OHIO NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE APRIL 1993 PRISON RIOT
AT THE SOUTHERN OHIO CORRECTIONAL FACILITY,
LUCASVILLE, OHIO

A Thesis

 Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the degree Master of Arts in the
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To My Parents
VITA

October 6, 1969 . . . . . . Born - Pasadena, Texas


FIELDS OF STUDY

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Easter Sunday, 1993, began normally at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility (SOCF) in Lucasville, Ohio. The daily activities appeared to be going routinely, until a violent situation developed involving the prisoners in an area of the facility known as "L-Block." At roughly 3:00 pm on Sunday, April 11, 1993, prisoners, armed with weapons they had constructed, hidden, or confiscated, seized control of "L-Block," taking both other inmates and prison guards hostage. The prisoners, shortly thereafter, issued a list of demands on issues ranging from human rights, to prison conditions, to procedures for ending the riot. These prisoners held-out for 11 days before agreeing to terms that concluded the crisis.

All was not peaceful, however, during the riot. The siege resulted in the deaths of nine individuals inside the compound, including prison guard Robert Vallandingham. The events at Lucasville place this prison riot as the longest in United States history. The uprising is also compared to prison riots in Attica, New York, and Santa Fe, New Mexico, in regard to violence surrounding such events.
This thesis project is an examination of print media coverage during the 11-day prison riot at Lucasville. Ohio newspapers from three separate regions of the state served as the medium for the analysis. A determination of the degree coverage from the event varied, and in some ways changed, over the 11 days of the riot provide the focus for the quantitative content analysis research methodology. Three issues were examined as a part of this assessment. These issues are (a) the time journalists take to gain an understanding of the various news-related issues at a crisis causing them to eventually migrate away from official sources in collecting information for stories, (b) the influence of outside events on setting the media agenda, resulting in changes in the framing of stories from the crisis event, and (c) the degree that newspaper proximity to the event, as well as newspaper size, influence the amount of coverage, and the framing of coverage from a crisis event.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

The examination of print media coverage of the Lucasville prison riot at SOCF centers around three hypotheses. This chapter includes literature reviews for each issue, with individual hypotheses stated at the conclusion of each review.

Literature Review for Hypothesis #1

The association between journalists and sources is a key element in news reporting. The relationship becomes more critical during news reporting from crises because, for example, journalists often are seeking updated information to meet deadlines and official sources are trying to evaluate and control the situation. The two parties can become dependent upon one another in order to achieve their individual objectives. Prior to exploring the reporter/source relationship involved within hypothesis #1, an understanding of what constitutes news should be established. Tuchman refers to news as a window to the world, aiming to tell the audience what it wants to know, needs to
know, and should know. Lasswell defines news as the coordination of activities within a complex society by making otherwise inaccessible information available to the public. Regardless of the definition, news as an event is constructed and manipulated by both reporters and sources on a daily basis.

The reporter/source relationship in news reporting is often exemplified as print journalists and members of the law enforcement community work from crises. The information from which news reports are generated on law enforcement issues is gathered through the interaction of these two groups. The interaction results in a two-way flow of information that generates news topics and stories. Gans discusses the use of official sources by journalists involved in the information gathering process. He makes reference to a generally accepted practice within the media of gaining information through official sources, such as appointed spokespersons. Official sources usually represent a specific organization and their statements to the press can reflect a favorable bias toward their employer. According to Gans, journalists engaging in the practice of focusing news reports based upon statements from official sources justify the technique because of perceived benefits. A primary benefit is that consistent usage of official sources establishes a "pool" of specific sources that are known


to be reliable providers of information. The working relationship between a journalist and source is typically established over time, encompassing numerous instances where the official source was used for story information.

Algaawi and Culbertson discuss the journalistic use of official sources in stories. Their portrayal of the press resembles an information pipeline. The theoretical pipeline carries information to a vast audience. The information is originally provided through numerous sources representing an array of organizations. The press consolidates all the information and distributes stories to the general public via the pipeline. Establishment of credibility for the information presented in a story is often attributable to a person appointed to serve as an official spokesperson. The source speaks on behalf of an organization, and the information is treated by the media as being both valid and reliable.

Problems exist, however, in a media structure that bases a majority of its reporting on information provided by official sources. Consistent media use of a limited pool of official sources as the basis for information, according to Gitlin, leaves other groups ignored. The limited number of these influential organizations regularly appearing in the news media serve as the basis for

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information in a high percentage of daily stories. The common group of officially used sources, including the organizations they represent, become perceived by the public as being "power players" in the disbursement of information. Sources regularly receiving coverage in the press have the potential to serve as powers that shape both media, and public opinion on topics.5 Specific organizations are consistently covered by the press, and therefore have their messages distributed through the media on a regular basis. Law enforcement, for example, is a group regularly providing statements to the media because of their involvement in maintaining public safety.

Journalistic usage of "power players" in criminal justice reporting includes the credibility conferred by journalists to official sources from the law enforcement community. Continued use of these sources establishes credibility and legitimacy for policing agencies as both "power players," and valid and reliable sources of information. Reporters at crisis scenes attempt to understand the scope of the story in the most expeditious, concise method possible. Their coverage from crises becomes heavily influenced, therefore, by official sources, including law enforcement personnel, for the facts bearing on the specific problem.

The tendency to seek official sources results in an indirect media delegitimization of issues and concerns of minority or deviant groups. Gitlin

states that a way for under-represented groups to attain media coverage is to find a creative way to penetrate the prevailing power structures of news sources. The prisoners at SOCF utilized the staging of a riot to attract media attention. The riot served to create a news event from which prisoners were then able to enter the media spotlight. Prisoners successfully entered the media stage, and thereby created a path through which to express their concerns and demands to the public.

Independent sources, individuals not part of the recognized "pool" of sources, are additionally important to journalists. These sources become useful once the initial presentation of facts from a crisis scene has occurred. Sigal states that once reporters have a grasp on the basic facts, they tend to branch toward other sources for information on stories. This occurs most often when core information is based on comments from official sources. Unofficial sources utilized in SOCF riot stories included the general public, family members of individuals involved directly in the riot, public interest groups, and religious/community leaders. These independent sources provided insights into emotional aspects of the riot that officials sources could not provide. Examples of constructive usage of unofficial sources occurred in background stories on specific inmates who were involved in the negotiating process during the riot.

6* Gitlin, p. 11.

Sources such as family members or friends of specific prisoners provided indications how inmate negotiators might react to different scenarios related to the conclusion of the crisis.

A primary concern for journalists dispatched to cover crises is to achieve an understanding of the basic facts surrounding the event. Official spokespersons often provide substantial portions of information compiled during the early stages of reporting from crisis locations. Over time however, as journalists gain an understanding of the issues involved in the event, the use of unofficial sources becomes commonplace in the coverage.⁹

**Hypothesis #1**

Over the duration of reporting about the SOCF riot, journalists gained more knowledge about the event and moved from primarily using official sources to utilization of more unofficial sources in an attempt to diversify coverage. The independent variable is reporter knowledge about the riot. The dependent variable is the use of unofficial sources in stories. This hypothesis is contingent upon an assumption that journalists' knowledge about a crisis increases over the duration of the event. There is no real quantifiable way to measure the actual knowledge gain that occurs, but time was used as an indirect measurement of knowledge gain. Testing of the hypothesis involved calculation of the daily percentage of unofficial sources used in coverage based upon the total number

⁹ Sigal, p. 70.
of sources used in three Ohio newspapers. Coding procedures measured daily occurrences of official and unofficial sources in SOCF reporting.

**Literature Review for Hypothesis #2**

Specific contents of news reports often depend upon decisions made by individual journalists. Story framing varies among newspapers based upon judgments made by the journalists covering the stories, the editorial framework set by newspaper management, or a combination of the two. The concept of framing a specific event, as outlined by Goffman, consists of organizational principles based upon an audience’s involvement or perceived interest in events. "Frames" organize the world into easily understandable pieces, cut from the much larger panorama of ongoing activities.\(^7\) Perceptions of events presented in news frames depend in some part upon preexisting ideas and stereotypes held by audience members. The perceptions are created through personal experiences, or exposure to previous news reports on the subject.

The process of news reporting is the act of constructing reality through the use of frames. News frames typically consist of more than simply a picture of an event. Tuchman perceives news frames as levels of issue complexity dependent upon a journalist’s role or responsibility to transform events into news stories by drawing upon familiarities of the audience’s everyday life. Based upon

news frames, journalists often attempt to present stories as representations of the world in which an audience member lives.\textsuperscript{10}

Gans agrees with Tuchman, although presents the topic in a slightly different manner. He perceives the role of the press as mediators of information. Individual journalists independently evaluate information based upon personal biases and perceived audience interests, and privately produce news reports to distribute the information to the general public. Decisions on the use or exclusion of specific facts are based upon individual framing choices made by the journalist. Gans additionally asserts that it is the journalist’s duty to summarize, refine, or in some cases alter the available information on an event by concentrating only on certain details while excluding others. Information is compiled through personal observations of events, and the use of multiple sources. It becomes the task of the journalist to present the acquired information in a usable and appropriate manner for the audience. This process is accomplished by presenting information within specific news frames.\textsuperscript{11}

Information reception and use by audience members is a subject discussed by Mayer. He concludes that the presentation and understanding of news reports impacts the lives of those receiving the messages. The news provides avenues for audience members to integrate and order themselves into the community structure. News reports take the general public beyond their own

\textsuperscript{10} Tuchman, p. 12.

\textsuperscript{11} Gans, p. 80.
limited personal experiences while exposing them to issues potentially relevant to their lives.  

The framing of stories by the press can, however, result in the audience receiving a distorted view of reality. Results of a study by Antunes and Hurley showed that public perceptions about reality can be distorted through the framing of news stories. They studied newspaper coverage in Houston, Texas, focusing on occurrences of stories about violent crime. It was concluded that newspaper coverage has the direct ability to create a social phobia in regard to reporting about violent crime. A high volume of stories about violent crime in the Houston media resulted in a public perception that violent crime was on the rise, although law enforcement statistics showed no change had occurred in the prevalence of violent crime in the area during the time of the study. The prevalence of violent crime stories related to public perceptions that certain types of crime were increasing. The press became directly responsible, in this example, for contributing to a growing public agenda on the subject of the severity and rise of violent crime through framing stories reflective of this problem.


The media agenda can become influenced by outside events as reports are assembled from a crisis. It is important to note that news reports not only distribute information to members of the general public, but also to other members of the media. Images and issues reported by journalists from one crisis can potentially influence reports from a separate event involving an entirely different set of issues. Tuchman states news organizations distribute information to the masses and, as stated earlier, this information is intended to inform audience members about what they want to know.\textsuperscript{14} Tuchman believes through this process the press has the capability to shape and mold audience perceptions. The audience, in many cases, includes other journalists being influenced to perceive events from a particular journalist's point of view. Journalistic framing of one story might influence a second, not directly connected story in a similar manner that audience perceptions are potentially affected by the media agenda. The influence of outside events can be indirect and not referenced in the story, or can be directly referred within the text of a specific story. An example of this was apparent in SOCF reporting as the ongoing events in Lucasville, Ohio, were compared to other prison riots through history, despite the fact that the events did not necessarily have anything to do with each other.

Journalists have the ability to establish, or manipulate, the public agenda on many issues. Individuals influenced by the agenda setting practice include

\textsuperscript{14} Tuchman, p. 2.
other press members that become audience members for stories isolated from events they personally cover. Members of the press in one location, through editorial content of stories, are essentially capable of influencing perceptions of reporters in other locations. During the time of the SOCF riot, other crises around the United States were unfolding. One event in particular came to a dramatic conclusion while the prison riot was ongoing. The stand-off in Waco, Texas, concluded between law enforcement personnel and members of a Branch Davidian religious sect led by David Koresh. The conclusion of this event, in a dramatic fire that killed over 40 individuals, had a potential impact on journalists around the country. Historical outside events of a possible comparable nature, such as the prison riot in Attica, New York in 1971, in which inmates and prison guards were killed, could also carry the same potential to influence reporting.

**Hypothesis #2**

The number of references to outside events, or social disruptions, included within SOCF reporting changed after the Branch Davidian mass suicide led by David Koresh. The independent variable is outside events listed in SOCF reporting. The dependent variable is direct references to events not directly associated with the SOCF riot. The outside event ongoing at the time of the SOCF riot was a stand-off between a Branch Davidian cult and federal authorities in Waco, Texas. The stand-off concluded on day eight of the SOCF
riot as the cultists set fire to their compound resulting in a mass suicide. The hypothesis was tested by counting the occurrences of outside events being included in SOCF reporting before and after the conclusion of the Branch Davidian stand-off. Further testing involved the assessment of how seriously journalists covering the SOCF riot perceived outside events as frames of reference for SOCF riot coverage. The level of severity placed by journalists on specific outside events were coded as being warnings, comparisons, or examples.

**Literature Review for Hypothesis #3**

Gans separates reporters into two classifications. These classifications are (a) beat reporters, and (b) general reporters.¹⁵ Beat reporters are responsible for consistently covering a specific area or topic. These reporters often have special knowledge or experience within the subject area they report. An existing understanding of the subject matter theoretically leads to stories containing more insights than might be found with other less-knowledgeable reporters. Use of established sources by beat reporters provides the journalist special access to information derived from an existing working relationship between the reporter and source.

In contrast, general reporters often engage in the information gathering process for stories without prior knowledge of the issues involved with the

¹⁵ Gans, pp. 132-133.
subject matter they are covering. General reporters rarely have the opportunity
to read background materials on stories they cover, nor do they have access to
a story library containing reports on similar subject matter. Gans argues that
general reporters are often at a distinct disadvantage when dispatched on
stories, including crises. They are often unknown to potential official sources at
the scene. Their lack of knowledge on the subject matter affects what they
observe, the interview questions they ask, the information they receive and use,
and the eventual stories they produce.\(^{16}\)

Gans says that smaller media organizations have a harder time
financing and supporting staff beat reporters than their larger counterparts. The
financial limitations for small market news organizations are due to personnel
strength shortages, a lack of experience of reporters on staff, and small news
operation budgets. Small market press organizations also face the dilemma of
high attrition rates within reporter ranks. The changing presence of small market
media personnel restricts information acquisition from crisis events by members
of these organizations. Small market journalists, based upon inexperience and
lack of knowledge on the subject matter, struggle in attempting to acquire
information from crisis events.\(^{17}\)

Results from Grusin's study on press relations with law enforcement
organizations demonstrates how market size influences the framing of stories on

\(^{16}\) Gans, p. 138.

\(^{17}\) Gans, p. 125.
criminal justice issues. Grusin concludes police-oriented reporting by inexperienced journalists tends to be event driven instead of issue driven. Journalists in these instances concentrate on the actual crime, paying little or no attention to law enforcement or social issues that may have surrounded the event.

Hawthorne confirmed and expanded Grusin's results by showing coverage of crime stories by inexperienced, small market journalists lacks understanding about police procedures or legal matters. Beat reporters with more experience and knowledge, however, attempt to explore the crime issues instead of just focusing on the facts from a crime scene or crisis location. Grusin states, however, that reporters from both large and small markets are inclined to frame coverage that is reflective of perceived audience member interests in their particular marketplace.

Hofstetter addresses this last point by Grusin from the standpoint of message distortion. A study conducted by Hofstetter focused on message distortion during the volatile presidential campaign of 1972. He concluded that examples of message distortion resulted from the omission of certain campaign-related facts while the press concentrated on a limited number of


issues within the editorial content of stories. Hofstetter also stated that charges of information suppression, twisting, altering appearance, or changed meanings within reporting should independently be examined within the context of the specific event. Journalists, through independent evaluation of events, tailor stories to meet specific perceived informational interests of the audience. This practice is generally considered satisfactory despite the fact that individual journalists present a somewhat restricted view of reality.

The proximity or location of a newspaper in regard to a crisis can influence the framing of stories of that event. Story framing differences between newspapers focus on varying issues, even when reporting on the same event. The variance often depends upon the informational interests of the specific area the newspaper services. A small market newspaper providing service to the local community where a crisis is occurring may frame coverage differently from larger market publications in a different geographic area. Framing differences between newspapers covering the crisis may also be dissimilar based upon the interests of audience members in specific market areas.

**Hypothesis #3**

Geographic locations of newspapers throughout Ohio in relation to the SOCF riot influenced story framing about the event between the different

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newspapers. The independent variable is the geographic location of a newspaper in regard to the nature of the public interest in the SOCF riot for a newspaper's specific market. Examples of varying public interest in the SOCF riot are described in Chapter III, "Method for Hypothesis #3." The dependent variable is story framing related geographically to the SOCF riot. Testing of the hypothesis involved measurement of story framing variance in relation to newspaper location in SOCF riot reporting.
CHAPTER III

METHOD

The three hypotheses in this study were examined through quantitative content analysis. Newspaper reports of the SOCF riot appearing in three Ohio-based newspapers were analyzed. Although the SOCF riot received extensive coverage through the electronic media, this study was limited to coverage in Ohio newspapers. The possibility exists that electronic media coverage of the riot was different from the print media, however this study was not intended to examine all press reports from the SOCF riot. Three Ohio newspapers were selected as a sampling of print journalism coverage statewide. The conceptual decision to proceed along this path was made to get a sampling of SOCF riot coverage from different regions of the state to assess possible differences in reporting styles dependent upon varying market size, audience interests, and geographic location.

Content analysis was based upon articles from the following three Ohio newspapers. These publications were (a) The Portsmouth Daily Times, a small market publication that serves the citizens of Lucasville, Ohio, (b) The Columbus
Dispatch, a large market newspaper in central Ohio located in the state capital, and (c) The Cleveland Plain Dealer, a large market publication in northern Ohio serving the home area of many of the SOCF prisoners, and Cleveland attorney Niki Schwartz, who served as prisoner negotiator toward the conclusion of the riot.

All stories in the three newspapers covering the SOCF riot were included in the sample group. This sample allowed for analyses of both journalists and newspapers in relation to SOCF riot coverage issues. The SOCF riot began at approximately 3:00 pm on Sunday, April 11, 1993, and officially ended at 10:40 pm on April 21, 1993, when the final hostage was released to law enforcement personnel at the scene. Newspaper coverage of the riot used in this study began with reports on April 12, 1993, and concluded with stories from April 22, 1993. Utilization of these two dates included stories encompassing the duration of the riot, with specific beginning and closure dates.

Method for Hypothesis #1

The first hypothesis in this study states that during reporting from the SOCF riot journalists moved from official to unofficial sources as they gained knowledge about the riot. Testing of this hypothesis was based upon results from the following research question. Did source attribution over the duration of SOCF riot coverage show movement from the use official sources to unofficial sources?
An important element in this section is the assessment of journalists' knowledge about the event throughout its duration. Knowledge gain is difficult to measure with newspaper articles alone, and hence a presumption was made that journalistic knowledge gain occurred over time in the SOCF case. The passage of time during the event was assumed to indicate journalists' knowledge gain. This assumption allowed for the prediction to be made of movement from official to unofficial sources in relation to story framing during SOCF riot reporting.

Story source attribution for individual stories was coded as "official" or "unofficial." The first category, official source, included individuals involved directly in the events of the riot or its political implications. Five types of sources were classified as official: (a) corrections department personnel, (b) law enforcement personnel, (c) government personnel, (d) negotiating prisoners, and (e) state of Ohio negotiators. The second category, unofficial source, included individuals not directly involved in the riot situation. Five types of sources were classified as unofficial: (a) family members of individuals involved in the crisis, (b) private citizens, (c) religious or community leaders, (d) public interest group spokespersons, and (e) journalists.

The occurrence of statements attributable to an individual within a story were recorded into one of the above categories. A specific source was only counted one time per story, regardless of whether the source actually appeared more than one time in the specific story. For example, if Sergeant John Born of
the Ohio State Highway Patrol had information attributed directly to him four
times in a story, it would be coded as only one occurrence of an official source.
However, if Sergeant Born had information attributed to him in four separate
stories on the same day in the same newspaper, it would be coded as four
separate occurrences of an official source.

Coded source attributions were totaled for the duration of the event.
Source attribution totals additionally were calculated on a daily basis for each
newspaper to obtain the daily percentage of unofficial sources used per
newspaper. Based upon these results, an account of sources utilized by
journalists covering the SOCF riot was available for analysis.

**Method for Hypothesis #2**

The second hypothesis in this study states the number of references to
outside events, or social disruptions, included within SOCF reporting changed
after the Branch Davidian mass suicide led by David Koresh. The following two
research questions were utilized in the testing of this hypothesis. First, did the
number of references to outside events change after the Branch Davidian cult
suicide that corresponded with day eight of the SOCF riot? Second, were
references to specific outside events utilized as warnings, comparisons, or
examples in regard to events during the SOCF riot?

Coding related to the first research question in this section detailed daily
references to outside events separate from the SOCF riot. The outside events
looked for were (a) David Koresh's Branch Davidian stand-off with federal
authorities in March and April 1993, that ended in a mass suicide, (b) the trial
and verdict, also in April 1993, of the Rodney King civil rights violation case that
resulted in rioting in Los Angeles, (c) the 1971 prison riot in Attica, New York that
ended in a "militaristic" assault on inmates by law enforcement personnel and
the deaths of 31 prisoners and nine guards and civilian employees held as
hostages, (d) the 1980 prison riot in Santa Fe, New Mexico that resulted in
deaths of 33 inmates, and (e) the 1968 Ohio Penitentiary riot in Columbus, Ohio.

Specific references to one or more of these outside events were each
counted separately for each newspaper on a daily basis. Analysis was
conducted to determine the level of reference to outside events within SOCF riot
reporting. Special attention was paid to differences in the number of daily
references to outside events before and after the Branch Davidian cult mass
suicide

Coding of the second research question in this section focused on
determining the level of journalists' perceived importance of outside events
referred to in SOCF riot stories. Each reference to an outside event was
classified as a warning, a comparison, or an example. The classifications are
accompanied by operational definitions.

**Warning:** The outside event was framed to demonstrate what could
happen if negotiations broke down, or if a peaceful resolution could not be
reached. Operationally, a reference to an outside event was coded into this
category if it was presented in a manner emphasizing hostility or violence associated with the event.

**Comparison:** The outside event and the SOCF riot were compared with the similarities drawn between the two events. Operationally, a reference to an outside event was coded into this category if it focused on parallels between the outside event and the SOCF riot.

**Example:** The SOCF riot was placed within a listing of one or more outside events. Operationally, a reference to an outside event was coded into this category if it included the SOCF riot in a listing of other prison riots. The listings most often grouped numerous prison riots together, sometimes in a chart, to place outside events into an historical perspective in relation to the SOCF riot.

Results from this coding were used to analyze the comparative level of significance placed on the SOCF riot and the outside event. Traits and tendencies of reporters bringing views on outside events into reporting were explored through these analyses. References to outside events presented as warnings were regarded as having the most severe influence, comparisons as having a moderately severe influence, and examples as having a minimally severe influence.
Method for Hypothesis #3

The third hypothesis in this study states the geographic location of a newspaper in relation to the SOCF riot influenced story framing in that specific newspaper. Two research questions were utilized to test this hypothesis. First, what percentage of a newspaper's total SOCF riot stories were framed to represent local concerns of the specific newspaper's market area? Local concerns are defined as topics and issues relating directly to the citizens in the specific community served by a newspaper. For example, local concerns coded in *The Columbus Dispatch* focused on issues of local concern to citizens in Columbus, and the surrounding areas that received the *Dispatch* as their regular daily newspaper. Second, what were the primary local story framing issues addressed in relation to geographic locations of specific newspapers involved in SOCF riot coverage?

Coding for the first research question involved placing stories into a geographic framing scheme. Each story was coded as being framed to represent local issues for the audience, or as representing issues relevant to the entire state of Ohio. Locally framed stories focused directly on actions and/or concerns of local citizens in the newspaper's market-area that were involved in activities during the riot. Many of these stories explored unique community efforts such as support groups and prayer vigils occurring in a specific newspaper's market. Based upon this information an assessment of the number of locally framed stories in regard to the SOCF riot could be made. Analysis of
this information explored the relationship between the number of locally framed stories and the newspaper's geographic location within Ohio.

Coding of the second research question in this section involved placing each story into one of six categories related to geographic framing results from the first research question related to this hypothesis. Stories previously coded as locally framed were assessed to determine if different newspapers focused local stories on different subjects dependent upon public interests in the specific market. Similar to coding for hypothesis #1, a story could have more than one main subject. An assessment to determine the dominant subject within the story had to be made, despite the fact that this resulted in a few coding inconsistencies. The categories are listed below, accompanied by operational definitions.

Prisoners: The focus of the story was on situations affecting the prisoners. The story either dealt with one or more of the prisoner demands, or explored other issues that related to the prisoners. The geographic interest in this category was derived from a possible Cleveland Plain Dealer focus on prisoners because a majority of the inmates located at SOCF were originally from the Cleveland area.

Hostages: The focus of the story was on issues detailing the plight of the guard/hostages held by prisoners inside "L-Block." The story was either about the group of hostages, or was about a specific hostage, including murdered hostage Robert Vallandingham. The geographic interest in this category was
derived from a possible Portsmouth Daily Times focus on the hostages because they were all local residents of Lucasville.

**Law Enforcement**: The focus of the story was on activities and issues that affected law enforcement personnel assigned to the SOCF riot. The geographic interest in this category was derived from a possible Columbus Dispatch focus on law enforcement because many of the policing organizations involved in quelling the riot were located in Columbus. Locally framed stories on law enforcement specifically examined law enforcement from a community standpoint. An example of this would be local reactions to law enforcement efforts and security commitments during the SOCF riot.

**Local Community Residents**: The focus of the story was on concerns and activities of local citizens affected by the SOCF riot. The geographic interest in this category centered on possible heavy Portsmouth Daily Times coverage of activities involving citizens in the Lucasville area.

**Government**: The focus of the story was on concerns and actions taken by state and local government personnel as a result of the SOCF riot. The geographic interest in this category involved possible government focus primarily in Columbus Dispatch, and Portsmouth Daily Times coverage. It was expected that Dispatch framing would involve state government reactions to the riot, while Daily Times coverage would focus on reactions from locally elected government officials.
**Negotiations**: The focus of the story was the negotiating process ongoing between inmates and state negotiators, including negotiations that occurred prior to the entrance of Niki Schwartz into the process. Stories about specific negotiators on both sides of the dispute were included. The geographic interest in this category primarily focused on *Cleveland Plain Dealer* coverage because the appointed inmate negotiator, attorney Niki Schwartz, was from the Cleveland area.

Results of the coding schemes outlined above were used to assess differences in issue representation between newspapers. The percent of locally framed stories for each category based upon the total number of locally framed stories for each newspaper was calculated. Analysis of data was utilized to reveal if newspapers from various locations in Ohio framed stories dependent upon issues important to their specific readership.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Results from coding procedures involving the three hypotheses in this project appear in this chapter. A total of 227 articles comprised the sample group. Story distribution for The Portsmouth Daily Times totaled 75 stories, with a high for one day of 11 and a low of three. The Columbus Dispatch had a total of 80 articles, with a one-day high of 22 and a low of four. The Cleveland Plain Dealer had a total of 71 stories, with a one-day high of 12 and a low of one. Low story totals for each newspaper occurred on the first day of coverage, while the high totals occurred on different days.

Intercoder Reliability

To help establish reliability for the coding results of the three hypotheses in this study, a second, independent coder was utilized. This individual coded a random sampling of 23 articles, or roughly 10 percent of the total sample group. Results from the second coder were compared to those of the researcher, and an intercoder reliability percentage for each hypothesis was calculated.
Intercoder reliability for the three hypotheses was (a) 74 percent for Hypothesis #1, (b) 79 percent for Hypothesis #2, and (c) 76 percent for Hypothesis #3. The overall Intercoder reliability for the study was slightly over 76 percent.

Results for Hypothesis #1

Coding of the research question for this hypothesis concerned source attribution. Coding results revealed 656 total source references used by the combination of the three newspapers. During the coding process, each source was only counted one time per story, regardless of whether that source was actually attributed more than one time in the story. The Portsmouth Daily Times featured 190 total source references (116 official and 74 unofficial), The Columbus Dispatch contained 222 total source references (104 official and 118 unofficial), and The Cleveland Plain Dealer had 244 total source references (127 official and 117 unofficial).

Figure 1 identifies the percentage of each specific type of source coded based upon the total number of sources used by the individual newspaper. The far right column identifies the total percentage for each specific source based upon the total number of sources included in all three newspapers during the 11 days of SOCF riot coverage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Official Source</th>
<th>Portsmouth Daily Times</th>
<th>Columbus Dispatch</th>
<th>Cleveland Plain Dealer</th>
<th>Combined Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrections Department</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inmate Negotiators</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Negotiators</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for Official Sources</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unofficial Source</th>
<th>Portsmouth Daily Times</th>
<th>Columbus Dispatch</th>
<th>Cleveland Plain Dealer</th>
<th>Combined Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Members of</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals Involved in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Crisis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Citizens</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious/Community</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Interest Group</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalists</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for Unofficial</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 - Percentage of Official and Unofficial Sources in SOCF Reporting
Figure 2 indicates the daily ratio of unofficial sources to official sources used in each newspaper based upon the total number of sources used in each newspaper per day. The figure also shows the daily ratio of unofficial sources to official sources used for all three newspapers combined, based upon the total number of sources used per day.

![Ratio of Unofficial Sources to Official Sources](image)

**Figure 2 - Daily Ratio of Unofficial Sources to Official Sources in SOCF Reporting Based on the Daily Total of Sources Used Per Newspaper**

**Results for Hypothesis #2**

Coding of the first research question for this hypothesis concerned reference to outside events within coverage of the SOCF riot. There was a total of 24 references to outside events within the 11 days of SOCF riot coverage. *The Columbus Dispatch* made 14 references to outside events, while *The*
Cleveland Plain Dealer made six references, and The Portsmouth Daily Times made four references to outside events. Figure 3 indicates the daily total number of references to outside events per newspaper, as well as the total number of references to outside events included in all three newspapers. The outside event ongoing during the SOCF riot was a Branch Davidian cult stand-off with federal authorities in Waco, Texas. This stand-off ended on April 19, 1993, after 86 cultists set fire to their compound committing in a mass suicide. The conclusion of the Branch Davidian stand-off occurred on day eight of SOCF riot coverage coded in this study. In Figure 3, the end of the Branch Davidian stand-off is represented by a solid vertical line corresponding with day eight.

**Number of Outside Events Mentioned Per Day**

![Chart showing the number of outside events mentioned per day in SOCF reporting. The chart includes data for Total, Portsmouth, Columbus, and Cleveland.]()

Figure 3 - Daily Occurrences of Outside Events Mentioned in SOCF Reporting
The perceived severity of outside events referenced in SOCF riot coverage appears in Figure 4. The total number of outside events referenced in each newspaper is presented in coded categories of warnings, comparisons, and examples. It should be noted that there were zero instances of comparisons within Daily Times coverage, and zero warnings in Plain Dealer coverage.

![Number of Coded References to Outside Events](image)

**Figure 4 - Perceived Severity Level of Outside Event References in SOCF Reporting**

**Results for Hypothesis #3**

Coding of the first research question for this hypothesis involved the determination of locally framed stories in the sample group. Figure 5 indicates the number and percentage of locally framed stories for each newspaper in SOCF riot reporting.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number and Percentage of Locally Framed Stories</th>
<th>Portsmouth Daily Times</th>
<th>Columbus Dispatch</th>
<th>Cleveland Plain Dealer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20/27%</td>
<td>14/18%</td>
<td>10/14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 5 - Total Number and Percentage of Locally Framed Stories Per Newspaper in SCCF Reporting

Coding of the second research question for this hypothesis involved a determination of story subject framing for each story that was previously coded as being locally framed. Figure 6 indicates specific categorical coding percentage results based upon the total percentage of locally framed stories within SCCF riot coverage for each of the three newspapers. It should be noted that locally framed stories in each newspaper did not always encompass all six of the story framing categories. Figure 6 represents the locally framed story distribution inclusive of all six coding categories for each newspaper. Instances when coding resulted in zero percent coverage for a specific category appear in Figure 6 as an apparent missing bar because the value for that category was zero.
Figure 6 - Subject Distribution by Percentage of Locally Framed Stories in SOCF Reporting

Figure 6 shows the subject distribution of locally framed stories in the three newspapers used in this study. Locally framed stories were defined as stories in which the topics or issues discussed in the story were directly tied to expected connections between the general public and the SOCF riot in a newspaper's specific market area. As established earlier, each newspaper was expected to focus on different "local" interests in regard to the SOCF riot.

Only the Portsmouth Daily Times met the expectations set out in this hypothesis by focusing locally framed stories on the hostages and community residents. Both the Columbus and Cleveland newspapers did not focus as clearly on the local connections between their specific market areas and the
SOCF riot. These results are discussed further in the next chapter under,

"Discussion of Hypothesis #3."
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion of Hypothesis #1

It was asserted in the first hypothesis that journalists move from official sources to unofficial sources during the course of a crisis event. Expected results were that during the 11 days of coverage regarding the SOCF riot, a trend of source attribution toward frequent use of unofficial sources would be apparent. A key element of this hypothesis was the assumption of journalists' knowledge gain occurring over time during the riot. The passage of time was assumed to be an indicator of knowledge gain. Knowledge gain could not be represented quantitatively and therefore statistical testing was not used to assess the data. Examination of graphs displaying coding data did however reveal patterns that were used for analytical purposes.

Coding results indicated a partial trend during the SOCF case toward increased use of unofficial sources, but may not be sufficient to confirm the hypothesis. The SOCF prisoners, in part due to usage of unofficial sources by
the three newspapers in the sample group, achieved the objective of receiving coverage of their demands based upon story framing results.

Coverage in *The Portsmouth Daily Times* was the most conservative in reporting styles. The conservative reporting style resulted in stories typically based solely upon attributable facts, a lack of journalistic speculation about the SOCF riot, and a general trend of the context of stories being informational, yet noncontroversial. The riot was a local-interest story for readers of the *Daily Times* and more local reaction to the events would therefore be expected in the coverage. The lowest amount of unofficial sources used however, 39 percent, occurred in *Daily Times* coverage. This fact could result from a small editorial staff at the *Daily Times* that limited the amount of diverse coverage the riot could receive. It could additionally result from a desire to concentrate reporting on official source information to ease public concern. The atmosphere in Lucasville was tense and uncertain through most of the riot as both private citizens and relatives of the hostages had an immediate interest in the outcome of the crisis. The use of official sources as the basis of primary information may have been intended to limit public speculation through the media, especially when weighing the serious nature of the events. It may have ultimately been due to the local nature of the riot that *Daily Times* coverage was substantially conservative in its use of unofficial sources.

Daily unofficial source usage and attribution varied drastically between the three newspapers. The anticipated trend of higher ratios of attributed
unofficial sources over time is evident in the average for all newspapers combined, yet was not as apparent in the individual newspapers. The trend is somewhat evident in both Dispatch and Plain Dealer coverage, but the erratic nature of the daily ratios makes it difficult to assert that the anticipated results occurred in these specific newspapers. Dispatch journalists focused on official sources for information during the early days of the riot. A dramatic shift in source attribution toward unofficial sources occurred during the middle of the riot, and continued in part for the remainder of the crisis. The overall percentage of unofficial sources in the Dispatch, 53 percent, was the only instance of a newspaper featuring more unofficial than official sources throughout the duration of reporting.

The use of unofficial sources by the Dispatch often led to fragmented reporting, or coverage not contributing to the understanding of events and issues surrounding the SOCF riot. Stories containing a greater number of unofficial sources sometimes resulted in incoherent reporting because the unofficial sources used presented general speculation as fact-based content within a specific story. It was through this speculation that rumors in regard to the SOCF riot circulated as facts. These rumors included speculation on substantial numbers of dead bodies inside the cellblock, a rumor that was found to be false upon the conclusion of the riot. Another example of this coverage was a series of articles surveying public opinion for possible methods to resolve the riot. The stories began with the premise that ongoing methods were not working thereby
allowing for public opinion to provide possible solutions. Based upon the high percentage of unofficial source stories, Dispatch coverage during the riot turned into unfocused, repetitive-style human interest stories that lacked substance, and sometimes journalistic integrity. The stories over the duration moved away from reporting solely about the riot as journalists sought new angles for essentially reporting the same stories day after day. Instead of stating that the previous day's activities brought about little change in the overall riot situation, journalists created emotionally charged stories focusing on the pain and strife being endured by family members of those involved directly in the actions inside the prison block. Dispatch coverage also became a platform for official sources providing bland information often from prepared press releases that contributed very little to public understanding of the SOCF riot. It appears as though many of these journalists became interested in coming up with new angles for stories by using unofficial sources, and lost track of the "so what" factor for their reports about the riot.

Source attribution in The Cleveland Plain Dealer in many ways resembled that of the Columbus newspaper. Official sources dominated the early days of the riot, but midway through the riot the use of unofficial sources became more prevalent. A possible explanation exists for the reliance on unofficial sources by the Plain Dealer. A majority of the inmates located at SOCF were originally from the Cleveland area. Friends and family members of many of the inmates directly involved in the riot were used as sources. These
individuals often contributed to public understanding of the event because as unofficial sources they provided insight regarding specific prisoners involved in the negotiating process. Plain Dealer journalists appear to have made an effort to use unofficial sources in a constructive, informational manner. The use of unofficial sources in many instances within Plain Dealer reporting increased the overall public understanding of the issues involved in the SOCF riot. Family members of prisoners serving in leadership positions inside the prison block provided insightful commentary on the tendencies of these individuals during times of high tension. The use of family members and friends of the inmates possibly enhanced public understanding of the psychological aspects of the riot through a series of biographical stories about the important players in the riot, from the perspective of the prisoners. This effort contrasted unofficial source usage by the Dispatch that often made no contribution in assisting the public to understand the issues involved in the riot.

Prisoner issues were covered more extensively by the Plain Dealer than by the other two newspapers for another reason. Prisoner negotiator Niki Schwartz was from the Cleveland area. His involvement became instrumental in the eventual conclusion of the riot, and Plain Dealer coverage focused on his actions considerably more than newspapers in either Columbus or Portsmouth. This increased coverage involved stories with more official and unofficial sources related to prisoner negotiations, in addition to a high number of stories framed about the prisoners, as previously mentioned.
Conclusion for Hypothesis #1

Coverage of the SOCF case somewhat supports the first hypothesis, but not entirely. The increased use of unofficial sources by journalists occurred throughout the event, but appears dependent upon the location of the newspaper in relation to the riot. The *Portsmouth Daily Times*, a local newspaper in the SOCF case, least often utilized broad ranges of unofficial sources, or framed stories in a multitude of ways. The reporting by larger, non-local newspapers appears to confirm the hypothesis. Source diversification, however, did result in fragmented, and sometimes confusing reporting when a clear focus was not maintained through story framing. The *Cleveland Plain Dealer* successfully used unofficial sources to enhance its coverage of the riot. The *Columbus Dispatch* failed both in source and framing diversification, resulting in substantial amounts of insufficient, confusing coverage.

Newspaper coverage of the SOCF riot indicates that unofficial sources are used more frequently as knowledge gain occurs. It does not appear, however, that knowledge gain over time results in a predictable increase in the number of unofficial sources used. An assessment of information provided by unofficial sources plays a key role in covering crises, but does not appear to be directly associated with the factor of time and knowledge gain during a crisis. These sources can either provide insightful commentary on the event, or plague a story's context through speculation. Speculation, however, is not always bad. Journalists who use speculation in their stories should guard against presenting
it as fact, and should attempt to place the speculative components into a usable context for the audience. It becomes the duty of the individual journalist to assess if using an unofficial source in reporting from a crisis will contribute to the overall reporting of the incident. This study examined both successful and unsuccessful use of unofficial sources, and demonstrated that unofficial sources are important to journalists during crises events if utilized to enhance overall public understanding of the event. Study findings also illustrate the importance of source management by journalists as a meaningful component of crisis reporting.

The only way to accurately assess the validity and reliability of these results would be to determine a method for measuring journalists' knowledge gain quantifiably. In this study, the element of time elapsed during the SOCf riot was used as an assumed indicator of knowledge gain. Therefore, the results associated with this hypothesis are based on coding observations and should not be construed as totally valid and reliable.

Despite the stated inadequacy of the results, law enforcement implications can be examined based upon the conceptual nature of the data. The Ohio State Highway Patrol attributed the increased use of unofficial sources over time during a crisis event to inadequate amounts of information being provided to the media. The Patrol, or any law enforcement organization involved in a crisis, must understand that journalists will use unofficial sources in order to diversify coverage. The key is to insure that an official source provides timely,
accurate, and useful information to the media. This official source information should be significant enough that the media utilizes the law enforcement organization as the primary source for information related to the event. Providing a substantial amount of useful information will significantly reduce the likelihood of the media using unofficial sources as providers of primary information relevant to the crisis itself. It should not be the objective to limit the media's use of unofficial sources, however efforts should be made by the law enforcement organization managing a crisis to insure that critical information about the crisis is provided to the media.

Discussion of Hypothesis #2

The second hypothesis predicted the number of references to outside events, or social disruptions, included within SOCF riot reporting would change after the Branch Davidian mass suicide led by David Koresh. Coding results indicated that outside events did directly influence journalistic coverage of the SOCF riot. Disparities existed between newspapers, however, in the reference and level of importance journalists gave to outside events through SOCF riot coverage.

Coding results revealed a slight trend in the decrease of references to outside events following the Branch Davidian mass suicide. The Branch Davidian suicide occurred on day eight of the SOCF riot, and all three newspapers show slight decreases in the use of outside events in SOCF
reporting after that day. This reduction is somewhat insignificant, however, because none of the newspapers had displayed a strong tendency to use high numbers of outside event references prior to coverage on day eight. It can therefore be stated that the Branch Davidian suicide appears to have caused journalists covering the SOCF riot to more closely assess the use of outside events in their reporting, but did not significantly change reporting techniques in regard to using outside events in SOCF stories.

Analysis of coding results in this section showed a variation in the number references to outside events between The Columbus Dispatch and the two other newspapers. Dispatch coverage featured over twice as many references to outside events as either of the other two newspapers. Additionally of note, adding totals of outside event references from both the Daily Times and the Plain Dealer resulted in four fewer references than were found in the Columbus newspaper by itself. The high number of references in Dispatch coverage illustrates the perceived importance that journalists can place on outside events during other crises. Starting with the first day of coverage, outside events were utilized by the Dispatch to supplement and enhance coverage of the SOCF riot.

Dispatch coverage differed in another way from the other two newspapers. The Columbus newspaper was the only one to use non-prison riots as outside event references within SOCF coverage. Ongoing crisis events were utilized by Dispatch reporters to illustrate a possible pattern of violence
prevalent around the United States during the time of the SOCF riot. The most dramatic current event included was the conclusion of the Branch Davidian stand-off with federal authorities in Waco, Texas. Inclusion of the Branch Davidian event exemplifies the influence of unrelated outside events directly upon the reporting of events from a separate crisis. The impact is even more significant when considering all references to the Branch Davidian situation were "warnings," even though the two events were unrelated and vastly different.

The two large-market newspapers, Columbus and Cleveland, utilized outside events consistently throughout coverage. This fact may be connected to the experience and reporting skill levels of journalists at these newspapers. Small-market operations, as discussed earlier, often do not staff experienced reporters. The lack of experienced journalists not only affects sources used for stories, but can prohibit journalists from having an historical perspective on the issues they cover. Experienced journalists from larger markets, perhaps based upon their longevity in the industry, are more likely to compare and contrast other events to crisis situations they cover.

The three newspapers analyzed individually made first references to outside events on different days, however the first reference in each newspaper was to the Ohio Penitentiary riot of 1968. This may be an indication that efforts were made, even through outside events, to localize story content for audience members. Despite the fact that the prison riot of 1971 in Attica, New York, more closely resembled the SOCF situation, journalists at all three newspapers
appeared initially to want to establish an Ohio precedent for prison riots. The second coding scheme in this section, level of reference to the outside events, revealed another pattern consistent between all three newspapers in regard to the Ohio Penitentiary riot. The references to that outside event predominantly were coded as, "examples." This level of reference is the mildest of the four levels utilized, and appears to further illustrate the notion of journalists hoping to give audience members non-threatening references to previous crisis situations.

Contrasting references made to the Ohio Penitentiary riot were those to the Attica riot. Perhaps due to the violent conclusion of the Attica riot, references to it within SOCF coverage carry unique overtones. Seven of the nine references to Attica were coded as, "warnings," many forecasting a similar violent ending to the SOCF situation. The first references to Attica by any of the three newspapers did not occur until prison guard Robert Vallandingham was murdered by rioting inmates. Until that point in the crisis only inmates had died. The emotion that surrounded the death of a guard appeared to shift reporting, at least in some manner, to an expectation of more violence before the riot ended. The precedent for dramatic violence related to the conclusion of a prison riot was established in the Attica case, and was suggested as a possibility at the SOCF riot.

Despite the cautionary nature of references to Attica, journalists did not appear to sensationalize these references. This is important when factoring in how much speculation occurred surrounding resolution of the SOCF riot. Attica
ended with a militaristic-style assault on the prisoners within the compound. References to Attica in SOCF riot coverage tended to assess the merits and consequences of a similar strategy to end the crisis event. A majority of references to Attica within this context clearly stated a hope that Lucasville not become another Attica by concluding with mass violence and high numbers of fatalities of both inmates and hostages.

**Conclusion for Hypothesis #2**

Support exists for the second hypothesis in this study, but its conceptual importance is not as significant as expected. The overall importance of outside events with regard to the SOCF case was minimal. It can additionally be concluded that the Branch Davidian mass suicide did not directly result in a change in the number of references to outside events within SOCF reporting. The only affect of the conclusion of Branch Davidian event on SOCF reporting was that journalists were more selective in the use of outside events in riot coverage, but the number of outside event references did not substantially change.

Assessment of outside events on SOCF reporting revealed historically-oriented outside events held a greater influence on reporting than did ongoing outside events at the time of the riot. Reference to outside events appears intended primarily to provide a small amount of perspective on the event to the audience. Journalists themselves appeared more caught up in
reporting the SOCF riot as an independent story than applying outside events to the riot events. *The Columbus Dispatch* was the only newspaper that consistently utilized references to outside events during its riot coverage, yet most of the references were not accompanied by powerful messages, coded in this study as warnings.

Sergeant John Born served as the Ohio State Highway Patrol's public information officer during the SOCF riot. Referring to the inclusion of outside events that resulted in speculation within SOCF riot coverage, Born said, "That kind of speculation is inevitable, especially in a situation that stretches over a prolonged time period. It was not helpful to the ongoing Patrol operation in this case because outside events were used more as analyses than news reports."

The law enforcement organization, as the provider of primary information for stories during specific crises, should recognize that other news events are occurring outside of the event in which they are involved. Realizing that references and comparisons between events might appear in media coverage of a crisis, the law enforcement organization can implement an information disbursement strategy to the media to reduce possible outside event references. Providing a high volume of timely, accurate, and interesting information to the media may alleviate the need for journalists to create new angles on stories by referencing outside events. Another strategy would be to initiate the references to specific outside events. This approach allows for the law enforcement organization to draw comparisons and differences between the crisis and outside
events before the media. The media often is searching for different news reporting frames from crisis events, and if the presiding law enforcement organization understands this concept it can control possible speculation resulting from referencing outside events, as well as assist in setting the media agenda of crisis reporting.

Discussion of Hypothesis #3

The final hypothesis predicted geographic location of an individual newspaper would impact story framing about the SOCF riot. The closer a newspaper was to the SOCF riot, the higher probability stories in that newspaper would be framed to present local issues pertinent to the general public in that specific newspaper's market area. Analysis of stories based upon a geographic coding scheme revealed such a trend. The Portsmouth Daily Times featured more locally framed stories relative to interests in the newspaper's specific market area than either of the other two newspapers analyzed. The Portsmouth newspaper contained 20 locally framed stories concerning issues directly related to citizens in the Lucasville area, equal to approximately 27 percent of its total coverage. This high amount of locally framed stories is not surprising when considering the Daily Times serves as the local newspaper for the citizens of Lucasville, Ohio. The percent of locally framed stories decreased as the distance between the newspaper's market-area and the location of the SOCF riot increased. The Columbus Dispatch, for example, had 18 percent of stories
that dealt with locally related issues concerning general public interests in the SOCF riot for Columbus residents, while the Cleveland Plain Dealer had 14 percent locally framed stories detailing SOCF riot interests directly associated with citizens in the Cleveland area. The low amount of locally framed coverage is understandable in Dispatch coverage. Despite being located only 100 miles from Lucasville, there was little connection between activities in Columbus and those in the SOCF area. The state administrative and governmental elements of law enforcement and corrections work are primarily located in Columbus, however the activities in Lucasville had little immediate impact on most people in Columbus.

The Cleveland Plain Dealer, in contrast, had the market farthest from the actual riot location and featured the lowest percentage of locally framed stories for Cleveland area citizens, although the connection between Cleveland and the SOCF riot appeared to be significant.

Expectations of locally framed stories for Cleveland area citizens in The Cleveland Plain Dealer did not materialize. Unlike Columbus citizens, Cleveland residents theoretically had a great deal of local interest regarding the SOCF riot. Two perceived connections between Cleveland-area residents and the SOCF riot formed the basis for expectations that coverage in the Cleveland newspaper would feature more locally framed stories. First, a majority of the inmates detained in Lucasville were originally from the Cleveland area, and had a high percentage of family members in the community. Local interest in the riot
existed from the standpoint of the uncertainty family members had about the condition of prisoners involved in the riot. The second potential reason for more locally framed stories was the participation in the negotiating process by Cleveland attorney Niki Schwartz as negotiator for the prisoners. Schwartz was instrumental in the resolution of the dispute, and expectations were the Plain Dealer would focus on him being a Cleveland resident.

There were only two stories about Niki Schwartz that related specifically to interests of Cleveland area citizens, and only one story about Cleveland residents related to rioting inmates in Plain Dealer coverage. Potential local angles for stories appear to have been overlooked by Plain Dealer journalists. Considering the newspaper also had the fewest total number of stories about the riot, perhaps the great geographic distance between Lucasville and Cleveland impacted the level of importance given to riot coverage. The low number of locally framed stories is surprising considering the apparent significant Cleveland connection to the SOCF riot.

Both the Columbus and Cleveland newspapers covered locally framed stories about the Lucasville area in a similar fashion. The majority of framing of stories centered on activities of the general public in Lucasville. Events such as prayer vigils and support group meetings dominated this aspect of coverage. Both newspapers also briefly examined the impact on the Lucasville area of prison guards, who were also local residents, being held hostage by prisoners. The hostage issue, however, did not receive nearly the amount of coverage as
did the activities of Lucasville residents in coping with the dramatic nature of the riot.

*Daily Times* coverage was the only example of locally framed stories about Lucasville that explored more than general public or hostage issues. The riot was covered from numerous angles in both a general and local perspective. This diversity in reporting offered the most substantial look into how the riot impacted the state in general, and the dramatic impact of events on the local residents of Lucasville.

**Conclusion for Hypothesis #3**

The broad range of totals between newspapers in regard to locally framed stories supports hypothesis #3. The closer a newspaper's market was to the SOCF riot, the higher the percentage of locally framed stories about the event. Newspaper or market size, however, appeared to have little influence on the level of locally framed stories. The trend in the SOCF case appears clear enough to conceptually state that a correlation exists in crisis event reporting between newspaper location and the prevalence of locally framed stories in that publication. The closer a newspaper was to the crisis, the higher the number of locally framed stories appeared.

Despite the apparent geographic connection between a newspaper's location and a crisis event, another conceptual component should be considered when predicting the level of coverage an event will receive. Communities may
have strong ties to ongoing crises despite distances between the specific crisis and the location of the community. These connections need to be understood by journalists to determine if a potential audience interest exists in events occurring vast distances away from the newspaper's actual market. Geographic distance does not always equate to audience interest or lack of interest in news coverage, and journalists need to understand local community concerns to establish appropriate coverage levels of crisis events occurring in other areas.

Ideally, law enforcement agencies would individually tailor information to media organizations based upon their specific interests. This usually cannot be accomplished during crises due to the tremendous time and resource constraints placed upon the appointed spokespersons. The solution for insuring journalists have the appropriate amount of information to file their stories goes back to the strategy of providing high amounts of information to journalists at arranged press briefings. Specific local interests of journalists and newspapers can only be addressed on a case by case basis. The problem, however, with providing certain journalists with specific information is that once a precedent has been established then other journalists may expect the same treatment. It appears best, especially in the scenario of providing information during a crisis, to provide all journalists with the same basic information and address more specific details based upon questions posed by members of the press at scheduled briefings.
General Conclusions

This project, in general, explored the interactions between journalists and the law enforcement community during crises. There are some general conclusions that can be drawn from the project’s results to insure both sides are better prepared during similar situations in the future.

The overall objective of both sides in cases like the SOCF riot is to provide accurate, timely information to the general public on activities related to the crisis. The need exists, in large part due to the pressure placed on both the media and law enforcement at crises like the SOCF riot, for those involved to better understand the demands being placed on each other group. The Ohio State Highway Patrol felt that some of the media coverage from SOCF, including the reporting of rumors and speculation as facts, was counterproductive to achieving resolution of the crisis. Patrol spokesperson Sergeant Born expressed frustration with inaccurate or speculative reporting that appeared during the SOCF riot. This frustration led him to become more cautious over the duration of the event about disclosing information related to complex issues such as the negotiating process.

A possible solution to the breakdown in trust between law enforcement personnel and the media would be to conduct training seminars bringing together journalists and law enforcement personnel that might work at future crises. Journalists need a better understanding of police science methodology on crisis management techniques if they are to be expected to accurately report
the issues surrounding law enforcement operations. Law enforcement personnel could additionally benefit from such training seminars to better understand the informational needs and concerns of journalists that are often driven by the immediacy of deadlines in filing their stories.

Both law enforcement officers and journalists are responsible for the tension that can exist between the two groups at a crisis like the SOCF riot. Neither side should be held solely responsible for the breakdown in communication, or problems associated with the flow of information from crises. The group that suffers the most from this breakdown is the general public who are dependent upon both sides working together so they can receive important information on the ongoing crisis. The establishment of an operational model between the media and law enforcement organizations for managing information at future crisis scenes would better prepare those involved for the inevitable tension that both sides face at events like the SOCF riot.
LIST OF REFERENCES


