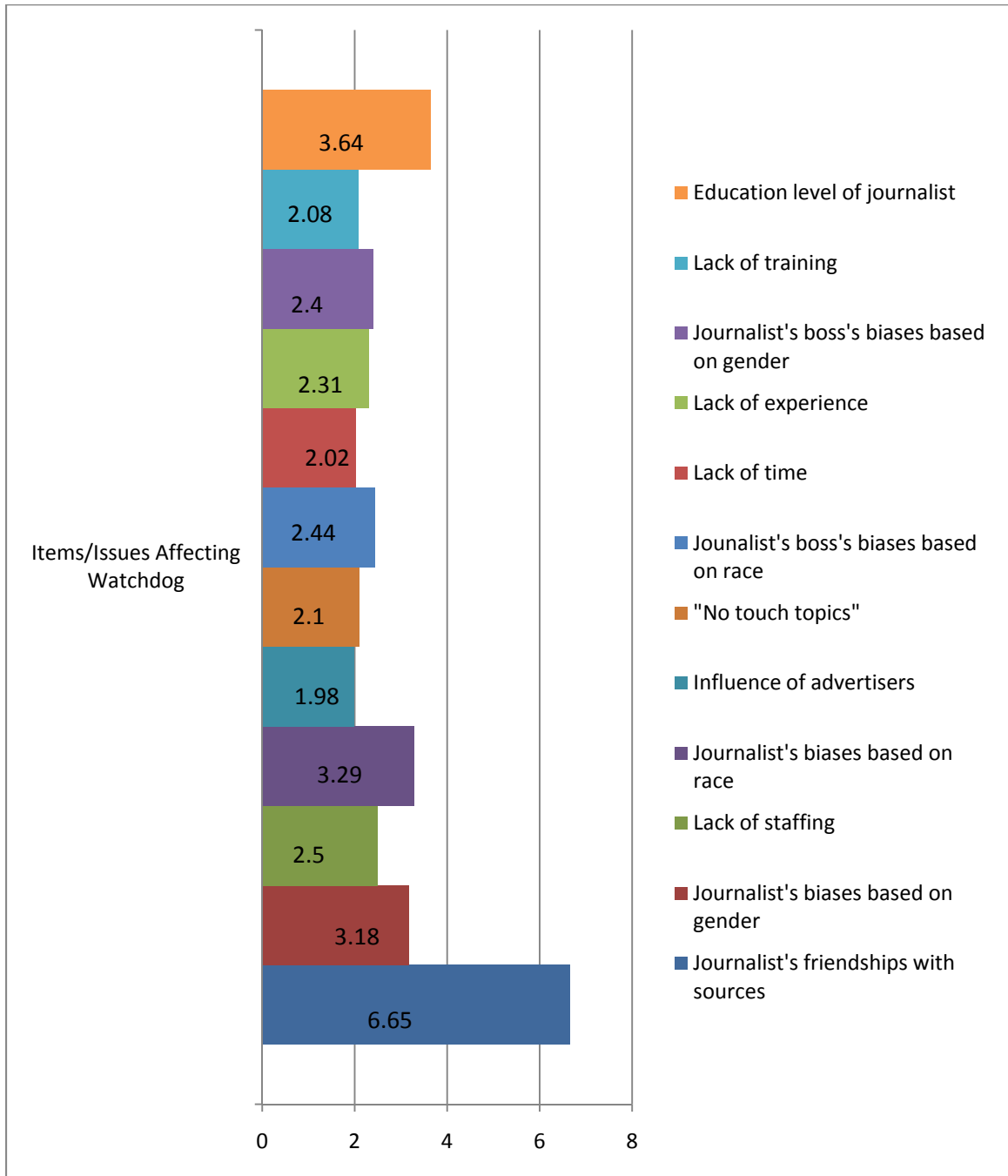
Effect of Issues/Items That May Hurt Watchdog

Table 5. Frequencies for Items Hurting Watchdog Journalism Ability
(0=no effect, 5=neutral, 10=strongest possible effect)

Item/Issue	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	total
Journalist's friendships with sources	7.1% (5)	0 (0)	8.6% (6)	2.9% (2)	1.4% (1)	28.6% (20)	18.6% (13)	12.9% (9)	15.7% (11)	4.3% (3)	0% (0)	100% (70)
Journalist's biases based on gender	15.9% (11)	7.2% (5)	7.2% (5)	5.8% (4)	1.4% (1)	24.6% (17)	14.5% (10)	7.2% (5)	4.3% (8)	2.9% (2)	8.7% (6)	100% (69)
Lack of staffing	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.4% (1)	0% (0)	1.4% (1)	1.4% (1)	2.9% (2)	5.7% (4)	20.0% (14)	17.1% (12)	50.0% (35)	100% (70)
Journalist's biases based on race	14.7% (10)	5.9% (4)	7.4% (5)	4.4% (3)	4.4% (4)	23.5% (16)	8.8% (6)	8.8% (6)	7.4% (5)	2.9% (2)	11.8% (8)	100% (68)
Influence of advertisers	20.6% (14)	14.7% (10)	11.8% (8)	4.4% (3)	10.3% (7)	10.3% (7)	14.7% (10)	8.8% (6)	5.9% (4)	4.4% (3)	4.4% (3)	100% (68)
"No touch topics"	17.4% (12)	5.8% (4)	11.6% (8)	2.9% (2)	2.9% (2)	8.7% (6)	15.9% (11)	5.8% (4)	8.7% (6)	0% (0)	20.3% (14)	100% (69)
Journalist's boss's biases based on race	23.5% (16)	4.4% (3)	14.7% (10)	2.9% (2)	1.5% (1)	20.6% (14)	10.3% (7)	5.9% (4)	5.9% (4)	1.5% (1)	8.8% (6)	100% (68)
Lack of time	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	1.4% (1)	1.4% (1)	4.3% (3)	7.2% (5)	13.0% (9)	20.3% (14)	14.5% (10)	37.7% (26)	100% (69)
Lack of experience	3.0% (2)	3.0% (2)	1.5% (1)	0% (0)	4.5% (3)	11.9% (8)	13.4% (9)	14.9% (10)	29.9% (20)	10.4% (7)	7.5% (5)	100% (67)
Journalist's boss's biases based on gender	23.9% (16)	6.0% (4)	11.9% (8)	3.0% (2)	0% (0)	20.9% (20)	13.4% (9)	4.5% (3)	6.0% (4)	4.5% (3)	6.0% (4)	100% (67)
Lack of training	5.8% (4)	0% (0)	2.9% (2)	4.3% (3)	1.4% (1)	8.7% (6)	10.1% (7)	24.6% (17)	21.7% (15)	11.6% (8)	8.7% (6)	100% (69)
Education level of journalist	16.4% (11)	6.0% (4)	7.5% (5)	4.5% (3)	4.5% (3)	23.9% (16)	9.0% (6)	11.9% (8)	11.9% (8)	3.0% (2)	1.5% (1)	100% (67)

Figure 6. Mean Rating for Effect to Help Watchdog Journalism

(0=no effect, 5=neutral, 10=strongest possible effect)



The item that journalists ranked as the lowest effect to hurt journalists' watchdog ability was "Influence of advertisers" with an average rating of 4.84. (Table 5 shows all responses in detail.) A journalist's boss's biases based on race and on gender had the next lowest average rating at 5.03, with 5 meaning neutral.

Journalists were also asked to evaluate the effect of these same items to HELP journalists be watchdogs (Figure 6). The highest number of respondents for the series of questions about items or issues that might help journalists' ability to act as watchdogs for the public was 66. The lowest number of respondents was 61. Respondents rated each item on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning the item had no effect at all on helping journalist's watchdog ability and 10 meaning the item had the strongest possible effect on helping journalists' watchdog ability. The item that ranked the highest on the scale was "Journalists' friendships with sources" with a mean of 6.65 out of 10. The second highest ranking was "Education level of journalist" with a mean of 3.64 out of 10. The lowest ranking was "Influence of advertisers" with a mean of 1.98 out of 10.

Perhaps the most revealing data to come out of questions about what journalists' believed affected the watchdog function came out of a question asking journalists to list any potential limitations -- items that HURT their ability to be watchdogs -- that were left out of the survey. Twenty-two journalists took advantage of that opportunity to provide qualitative answers. (For the complete list of answers, see Appendix D.) Two main themes emerged. The first is a lack of support both monetarily and by some management. As one journalist wrote, "Drastic funding issues at newspapers mean that reporters have to watch how much is spent from miles traveled to paying for copies tied to Open Records Requests." Other journalists echoed that sentiment, noting that funding for

reporters, computers, software and data gathering is difficult to get. One of the ways a lack of support from management was expressed was this: "General timidity... the 'corporatizing' of newsgathering. I think generally newspapers are becoming more sympathetic to corporate interests than those of regular people." Others said management verbally backed the idea of watchdog reporting, but when it came to actually giving reporters the time or money to do it, management fails. A second theme that emerged was the perception of negative or no reader feedback to watchdog stories. One journalist wrote, "Many complain newspapers don't do enough of this work, but when it is presented, few seem to read it. We get more feedback on routine crime stories than on blow-out packages that take months to prepare." Other journalists listed complaints from public relations representatives, complaints from readers who believe newspapers are biased when they do not echo what bloggers are saying, readership's failure to know the difference between fact and opinion, and political biases on both the part of journalists and readers as limitations to the watchdog function.

Perhaps the most disheartening statement a journalist wrote in answer to the question about limitations to the watchdog function that were not listed on the survey was this:

With layoffs looming each quarter, I am less aggressive with agencies that might potentially hire me if I lose my job. In an odd way, I'm feeling less loyalty to the people who are cutting my salary, working me longer hours, treating me with less respect and trashing my best writing efforts. There's no way your survey can account for Napoleonic approach that has settled into most management at newspapers.

Research Question 1 asked journalists for examples of good bad and watchdog journalism. Journalists were asked to cite examples in two different questions. If they believed that newspapers overall or their own newspapers were good watchdogs, they were asked to cite an example. If they believed that newspapers overall or their own newspapers were *not* good watchdogs, they were asked to cite an example of a failure of the watchdog function. Because far more journalists believed newspapers as a whole and their own newspapers were good watchdogs rather than bad watchdogs, as previously reported, there are far more examples of good watchdog journalism than bad. A total of 64 respondents gave examples of good watchdog journalism by any newspaper. Many of the journalists said in their answers that newspapers were doing watchdog journalism every day. One journalist wrote, "Any story about government action or inaction can qualify--there are dozens of well-written examples daily nationwide." Another said, "Newspapers, though incredibly weakened, still are the only institutions doing watchdog work for a mass audience." And a third wrote, "Who else is going to willingly sit through every zoning board and county commission meeting? You're welcome, gentle readers!"

The newspaper that was mentioned the most often as an example of a good watchdog was the *Los Angeles Times*. Eleven journalists out of 64 respondents, 17.2%, mentioned work by the *Los Angeles Times* as an example of good watchdog journalism. The most commonly mentioned story was the *Los Angeles Times'* coverage of corruption of public officials in Bell, California. The *Times* won the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service for this coverage (The 2011 Pulitzer Prizes, 2011b). A few respondents mentioned the 1970s Watergate coverage as their example of good watchdog journalism.

Only seven respondents gave examples of poor watchdog journalism (Appendix D). Their examples could come from any newspaper. Three cited a lack of resources and/or staff and its effects. For example, one journalist wrote, "We don't really have enough staff left to cover every zoning board meeting anymore. Sorry, readers." Two cited failures in coverage related to the War in Iraq, including the lack of weapons of mass destruction. One cited a lack of explanation about increasing college costs and a lack of coverage of the environment.

Journalists were also asked to give examples of good and bad watchdog journalism at their *own* papers, meaning the papers for which they work. Again, there are far more examples of good watchdog journalism than failures of watchdog journalism because journalists overall said they believed their newspapers were doing a good job at a being a watchdog. In total, 57 respondents gave examples of good watchdog journalism at their newspapers, and 11 respondents gave examples of a failure of watchdog journalism at their papers (Appendix D). Eleven of the 57 respondents for good watchdog stories said they would cite the same story they did for the general watchdog example. The rest of the stories ranged from politicians taking or giving money illegally to tracking child abuse cases. Two of the respondents simply noted the existence of a watchdog team on their staffs.

Of the 11 examples of failure of watchdog journalism at their papers, six of the examples cited a lack of staffing and/or time as reasons why their paper could not adequately cover court cases, environmental issues, and government spending. One respondent wrote, "Happens every day. From small-time police log to municipal government. Nobody left to ask the hard questions, do the digging, cultivate the

contacts." Another respondent simply wrote, "We're a Gannett paper. We are very, very terrible."

Research Question 2 asked if there any major differences in responses based upon the experience level or gender of the newspaper journalist. As noted earlier, the split between male and female journalists is nearly even among those who answered the question, with 50.8% (n=33) who said they were female and 49.2% (n=32) who said they were male. Cross-tabulations run on gender and all of the answers given show few substantial differences. One exception is in the job category. 21.2% of female respondents were editors, compared to 36.7% of male respondents (Table 6). The chi-square for the difference is not statistically significant. Overall, the American Society of Newspaper Editors (2010) estimates women made up about 36% of newsroom staffers in 2010.

Table 6. Cross-tabulation of Gender and Job Category

	Male	Female
Reporter	63.3% (19)	78.8% (26)
Editor	36.7% (11)	21.2% (7)
	100% (30)	100% (33)

$$\chi^2=2.34, df=1, p>.05, \phi = -.191$$

Overall, male respondents had more years in journalism than the female respondents did (Table 7). More than half of the male respondents -- 53.13% -- had 31

years of journalism experience or more. Only 15.15% of female respondents had 31 years or more. A chi-square was not a viable option because of four cells with expected frequencies less than five.

Table 7. Cross-tabulation of Gender and Years in Journalism

	1-10yrs.	11-20 yrs.	21-30 yrs.	31-40 yrs.	> 40 yrs.
Total					
Male 100%	3.13%	9.38%	34.38%	46.88%	6.25%
(33)	(1)	(3)	(11)	(15)	(2)
Female 100%	27.27%	27.27%	30.30%	15.15%	0%
(33)	(9)	(9)	(10)	(5)	(0)
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(10)	(12)	(21)	(20)	(2)

*Due to rounding, percentages may not add up exactly to 100%.

**Because four cells have an expected frequencies less than five, a chi-square is not viable here.

The difference in experience and positions, however, did not seem to greatly impact their answers to the survey questions. Answers were similar, regardless of gender.

Next, in Chapter 5, I will discuss the findings, compare the journalists' results to the results of the college student and senior citizens surveys, detail the limitations in the research, and list areas of future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion

"... the quality of the news about modern society is an index of its social organization. The better the institutions, the more all interests concerned are formally represented, the more issues are disentangled, the more objective criteria are introduced, the more perfectly an affair can be presented as news. At its best, the press is a servant and guardian of institutions; at its worst it is a means by which a few exploit social disorganization to their own ends. In the degree to which institutions fail to function, the unscrupulous journalist can fish in troubled waters, and the conscientious one must gamble with uncertainties." (Lippmann, 1922, p. 229)

The four hypotheses in this study were supported. Hypothesis 1 stated that newspaper journalists will believe that, as a group, they are doing a good job fulfilling the watchdog function. Some 93.6% of journalists surveyed said they believed newspapers overall were good watchdogs for the public. The journalists were also asked to rate how newspapers are doing fulfilling the watchdog function on an 11-point scale, with 0 meaning the worst possible job, 5 meaning neutral, and 10 meaning the best possible job. The average rating of the journalists sampled was 7.57 out of 10. Likewise, Hypothesis 2, which stated that journalists would believe that they, as individuals, were doing a good job fulfilling the watchdog function, was also supported. An overwhelming 77.78% of journalists said they thought that as individuals they were good watchdogs for the public. The responses to Hypotheses 1 and 2 are not a surprise. As stated earlier, surveys have indicated that journalists believe that the watchdog function is important to journalism (Pew Research Center, 2008; Weaver & Wilhoit, 2006). Because the watchdog function

is so ingrained in what it means to be a journalist, to fail at the watchdog function would mean failing as a journalist. Being a watchdog is vital part of the role conception of many journalists, and some of the qualitative responses supported that. One copy editor wrote "Yes" to being a good individual watchdog for the public. Here is how that editor explained it, "I am a copy editor so this is not really my role in the process, but I try to stay alert to what is going on in my town (a suburb of where the paper is based) and alert the editor in charge of my area if I hear about anything fishy." Another respondent wrote, "I see that as the major task for journalists -- shine the light into the dark corners and let residents/taxpayers/voters know what is going on. If we don't, what credible source of information will people have?"

Hypothesis 3 stated that newspaper journalists will believe that the organizations for which they work are doing a good job fulfilling the watchdog function of the media. Hypothesis 3 was supported. When asked, 87.5% of journalists surveyed said their newspaper was a good watchdog for the public.

Hypothesis 4 stated that newspaper journalists will cite time restraints as a major reason for journalists' failure to do watchdog journalism. Hypothesis 4 is supported. Respondents were asked to rate a list of items that could negatively impact watchdog journalism on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning the item had no effect at all on hurting journalist's watchdog ability and 10 meaning the item had the strongest possible effect on hurting journalists' watchdog ability. "Lack of time" had an average rating of 9.36 on a scale of 10. The only item with a higher value on the scale, meaning journalists believe it had a stronger negative effect on the watchdog function, was "Lack of staffing" with an

average rating of 9.87 out of 10. Mentions of lack of staff and lack of time are throughout the qualitative comments submitted by journalists.

What is clear from the survey results is that journalists think that both newspapers and they themselves are doing a good job with the watchdog function. And the list of stories they present as examples does make an impressive statement. However, what is also clear from the qualitative comments, is that some journalists A) wish they could do more and B) do not think their newspapers are doing as good of a job holding the government and those in power accountable as they once did. Several journalists made references to doing more stories or having more resources to do more watchdog stories before the job cuts started. The Research Questions delved more deeply into some of these areas.

Research Question 1 asked what stories newspaper journalist would cite as examples of good and bad journalism. The most popular response for the good watchdog story was the *Los Angeles Times*' coverage of corruption in Bell, CA, a story that won the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for public service. Interestingly, no college student or senior citizen surveyed chose that example. That may be because the college students and senior citizens were not aware of it because they live on the East Coast and do not see the *Times*, or it could be a reflection that Pulitzer Prizes mean more to journalists than to the general public. The most popular example for bad watchdog journalism tended to focus on the lack of resources, staff or time that the journalist's newsroom had.

Research Question 2 asked if there were any major differences in responses based on the experience level or gender of the newspaper journalist. The responses to questions were similar. However, it should be noted that the biggest differences was between the

experience level of the journalist and the gender of the journalist, and the job title and gender. Of the editors who responded to the survey, 36.7% were male and 21.2% were female. More than half of the male respondents -- 53.13% -- had 31 years of journalism experience or more, compared to 15.15 years experience for female respondents. The differences seem logical. Everbach and Flournoy (2007) stated in their research on why women leave newspapers that although women have been the majority of journalism graduates since the early 1980s, their representation in newsrooms has stayed largely the same, percentage-wise.

It should be noted that not all journalists welcomed the survey. One reporter emailed me to say he found the questions confusing and that he wanted to call me, but I had not included a phone number, which further irritated him. He said he had no idea what other newspapers were doing and did not understand why he was being asked. Another journalist said he found the questions repetitive. Conversely, three other journalists emailed me to thank me for inviting them to participate in the survey. One journalist from a Spanish language newspaper said she was happy to have the chance to participate. Another journalist e-mailed that she had filled the survey out and wrote, "Thank you for caring about journalism."

Comparisons with the Contextual Surveys

Two non-probability samples of college students and senior citizens were asked some of the same survey questions as the journalists were. The college student sample was made up of a total of 55 college students who were Journalism and Broadcasting majors. The mean age of the students was 22.6 years. The median age of the students was

21 years. The oldest student was 46 years old, and the youngest student was 18 years old. The breakdown by gender is 56.4% male and 43.6% female. The senior citizen sample was made up of a total of 37 senior citizens. Some of the respondents only answered some of the questions. The mean age of the seniors was 75 years. The median age of the seniors was 76 years. The oldest was 97 years old, and the youngest was 60 years old. More than twice as many female seniors took the survey as male seniors. The breakdown by gender of the 35 respondents who answered the question is 31.4% (n=11) male and 68.6% (n=24) female.

To put it simply, the samples of college students and seniors citizens I surveyed did not think journalists are doing as well as the journalists *themselves* think they are doing. While 93.6% of journalists surveyed believed newspapers overall were doing a good job fulfilling the watchdog function, 69.1% of college students surveyed and 73.5% of senior citizens surveyed believed the same (Figure 7). Also, when asked to rate how newspapers were doing with fulfilling the watchdog function on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being best possible coverage, the average rating by journalists was 7.57, while the average ratings by college students and seniors were 6.33 and 6.09, respectively (Figure 8). Note that the rating of the seniors -- 6.09 -- is not much above 5, which means "neutral" on the scale. A complete listing of all college student and senior citizen ratings of the watchdog function can be found in Tables 8 and 9.

Figure 7. Percent Believing Newspapers Overall Are Good Watchdogs

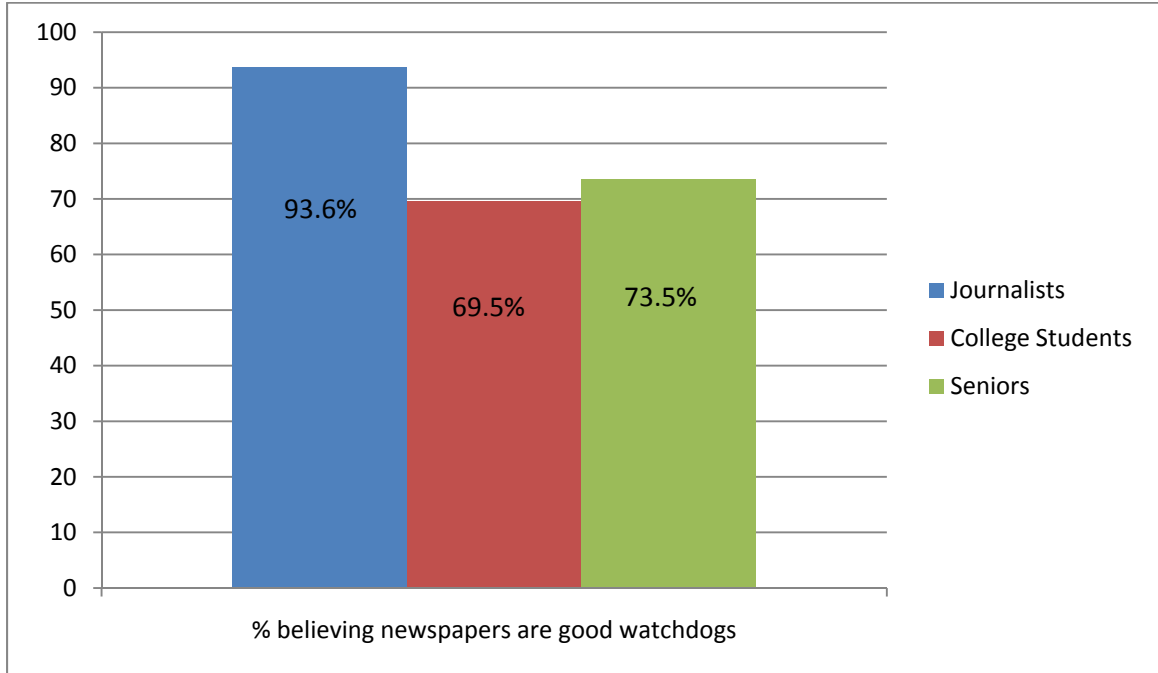


Figure 8. Mean Ratings for Newspapers Overall and Watchdog Function

(0=worst possible job, 5=neutral, 10=best possible job)

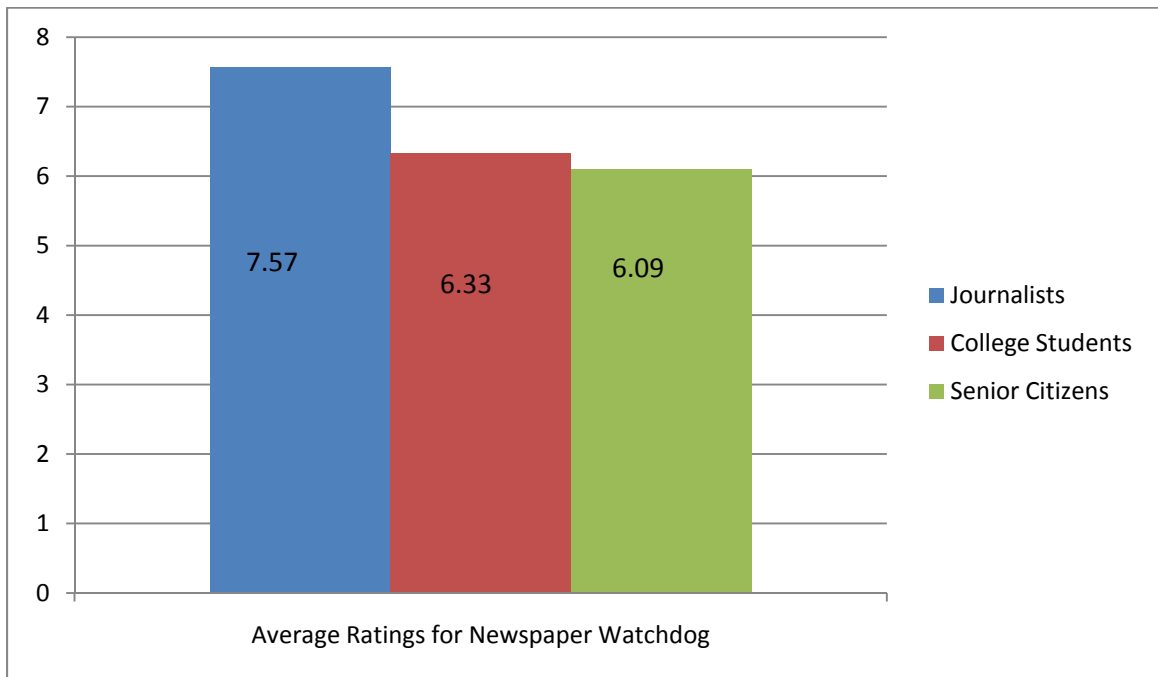


Table 8. Frequencies for Student Ratings of Newspaper Watchdog Fulfillment
(0=worst job, 5=neutral, 10=best job)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals
0% (0)	3.6% (2)	5.5% (3)	3.6% (2)	10.9% (4)	25.5% (14)	25.5% (14)	21.8% (12)	1.8% (1)	1.8% (1)	0% (1)	100%* (55)

*rounding may make total appear larger than it is

Table 9. Frequencies for Senior Citizen Ratings of Newspaper Watchdog Fulfillment
(0=worst job, 5=neutral, 10=best job)

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Totals
6.1% (2)	3% (1)	3% (1)	6.1% (2)	18.2% (6)	3% (1)	36.4% (12)	18.2% (6)	0% (0)	6.1% (2)	0% (0)	100%* (33)

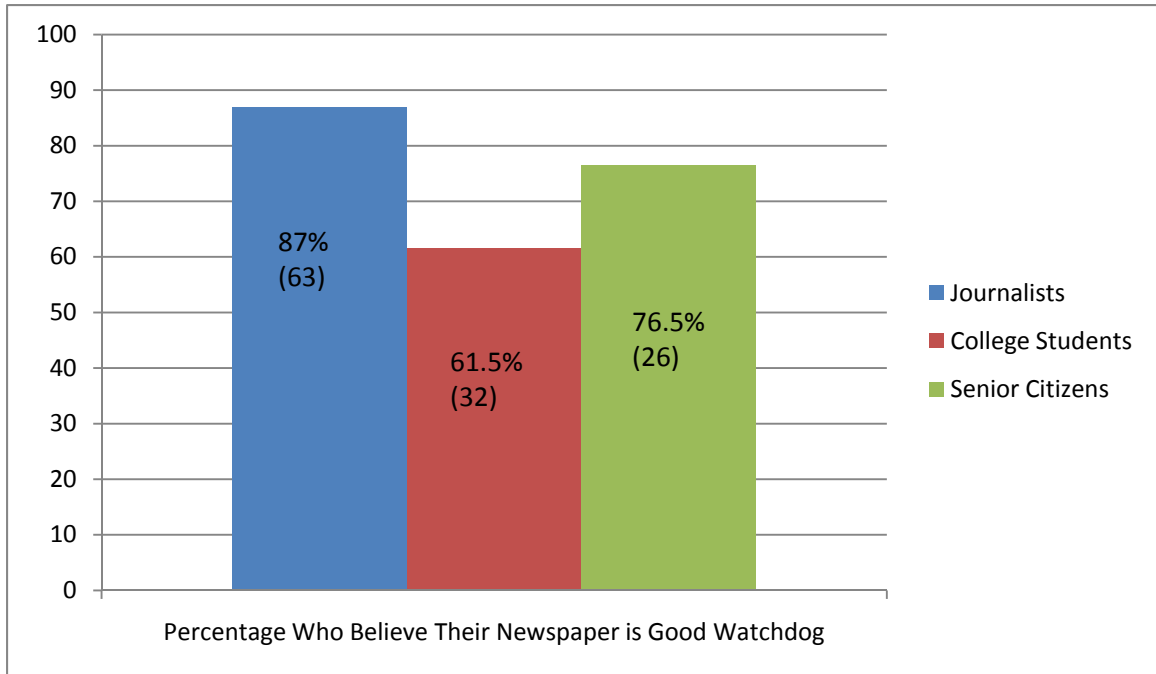
*rounding may make total appear larger than it is

Comparisons of how journalists believed *their* newspapers were doing with the watchdog function with how the college student and senior citizens believed whatever newspaper they considered to be *their* newspapers was doing with the watchdog function revealed similar discrepancies. While 87% of journalists believed their newspapers were doing a good job, 61.5% of college students and 76.5% of senior citizens said they felt the same way (Figure 9). It is possible that the much lower percentage of college students believing that their newspaper was a good watchdog stemmed from the fact that some cited their college newspaper as their newspaper in the qualitative comments. College newspapers are not traditionally good watchdogs.

This difference between the journalists and my student and senior samples is consistent with what has been said in national polls. In fact, one could argue that it is

surprising that the difference between the journalists and the college students and seniors is not greater. Only 28% of Americans surveyed by Gallup have "a great deal/quite a lot" of confidence in newspapers (Morales, 2011). That's actually an increase from 2004,

Figure 9. Percentages Believing Their Newspapers Are Good Watchdogs



when only 22% had "a great deal/quite a lot" of confidence in newspapers. In the early 1990s, 39% had "a great deal/quite a lot" of confidence in newspapers (Morales, 2011). According to the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (2010b), 27% of Democrats, 17% of Independents and 18% of Republicans believe "all or most" of what their daily newspaper says. Percentages were higher for believing "all or most" of what the top three circulation U.S. daily newspapers say, but never reached more than 33% (See Table 10).

Table 10. Percentage Believing "All or Most" of what newspaper says

<u>Newspaper</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Independent</u>
Your Daily Newspaper	27%	18%	17%
Wall Street Journal	33%	28%	19%
USA Today	20%	16%	13%
New York Times	31%	14%	16%

Source: Pew Research Center for the People and the Press

Like the journalists, the college students and senior citizens were also asked to cite examples of good or bad watchdog journalism. To some degree, the public had different ideas of what constitutes good and bad watchdog journalism. A few college students cited Watergate, as did journalists. But mainly college students and seniors citizens lacked specificity when giving examples of watchdog journalism (good or bad), and if they were specific, it tended to focus on some kind of political coverage. General statements of support for newspapers and what they do as well as complaints about everything from the size of the newspaper to the bias perceived to be in its pages were common in the examples. In some cases, what some college students and seniors cited as watchdog journalism -- for example, tracking illnesses in a town or straight reporting on a statement from President Obama-- is not necessarily. It is providing basic information about what is happening in the community and the world. Yet it is important to them, and they grouped it with watchdog journalism.

In the 38 examples that college students cited for good newspaper watchdog journalism in general, three themes could be found. (All examples the colleges students listed are available in Appendix D.) The first theme was the lack of specificity in some of the examples. Eight respondents wrote generally about newspapers, including statements such as "I trust what they print! ex. [sic] Osama dead" and "They keep everyone on edge." A second theme was the link between newspapers and the perception of good political coverage, especially at election time. For example, "They fulfill their watchdog function when writing stories based on political candidates so that you see what government and government officials are really doing and what their thoughts and values are on certain topics." A third theme was historically important articles. At least five examples cited the work of Woodward and Bernstein and/or Watergate -- or as one student wrote, "Water Gate Playa."

In the 16 examples college students cited as examples of a failure of newspapers to fulfill their watchdog function, bias was the top concern. Almost half of the posts, seven, mentioned bias as a worry and/or reason not to trust the reporting of a newspaper. One student wrote, "Newspapers, on a political level, have a certain bias that clouds the accuracy of reporting." A second concern was sensationalism. A respondent wrote, "They are sensationalized a lot of time and want to be the first one to come out w/ new info and sometimes get info wrong"

When it came to the news in their newspaper, whatever college students considered that to be, two themes emerged. The first theme is lack of specificity, just as before. Of the total of 26 responses citing good examples of watchdog journalism in their papers, 12 were general. One respondent wrote, "Newspaper give [sic] us quick and

credible information." Another said, "Sometimes if I don't have time to watch news on t.v. [sic] I can read the newspaper and get a clear summary of what's going on in the media." The second theme focused on the student newspaper at the college. Ten students brought up recent stories in the newspaper. Eight of them cited the same example of watchdog journalism, an on-going controversy with student government at the college. The other two cited a lack of coverage of Greek life on campus and the limited size of the paper's staff as failures related to the watchdog function. Of the total 16 responses to cite poor watchdog journalism in the newspaper the respondent considered to be his/her newspaper, the theme was the same as with newspapers in general: Bias. "There is a massive liberal slant in my newspaper. Buffalo is very liberal," one student wrote. Another said, "They appear to be selective and biased in their reporting. You can see a clear line between city v. suburb stories."

Senior citizens also provided examples of good or bad watchdog journalism. (All examples the senior citizens listed are available in Appendix D.) A total of 17 seniors provided stories of good watchdog coverage overall for newspapers. The senior citizens tended to focus on local politics for their examples. Eight of the stories seniors cited as example involved coverage of politics, mainly local politics. One senior wrote, "Our local newspaper did an excellent job at [sic] keeping the public informed about the school board budgets/elections that were just held. My hometown paper also did a great job with their budget/election information." Follow-up coverage of the Gulf War oil spill and safety inspections related to it, the war in Libya and "when they let us know about diseases in the area" were also mentioned. Several people only wrote generically about

newspapers and the information they provide. One offered criticism: "They are all one sided. For example, Obama. They were all for him."

Only one of the seven items given as an answer to the question about bad watchdog reporting was an actual specific story. "The local paper wrote a piece about the desire of the county government to sell the county nursing home to a private firm," one senior wrote. "This came as a surprise to many people as the county had just spent a lot of money to upgrade the nursing home. The article just gave the government take on the situation without looking further into it." The other six responses to the question were complaints about newspapers. "I don't feel others matter to anyone anymore ... anything goes to sell papers," one respondent wrote. "Bad news is all that is fit to print," another senior said. One senior's hand-written response filled up the front and back of a page. She wrote:

Newspapers appear to adjust the news to their own agenda. When a newsworthy story breaks, you can compare notes to find the roots of the story in other papers only to discover they do not jibe; either facts or data are often incorrect. The use of adjectives and adverbs can convey biases, whether from journalists or the editors, that have the power to bend people towards believing what eventually is revealed as incorrect data, and in some cases actual lies. Paper watchdogs verify their information before putting it out, using enough feeds to make sure what they're reporting is correct. What happened to truth in journalism?

Seniors were asked to provide examples of good and bad watchdog journalism in whatever they considered their newspaper to be. Of the 18 responses for an example of good watchdog journalism, four mentioned specific stories. The stories include an

investigation of the county airport, details of a proposition that was to be voted upon, and an examination of properties owned and back taxes owed by political candidates. Other responses generically discussed items such as investigating "government corruption." One respondent wrote, "I believe my newspaper is a good watchdog for the public if they have enough time [sic] to monitor meetings and check on officials. Not all stories get the newspapers['] attention due to lack of time and reporters. On most stories the watchdog function is fulfilled." Others complained, "It's all garbage" and "It keeps getting smaller."

Of the two examples of a failure to do watchdog journalism on the local level, one senior stated that there was a lack of investigative journalism and said newspapers "just copy stories out there." The other senior said this:

An illiterate journalist, or even a poorly-schooled typesetter, can really upset the applecart, creating situations that cause the local government members to find themselves drowning in hot water. Our local government has had a time with poorly written articles that pilloried candidates even before the elections. The owners have, on occasion, had to eat crow for an incorrect data problem leading to candidate bashing. The corrections are seldom on the first page, however. The readers in this area often depend on one paper for their news, and form opinions based on faulty reporting.

What is clear from the responses of both the college students and the senior citizens is that, regardless of their age, many of them value newspaper journalism, even in cases in which they hope the journalism improves.

No research question or hypothesis directly addressed what the public thought caused the strongest negative effect on watchdog reporting, but that data was gathered

from the college student and senior citizen samples surveyed. Journalists had rated "Lack of staffing" and "Lack of Time" as the two issues with the strongest ability to have a negative effect on the watchdog function. College students rated "No touch topics," meaning topics a newsroom/reporters have been told to avoid by higher ups, and "A journalist's biases based on race" as the number one and number two issues, respectively, that they thought were having a negative effect on journalists' ability to fulfill the watchdog function. Senior citizens rated "A journalist's boss's biases based on race" and "no touch topics," as the number one and number two issues affecting the watchdog function, respectively. It is interesting that racial biases and "no touch topics" were perceived to be problems impacting the watchdog function by both students and seniors. For journalists, those two issues were rated as having close to no effect.

One 87-year-old senior said she did not think advertisers could impact the watchdog function. "I just don't think that would come into being," she said. A 64-year-old senior had the opposite opinion, saying he believed advertisers had a "strong influence, certainly" on the watchdog function of newspapers.

Another 80-year-old said lack of experience should never impact the watchdog function. "Don't bosses look over and guide them?" she said.

And one 84-year-old man would not even entertain the idea that there might be issues or items limiting the watchdog function. "If you are going to do a story, do it," he said.

Limitations

Surveys inherently have two limitations. The first is getting people to respond. The journalist survey had 19% of those invited to take the survey answer at least one question, but not all journalists answered all questions. Several journalists contacted me to say that they were not going to respond to the survey because of lack of time. One said he gets so many email invitations for online surveys that he has stopped replying to all of them. Those that do not respond to the survey can create what is known as a "nonresponse bias," meaning that those respondents who do not respond to the survey are significantly different than those who do (Fowler, 2009). So, for example, if the 400-plus journalists who did not respond to the survey did not care about watchdog journalism, those voices are not included in the results. There is no way of knowing how those non-respondents are different. The second limitation is the risk that what someone reports in a survey is not true or gives a false perception. That is not to allege that anyone would lie. It is simply that how we see ourselves and our situation may not be how others see us. It is socially desirable for a journalist to purport wanting to do more with the watchdog function and to be a good watchdog to help the public. Therefore, he or she may say they care about it when they do not. Hopefully, the anonymity helped respondents feel it was safe to be honest. And although there are qualitative answers on the survey, that does not guarantee full context for what is being said in the answer.

Although the journalists were randomly selected from the top 100 newspapers, both the college student and senior citizen samples were non-probability samples, meaning we have no way of knowing if results from these samples in any way represent the larger population (Babbie, 2001). The college student sample was a convenience

sample of available participants. The senior citizen samples were a mix of convenience and snowball samples.

Because of the mostly Caucasian areas these samples were taken from, very few minorities are represented in the sample. In the college student sample, only four students were African American and two students Asian. In the senior citizen sample, there were three African Americans and one Asian. The views of the college students and senior citizens in the samples might be different from the population as a whole, which is more diverse. The college student sample also was made up of journalism and broadcasting majors, many of who learned about the watchdog function as part of their major. Therefore, they might not represent the views of college students as a whole, who may not be as sensitive to the watchdog function and might not read newspapers as often as the journalism and broadcasting majors do.

It is also possible that there is little racial or ethnic diversity in the respondents to the journalism survey. There is no way to know because the question was not asked. Only a limited number of questions that might personally identify someone were asked. Those included gender, job title, and years as a journalist.

The survey also did not ask college students and seniors how often they read newspapers. That could be important data, because frequent readers might have a much different sense of how newspapers are doing than those who seldom read the newspaper. There also was no question about whether the student or senior read the newspaper online or in print form. Fewer stories can be highlighted on the front page of a web site than the front page of a newspaper. Potentially, that could impact responses related to the

watchdog function. Although it is unlikely that a significant portion of seniors read the newspapers online, it is entirely possible that a large portion of the college students do.

Future Research

Because of the importance of the watchdog function to inform the public of what their political leaders are doing, more research needs to be done. This research should be expanded to include television journalists at the local and national levels. As the recently released Federal Communications Commission report *The Information Needs of Communities* noted, television news departments have also faced staff cutbacks (Waldman et al., 2011). According to the Radio Television Digital News Association, local TV newsrooms are nearly 1,300 fewer staffers now than they did in 2007 (Staffing and profitability, 2011). Although some might argue that the American public has more choices than ever on where to get its news, the report states, "An abundance of media outlets does not translate into an abundance of reporting. In many communities, there are now more outlets, but less local accountability reporting" (Waldman et al, 2011, p. 6). To support that claim, the report cites a 2010 Pew Research Center Project for Excellence in Journalism study on the "news ecosystem" of Baltimore, MD, which found that although there were 53 different media outlets providing news, 95% of the stories of the in those outlets "were based on reporting done by traditional media (mostly the *Baltimore Sun*)" (Waldman et al., 2011, p. 16). This is, of course, one case study, but if this is true in other cities, what does it say for the future of journalism if most of the reporting comes from the newspaper and the newspaper has cut staff and funding for investigative stories?

The current survey of journalists was done with a web survey. Future research could involve longer, in-depth interviews with a sample of journalists to expand upon some of the issues the journalists mentioned. For example, one of the journalists mentioned not being as aggressive with some sources because they may end up being future employers. This is an honest response. It is not uncommon for a journalist to go into PR or government work after leaving journalism. This speaks to the reality of having to pay one's bills and that making ends meet might necessarily take precedence over the watchdog function for some. In a climate where thousands of newspaper journalists have lost their jobs, it is difficult to believe this journalist is the only one thinking about a future beyond journalism. How many other journalists feel the same way and simply did not say it?

Future research could also involve in-person interviews with a wider range of senior citizens, college students and people in their 30s and 40s to better gauge their responses to what is happening in newspaper journalism.

Perhaps what would be most helpful would be more research into how to make sure watchdog journalism continues. Yes, some online, non-profit sites have started in an attempt to cover some of what they perceive is not being done, but there are also experienced journalists in newspaper newsrooms around the country who lack the time and resources to do the kind of watchdog journalism they would like to do. Future research could examine how best to utilize those journalists. As one journalist wrote in his survey comments, "Our reporting ranks are diminished. There is more of an emphasis on daily copy, instead of spending weeks or months on a deep probe. Some investigative work still happens but not nearly as much as ten or even five years ago." Another echoed,

"If you had asked me if we were doing as much as before the drastic downsizing, I would say no." Future research might examine what some of the top thinkers *outside* of journalism think could be done to improve this situation.

Perhaps the best way to end this dissertation is with two quotations. The first is a reminder of why some journalists get into the field. "I can do more. I should do more," one journalist wrote in a survey response. "This is why I stay in journalism. If I wanted a fun job, I'd go get paid for real. The public service is the point for me."

As a former journalist and a researcher, statements like these reaffirm why I sought a career in journalism and why I research the field today. Some of the journalists' qualitative responses were more forthright than I had anticipated. They make the metaphorical alarm sounding about the future of newspapers, and indeed, about the future of journalism itself, louder and more urgent.

The second quotation with which I would like to end comes from two-time-Pulitzer-Prize-winning newspaper columnist and editor Walter Lippmann, a man whose thoughts have been sprinkled throughout this dissertation:

*"There can be no higher law in journalism than to tell the truth
and shame the devil."*

(Lippmann, *Liberty and the News*, p. 13)

It is up to journalists and journalism scholars to make sure that journalism keeps at its core "telling that truth and shaming that devil."

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Appendix A

2011 Online Survey of U.S. Daily Newspaper Journalists

at Top 100 Daily Circulation U.S. Newspapers

Welcome

This study is being conducted by Marsha Ducey under the supervision of Dr. Tom Feeley in the Department of Communication, University at Buffalo. The purpose of this study is to learn your opinions about national news coverage and the watchdog function. The study will clarify how print journalists think newspapers are doing covering the news.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate, to refuse to answer particular questions and to withdraw from this study at any time. Should you choose to withdraw from the study, simply click out of the survey.

This research study is intended for adult participants who are 18 years of age and over. If you are not yet 18, please do not participate in this study.

The survey includes 33 questions. Some questions have multiple parts. The survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

There are no known risks to you for participating in this survey. There is likely no direct benefit to you either. You will not be paid for participating in this study. But your input will help scholars and those interested in journalism learn about what journalists value and what they think of current news coverage.

This is an anonymous survey. At no time are you asked for your name. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the survey. We will not secretly keep your e-mail address. We will not leave cookies (identifying files) on your system. We provide a secure web server to protect against intermediate sites from intercepting your data. Please note that because you are answering questions via the Internet, your anonymity cannot be absolutely guaranteed. It may not be wise to answer the survey in a coffee shop or library. Be sure to quit the web browser after finishing the study so people cannot "go back" to the pages you completed.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact Marsha Ducey at mducey@buffalo.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in a research project, or questions, concerns or complaints about the research and wish to speak with someone who is not a member of the research team, you should contact (anonymously, if you wish) the Social and Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, 515 Capen, University at Buffalo, Buffalo, NY 14260, e-mail SBSIRB@research.buffalo.edu, phone 716 / 645- 6474.

By responding to this survey, you are verbally consenting to participate in this research. Thank you for your time.

The following questions deal with the state of newspaper journalism. Please answer honestly.

Do you think newspapers overall are good watchdogs for the public? (Watchdog in this question refers to the media's responsibility to monitor government and those in power, hold government officials and those in power accountable and tell the public what is going on in government. Some people call these investigative stories.)

Yes

No

If the survey respondent answered yes to question 1, he/she was brought to question 1A. If the survey respondent answered no, he/she was brought to question 1B.

1A. Please give an example in which you think newspapers fulfilled their watchdog function and explain why.

When you are ready to go to the next question, please click "Continue" below and then click "Next."

1B. Please give an example in which you think newspapers failed to fulfill their watchdog function and explain why.

When you are ready to go on to the next question, please click "Continue" below and then click "Next."

2. Do you think that YOUR newspaper is a good watchdog for the public? (Again, watchdog in this question refers to the press's responsibility to monitor government and those in power, hold government officials and those in power accountable and tell the public what is going on in government. Some people call these investigative stories.)

Yes

No

If the survey respondent answered yes to question 2, he/she was brought to question 2A. If the survey respondent answered no, he/she was brought to question 2B.

2A. Please give an example in which you think your newspaper fulfilled its watchdog function and explain why.

When you are ready to go on to the next question, please click "Continue" and then click "Next."

2B. Please give an example in which you think your newspaper failed to fulfill its watchdog function and explain why.

When you are ready to go on to the next question, please click "Continue" and then click "Next."

3. Do you think that YOU are a good watchdog for the public? (Again, watchdog in this question refers to the media's responsibility to monitor government and those in power, hold government officials and those in power accountable and tell the public what is going on in government. Some people call these investigative stories.)

Yes

No

Other (please specify)

Please answer Questions 4-9 by picking a value on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning no effect at all and 10 meaning strongest possible effect. (5 is neutral.)

To what degree, if any, do you think the following HURT journalists' ability to act as "watchdogs" for the public?

	0--No Effect	1	2	3	4	5--Neutral	6	7	8	9	10--Strongest Possible Effect
4. Journalists' friendships with sources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. A journalist's biases based on gender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Lack of staffing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. A journalist's biases based on race	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Influence of advertisers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. "No touch topics" (This means topics a newsroom/reporters have been told to avoid by higher-ups.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer Questions 10-15 by picking a value on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning no effect at all and 10 meaning strongest possible effect. (5 is neutral.)

To what degree, if any, do you think the following HURT journalists' ability to act as "watchdogs" for the public?

	0--No Effect	1	2	3	4	5--Neutral	6	7	8	9	10--Strongest Possible Effect
10. A journalist's boss's biases based on race	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Lack of time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Lack of experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. A journalist's boss's biases based on gender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Lack of training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. Education level of journalist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. If you think that there are any potential limitations that did not appear in the previous list, please list them here. If not, please click "Next."

Please answer Questions 17-21 by picking a value on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning no effect at all and 10 meaning strongest possible effect. (5 is neutral.)

To what degree, if any, do you think the following HELP journalists' ability to act as "watchdogs" for the public?

	0--No Effect	1	2	3	4	5--Neutral	6	7	8	9	10--Strongest Possible Effect
17. Journalists' friendships with sources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. A journalist's biases based on gender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. Lack of staffing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. A journalist's biases based on race	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Influence of advertisers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer Questions 22-28 by picking a value on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning no effect at all and 10 meaning strongest possible effect. (5 is neutral.)

To what degree, if any, do you think the following HELP journalists' ability to act as "watchdogs" for the public?

	0--No Effect	1	2	3	4	5--Neutral	6	7	8	9	10--Strongest Possible Effect
22. "No touch topics" (This means topics a newsroom/reporters have been told to avoid by higher-ups.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. A journalist's boss's biases based on race	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. Lack of time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. Lack of experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. A journalist's boss's biases based on gender	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. Lack of training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. Education level of journalist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

29. If there were any items that help journalists that you believe were left off the list, please specify them here. Otherwise, please click "Next."

30. What is your job? Please choose the most appropriate category.

Reporter

Editor

Other (please specify)

31. How many years have you been a journalist?

32. What gender are you?

Male

Female

33. Please answer the following question on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being the worst possible job, 5 being neutral and 10 being the best possible job.

How do you think newspapers are doing fulfilling the watchdog function?

	0--No Effect	1	2	3	4	5--Neutral	6	7	8	9	10-- Strongest Possible Effect
Newspaper Evaluation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Thank You!

Thank you for participating in this survey. I truly appreciate your time and responses. If you have any questions about the survey or would like a copy of the summary of the results, please contact me at mducey@buffalo.edu.

Marsha Ducey, University at Buffalo

Appendix B

List of the Top 100 Daily Circulation U.S. Newspapers

(Audit Bureau of Circulation, for six months ending September 30, 2010)

Newspaper	Circulation
1. <i>Wall Street Journal</i>	2,061,142
2. <i>USA Today</i>	1,830,594
3. <i>The New York Times</i>	876,638
4. <i>Los Angeles (CA) Times</i>	600,449
5. <i>The Washington Post</i>	545,345
6. <i>Daily News (NY)</i>	512,520
7. <i>New York Post</i>	501,501
8. <i>The San Jose (NM) Mercury News</i>	477,592
9. <i>Chicago (IL) Tribune</i>	441,506
10. <i>Houston (TX) Chronicle</i>	343,952
11. <i>Philadelphia (PA) Inquirer</i>	342,361
12. <i>Newsday (NY)</i>	314,848
13. <i>The Denver (CO) Post</i>	309,863
14. <i>The Arizona Republic</i>	308,973
15. <i>Minneapolis (MN) Star Tribune</i>	297,478
16. <i>Dallas (TX) Morning News</i>	264,459
17. <i>Cleveland (OH) Plain Dealer</i>	252,608
18. <i>Seattle (WA) Times</i>	251,697
19. <i>Chicago (IL) Sun-Times</i>	250,747
20. <i>Detroit (MI) Free Press</i>	245,326
21. <i>St. Petersburg (FL) Times</i>	239,684
22. <i>The Oregonian</i>	239,071

23. <i>The San Diego (CA) Union-Tribune</i>	224,761
24. <i>San Francisco (CA) Chronicle</i>	223,549
25. <i>The (NJ) Star-Ledger</i>	223,037
26. <i>The Boston (MA) Globe</i>	222,683
27. <i>St. Louis (MO) Post-Dispatch</i>	207,145
28. <i>The Kansas City (MO) Star</i>	206,441
29. <i>The Sacramento (CA) Bee</i>	205,531
30. <i>St. Paul (MN) Pioneer Press</i>	185,736
31. <i>Milwaukee (WI) Journal Sentinel</i>	183,636
32. <i>The Indianapolis (IN) Star</i>	182,933
33. <i>The Orange County (CA) Register</i>	182,391
34. <i>The Atlanta (GA) Journal-Constitution</i>	181,504
35. <i>El Nuevo Dia (Puerto Rico)</i>	181,131
36. <i>The Pittsburgh (PA) Post-Gazette</i>	181,058
37. <i>The Pittsburgh (PA) Tribune-Review</i>	179,695
38. <i>The Baltimore (MD) Sun</i>	178,455
39. <i>The Arkansas Democrat-Gazette</i>	177,633
40. <i>The Orlando (FL) Sentinel</i>	172,271
41. <i>The Buffalo (NY) News</i>	160,316
42. <i>The Louisville (KY) Courier-Journal</i>	159,275
43. <i>The Cincinnati (OH) Enquirer</i>	157,574
44. <i>The Virginian Pilot</i>	156,968
45. <i>The Charlotte (NC) Observer</i>	155,955
46. <i>The Fort Worth (TX) Star-Telegram</i>	153,546
47. <i>Miami (FL) Herald</i>	151,612
48. <i>Las Vegas (NV) Review-Journal</i>	150,403
49. <i>South Florida Sun-Sentinel</i>	149,892

50. <i>The Columbus (OH) Dispatch</i>	149,420
51. <i>The Hackensack (NJ) Record</i>	149,090
52. <i>The Detroit (MI) News</i>	146,962
53. <i>The Tampa (FL) Tribune</i>	145,045
54. <i>Omaha (NB) World-Herald</i>	143,721
55. <i>The (LA) Times-Picayune</i>	144,294
56. <i>The Oklahoman</i>	138,493
57. <i>The Hartford (CT) Courant</i>	134,751
58. <i>San Antonio (TX) Express-News</i>	130,566
59. <i>The Raleigh (VA) News & Observer</i>	130,566
60. <i>Austin (TX) American-Statesman</i>	127,727
61. <i>The Tennessean</i>	127,538
62. <i>Boston (MA) Herald</i>	124,691
63. <i>Investor's Business Daily</i>	122,493
64. <i>The Memphis (TN) Commercial Appeal</i>	121,684
65. <i>The Rochester (NY) Democrat and Chronicle</i>	119,399
66. <i>The Richmond (VA) Times-Dispatch</i>	118,489
67. <i>The Toledo (OH) Blade</i>	114,308
68. <i>The Asbury Park (NJ) Press</i>	112,683
69. <i>The Fresno (CA) Bee</i>	110,427
70. <i>The Riverside (CA) Press-Enterprise</i>	110,076
71. <i>The Birmingham (AL) News</i>	109,727
72. <i>The Salt Lake (UT) Tribune</i>	109,703
73. <i>The Des Moines (IL) Register</i>	109,095
74. <i>The Florida Times-Union</i>	108,926
75. <i>The Arlington Heights (IL) Daily Herald</i>	104,297
76. <i>The Palm Beach (FL) Post</i>	100,830

77. <i>The Grand Rapids (MI)</i>	97,822
78. <i>The Providence (RI) Journal</i>	96,595
79. <i>The Dayton (OH) Daily News</i>	95,365
80. <i>The Allentown (PA) Morning Call</i>	94,859
81. <i>The Tulsa (OK) World</i>	93,558
82. <i>The Akron (OH) Beacon Journal</i>	92,856
83. <i>The Knoxville (TN) News Sentinel</i>	91,697
84. <i>The Lexington (KY) Herald-Leader</i>	91,518
85. <i>The Arizona Daily Star</i>	90,604
86. <i>The Albuquerque (NM) Journal</i>	90,079
87. <i>The Los Angeles (CA) Daily News</i>	89,091
88. <i>The Wisconsin State Journal</i>	87,950
89. <i>The Wilmington (DE) News Journal</i>	87,138
90. <i>The Mobile (AL) Press-Register</i>	85,967
91. <i>The Syracuse (NY) Post-Standard</i>	85,015
92. <i>The Times of Northwest Indiana</i>	83,877
93. <i>The Tacoma (WA) News Tribune</i>	82,855
94. <i>The Baton Rouge (LA) Advocate</i>	82,248
95. <i>The Charleston (SC) Post and Courier</i>	81,743
96. <i>The White Plains (NY) Journal News</i>	79,525
97. <i>La (CA) Opinion</i>	78,712
98. <i>Lancaster (PA) New Era</i>	78,060
99. <i>The Roanoke (VA) Times</i>	75,740
100. <i>The Columbia (SC) State</i>	75,615

Appendix C

2011 Survey of College Students and Senior Citizens

Survey Questions

The following questions deal with the state of newspaper journalism. Please circle your answer.

1. Do you think newspapers overall are good watchdogs for the public? (Watchdog in this question refers to the media's responsibility to monitor government and those in power, hold government officials and those in power accountable and tell the public what is going on in government. Some people call these investigative stories.)

Yes (Please go to Question 1A next.)

No (Please go to Question 1B next.)

1A. If you answered "Yes" to Question 1, please give an example in which you think newspapers fulfilled their watchdog function and explain why. (Please go to Question 2 next.)

1B. If you answered "No" to Question 1, please give an example in which you think newspapers failed to fulfill their watchdog function and explain why. (Please go to Question 2 next.)

2. Do you think that your newspaper is a good watchdog for the public? (Again, watchdog in this question refers to the press's responsibility to monitor government and those in power, hold government officials and those in power accountable and tell the public what is going on in government. Some people call these investigative stories.)

Yes (Please go to Question 2A next.)

No (Please go to Question 2B next.)

2A. If you answered “Yes” to Question 2, please give an example in which you think your newspaper fulfilled its watchdog function and explain why. (When done, please go to Question 3 next.)

2B. If you answered “No” to Question 2, please give an example in which you think your newspaper failed to fulfill its watchdog function and explain why. (When done, please go to Question 3 next.)

Please answer Questions 3-14 by picking a value on a scale of 0 to 10,

with 0 meaning no effect at all and 10 meaning strongest possible effect. (5 is neutral.)

To what degree, if any, do you think the following HURT journalists’ ability to act as “watchdogs” for the public?

	No Effect											Strongest Effect
3. Journalists’ friendships with sources	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
4. A journalist’s biases based on gender	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
5. Lack of staffing	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
6. A journalist’s biases based on race	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

- | | No
Effect | | | | | | | | | | | Strongest
Effect |
|--|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---------------------|
| 7. Influence of advertisers | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| 8. “No touch topics”
(This means topics a newsroom/
reporters have been told to avoid
by higher-ups.) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| 9. A journalist’s boss’s biases
based on race | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| 10. Lack of time | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| 11. Lack of experience | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| 12. A journalist’s boss’s
biases based on gender | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| 13. Lack of training | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| 14. Education level
of journalist | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | |
| 15. Are there any potential limitations that did not appear in the previous list that you think impact a journalist’s ability to be a good watchdog? | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Yes (Please go to Question 15a next.)

No (Please go to Question 16 next.)

15a. If you answered “Yes” to Question 15, please specify and explain.

Please answer Questions 16-27 by picking a value on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning no effect at all and 10 meaning strongest possible effect. (5 is neutral.)

To what degree, if any, do you think the following HELP journalists’ ability to act as “watchdogs” for the public?

	No Effect											Strongest Effect
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
16. Journalists’ friendships with sources	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
17. A journalist’s biases based on gender	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
18. Lack of staffing	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
19. A journalist’s biases based on race	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
20. Influence of advertisers	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
21. “No touch topics” (This means topics a newsroom/reporters have been told to avoid by higher-ups.)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
22. A journalist’s boss’s biases based on race	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
23. Lack of time	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
24. Lack of experience	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

	No Effect											Strongest Effect
25. A journalist's boss's biases based on gender	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
26. Lack of training	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
27. Education level of journalist	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

28. Are there any items that did not appear in the previous list that you think impact a journalist's ability to be a good watchdog?

Yes (Please go to Question 28a next.)

No (Please go to Question 29 next.)

28a. If you answered "Yes" to Question 28, please specify and explain.

29. What gender are you?

Male

Female

30. What age are you? _____

31. Please answer the following question on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being the worst possible job, 5 being neutral and 10 being the best possible job.

How do you think newspapers are doing fulfilling the watchdog function?

Worst

Best

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Closing—Thank You

Thank you for participating in this survey. I truly appreciate your time and responses. If you have any questions about the survey or would like a copy of the summary of the results, please contact me at mducey@brockport.edu or 395-5835.

Marsha Ducey, The College at Brockport Department of Communication

Appendix D

Qualitative Responses to 2011 Survey Questions

Survey of journalists, Question 16. If you think that there are any potential limitations that did not appear in the previous list, please list them here

"A lack of coherent direction from newsroom managers and editors. Newsroom cutbacks have depleted the ranks of skilled, experienced editors."
"Aggressive PR people who complain to newspaper bosses about negative coverage. This has a chilling effect on coverage."
"Brain drain in newsrooms and failure (lack of management time) to emphasize newsroom culture to newer people."
"Drastic funding issues at newspapers mean that reporters have to watch how much is spent from miles traveled to paying for copies tied to Open Records Requests."
"General timidity... the 'corporatizing' of newsgathering. I think generally newspapers are becoming more sympathetic to corporate interests than those of regular people."
"I basically think is lack of time and resources. Normally Spanish media has less economic budgets that English media. Sometimes there is only one reporter for investigative stories."
"I thought some of the questions suggested a bias on the part of the survey. I chose not to answer them."
"I was confused by the 'lack of training' and 'lack of education' questions. I don't that journalists lack that training or education at major daily newspapers. That probably is a problem at smaller papers as wages deteriorate [sic] and quality workers cannot be hired."
"lack of equipment such as computers and software that can crunch data."
"Lack of support from management. Most bosses support the idea of watchdog journalism; not many put their time and support on a daily basis behind it."
"Lack of time for coming up with well-thought-out, worthy ideas."

"Monetary Cost."
"nope. lack of staff's the big one. lack of commitment, day to day, perhaps of management."
"Polictical [sic] bias is far more detrimental than race or gender bias in diluting honest, neutral watchdog work, though gender and racial bias is ofetn [sic] part of the political bias package."
"Pressure to do 'online' and daily stories limits ability to devote time needed to investigative projects. Also space limits and pressure to write 'shorter' is also a factor, as is institutional bias against series.
"Reader interest. Many complain newspapers don't do enough of this work, but when it is presented, few seem to read it. We get more feedback on routine crime stories than on blow-out packages that take months to prepare."
"Staffing shortages mean a mad rush to fill the paper, which doesn't leave much time for in-depth, watchdog-style work."
"the individual's level of commitment and tenacity. obviously, that is a subjective measure."
"The shrinking newshole provides a limitation on in-depth reporting. Also, fear of appearing bias."
"The watchdog function of newspapers has been severely harmed by the huge staffing cuts in newsrooms nationally in the past three years."
"This limitation is happening now: The rise of the public's perception being shaped by ill-informed bloggers and so-called 'news' sites on the web that mix opinion in with facts. Readers then complain that newspapers aren't reporting the whole story or have biases of their own when, in fact, solid reporting done by newspaper journalists reveals that the 'opinion' on the blogger is not based on any fact, but some agenda on the part of the blogger."
"With layoffs looming each quarter, I am less aggressive with agencies that might potentially hire me if I lose my job. In an odd way, I'm feeling less loyalty to the people who are cutting my salary, working me longer hours, treating me with less respect and trashing my best writing efforts. There's no way your survey can account for Napoleonic approach that has settled into most management at newspapers."

Survey of journalists, Question 1A. Please give an example in which you think newspapers fulfilled their watchdog function and explain why.

"A couple of months ago, there was a story that revealed a secret agreement between the current California administration and the prison guards union that provides cash windfall to the officers when they retire. The guards are among Brown's largest political benefactor."
"A prime example of this is the LA Times and its 2011 Public Service Pulitzer Prize winning series of stories exposing corruption in the small California city of Bell. Had it not been for two Times reporters doing their jobs, which is to hold public officials accountable, it may have taken taxpayers years to realize that their leaders were getting rich from the citizen dime."
"Any story about government action or inaction can qualify--there are dozens of well-written examples daily nationwide."
"Assigning reporters to cover government at all levels and write stories about how policies and spending decisions impact citizens."
"At my own paper, we exposed how unfair police were treating Latinos based on a disproportionate number of arrests in that community compared to whites for drinking in public."
"At The Post-Standard in Syracuse, NY, we recently spent months keeping a close eye on what was happening in the Jordan-Elbridge school district. After fighting to get the director of operations' contract, we found she had received an unusual contract that would have guaranteed her a \$300,000 payment if she did not receive tenure. This was taxpayers' money and the residents of this school district were outraged when they learned what we had reported."
"Baltimore Sun's investigations into ground rents and misdeeds by Mayor Sheila Dixon, leading to her conviction and resignation."
"Bringing crimes to the public's notice, crimes that otherwise would not have been discovered. Watergate is a great example"
"County officials hiring so many family members whether qualified or not"
"Coverage of government spending, particularly at the local level and with the proliferation of LLC and LDCs in New York state."
"Day-to-day and detailed coverage of the workings of government at all levels - local, state and national. No other news outlet provides the depth, context and detail that newspapers do."

<p>"Despite being a struggling industry, newspaper reporters are still the folks on the frontlines monitoring local city councils, school districts, counties, etc. I think the LA Times coverage of the overpaid city leaders in a smaller nearby community is one of the best examples."</p>
<p>"FEMA response (or lack thereof) to Hurricane Katrina. Gubernatorial scandals (list too numerous to mention. Stories on abuse of tax funds."</p>
<p>"focusing on public agency waste"</p>
<p>"in chicago, [sic] the tribune busted blagejevich [sic] and saved innocent people from death row. the sun times got people, city workers, thrown in jail, in the hired truck scandal. the reader has explained tif [sic] spending and what a bum parking meter deal we all got."</p>
<p>"In NYC, the NY Daily News has a special investigative team that has exposed dangerous and deadly housing violations, massive city waste by hiring of consultants, Anthony Weiner's bizarre cybersex antics."</p>
<p>"In this economy, especially, newspapers are doing a better job of holding govt. accountable for money it spends."</p>
<p>"Indianapolis Star examination of emails between Duke Energy and the state; brought to light public/private connections taxpayers should know."</p>
<p>"L.A. Times series on huge salaries of city officials in Bell, Calif. Shined a light on an abuse of power and wrought changes."</p>
<p>"LA Times exposing outrageous salaries for small town; News Sentinel exposing chronic meth problems in East Tennessee; News Sentinel exposing huge waste of public money for private developer of Rarity projects."</p>
<p>"LA Times - They did a huge expose about how city officials in Bell, Calif. were paying themselves \$500K+ annually and fleecing the city. They also uncovered that Arnold Schwarzenegger had a love child, among many other discoveries."</p>
<p>"LA Times reporting on excessive pay for Bell city officials"</p>
<p>"Local papers in S.F. Bay Area have really held PG&E's feet to fire over San Brune pipe explosion, which killed some people. Just one local example, there still are many"</p>
<p>"Most good ones follow the actions of state and local governments, and in the simplest terms, that is acting as a watchdog. The larger institutions obviously dig even deeper to follow</p>

taxpayer money and power struggles that affect public policy."
"My newspaper recently exposed a sweetheart employment contract given a local school administrator"
"My paper has a feature called Whistle Blowers that has been a popular outlet for that kind of tale-telling. And we have covered important stories, from prison reform to govt. corruption, on a regular basis."
"New York Times, LA Times and Allentown Morning. The first two are obvious because they routinely win Pulitzer's for watchdog stories and the third is my current newspaper, where I get a closer look at how hard the paper works as producing watchdog pieces. The Morning Call actually has monthly and quarterly 'watchdog' awards to provide added incentive, and set a tone that watchdog stories are a priority."
"Newspaper reporters revealed that former S.C. Gov. Mark Sanford, while he was in office, had an Argentine lover whom he visited without telling anyone else in state government where he was. The reporters also showed he had misused taxpayer money."
"Newspapers across the country fulfill their watchdog function every day, despite their reduced staffs. One example is the LA Times' investigation of excessive salaries in Bell, Ca. Another was the Washington Post's investigation of poor conditions at Walter Reed Army Hospital. At the newspaper where I work, we did a series of stories on 2009 on excessive or questionable spending at several quasi-public agencies, such as the airport board, that led to criminal charges against some public employees and legislative changes."
"Newspapers all over the country all virtually the only reliable source of watchdog information about local governments."
"Newspapers are good local watchdogs. Our newspaper helped free a woman who was wrongly convicted; highlighted misdeeds by a local jobs agency that led to reforms; and wrote about questionable raids on black-run barber shops, which led to resignations at a state level and a change in the way the sheriff's office operates."
"Newspapers are not so driven by velocity and engagement and can instead concentrate on fact-finding and revelations."
"Newspapers that are implementing 'fact check' features, like the St. Petersburg Times and Washington Post, are keeping the debate fact-based and removing myths and falsities."
"Newspapers, though incredibly weakened, still are the only institutions doing watchdog work"

<p>for a mass audience. My employer is dedicated to watchdog work. The most compelling local stuff lately has been about the movement against local Muslims and the money that those agitating against them are making."</p>
<p>"Our paper (Sac Bee) did a great job as recently as this past Sunday exposing a nearby D.A. who was getting weird loans from people he probably should have been investigating for criminal activity."</p>
<p>"Pentagon Papers; Watergate; aftermath of Hurricane Katrina; payments to failed bidder in a road project in Utah."</p>
<p>"Politics and government reporting at all levels, from school boards to the presidency, fraud and crime stories not only expose problems such as Medicaid fraud in health care providers, they might serve as a deterrent."</p>
<p>"Providing scrutiny of how tax dollars are spent."</p>
<p>"Questioning the policies and practices of powerful bureaucrats and politicians in general. Specific example: Detroit Free Press expose of the Mayor's practices, LA Times expose of the wasteful, harmful practices at King Drew Medical Center."</p>
<p>"Report on government functions that otherwise wouldn't be known to the public"</p>
<p>"Selective publishing of WikiLeaks info, exposure of multiple Ponzi schemes in Florida. The first educates public about how our government works, the second how people should be more careful about being scammed."</p>
<p>"Series of stories about a water deal in the suburbs has led to two water board members being ousted, a government affairs director being dismissed and a new set of ethics guidelines."</p>
<p>"Simply by paying attention and reporting on government activities, newspapers fulfill the role of informing the public who in turn can affect govt policy. In Phoenix, billboards are such an issue."</p>
<p>"stories on overgenerous pensions for firefighters/police"</p>
<p>"Such work as the LA Time's investigation of widespread corruption in the city of Bell showcases local reporting that exposed corruption that has shocked people on a national level. Likewise, the Bristol paper's report last year on owners of underground mineral rights that were not being properly paid by the state's utilities is another big impact story."</p>

"Ted Sherman writing on the PVSC for the Star Ledger"
"The city hall corruption in Detroit which resulted in the resignation of former mayor Kwame Kilpatrick"
"The Fresno Bee had a story about impound fees in the city of Fresno and how they were extremely higher than any other city around."
"The L.A. Times coverage of the city of Bell and salaries paid workers."
"The la times and its coverage of Bell."
"The Los Angeles Times just broke the story about Calif. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's love child. Today, blogs and Twitter types break a lot of news (witness Breitbart and NY Rep. Anthony Weiner's involvement in virtual sex, but newspapers still step up to the plate. I think a lot of news is broken by newspapers on a local basis, though this has been made more difficult by cutbacks in the newsroom."
"The New York Times' reporting on the NSA eavesdropping on Americans; The Washington Post's series on Top Secret America and the outsourcing of national security."
"The News & Observer got a tip that the state revenue department had liberally interpreted a new law in such a way that it no longer had to provide refunds to folks who it had reason to believe had unknowingly overpaid their taxes three or more years ago. Revenue officials refused to confirm this information and would not release records relating to the matter. The N&O got them released, uncovered a years' long backlog of such cases and in the end, caused the revenue department to return more than \$2 million to taxpayers. The revenue secretary resigned. The simple answer to the question is if the N&O had not fought this battle, these folks would be the poorer for it, literally, and many others through the years might have been caught in the same trap."
"The on-going coverage of the Marcellus Shale industry here in Pennsylvania, a topic that is difficult and has a well-funded effort by the industry to speak for itself."
"The Salt Lake Tribune successfully fought at Utah law that repealed GRAMA access."
"There are countless examples. One is the detailed account of Halliburton's contracts in Iraq war. Newspapers have recounted the costs of war (although citizens don't seem to care too much)"
"They are not as good a watchdog as they used to be because of staffing cuts, but they still

<p>have more people watching government than any other organization. Recent example: coverage of governor's plans to privatize ABC stores, which found dubious cost-savings and other conflicts. Plan was abandoned."</p>
<p>"um, i [sic] live in chicago [sic]. sun times uncovered hired truck scandal. tribune busted blagojevich [sic]. trib [sic] used to get innocent people freed from death row. daily southtown got the superintendent of the poorest school district in illinois [sic] sent to jail for stealing money from the district. etc."</p>
<p>"Watergate scandal. Recent stories from Bell, Calif. The digging got results."</p>
<p>"Watergate: obvious Multiple examples every day"</p>
<p>"watergate."</p>
<p>"We are covering an ongoing story now in which a county sheriff knew one of his deputies had threatened to kill his ex-wife and failed to issue appropriate alerts until after the woman was killed. If the newspaper hadn't reported the documents showing the sheriff's actions, it might not have been known by the public."</p>
<p>"We have a state Capitol reporter named Jon Lender who writes a weekly 'Government Watch' column. Last year, for example he exposed multiple instances of political patronage jobs that went to relatively or completely inexperienced people. At least some of those appointments were reversed."</p>
<p>"We've written extensively about an attempt to sell a county nursing home, Gracedale, examining the claims and motives from all sides. Often our reporting drove the public debate."</p>
<p>"Who else is going to willingly sit through every zoning board and county commission meeting? You're welcome, gentle readers!"</p>

Survey of Journalists, Question 1B. Please give an example in which you think newspapers failed to fulfill their watchdog function and explain why.

<p>"Failed at expressing enough skepticism over the 'weapons of mass destruction' and reasons to attack Iraq after 9/11"</p>
<p>"I can't recall having seen newspapers adequately explain why college costs have risen much more rapidly than the rate of inflation. This is of great interest to quite a few readers. Newspaper coverage of environmental issues seems to have largely dried up. This is strictly an observation of mine, with no specific example to cite."</p>

But it appears that newspapers as a whole have done away with dedicating a reporter to the environmental issues beat and digging into those issues and concerns."
"Iraq War, too much acceptance of what government was saying, not detailed search and publication of research and facts on situation".
"Ted Sherman writing on the PVSC for the Star Ledger"
"The budget process for most local and regional agencies goes untouched now because staffing is so low at newspapers."
"They just don't have the resources anymore to check documents, act on tips and examine spending."
"We don't really have enough staff left to cover every zoning board meeting anymore. Sorry, readers."

Survey of Journalists, Question 2A. Please give an example in which you think your newspaper fulfilled its watchdog function and explain why.

"Another example, again, on police, showed that the San Jose police department has not upheld a single complaint against a police officer following a citizen complaint of abuse of force."
"At one of the school districts we cover, reporters uncovered questionable dealings with district vendors."
"Bringing to the public's attention that OSU football players appear to be receiving special benefits, a violation of NCAA rules."
"Broke news about illegal campaign payments, misstatements by politicians, etc"
"Checking facts in a legal case where the defendant was charged with a crime for sending her two children to a school outside her residence. The facts explained that the school waited two years before lodging the charges and various other issues that were not discussed by school board members"
"Chief of police had to resign a couple of years ago after we disclosed improper conduct/connection with towing company."

<p>"County judge trying to disallow coverage of a court case, feeling it would negatively impact a companion case. We fought on First Amendment grounds and won in court. We uncovered a ""secret"" trade mission to China that the Toledo mayor was involved with, that he didn't want the public to know about; we have reported on pension plans for city employees and how that impacts tax dollars; we are involved in a series on our largest public school system, reviewing how tax dollars are spent and why performance is so low. The list goes on and on."</p>
<p>"coverage of collective bargaining changes"</p>
<p>"Coverage of travel spending and advertising contracts at the county owned airport."</p>
<p>"Did that in last question. We make a a [sic] priority by giving an award, that includes cash and a trophy that is passed around the newsroom from winner to winner."</p>
<p>"Discovery of million dollar payment to failed bidder on a road project, which showed connections to governor and led to legislative policy changes."</p>
<p>"Each election we analyze major TV ads with AdWatch coverage. We have a full-time Watchdog reporter."</p>
<p>"Exposed corruption in program on tax sales of foreclosed homes. FBI was investigating, but paper gave it wide public notice."</p>
<p>"Exposing high school coaches who sexually abuse their student athletes (""Coaches who Prey"") and why they get away with it. This led to a new state law and held school districts accountable for cover-ups. It cost the newspaper a great deal of money in litigation to get the records."</p>
<p>"Exposing what happened to three children in an Irvington home who were being starved and beaten to death"</p>
<p>"I already gave this as the first example, but here's another: One of our reporters discovered that some county officials were misusing their county credit cards."</p>
<p>"I cited an example in the previous answer. There are others, such as stories on conflicts of interest involving state lawmakers, questionable spending by the state employees' retirement system and examinations of political candidates' backgrounds and positions."</p>
<p>"I covered this in the previous question. There are lots of other examples _ one, the</p>

Daily News exposed that Ticketmaster was cheating concert goers by increasing the cost of handling fees on its more expensive tickets."
"I gave one, in the last question."
"I just did."
"I just gave you one, will give you another. Last year, a three-part series showed that North Carolina had one of the most secretive personnel laws in the nation. Salary and employment histories and all disciplinary records were not public. As a result, big pay raises, misbehaving employees and patronage hires were all protected by the law. The series cited several scandals that might have been avoided had the government more transparency in personnel matters. Lawmakers responded by making salary and employment histories public, and some disciplinary records. Those records have since helped expose bad cops and improper pay deals."
"I'll refer to the Marcellus Shale industry again, but also to our continuing coverage of our largest local employer, UPMC, and how they have failed to properly monitor some transplants."
"In a sexual harassment controversy involving a city council aide, the newspaper put in a FOI request for emails to determine whether an increase in funding for the commonwealth's attorney's office had any connection with the settlement of the case. It didn't. Others repeated the allegations, but no one else bothered to dig into the particulars."
"In our newspaper this month, reporters have exposed egregious spending and exceptions in county government pension plans and the fact that they were passed in committee meetings that were never made public. Reporters have also exposed a county clerk who has been skimming the cash drawer for personal loans and law enforcement officers swept up in federal investigations."
"In our own section currently we have detailed misinformation being given out in a funding battle over the school system, useful stuff for the public."
"Investigative reporter Jeff Testerman unmasked the problems behind the U.S. Navy Veterans Association, a scam fundraising operation that played off military/patriotic giving."
"it'll (sic) give away my newspaper. sorry."
"My newspaper has investigated and written at length about political players, including commissions that have little public oversight, and how they are spending

public money."
"Newspaper exposed government corruption/questionable behavior by Loudon County/Lenoir City govt officials; our Anderson County reporter revealed questionable behavior by county mayor in buying and then selling vehicles, including a county vehicle, for person profit."
"On Sunday, June 12, 2011, the Dayton (Ohio) Daily News published a series of investigative reports about how public-sector workers fired for committing crimes on the job were still allowed to retire and collect disability pensions. It represented a substantial commitment of journalistic resources. Within the past 18 months, the newspaper has published a series of stories about a locally known civil rights leader who is the subject of criminal investigations and who effectively was kicked out of a civil rights organization he had been affiliated with for decades. The man had prior political support in the community, so taking on critical reporting about him required an unshakeable commitment."
"Ongoing stories about an unfinished city-funded gym that appears to a waste of taxpayer money: http://www.fresnobee.com/2011/04/30/2371360/is-fresnos-unfinished-eoc-gym.html "
"Our city hall reporter has focused on the council's use of executive session to come to conclusions. Although they take the vote in public, they do it without discussion."
"Our continuing coverage of L.a [sic]. city hall and lausd., explaining tad increases, layoffs and furloughs and impact on public services".
"Our daily co rage (sic) of Los Angeles city hall and local issues"
"Our newspaper has a reporter who does a weekly tax watchdog investigation for Page 1. But we also require all of our reporters to pursue 'On Guard' stories that seek to do the same thing."
"Our newspaper's Pulitzer Prize from 2010 for exposing flaws/abuse in a state-run program for child care for low-income families."
"Our state government coverage in the past couple of years has led to legislative action for the public good; shined a light on taxpayer money going to benefit green energy companies with little payoff; uncovered political favoritism, etc."
"Questioning expense reimbursements by a Roanoke city councilman led to the

man's resignation."
"Recent stories on efforts by public officials to ignore the state's freedom of access law; use state-owned vehicles for private purposes; track spending by lobbyists at the legislature are just a few of the stories we've done."
"Recently our newspaper exposed, through a public records request, that a public hospital in town intentionally misled the public about the reasons for a program's shutdown."
"Reporters for our newspaper revealed that the personal finances of S.C. Gov. Nikki Haley were in disarray, which contradicted her assertion as a candidate that she had the skills to ensure wise use of taxpayer money."
"Reporting on public pensions, Child Protective Service negligence"
"Revealing a gubernatorial plan to oust a university trustee who did not support her campaign for office"
"See above. If you had asked whether we are doing as much as we were before drastic downsizing, I would say no."
"See examples in previous answer."
"See previous answer"
"See previous answer to 1A. Have not responded to Q 1 or 2 because my answer is 'sometimes,' not a flat yes/no."
"See previous answer."
"See the response from the first question. There are other examples too, but that is a good one."
"Study of state pensions showed the inconsistencies in the system."
"The Boston Globe has exposed problems with the Massachusetts probation department as well as an on-going investigation into allegations of wrong-doing by the mayor in the city of Lawrence."
"The pittsburgh post-gazette [sic] broke the story of a politician taking money from an elderly woman unaware of it."
"Thorough coverage of local politics and investigation of public entities and public

spending"
"though we can do more and better. but staff layoffs have prevented that. we've had people thrown into jail, compelled to pay back taxpayer money, fired from scammy [sic] jobs."
"USA TODAY stories on toxic air around schools, inadequate protection for soldiers against IEDS."
"We do an excellent job covering the influence of money on government; We do an excellent job covering key environmental stories. We have a projects team dedicated to important watchdog stories."
"we have a watchdog team"

Journalism Survey, Question 2B. Please give an example in which you think your newspaper failed to fulfill its watchdog function and explain why.

"Happens every day. From small-time police log to municipal government. Nobody left to ask the hard questions, do the digging, cultivate the contacts."
"I do not think it fails, but it does not enough economic resources to do investigative stories."
"I wrote about a power utility that was using unsafe methods and exposed a near-explosion that the utility tried to keep quiet. As a result of the article, new safety methods were employed."
"No specific case comes to mind right now, although I am sure there are some. Perhaps the lack of staff means that small city budgets and even big ones are not being monitored like they used to be."
"Our problem has been in having enough staff to fill our bets. We have not had a full-time court reporter for several years."
"Our reporting ranks are diminished. There is more of an emphasis on daily copy, instead of spending weeks or months on a deep probe. Some investigative work still happens but not nearly as much as 10 or even five years ago."
"State government touting creation of jobs, when in reality many did not pan out as actual jobs, TV station broke story, reason is tightly stretched staffing, so while the newspaper does do some watchdog functions, is limited on research time and topic

due to short staffing."
"The local air district is expanding exponentially because this is one of the worst airsheds in the country. Politicians are getting good mileage out of throwing money at it. But we can't account for all the fee increases and grant funds because we don't have the time to look. We may actually be squandering this money and not cleaning up the air. We don't know."
"This doesn't fit my newspaper's format/purpose because it's a business newspaper that focuses on stocks and economics."
"We're a Gannett paper. We are very, very terrible."
"We're a watchdog for a certain segment of population, but not really our overall role (if that makes sense)"

Survey of College Students, Question 1A. Please give an example in which you think newspapers fulfilled their watchdog function and explain why.

"Anything that deals with political scandals of government"
"Because they are open to the public"
"Currently, instead of blindly going by what White House correspondents say, newspapers are reporting possibilities that it may not be Osama. Newspapers aren't doing PR for his death."
"Following the Wikileaks diplomatic cables drop, it was the New York Times and other newspapers that disseminated the secrets of US diplomatic policy to expose questionable actions and hold the Government accountable."
"for online newspaper, they reflect public opinion by poll."
"I feel like newspapers are the most trusted news source because they don't have to show meaningless stories to get ratings."
"I remember a story about five years ago in which a Rochester based newspaper ran a story about a prominent business that was polluting the Genesee River. I do not remember the name of the newspaper or the business. But I remember the excitement of believing the story would make a difference and wishing I could do that someday."

"I suppose it's obvious, but Watergate. Those reporters followed leads diligently until they could verify the info and keep politicians from getting away with something."
"I think that newspaper coverage of the elections fulfilled the watchdog function because they told what was happening with the candidates and the different platforms and debates"
"I trust what they print! ex. Osama dead"
"Media as a whole today, avoids issues that are much more relevant to the public because these said issues may be boring. Instead media is more focused on sensational news. Yes sometimes we will get a relevant story but it won't be as in depth as it should."
"News papers [<i>sic</i>] promote investigate journalism"
"Newspapers and reporters tell the truth, regardless of the consequences, in order to inform their readers of corrupt gov't officials and/or frightening news."
"Newspapers, especially local, cover more than the average broadcast news. While there is still a certain hierarchy in term of format and page location readers can stay more informed by reading throughout the entire paper. For example obituaries, or good deals in the want ads."
"Newspapers, unlike broadcast television, tend to be more focused on events that I would deem 'important' I could care less about the state of today's popular celebrities. Newspapers tend toward what I call 'news.' "
"One example is when they broke the story about Charles Schumer and the 'escort.' I think this was an example of newspapers doing due diligence and paying attention to what is going on in Albany."
"President Bush took heavy criticism for entering the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. He took more criticism for not finding the weapons of mass destruction that he said he would find."
"recent covering convicted officer Rahn"
"Scandals with presidents--example Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinski"

"shows people whats [sic] going on in the world"
"the death of Osama Bin Laden"
"The public has the right to know what is going on in their country."
"The Stylus vs. BSG"
"The Stylus vs. BSG. If the Stylus were not constantly asking and pushing the BSG for answers our student body would be misinformed, if told anything at all."
"There are definitely newspapers out there that keep an eye out for their readership and report honestly on the big/tough issues (although not all)."
"There were some articles that informed the public about wikileaks"
"They cover things in government and that tells the public what the government is doing."
"They fulfill their watchdog function when writing stories based on political candidates so that you see what government and government officials are really doing and what their thoughts and values are on certain topics."
"They help to keep the gov. in check. specifically investigative journalism etc."
"They keep everyone on edge"
"Water Gate Playa"
"Watergate"
"When the government in the United States was exposed for their massive debt Newspapers where at the forefront. Another example is Watergate. Nixon was impeached because of newspapers."
"When the NYT broke the story on the 'torture' techniques used in interrogating detainees. Side note: I believe this irresponsible and angered both Americans and our national security. But in the capacity of the watchdog, this is good example."
"Who would question or inform the people of the governments doings if there was no newspaper reporting on it?"
"Woodward and Bernstein and Rolling Stone Political stories and 'the report' on steroid use in baseball informed public (me) of things I wasn't or couldn't be aware"

of"
"Yes because the public is asking for the picture of dead Osama bin Laden to be published in print."
"Yes, I think they are it's just not that many people pay attention to them. So it's pretty much a great old watchdog, that everyone tells to 'shut up' because now there is social media and that's easier to get a hold of".

Survey of College Students, Question 1B. Please give an example in which you think newspapers failed to fulfill their watchdog function and explain why.

"9/11"
"Different political agenda's change framing of topics and drive for monetary gain has also created untouchable subject matter."
"Every media outlet is bias. A prime example is the article you spoke about in class about the young girl."
"I believe that in some cases, reporters or the media in general cooperate too much with big companies--particularly oil companies. For example: the hydro-fracking around the nation caused terrible environmental and health risks and I haven't heard about them at all until I watch Gasland and followed up w/my own research."
"I believe the NY Time leans towards the left. When I read a newspaper I do not want to worry about what the journalists goal is. I want to hear the story how it was not from someones [sic] perspective. The D and C does a good job of no bias though."
"I don't have any specifically, but sometimes or even all the times newspapers can be biased."
"I feel that tend to sensationalize some stories. The shark attack situation, the year those stories were run ws [sic] the lowest shark attack rate since the 1980s I Believe."
"I think newspapers deliver news to publics but its sensationalized, exaggerated and sometimes altered to better fit the story."

"I think that newspapers, at least in my hometown (Niagara Falls), are easily influenced by those in positions of power. Therefore, the watchdog function is rendered inept. Perhaps national newspapers are better watchdogs."
"I think, especially in N.Y. State, there is a huge liberal slant to all media coverage. They are not neutral making them not watchdogs."
"Just no in general because I believe it worries the public"
"Many crime related stories tend to have bias towards police departments. Newspapers and other media (can't read) their primary information for authoritative [sic] statements from the police. If they lost that conduit of information they would no longer have reliable sources to tell other stories. Many stories aren't reported because of this phenomenon."
"Newspapers won't investigate everything"
"Newspapers, on a political level, have a certain bias that clouds the accuracy of reporting."
"There is too much money involved in advertising in newspapers. The paper is unlikely to print a negative story about a top advertiser."
"They are sensationalized a lot of time and want to be the first one to come out w/ new info and sometimes get info wrong"

Survey of College Students, Question 2A. Please give an example in which you think your newspaper fulfilled its watchdog function and explain why.

"An example of when my newspaper fulfilled a watchdog function is when the Wellsville Daily Reporter broke the story about the brand new jail being built in Allegany County and how much money it was going to cost the taxpayers."
"For the most part, yes. There aren't apparent political biases & they represent all sides of occurrences [sic]/events."
"Governor Spitzer's infidelity."
"I believe local papers do a much better job as watchdogs than national papers."
"I believe the school paper is a good watch dog because I don't think this paper is

biased. tells everything good that's going on in campus (new building) and also bad (bsg stealing papers)"
"I cannot claim ownership or membership to any one paper, but in my opinion the written word tends to be more devoted to news rather than sensationalism."
"I consider my own newspaper to be The Stylus. Given everything w/BSG this past year--yes."
"I do read the newspaper and I find a lot and it usually gives me something to talk about."
"I don't read newspapers. However, the Stylus avoids issues about Greek life on campus."
"I think most newspapers cover the same topics. I can usually tell by the coverage what really happened and some newspapers may skew the info or lead you in a direction but being familiar with the paper allows me to be able to tell when this happening and make an educated assumption on the real occurrences."
"I think yes because the public should know about what is going on in government."
"If you mean 'your' by the New York Times and other large organizations, then Yes. The Wikileaks Phenomenon is an excellent example of newspapers fulfilling their journalistic responsibility of supporting free information and performing a watchdog function."
"Ithaca Journal has investigative stories, but they so often get facts wrong that they lose credibility and I don't believe them. Also, they rarely break stories that take in-depth reporting."
"Keeps tabs on Student gov't and how our money is being spent."
"lets us know about sex offenders and criminals"
"My news papers is always on true look out for news."
"My school newspaper is catching regional publicity regarding a libel lawsuit for editor in chief simply wrote the truth about an elected gov't figure and is has being criticized when he was trying to inform his audience."
"Newspaper give us quick and credible information."

"Once again local news investigate into communities and governments that are relevant to a specific community, like Rochester."
"Our newspaper (D&C) publishes legal and official documents in full but also references these documents."
"same as 1A"
"See Question 1A."
"Sometimes if I don't have time to watch news on t.v. I can read the newspaper and get a clear summary of what's going on in the media."
"Still keeps everyone on edge, and booking" (researcher can't read writing)
"The newspaper here explains to readers that BSG documents are being withheld. Rather than allowing BSG to simply deny them, the paper points out to readers, FOILS for them, and keeps pursuing it."
"The reason I say this is because I read NYT online stories for my newspaper and thought their coverage of the election was good. I don't read the D & C so much to know about them."
"The Stylus covering the truth about Brockport Student Government regardless of threats and intimidation from those in power"
"The Stylus has covered BSG fully this year and have serviced readers by printing the truth and information they normally wouldn't know."
"They know and understand the community very well and are up to date with local candidates for office. example Spitzer spending thousands on hookers."
"Through no fault of its own, The Stylus is a small college weekly newspaper that isn't read outside of Brockport. Only giant newspaper chains like the New York Times can make a major impact."
"Watergate scandal Nixon."
"We kept a motha [sic] f*c*i* [sic] eye on BSG yeah!"
"When covering politics I feel the D&C remains fairly objective."
"Whenever an election comes up there will be an extensive profile and background

article on the candidates."
"Yes the D and C covers all news stories for the good of the public and not what they want us to hear."
"Yes, because it contained the statistics from an ABC WHAM News Report I watched the night before."

Survey of College Students, Question 2B. Please give an example in which you think your newspaper failed to fulfill its watchdog function and explain why.

"Again, I have a paranoid--although not unsubstantiated--feeling that a paper's bias, and overall government secrecy, prevent news that is pertinent to our rights from ever reaching us."
"As I stated in response to question 1, newspapers in Niagara Falls area simply reinforce the views of those in power, effectively negating their watchdog function."
"Back home our local newspaper only reports on crap that happens in the school district"
"I don't have an example but poor experiences in past with editors and stories feed mistrust."
"I don't read newspapers."
"I don't really think the D&C truly gives the readers everything that is going on in the world. There are Definitely some things I believe are hidden from the public but overall they tell us most things."
"I feel like the D&C sometimes has front page stories that shouldn't be front page news. I never hear how a reporter there broke a big story."
"I have seen some biased reporting which has a negative effect on readers."
"I think that they don't concentrate on major/world issues and stories as much as they could."
"I've yet to see a D&C article that shines truth on something I didn't already know."
"It's more informative, less investigational, usually I feel like larger papers are better for watchdog purposes"

"My local newspaper does a terrible job of informing the public of anything important really."
"NYC snowstorm back in January. The weather forecasters and news anchors didn't emphasize enough the potential damage the snow inevitably caused."
"Our paper doesn't really talk about the government or what is going on, I usually get information from TV"
"There is a massive liberal slant in my newspaper. Buffalo is very liberal."
"They appear to be selective and biased in their reporting. You can see a clear line between city v. suburb stories."

Senior Citizen Survey, Question 1A. Please give an example in which you think newspapers fulfilled their watchdog function and explain why.

"Give better coverage of upcoming election than TV."
"I believe that newspapers fulfilled their watchdog function with government officials such as Chris Lee of New York and the former governor of California, Arnold S. Christopher Lee resigned from his job. Arnold s. has fallen from grace and his wife has separated from him."
"I read all the time. I read the D and C and the Wall Street Journal and some magazines."
"I'm impressed with the D and C. I always took it. I go to the library now to look at it."
"In recent school board elections, candidates were interviewed. This helps a voter understand the line of thinking of a candidate."
"Investigated the government's safety record on Gulf Oil spill. It showed they were lax in doing inspections and follow ups."
"Often when a candidate makes a statement the newspaper checks into his/her past actions to see whether or not that is true of the way they have acted/voted in the past."
"Our local newspaper did an excellent job at keeping the public informed about the school board budgets/elections that were just held. My hometown paper also did a

great job with their budget/election information."
"reporting on budget mismanagement and wasteful spending. How well are seniors represented?"
"Reporting on factual errors in political campaign ads"
"salaries"
"The newspaper keeps us up to date as to what is going on in Washington. Also keeps us updated on the progress in Afghanistan and Libya."
"They are all one sided. For example, Obama. They were all for him."
"They bring our attention to things we may not be aware of."
"when they let us know about diseases in the area."
"Will tell some info and give us sources to find more info."
"Yes, but newspapers keep us up on all news but of course TV is much more current and up to the minute. I often read something in the paper I heard on the TV the day before. Newspapers are more in-depth discussing something like Social Security and Medicare and their future."

Senior Citizen Survey, Question 1B. Please give an example in which you think newspapers failed to fulfill their watchdog function and explain why.

"Bad news is all that is fit to print."
"I don't feel others matter to anyone anymore...anything goes to sell papers"
"It's all one sided. Just repeated."
"Newspapers appear to adjust the news to their own agenda. When a newsworthy story breaks, you can compare notes to find the roots of the story in other papers only to discover they do not jibe; either facts or data are often incorrect. The use of adjectives and adverbs can convey biases, whether from journalists or the editors, that have the power to bend people towards believing what eventually is revealed as incorrect data, and in some cases actual lies. Paper watchdogs verify their information before putting it out, using enough feeds to make sure what they're reporting is correct. What happened to truth in journalism?"

"The local paper wrote a piece about the desire of the county government to sell the county nursing home to a private firm. This came as a surprise to many people as the county had just spent a lot of money to upgrade the nursing home. The article just gave the government take on the situation without looking further into it."

"They will print anything to sell a newspaper."

"Too much sensationalism"

Senior Citizen Survey, Question 2A. Please give an example in which you think your newspaper fulfilled its watchdog function and explain why.

"airport scandal and wage for superintendents. Newspapers do more than anyone else. The TV copies it and repeats it."

"Buffalo News--See 1A"

"But it keeps getting smaller."

"can't think of a specific incident"

"Good coverage of three candidates of May 24th election"

"I believe my newspaper is a good watchdog for the public if they have enough time to monitor meetings and check on officials. Not all stories get the newspapers attention due to lack of time and reporters. On most stories the watchdog function is fulfilled."

"it's informative"

"Our government's involvement in the killing of Bin Laden. It showed the president and others following the invasion into the compound."

"Our newspaper (hometown) prints articles from major newspapers on government issues, etc."

"Our newspaper did a good job presenting both sides to the school 'sports complex' proposition--letters and opinions expressing both sides of the issues were printed."

"Recent Congressional election--summarized 3 candidates' positions fairly I thought and then the paper gave their recommendation. Recent school board elections and info on propositions. Gave all sides and then their recommendation."

"reporting on govt [<i>sic</i>] corruption"
"same reason--keeps us informed on diseases currently around."
"Same statement as 1A."
"same thing. It's all garbage."
"see answer 1A"
"The local one does. They raised alot [<i>sic</i>] about the county government."
"The news again check records--for example a candidate promising to improve the city and finding out he/she owns several rundown properties and back taxes and reports that info."

Senior Citizen Survey, Question 2B. Please give an example in which you think your newspaper failed to fulfill its watchdog function and explain why.

"An illiterate journalist, or even a poorly-schooled typesetter, can really upset the applecart, creating situations that cause the local government members to find themselves drowning in hot water. Our local government has had a time with poorly written articles that pilloried candidates even before the elections. The owners have, on occasion, had to eat crow for an incorrect data problem lending to candidate bashing. The corrections are seldom on the first page, however. The readers in this area often depend on one paper for their news, and form opinions based on faulty reporting."
"No indepth [<i>sic</i>] reporting, just copy stories already out there."

Appendix E

2008 Pre-Test Survey of Buffalo, NY, Print, TV, and Radio Journalists

Journalism Attributes					
1. The following are some attributes associated with journalism. Please rate the following as "Very Important", "Important", "Somewhat Important", "Neutral", or "Not Important".					
	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Not Important
To hold government officials accountable for actions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To hold business officials accountable for actions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To keep people informed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To sell papers and/or air time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To make people think	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To monitor government	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To act as the people's eyes and ears	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To entertain	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To create a sense of community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To monitor business	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To give people a voice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Local News Coverage											
2. Please answer the following questions by picking a value on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning horrible/worst possible coverage and 10 meaning excellent/best possible coverage.											
	0-- Worst Possible	1	2	3	4	5-- Neutral	6	7	8	9	10-- Best Possible
How would you rate local news coverage by Buffalo media?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How would you rate your media organization's local news coverage?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, how do you think Buffalo media have done informing the public about what is going on in government?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Local News Coverage

3. Please answer the following by picking a value on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning horrible/worst possible coverage and 10 meaning excellent/best possible coverage.

	0-- Horrible/Worst Possible	1	2	3	4	5-- Neutral	6	7	8	9	10-- Excellent/Best Possible Coverage
How would you evaluate your media organization on informing the public about what is going on in government?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How do you think the Buffalo media have done holding government officials accountable for their actions?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How would you rate YOUR media organization on holding government officials accountable for their actions?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Organization Evaluation

4. What one local media organization do you think has done the best job covering government?

- The Buffalo News
- WBEN-930 AM
- WBFO-88.7 FM
- WGRZ-TV
- WIVB-TV
- WKBW-TV
- WNED-970-AM

Other (please specify)

Local Organization

5. Why did you choose that organization?

Local Organization

6. Did you choose the media organization at which you work as the best at covering local government?

Yes
 No

If the respondent clicked "Yes" on number 6, the respondent automatically went to number 7. If the respondent clicked "No" on number 6, the respondent automatically skipped to number 8.

Why

7. Why did you choose your organization as the best at local coverage?

After answering number 7, the respondent automatically moved on to number 9. Only those answering "Yes" on number 6 answered number 7.

Why not

8. Why didn't you choose your organization as the best at local coverage?

After answering number 8, the respondent automatically moved on to number 9. Only those answering "No" on number 6 answered number 8.

National Coverage

9. Please answer the following questions by picking a value on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning horrible/worst possible job and 10 meaning excellent/best possible job.

	0-- Horrible/worst possible job	1	2	3	4	5-- Neutral	6	7	8	9	10-- Excellent/best possible job
How do you think the national media do covering the news in general?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How would you rate national media coverage of government/political news?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>										
	<input type="text"/>										

National News Coverage

10. Please answer the following question by picking a value on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 meaning horrible/worst possible job and 10 meaning excellent/best possible job.

	0-- Horrible/Worst Possible Job	1	2	3	4	5-- Neutral	6	7	8	9	10-- Excellent/Best Possible Job
How do you think the national media are doing fulfilling their "watchdog function"? (Watchdog function in this question refers to the media's responsibility to monitor government, hold government officials accountable and tell the public what is going on in government.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

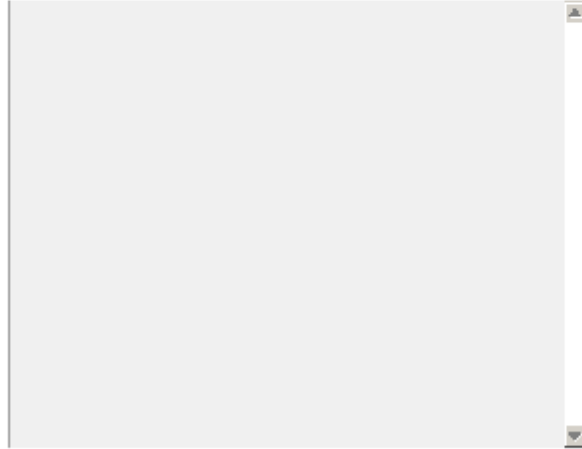
National Media

11. Do you think the national media are good watchdogs for the public overall?

Yes
 No

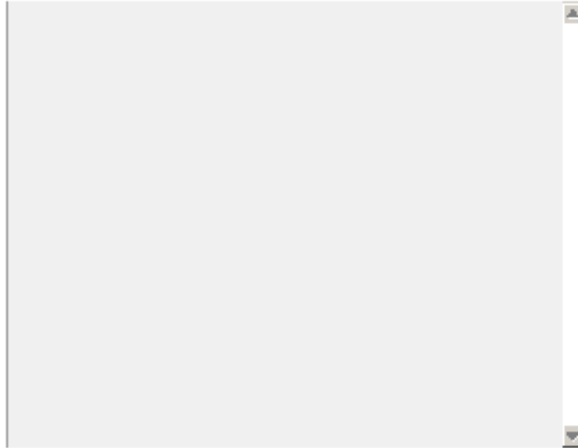
Example

12. Please give an example in which you think the national media fulfilled their watchdog function and explain why.



Evaluation

13. Please give an example in which you think the national media failed to fulfill their watchdog function and explain why.



Short Answer

14. What type of media organization do you work for?

- Radio
 Newspaper
 TV

15. What is your job? Please pick the most appropriate category.

- Editor or news director
 Reporter
 Opinion writer or commentator

Other (please specify)

16. How many years have you been a journalist?

This page was followed by a screen thanking respondents for participating.