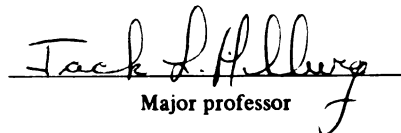This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

THE PHOTE GATEKEEPER: A CASE STUDY IN

THE SELECTION AND USE OF NEWSPAPER PICTURES

presented by

Morna Moore

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

_____M.A._____degree in _Journalism_

_____
Major professor

Date __December 16, 1977__

O-7639

THE PHOTO GATEKEEPER: A CASE STUDY IN

THE SELECTION AND USE OF NEWSPAPER PICTURES

By

Morna Moore

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

School of Journalism

1978

ABSTRACT

THE PHOTO GATEKEEPER: A CASE STUDY IN

THE SELECTION AND USE OF NEWSPAPER PICTURES

By

Morna Moore

This study is an attempt to determine criteria used in choosing news pictures by gatekeepers at six newspapers in the mid-Michigan area. It explores the chain of command among those who control picture usage.

The newspapers were categorized so that two were of small circulation (25,000-50,000), two were medium circulation (65,000-85,000), and two were large circulation (over 100,000). Additionally, within each pair of newspapers, one employed a photo editor and one did not.

The research revealed that picture selection and usage is not a standardized practice but the presence of a photo editor does result in a significant effect. Newspapers with photo editors used a greater percentage of news hole for pictures. Also, gatekeepers at newspapers which did not employ a photo editor were more likely to use pictures, even inferior pictures, for graphics purposes alone. Photo editors, however, expressed a greater concern for the content of the pictures.

Accepted by the faculty of the School of Journalism,
College of Communication Arts and Sciences, Michigan State
University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Master of Arts degree.

Jack L. Hillwig
Director of Thesis

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My sincere thanks to the various editors, photo-
graphers, and other newspaper employees who aided me in
the research of this thesis.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The term gatekeeper was first introduced in the mid-1940's by Kurt Lewin, the late social scientist and former head of the Research Center for Group Dynamics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Lewin said that in any type of institution various social and economic channels can be recognized. And within these channels can be located gate sections. Social changes in society, Lewin pointed out, are caused by changes within these particular gate sections. Those governing the gate sections, Lewin called "gatekeepers."[1] The person who functions as a gatekeeper, he said, is in a position of power to determine what shall and shall not pass through his gate. Lewin said that, as a rule, "the constellation of forces before and after the gate region is decisively different."[2]

Lewin did not himself apply the term gatekeeper directly to mass communication. But others did, and there have been a number of studies relating to gatekeepers in the mass media, particularly in newspapers.

[1]Kurt Lewin, Field Theory in Social Science (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951) pp. 186-187.

[2]Ibid., p. 186.

1

In the mass media, a gatekeeper is one who determines which items will be incorporated into the flow of news between the source (or event) and the reader or viewer. Reporters, for example, serve a gatekeeping function in deciding whether to cover an event and in selecting which aspects of an event to incorporate into their stories. Wire service editors serve as gatekeepers by determining which stories will remain on the wire and which will be dropped to make room for others. A newspaper wire editor, in turn, selects which items from the wire will find their way into print.

If newspapers had unlimited space there might be no need for gatekeepers. However, it is a fact of newspaper life that not all the news can be presented to the reader. A logical question which arises then is, "Who decides what will get into print and on what basis are these selections made?" This has been the principle question which mass communication gatekeeper studies have sought to answer.

By studying the flow of news and the people who control the flow, i.e. the gatekeepers, these studies reveal the ways in which the news is selected and the reasons why the selections are made. The earliest study of the gatekeeper and his function in the mass media was by Leo R. Rosten in The Washington Correspondents.[3] Rosten

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[3]Leo C. Rosten, The Washington Correspondents (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937).

undertook to determine the role played by newsmen in Washington, D.C., and how they shaped, altered, or other-wise manipulated the news which filtered out of the capital. Rosten's study was done in the early 1930's, before the concept of gatekeepers had been formulated, but it was the gatekeeping function of the media with which he was concerned.

Perhaps the most significant study of a particular gatekeeper was the one made in 1949 by David Manning White.[4] White studied the selection process of a single wire editor at a midwest morning daily newspaper with a circulation of 30,000. The gatekeeper, whom White called "Mr. Gates," was a middle-aged man with 25 years of experience as a re-porter and copy editor before he became wire editor. The paper at which Mr. Gates was employed received wire copy from the Associated Press, United Press, and International News Service.

White studied Mr. Gates from February 6, 1949 to Februrary 13, 1949. During the study period, Mr. Gates received about 12,400 inches of wire copy (at five lines per inch) and used 1,297 column inches, or about one-tenth.[5]

White was concerned with the reasons why Mr. Gates rejected almost nine-tenths of the stories he received,

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[4]David Manning White, "The 'Gatekeeper', a Case Study in the Selection of News," _Journalism Quarterly_, 27 (Fall, 1950):197-201.

[5]Ibid., p. 198.

in order to determine the kinds of judgments which affect news flow. Mr. Gates was asked to save all rejected copy and, at the end of the day, to write his reasons for rejection. These reasons were (number in parentheses indicates the number of times a reason was given): "Not interesting" (62); "No interest here" (43); "Dull writing" (51); "Too vague" (26); "Drags too much" (3); "No good" (31); "Slop" (18); "Used up" (4); "Passed--dragging out," "Too much of this," "Goes on all the time," "Dying out," "trivial" (29); "Would ignore" (21); "No need for this," "Wasted space," "Not too important," "Not too hot," "Not too worthy," "Never use this" (21); "Never use" (7); "Propaganda" (16); "He's too Red," "Sour grapes," "Wouldn't use" (13); "Don't care for suicide stores," "Too suggestive," "Out of good taste" (6).[6]

White found that Mr. Gates' decisions were highly subjective, and were based on preference for human interest stories with a moral, warning, or lesson. Length, clarity, conciseness, and angle were also determining factors, but to a lesser degree.

In conclusion, White pointed out that, "only after we study the reasons given by Mr. Gates for rejecting almost nine-tenths of the wire copy do we begin to understand how highly subjective, how reliant upon value judgments based on the gatekeeper's own set of experiences,

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[6]Ibid., p. 199.

attitudes and expectations the communication of news really is."[7]

Scott M. Cutlip conducted a gatekeeper study of Wisconsin and Indiana daily newspapers in 1954 which found that the adoption of the teletypesetter was lessening even further the amount of local news available to the newspaper audience.[8] This was due to the fact that the TTS made it easier for the editor to transfer news from the wire to the pages of the newspaper. Cutlip was, like White, struck by the fact that very little of the total amount of news available actually reaches the reader. He concluded that, "an overall look at the flow of news from the many world-wide points of origin to the newspaper reader in, say Wisconsin Rapids, underlines anew the tremendous difficulties and barriers involved in getting a full, balanced, authentic picture of the world's complicated happenings to Mr. Average Reader."[9]

In 1955, Warren Breed conducted a study which looked into a condition noted by Marlen Pew, former editor of

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[7]Ibid.

[8]Scott M. Cutlip, "Content and Flow of AP News--From Trunk to TTS to Reader," Journalism Quarterly, 31 (Fall, 1954) : 434-446.

[9]Ibid., p. 435.

Editor & Publisher, who said: "Hundreds of newspapers, though published in cities scattered from coast to coast, were as like as so many peas in a pod."[10]

Breed's gatekeeper study revealed three characteristics of standardization which, he asserted, "may have consequences for the workings of democracy."[11] He found that newspapers across the country tended to carry the same or similar stories, that these stories were styled and arranged in same or similar ways, and that the same stories consistently appeared on the top of front pages across the country.

Breed attributed this standardization to several factors: wire services and syndicates exerted a strong standardizing influence along with widely-distributed publicity handouts, chain ownership, and a tendency among publishers toward a conservative political policy. Additionally, editors indicated that story play was greatly influenced by other papers.[12]

Breed's conclusion pointedly cast the gatekeeper in a far more influential and power role than he had previously been perceived as performing. Breed wrote,

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[10]Walter Breed, "Newspaper 'Opinion Leaders' and Processes of Standardization," Journalism Quarterly, 32 (Summer 1955):277-284.

[11]Ibid., p. 278.

[12]Ibid., p. 279.

The danger is in the potential influence of a small
number of persons in deciding what millions of
citizens will read. Great responsibility rests on
those few. In effect, editors of large papers,
and 'general news editors' of wire services, hold
more responsible posts than even they perhaps real-
ize, as ABSENTEE guides of the news display policies
of hundreds of newspapers.[13]

Walter Gieber conducted several studies concerning

news judgments of gatekeepers. His first important gate-

keeper study, in 1956, explored the activities of tele-

graphy editors employed by sixteen Wisconsin daily news-

papers.[14] Gieber found that these editors "accepted the

AP as a RECOMMENDER of news and consistently used budget

stories."[15] In other words, the AP selected the news

items that would appear in print and the wire editor served

mostly as a passer-on of those items. These editors,

Gieber found, were primarily concerned with simply getting

copy into print. "Only rarely," he wrote, "(were they)

willing to discuss news as a communication possessing

social utility; indeed, (they) sometimes scoffed at the

thought."[16]

Gieber described the telegraph editing he observed

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[13]Ibid., p. 328.

[14]Walter Gieber, "Across the Desk: A Study of 16
Telegraph Editors," Journalism Quarterly, 33 (Fall 1956):
423-432.

[15]Ibid., p. 429.

[16]Ibid., p. 432.

as a decision-making process affected by the editor's
perception of his readers, the paper's traditions, the
news policies of the editor's superiors, the editor's
own biases, white space availability, and time.[17]

"The wire editors," Gieber concluded, "were not
interested in providing news stories which explain the
meaning of events."[18] In fact, "only one said he read
the copy for 'more than errors.'"[19]

In another study, in 1960, Gieber looked at the
roles of reporters and information sources as gatekeepers
of civil liberties news.[20] After studying seventeen
sources and twenty-seven reporters at five California
daily newspapers, Gieber concluded that the relationship
between reporters and sources of civil liberties news is,
for the most part, a self-defeating one: "There exists
a genuine difference in perception," he wrote. "What
is news to a source is not news to a reporter."[21]

Another important gatekeeper study was conducted in
1960 by Robert L. Jones, Verling G. Troldahl, and J. K.

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[17]Ibid., p. 424.

[18]Ibid., p. 430.

[19]Ibid., p. 428.

[20]Walter Gieber, "How the 'Gatekeepers' View Local
Civil Liberties News," Journalism Quarterly, 37 (Spring
1960):199-205.

[21]Ibid., p. 203.

Hvistendahl.[22] The researchers analyzed the usage, by twenty-three Minnesota newspapers, of stories which ran on the AP's Minnesota Teletypesetter wire.

The researchers found that: 92 percent of the wire stories which were printed were used on the same day that they were filed; stories which were held over were rarely held for more than a day; there were few major rewrites; average use was of slightly over one-third the items available; seven percent of the items which ran during the study period were not used by any of the twenty-three newspapers; and only one-forth of the stories were edited and they were cut from the bottom, for the purpose of fitting the newshole rather than to improve the story.[23]

In summary, these gatekeeper studies have shown that:

--gatekeepers receive far more information than they pass along;

--gatekeeping decisions are often highly subjective;

--space and timliness have a significant effect on the gatekeeper's decisions;

--convenience often determines the gatekeeper's selections; and

--the gatekeeping process results in a standardization of news coverage with reliance on the wire services contributing greatly to this standardization.

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[22]Robert L. Jones, Verling C. Troldahl, and J. K. Hvistendahl, "News Selection Patterns From a State TTS Wire," Journalism Quarterly, 38 (Summer 1961):303-312.

[23]Ibid., p. 310.

Since the inception of gatekeeper studies in mass
communication, the gatekeeping roles of various people--
reporters, wire editors, news editors and so forth--have
been studied. Unfortunately, these studies have concen-
trated almost exclusively on news selection as it relates
to the written news. There are virtually no gatekeeper
studies which have been concerned with picture selection
and usage within the mass media.*

Although it is true that a great deal of research
remains to be done in the field of photojournalism, a
substantial body of findings has already been compiled.
Keith P. Sanders, professor of communication research at
the School of Journalism, University of Missouri, in
reviewing photojournalism research writes:

> . . . numerous studies have shown that photographs
> in newspapers and magazines consistently draw more
> readers than the words in print which the photographs
> accompany. The Continuing Study of Newspaper Read-
> ing, for example, demonstrated that the popularity
> of news photographs was several times that of written
> material?[24]

In 1947, Bert W. Woodburn, then special projects
director of the Publication Research Service in Chicago,

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*For a theoretical analysis see: George Arnold,
"Theoretical Views of the Photography Editor as a Gate-
keeper," (Masters thesis, University of Missouri, 1974).
For a gatekeeper study in an electronic medium, see:
James K. Buckalew, "The Television News Editor as a Gate-
keeper," Journal of Broadcasting, 13 (1968-1969):48-49.

[24]Keith P. Sanders, "Research in Photojournalism,"
in Photojournalism, ed. Clifton C. Edom (Dubuque, Iowa:
Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1976), p. 121.

made an analysis of readership surveys which revealed that pictures have a greater stopping power than any other newspaper element.[25] Also in 1947, Robert E. Gervin, then chief of *Life* magazine's New York news bureau, wrote on the potential use of photographs as documents of social trends.[26] "It is surely axiomatic," he wrote, "that when we see things for ourselves rather than rely on someone else's word description, we understand them better."[27] But, he said, newspapers have failed to exploit this potential in photography. He laid the blame for this on newspaper editors who, he wrote, "do not conceive of pictures as a separate medium which can tell a story by itself with the aid of very little text interpretation."[28]

Basil L. Walters, when he was executive editor of the Knight Newspapers, echoed Gervin's criticism of editorial attitude toward picture usage.[29] Walters recalled an Associated Press managing editors convention in 1935, shortly after the wirephoto became a reality. The

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[25] Bert W. Woodburn, "Reader Interest in News Pictures," *Journalism Quarterly*, 24 (September 1947):197-201.

[26] Robert E. Gervin, "Photography as Social Documentation," *Journalism Quarterly*, 24 (September 1947):207-220.

[27] Ibid., p. 207.

[28] Ibid., p. 208.

[29] Basil L. Walters, "Picture vs. Type Display in Reporting the News," *Journalism Quarterly*, 24 (September 1947):193-196.

suggestion was made at the convention that at least half of the next convention be devoted to the discussion of press photography. According to Walters, this suggestion was met with a great deal of resistance by most of the participants. "Pictures, they reasoned, should not be permitted to encroach upon the written word in newspapers," Walters wrote.[30]

Walters was ahead of his time in realizing that "there should be little distinction in the newspaper office or the courts or any other place between the men who report a story through the photographic lens and those who use the typewriter."[31] He was even to some degree prophetic in declaring that "the great shift in appreciation of pictorial reporting in newspapers may come with more general use of offset printing."[32]

Despite studies which indicate pictures have a high readership as well as an ability to influence public opinion, and despite the opinions of experts that pictures deserve a greater measure of respect in the press, there is evidence that management fails to regard pictures as important means of communicating news. For example, a

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[30]Ibid., p. 193.

[31]Ibid., p. 195.

[32]Ibid., p. 194.

content analysis of three newspapers conducted by graduate students in the Department of Journalism at the University of California at Los Angeles revealed a steady decrease in picture usage at two of the papers.[33] Further, these decreases followed patterns which indicated that, "whenever space is restricted, pictures and other graphics are cut out of proportion to the cut in editorial matter. And when space becomes available, graphics are not as quick to expand as are other types of content."[34]

Other researchers have concentrated more on the relationship between the photograph and the audience. William R. Hazard, in attempting to determine the factors which influence readers' preferences for certain pictures, found subject matter to be the most important.[35] Hazard's findings are consistent with those of other researchers: subject matter, or content, has repeatedly been pinpointed as the single most important factor in determining picture preference.[36]

The most relevant photographic studies, in terms of

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[33]Frederick S. Siebert, ed., "Trends in the Use of Pictures by Three Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly, 29 (1952):212-213.

[34]Ibid., p. 213.

[35]William R. Hazard, "Responses to News Pictures: A Study in Perceptual Unity," Journalism Quarterly, 37 (Autumn 1960):515-524.

[36]Keith P. Sanders, p. 122.

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this study, are those which look at picture preferences among members of the press. One such study was conducted in 1960 by William Stephenson.[37] Stephenson analyzed the selections of a committee of twelve persons which was formed to choose fifty outstanding news photos from all photos circulated in the United States from 1908 to 1958. This task was a part of the observance of the 50th anniversary of the University of Missouri School of Journalism. The committee was composed of members of the press as well as photojournalism scholars.

Stephenson found that "the practicing newspaper or magazine men are in some respects poles apart from the picture or wire service men. They do not see the pictures in the same way."[38] Stephenson found that newspaper men tended to favor pictures with "general news" value and those which aroused emotions of pity and compassion while photo and wire service men placed a greater value on "spot news" and sensational or novel subject matter.[39]

Another finding was that newspaper men

> . . . feel the need to upgrade their publications by
> the inclusion of more thought-provoking pictures. . . .
> They are more prepared to think of pictures as matters

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[37]William Stephenson, "Principles of Selection of News Pictures," _Journalism Quarterly_ 37 (Winter 1960): 61-68.

[38]Ibid., p. 65.

[39]Ibid., p. 68.

of record and as comment on the community scene

while the wire service man

> . . . seems more likely to value the directly enter-
> taining and sensational. His is the more hectic
> occupation, and he thinks of nationwide popularities
> rather than of the 'good' newspaper in his own
> community.[40]

Malcolm S. McLean and Anne Li-An Kao also analyzed

the picture selection process.[41] The two researchers asked

two editors and 32 readers to rank sixty pictures from

Life and _Look_ magazines according to their own preferences

as well as to how they predicted each other's preferences.

The researchers found that while the editors had difficulty

in predicting the preferences of the average reader, they

had no trouble in predicting the likes and dislikes of a

described hypothetical reader.[42] The photos that ranked

the highest among the thirty-two reader participants were

ones with children, human interest and warmth. Those which

were least liked by the group were those which depicted

death and war.[43]

Another study by MacLean and Kao indicated that "a

photograph that does not arouse strong feelings is not

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[40]Ibid.

[41]Malcolm S. MacLean, Jr., and Anne Li-An Kao,
"Picture Selection: An Editorial Game," _Journalism_
Quarterly 40 (Spring 1963):230-232.

[42]Ibid., p. 232.

[43]Ibid.

likely to be either much liked or disliked."[44] This obser-

vation, that a picture's impact greatly determines how well

liked or disliked it will be, was also noted by Kalis and

Edom in an earlier study.[45]

Despite the more than ample evidence that photographs

have the power "to increase readership, to enhance effec-

tive communication, and to shape the attitudes of readers,"[46]

picture usage, or editing, is not generally viewed with high

regard by managing editors. In 1965, Donald Blake wrote

that "many editors think of photographers as 'shutter-

tripper'--lacking in appreciation of news value and a

knowledge of journalism fundamentals. They have not accepted

the photographer as a member of the editoral family."[47] It

would appear that not much has changed, in terms of attitude,

since Walters' complaints in 1947.

MacLean, in a similar vein, asserted that research

has failed the photographer as well as the editor in its

lack of scrutiny of the decision making process in select-

ing news pictures. He wrote:

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[44]Malcom S. MacLean, Jr., and Anne Li-An Kao,
Editorial Predictions of Magazine Picture Appeals (Iowa
City, Iowa: School of Journalism, University of Iowa, 1965),
cited in "Research in Photojournalism," by Keith P. Sanders,
in Photojournalism, by Edom, pp. 125-126.

[45]Keith P. Sanders, p. 126.

[46]Keith P. Sanders, p. 130.

[47]Donald P. Blake, "The Editor vs. the Photographer,"
Quill, December 1965:18-20.

It is curious how little research has been done on
pictorial communication. All the evidence we have
says that pictures are important . . . . Yet we
have practically no research on how we can best make
or select those 'good' pictures to do such jobs
for us. Despite the thousands of readership and
audience studies, editors and photographers still
have to fly pretty much by the seat of the pants in
their decisions on pictorial communication.[48]

As recently as 1976, Sanders, in Clifton Edom's book,

Photojournalism, while reviewing research in photojournalism,

wrote that "we still know relatively little about how photo-

graphy editors choose pictures."[49] Sanders suggests that

a desirable next step in photojournalism research would

involve studies of photo editors using the methods developed

by White and Gieber.[50] In other words, what is needed are

gatekeeper studies of the photo selection process.

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[48]MacLean and Kao, "Picture Selection: An Editorial
Game," p. 230.

[49]Sanders, p. 134.

[50]Ibid.

CHAPTER II

OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

This study attempts to determine some of the criteria used in choosing news pictures* by editors at selected newspapers in the mid-Michigan area. In other words, what kinds of pictures are selected by photo gatekeepers and why?

Additionally, the study explores the chain of command among those who control picture usage. In a paper entitled "A Process Approach to Teaching Beginning Photojournalims," Jack Hillwig, photojournalism instructor at Michigan State University, defined photojournalism as an eight step process encompassing the following steps:

1. idea for the photo

2. approval and assignment of the idea

3. execution of the assignment

4. film development

5. picture selection

6. printing the photo

7. design-cropping-cutline writing

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*This study is concerned only with photographs. The word "picture" is used in that sense. Charts, maps, cartoons and other graphics were not included in this study. Additionally, the term "news picture" refers to pictures which appear in the newspaper and not to any particular category of pictures.

8. production in the publication.

The present study explores the "gates" between these eight steps and attempts to determine who has the power to open or close them.

Finally, this study seeks to present some indication of the attitudes toward news pictures expressed by the various editors.

Previous gatekeeper studies have shown that only a small percentage of the total information available to an editor ever reaches print. Just as far more copy comes across a news editor's desk than goes into the newspaper, so too far more news pictures are available each day than can be accommodated in the newspaper's pages. It is not the intent of this study to determine what percentage of all available photos are chosen.

This study seeks to compare picture usage at three mid-Michigan daily newspapers which employ a photo editor to picture usage at three mid-Michigan daily newspapers which do not employ a photo editor. The study seeks to determine whether there is a difference in the eight-step picture handling process at newspapers with and without photo editors, especially in terms of step five, picture selection. Is there a difference in the attitude toward news pictures? Is there a difference in the play given news pictures?

The newspapers range in circulation from 25,000 to more than 100,000. All but one of the newspapers are

evening publications. Three of them publish a Saturday edition in the morning instead of the evening. Only one of the six newspapers does not have a Sunday edition.

For purposes of comparison, the newspapers were chosen so they could be placed in three groups of two papers each. Each group includes a newspaper with a photo editor and a newspaper without a photo editor.

In the first group (Group A) are the two largest newspapers, both with circulations over 100,000 and both in major metropolitan areas. Both newspapers use the wire-photo services of the Associated Press and United Press International.

The second group (Group B) consists of two medium sized newspapers in the circulation range of 65,000 to 85,000. These newspapers use only the Associated Press wirephoto service.

The third group (Group C) consists of the smallest newspapers in the study, the 25,000 to 50,000 circulation range. Both use only Associated Press wirephotos. (See Table 1, page 21.)

Each newspaper was initially contacted by letter, addressed to the managing editor (see Appendix, p. 105). The initial method of the study, as described in the letter, was altered after discussion with the various managing editors and each editor was asked to cooperate for only a one-day period.

The date set for the experiment was June 9, 1976.

Table 1.—Summary of Papers I – VI

		Circulation Range	Distribution	Wirephoto Services	Number of Staff Photographers	Photo Editor	Chief Photographer
Paper I	A	Over 100,000	a.m. & Sunday	AP and UPI	Eight	No	Yes
Paper II	B	Over 100,000	p.m. & Sunday	AP and UPI	Six	Yes	Yes
Paper III	B	65,000-85,000	p.m.	AP	Five	Yes	Yes
Paper IV	B	65,000-85,000	p.m., Saturday a.m. & Sunday	AP	Five	No	Yes
Paper V	C	25,000-50,000	p.m. & Sunday	AP	Three	Yes	No
Paper VI	C	25,000-50,000	p.m., Saturday a.m. & Sunday	AP	Three	No	Yes

Prior to that day, the researcher visited each of the six newspapers and spoke with each of the persons who was to be involved, explaining in detail what was to be done. On June 9, each editor was to keep a log (see Appendix, pp. 106-108) of all the photos selected for use on that day with the reasons why each was chosen.

Within a week of the study date, each participant was revisited and interviewed in depth about his picture selections and about his attitudes toward picture usage in general. Each editor was asked to describe his educational and professional background, to cite any education in photojournalism or graphics, and to describe his job responsibilities. Each person interviewed was also asked to list the ways in which he was involved with the photo selection process and to describe the purposes and functions of newspaper pictures as well as the particular characteristics of a "good" news picture. Every effort was made by the researcher to ask identical questions of each editor.

In addition to the follow-up interview, each newspaper picture content was analyzed. This analysis included categorization of pictures by subject and by source as well as an analysis of picture play.

The researcher was primarily concerned with the newsroom and not with other departments within the newspaper. Two categories of photos, sports and women's, were not considered in this study.

No attempt is made in this study to generalize findings

to a larger population, but an attempt is made to paint an in-depth picture of photo usage at the six mid-Michigan dailies. This study, it is hoped, may suggest what is taking place at other newspapers throughout the country.

CHAPTER III

PARTICIPATING NEWSPAPERS AND
THEIR PHOTO GATEKEEPERS

Paper I

Paper I is the largest of the six newspapers, with a
circulation of over 100,000. The newspaper employs eight
full-time photographers, including a chief photographer.
It receives wirephotos from both the Associated Press and
United Press International. Production is by letterpress.

There is no photo editor at Paper I. Picture selec-
tions are made by the "picture person," as management
phrases it. The role of picture person is rotated daily
among three people.

The picture person on the day of the study began work-
ing as a copy editor at Paper I immediately after receiving
her Bachelor of Journalism in 1972. Because her job differs
from day-to-day, her responsibilities at the newspaper vary.
As picture person, she is responsible for selecting the
pictures for that day's paper. In addition to choosing
pictures, she crops, suggests size and writes the cutline.
She perceives her job as one of "sorting and categorizing."
She says she likes pictures and will push for a good one,
but dislikes the system by which pictures are selected:

> This job is disorganized and a hassle. I feel like
> I'm always trying to keep my head above water. I
> hate this job.

One reason why this picture person feels the job to be disorganized, she says, is because she has no control over the assignment of picture ideas. She says there is no overall control over what will be produced. Anyone who needs a picture just sends an assignment to the photo department. She receives the results. Some days she may have many local pictures to choose from, on others virtually none. She sees the staff photographers as "unproductive" but feels that's partly due to the "lack of coordination" of picture usage.

The associated editor at this paper, who spoke for the managing editor, sees picture selection as strong. However, he attributes the strength to factors other than the selection process. For example, he says picture selection is strong because the paper has a "full file of AP and UPI pictures and a full library."

He thinks, unlike the picture person, that the daily assignment of picture selection to one person provides coordination. However, his description of a picture editor is quite limited:

> The function of a picture editor is to look at pictures that already exist and choose from them. A picture editor doesn't assign photographers or dream up ideas.

Photo department personnel at Paper I are remarkably unhappy with the picture selection process. The manager

of this department says that pictures are downgraded there.
The fact that pictures receive such high readership is, in
his mind, the reason why so little attention is paid them
by management. "People will look at a picture, no matter
what it is," he says.

He is disdainful of the rotation system used and says,
"Just because someone is a news editor doesn't mean he
know about picking a good news picture and this paper is
a good example of that."

One of the photographers at this newspaper also ex-
pressed discontent over the system employed. He feels
that the lack of a strong picture editor causes the photo-
graphers to flounder; that there are no guidelines from
any reliable source of what kinds of pictures are sought.
He says that news pictures are treated as illustrations for
stories rather than story-telling vehicles in and of them-
selves. "We're not treated as another news producing
organ of the paper," he says, "but as an adjunct to the
others." He adds: "It's almost unheard of for a photo-
grapher to have an idea and get a writer assigned to do
the story, yet the reverse is traditional, common practice."

Generally, Paper I employs a picture selection system
which causes a great deal of frustration among the people
involved with picture usage. Management apparently is
unaware of this discontent as well as unthoughtful in
respect to what is involved in picture coverage of the

news. All of the employees interviewed at this newspaper felt the picture selection process to be uncoordinated.

Paper II

Paper II is the second of the large circulation pair of newspapers. It employs six full-time photographers, including a chief photographer. It receives wirephotos from both the Associated Press and United Press International. Reproduction is by letterpress.

Paper II employs a photo editor who has been with the newspaper for about thirty years. He began as a photographer, moved up to chief photographer, and then became photo editor about nine years ago. He attended college for one year. He says he likes words as well as pictures and had actually wanted to be a reporter when he started his career in newspapering. He has had several stories published in nationally circulated photography magazines and also wrote a camera column at Paper II for about a year.

As photo editor, he is responsible for all newspictures which go into the paper. He controls assignment ideas which must be approved by him before being sent to the photo department. Photographers are assigned by the chief photographer. The photo editor, in addition to processing assignment requests, also generates his own ideas for assignment. He selects, crops and suggests the size a picture should be run. Although he does not have total control over picture size, he crops first and prefers

to allow a picture to be used only if it will fit the space as it should be cropped. He writes all the cutlines, edits and sometimes rewrites copy which is to run with a picture. He does the layout of picture pages and picture groups and aids in the layout of single pictures. The photo editor does not go out on assignments.

There are three basic rules of picture usage, according to this photo editor, and they are:

1. crop ruthlessly to play up the portion of the picture that really has interest;

2. enlarge generously; and

3. describe fully but don't repeat in the cutline what is already obvious in the picture.

This photo editor has worked as a photographer both with and without a photo editor and he prefers the latter system. Having a photo editor, he says, provides a central clearing desk for all pictures and allows a photo-oriented person to oversee picture usage. Otherwise, pictures will be secondary, he believes. "My job," he says, "is to sell the pictures. And I'm here in the newsroom to do it."

According to the managing editor at Paper II, a picture editor is important and should be allowed certain perogatives in terms of what size a picture should be and whether or not it will run at all. He says his photo editor has control over such matters unless completely blocked out by layout of the page in question.

There is an emphasis on staff photos at this newspaper which the managing editor says is due to the high

calibre of photographers who work there: "We feel we have six good photographers, as opposed to most 50,000 and up paper who feel they have one good photographer."*

The photo department at Paper II is also involved in picture selection. The chief photographer makes the initial judgments on quality and coverage of subject matter and then sends the photographs which meet his approval on to the photo editor.

Paper III

Paper III is in the medium circulation range of 65,000 to 80,000. It is the only paper in the study group which does not publish on Sunday. It employs five full-time photographers. Wirephotos are from the Associated Press only. Reproduction is by letterpress.

Paper III employs five full-time photographers, including the chief photographer who also holds the title of photo editor. This photo editor is in his early 40s. He has had two years of college education. He has been employed by Paper III since 1961 and has been chief photographer for the last twelve years. He has held the title of photo editor for eight years.

Although he holds the title of photo editor, it is questionable whether he actually has the responsibility

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*Although most of the newspapers employed prize-winning photographers, in terms of state and national competitions, only Paper II had on its staff a Pulitzer Prize winning photographer.

of a photo editor. At the time of the initial inquiry
to Paper III, his name was never mentioned by the managing
editor or any other editor as the logical person for the
researcher to work with. Unlike the other photo editors
in this study, he has no desk or space in the newsroom.
He is confined to the photo department. The photo editor
says himself that although he has the title, "It doesn't
mean much."

This photo editor is responsible for processing
assignments over which he has and exercises veto power.
He also must supply a local picture for page one each
day, shoot assignments, and print his own work. He is
involved in selection insofar as he supplies the appro-
priate editor with the best prints of an assignment. As
a general rule, he does not crop, size or layout pictures.
He also does not write cutlines.

The photo editor is not involved with wirephotos at
all. He has very limited control over the photo selection
process except in the realm of local photos, and even
then, most of his input is limited to deciding which
prints to send on to the newsroom.

Wirephotos at Paper III are selected, cropped, sized
and placed on the page by the wire editor. She also often
rewrites cutlines. She is not involved in assigning
photo ideas.

The news editor at Paper III is somewhat involved
in the picture selection process. In doing the layout

for page one, he crops and sizes the photographs, but he does not write the cutlines. If there is more than one picture available for page one, he selects. He also supervises selection by exercising veto power when he feels a picture is in poor taste.

The assistant news editor, in laying out much of the paper, also uses photos. He says he doesn't choose photos: "I just take whatever comes my way." He does crop and size the photographs he receives.

There is no one person at Paper III who supervises photo coverage in terms of assigning of photographs to be taken. In fact, the entire process at this paper is one where, seemingly, no one and everyone is involved in the use of photographs. The managing editor expressed little interest in visual presentation of the news, the photo editor felt he had the title but not the job of editor, and each of the other editors are involved in picture usage but none are involved in an overall sense.

Generally, Paper III employs a very weak photo editor and has no well-defined system of picture usage.

Paper IV

Paper IV, in the 65,000 to 85,000 circulation range, medium size paper which does not employ a photo editor by title. The newspaper uses Associated Press wirephotos and employs five full-time photographers, including the chief photographer.

The chief photographer at Paper IV is unlike the chief photographers at the other newspapers in this study. In a few ways, he has the privileges and responsibilities of a photo editor. The first indication of this was at the time of the initial query to the newspaper. The reseacher was referred to the chief photographer. At no other newspaper did the managing editor consider the chief photographer to be the most appropriate to deal with the researcher. Also, this chief photographer has a desk in the newsroom. Again, no other chief photographer occupied newsroom space, while it was an important aspect of two of the photo editors' roles.

The chief photographer at Paper IV is in his early 40s and holds a Bachelor of Science in history. In the past twenty years, he has worked as a combination reporter/ photographer, city editor, political reporter and chief photographer. He was initially hired by Paper IV as a reporter/photographer and worked mostly as a reporter for the first ten years of his employment. He became chief photographer in 1974.

As chief photographer, he is responsible for generating assignment ideas as well as assigning photographers to fill requests from various reporters and editors. About half of his work day is spent shooting. He generally leaves picture selection to the photographers, who submit their best shots to whatever editor has made the request. However, he does select, from proof sheets, if he has time

and it is what he calls a "quality" package, meaning more than a run-of-the-mill assignment. He also makes the selections when a picture package is used, which happens frequently at this newspaper. He suggests the size he thinks a picture should be if his opinion is asked for by the person laying out the page.

He does not do much cropping. Most of the cropping is done in the enlargement process, by the photographers.

He does not write cutlines.

The front page photograph is selected jointly by him, the managing editor and the news editor.

The news editor at Paper IV chooses the pictures for the pages he lays out, which contain most of the national and international news. He crops and sizes the pictures he uses and also writes the cutlines. He is not pleased with the current method of having the photographers select their best shots, favoring, instead, a method by which he would examine proof sheets.

The assistant city editor at this newspaper, formerly a picture editor, is responsible for the layout of the local section. He also makes his selections from prints submitted by the photographers. He decides the size and number of pictures but generally does not alter the cropping already done by the photographers. "In most cases," he says, "I'll agree with their assessment of dimension." He usually writes cutlines.

There is no sense of organization or control to the picture operation at Paper IV. The photographers have a great deal of input in terms of selection by cropping and submitting their best shots, as they see them. However, there are several people to whom photos are submitted and no one standard for the photographers to work by. The chief photographer, in some ways, functions as a gatekeeper, most importantly in the fact that he is a part of the newsroom team rather than a servant to it. In the words of the managing editor:

> (He) could be called a photo editor as easily
> as a chief photographer. His job--in the purest
> sense--is neither, or a bit of both.

Paper V

Paper V, with a circulation in the range of 25,000 to 50,000, is in the smallest pair of newspapers chosen for this study. The newspaper employs three full-time photographers, but no chief photographer. It receives wirephotos from the Associated Press.

Having been singled out for attention in Clifton C. Edom's recently published book, Photojournalism, it has reputation among photojournalists for dynamic picture usage. The person to be credited for this, according to the managing editor, is the 32-year-old photo editor. This photo editor, according to the managing editor, embodies what he considers to be the characteristics of a good photo editor:

He's a news man and understands news in terms of
words and pictures. His special field is photo-
graphy. He's not just a person who is a photographer,
an esthetitician. He understands news value. He
can do layout, write captions, come up with ideas
. . . logically, he can serve in any other editoral
capacity.[51]

The photo editor at Paper V was hired in 1969. He

left in 1971 to earn his Master of Arts in journalism. He

returned in 1973.

In his capacity as photo editor, he is responsible

for serving all departments by carrying through their re-

quests as well as initiating picture ideas. In terms of

power and jurisdiction, he is on an equal plane with all

other editors at the newspaper, serving under the managing

editor.

The photo editor may make suggestions but may not

override the decisions of the other editors. He does not

have veto power over picture selection although his opinion

is generally respected. However, the editor in charge of

the page in question is entitled to make the final decision

in cases of disagreement over picture usage.

The managing editor is rarely involved in the picture

selection process, although he is sometimes placed in the

position of arbitrator when an irreconcilable disagreement

arises between the photo editor and another editor. He is

also involved in the sense that his positive attitude to-

ward picture usage affects the make-up of the newspaper.

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[51]Clifton C. Edom, Photojournalism (New York: Wm. C.
Brown Company, 1976).

He says, for example:

> The graphic approach to the newspaper business is
> the only way to go. You have to design your page
> around graphics. Word content is vitally important,
> but graphics pull the reader into the page.

The photo editor at this paper perceives his role as

one which deals with all phases of picture usage, begin-

ning with the generation of assignment ideas. All assign-

ments, however do not originate with him. All assignments

have to be logged with him and he sometimes rejects ideas.

This photo editor does not have absolute control over

selection, cropping and sizing of pictures. However, these

jobs are generally performed by him and because there is

no chief photographer at this newspaper, he exercises a

considerable amount of control over the darkroom product.

All cutlines are written by the photo editor. Layout

is usually a joint effort between the photo editor and the

editor in charge of the page. When multiple picture lay-

outs or full picture pages are used, the photo editor alone

does the make-up of the page or section. Picture pages

are a common occurence at this newspaper.

The photo editor has assumed, at times, the role of

educator. He served in this capacity by holding a series

of weekend seminars for employees of the newspaper. These

seminars are geared toward increasing picture appreciation

and usage among the staff.

The city editor at Paper V has held that position for

three years. He is in his late thirties and has a Bachelor

of Arts in journalism. He chooses pictures for the local pages, except the front page and page three. His selections are from an already limited group since the photo editor controls which prints ever make it out of the darkroom. The city editor, or his assistant, decides how to crop, size and place pictures in laying out the local pages. These decisions are often based on the advice of the photo editor.

The news editor at Paper V is also involved in picture selection. He is 48 years old, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism, and has been employed at Paper V for eighteen years. He has been news editor since 1968.

In addition to editing copy and writing headlines, he selects stories and photos and does page layout. Like the city editor, his selections are made from an already select group which has been passed on to him from the photo editor.

This news editor does not crop the photos he uses, leaving that job to the photo editor. But he does decide the size they will be and how many will be used. He does the layout for pages one and three and occasional inside pages.

Paper V is headed by a managing editor who likes to give good play to pictures and it employs a strong photo editor well-educated in photojournalism who exercises considerable control over the picture selection process.

Paper VI

Paper VI, the other of the small papers, has no photo editor. It uses Associated Press wirephotos and employs three full-time photographers. Reproduction is by letter-press.

News picture selection and usage at this newspaper is far less systematic or controlled than at Paper V.

The person at Paper VI who appears to have the most control over picture usage is the assistant city editor. She is in her early 60s, holds a Bachelor of Arts in journalism and has been assistant city editor for two years. Picture assignments are processed through her and she almost always writes the cutlines. She also crops and lays out pictures. She does not write cutlines for wire-photos.

Wirephotos are handled by the news editor who crops, sizes and places them on the pages he lays out. He also rewrites cutlines when necessary.

The chief photographer at this newspaper provides virtually no input into the picture selection process. He does exercise some control, as did all the photographers in this study, by submitting only what he considers to be his best shots. His selections, however, are limited because prints at this newspaper are made to size. So, if the newsroom requests a two-column by seven-inch picture and the photographer's best shot of the event is a wide horizontal, it probably will not be used.

Assigning of pictures is haphazard with no one person
in charge of assuring the news is adequatley covered pic-
torially. If some event comes to the attention of an
editor, the editor may think to put out a photo slip on
it, but probably only because he anticipates needing some-
thing "to break up the grey" on the page the story will
run. Another reason might be that the even doesn't warrant
a story but may yield a picture. Usually, the photographers
are expected to simply "find" good pictures while driving
about the city or to chase fires and other disasters which
are reported on the police radio scanner kept in the photo
department. When speaking to the researcher, the photo-
graphers complained of not receiving enough assignments
and the editors complained of not receiving enough staff
produced pictures.

The picture selection process at Paper VI is haphazard,
with no apparent theory, or reason for using pictures, to
give it direction. There is no apparent system, or method,
in how pictures are assigned or chosen.

Papers I Through VI

At all of the newspapers in this study there consis-
tently appeared one person who had the greatest opportunity
to exercise control over several of the gates in the eight-
step process of photojournalism. This person was the
photographer who was working on "enterprise." At each of
the newspapers, the photographers were expected to turn in

"enterprise" photos, i.e. unassigned shots of local inter-
est. Even pretty scenics were considered valuable because
they could be used to communicate information about the
weather. Photographers working on enterprise could come
up with their own ideas of what to shoot, "approve" the
idea, execute it, develop the film, select the picture,
print it and hand it in to the appropriate editor, thereby
covering six of the eight steps. Since step eight is the
mechanical one of production, they would have controlled
virtually all but one of the steps: design. According to
the photographers in this study, this was the step that
could make or break a photograph. Many of them expressed
the belief that their photographs were more likely to be
"broken" (by poor cropping, or inadequate sizing, etc.)
and therefore didn't much care for putting much effort
into the "enterprise" work. This attitude was especially
noticeable at Papers I, III, and VI.

Summary

Except in the middle category, the newspapers with
photo editors have strong photo editors who are truly in
charge of picture usage while the newspapers without photo
editors do not employ a system with much control over pic-
ture usage. In the large circulation category, the news-
paper without a photo editor employs a system by which the
role of the "picture person" is shifted from person to
person, thereby preventing continuity and control over

daily coverage of the news in pictures. At the small category newspaper without a photo editor, there is also a lack of cohesiveness to the picture usage policy.

An interesting reversal is apparent in the middle category where the newspaper without a photo editor employs a strong chief photographer and the newspaper which has a photo editor has one who serves more as a chief photographer. At neither of these newspapers was there an organized or defined method of picture selection.

A brief summary of the system at each of the newspapers would be:

Paper I: This newspaper's system provides a central clearing house for pictures once they have been taken but has no system by which it is seen to that the proper pictures are taken in the first place. The person responsible for picture selection (on the day of this study views herself merely as a "sorter" and does not like her job). A great deal of dissatisfaction is expressed by the photographers, on whom the newspaper depends for good pictures.

Paper II: Paper II employs a photo editor who likes his job, cares about proper photo usage, and is able to exercise a great deal of control over how pictures are played. The system works.

Paper III: Paper III employs a photo editor who, by his own admission, does not serve as a photo editor. There is no system governing pictures at his newspaper and the process of selection is handled by a variety of editors.

Paper IV: Paper IV has no titled photo editor, but
does employ a chief photographer whose job role extends
into the newsroom. Although he has more privileges than
the other chief photographers, he can not really be char-
acterized as serving in the role of a photo editor. He
does, however, make eidtorial judgments in selecting pic-
ture packages which this newspaper makes frequent use of.
There is no overall system to the picture selection and
usage at this newspaper.

Paper V: Paper V employs a strong photo editor who
takes great care to oversee picture coverage of the news
from the inception of the idea through the final layout
of the photo. Picture usage is well defined and the result
is a newspaper which has gained a reputation for the way
it handles photographs.

Paper VI: Paper VI has no system governing picture
usage, little rapport between the photo department and the
newsroom, and a generally haphazard method of covering the
news pictorially.

Table 2.—Who Keeps the Gates Between the Eight Steps in the Process of Photojournalism: Paper I.

	Idea for Photo	Approval and Assignment of Idea	Execution of Assignment	Film Development	Picture Selection	Printing the Photo	Design: Cropping	Design: Sizing	Design: Layout	Design: Cutline Writing
"Picture Person"					-x-	-x-	x**			x
Chief Photographer	x	x	x	x	(x)	x	(x)			
Various Reporters and Editors	x									
Staff Photographers	x		x	x	(x)	x	(x)			
Staff Photographers*	x	x	x	x	(x)	x	(x)			

 * = When working on "enterprise".

(x) = Within certain limitations--selection of what to print; cropping as the picture is being printed.

-x- = Final decision.

** = May suggest strongly but not necessarily have final say.

Table 3.--Who Keeps the Gates Between the Eight Steps in the Process of Photojournalism: Paper II.

	Idea for Photo	Approval and Assignment of Idea	Execution of Assignment	Film Development	Picture Selection	Printing the Photo	Design: Cropping	Design: Sizing	Design: Layout	Design: Cutline Writing
Photo Editor	x	x			-x-		x	x	x	x
Chief Photographer	x		x	x	(x)	x	(x)			
Various Editors and Reporters	x									
Staff Photographers	x		x	x	(x)	x	(x)			
Staff Photographers*	x	x	x	x	(x)	x	(x)			

* = When working on enterprise

(x) = Within certain limitations: selection, from negatives or contact print, of what to print; cropping the picture in the printing process.

-x- = Final decision

Table 4.--Who Keeps the Gates Between the Eight Steps in the Process of Photojournalism: Paper III.

	Idea for Photo	Approval and Assignment of Idea	Execution of Assignment	Film Development	Picture Selection	Printing the Photo	Design: Cropping	Design: Sizing	Design: Layout	Design: Cutline Writing
Photo Editor/ Chief Photographer	x	x	x	x	(x)	x	(x)			
Wire Editor					x		-x-	-x-	-x-	x
News Editor					x		-x-	-x-	-x-	
Assistant News Editor							-x-	-x-	-x-	
Various Editors and Reporters	x									
Staff Photographers	x		x	x	(x)	x	(x)			
Staff Photographers*	x	x	x	x	(x)	x	(x)			

 * = When working on "enterprise"

(x) = Within certain limitations: selection, from negatives or contact prints, of what picture(s) to print; cropping the picture in the printing process.

-x- = Final decision

Table 5.--Who Keeps the Gates Between the Eight Steps of the Process of Photojournalism: Paper IV.

	Idea for Photo	Approval and Assignment of Idea	Execution of Assignment	Film Development	Picture Selection	Printing the Photo	Design: Cropping	Design: Sizing	Design: Layout	Design: Cutline Writing
Chief Photographer	x	x	x	x	x	x	(x)	x**		
News Editor					x		-x-	-x-	-x-	x
Assistant City Editor					x			-x-	-x-	x
Various Editors and Reporters	x									
Staff Photographers	x		x	x	(x)	x	(x)			
Staff Photographers*	x	x	x	x	(x)	x	(x)			

* = When working on "enterprise"

(x) = Within certain limitations: selection, from negatives or contact prints, of what picture(s) to print; cropping the picture in the printing process.

-x- = Final decision

** = May suggest but not necessarily have final say.

Table 6.--Who Keeps the Gates Between the Eight Steps in the Process of Photojournalism: Paper V.

	Idea for Photo	Approval and Assignment of Idea	Execution of Assignment	Film Development	Picture Selection	Printing the Photo	Design: Cropping	Design: Sizing	Design: Layout	Design: Cutline Writing
Photo Editor	x	x			x		x	x**	x	x
City Editor					-x-		-x-	-x-	-x-	
News Editor					-x-			-x-	-x-	
Various Editors and Reporters	x									
Staff Photographers	x		x	x	(x)	x	(x)	(x)		
Staff Photographers*	x	x	x	x	(x)	x	(x)	(x)		

* = When working on "enterprise"

(x) = Within certain limitations: selection, from negatives or contact prints, of what picture(s) to print; cropping the picture in the printing process.

-x- = Final decision

** = May suggest

Table 7.--Who Keeps the Gates Between the Eight Steps in the Process of Photojournalism: Paper VI.

	Idea for Photo	Approval and Assignment of Idea	Execution of Assignment	Film Development	Picture Selection	Printing the Photo	Design: Cropping	Design: Sizing	Design: Layout	Design: Cutline Writing
Assistant City Editor	x	x			-x-		-x-	-x-	-x-	-x-
Chief Photographer	x		x	x	(x)	x	(x)			
News Editor					-x-		-x-	-x-	-x-	
Various Editors and Reporters	x									
Staff Photographers	x		x	x	(x)	x	(x)			
Staff Photographers*	x	x	x	x	(x)	x	(x)			

* = When working on "enterprise"

(x) = Within certain limitations: selection, from negatives or contact prints, of what picture(s) to print; cropping the picture in the printing process.

-x- = Final decision

CHAPTER IV

PICTURE SELECTION AND USAGE

Editors at each of the six newspapers were asked to keep a log sheet of the pictures they selected for print either for immediate or later use in the newspaper. Not all the gatekeepers were involved in this aspect of the study. For example, photographers served as gatekeepers at most of the newspapers by choosing not only what to photograph, but also by submitting only what they considered to be their best pictures. However, for purposes of the study, only the gatekeepers having control over the final product as it appeared in the pages of the newspaper were asked to keep a log.

Each participating gatekeeper was supplied with a two part log to record pertinent information. The first part of the log was used to record all photos selected for immediate use in that day's newspaper. In the case of the one morning newspaper, the first part was used to record photos selected for use in the next day's newspaper. The gatekeepers identified all photos and recorded reasons for choosing them.

The second part of the log was to record photos selected for later use or photos which were to be filed in the newspaper's library. Again, reasons were given for these selections.

In addition to using the information provided by
the gatekeepers in these logs, the researcher analyzed
the picture selections which appeared in the issue of the
newspaper which the gatekeepers had been working on. This
analysis included the placing of pictures into the follow-
ing categories: national politics, state and local poli-
tics, local general news, buildings and objects in the
news, accidents and disasters, crime, international general
news, feature, celebrities, weather, promotion of an up-
coming event, and other. Each picture was placed in only
one category, that considered to be its primary category.
For example, a celebrity arrested in California for pos-
session of a small amount of marijuana was categorized as
"celebrity" rather than "crime" because it was assumed
that the item was newsworthy because of who was arrested
rather than because of the crime.

Photos were also classified according to source,
i.e., staff-produced or wirephoto, and picture play was
analyzed, i.e., percentage of news hole used for pictures,
proportion of pictures on the front page, and so forth.
Tables dealing with this analysis of the six newspapers
can be found at the end of this chapter.

In some cases, the number of pictures appearing in
the newspapers was greater than the number of pictures
recorded on the log. This was due, in part, to the fact
that the pictures in any given edition of the newspaper
were usually selected over a period of more than one day.

It was also due, in part, to the fact that only the primary gatekeepers were asked to keep logs.

By analyzing picture usage in the newspaper, the researcher was able to determine whether selections on the day of the study were consistent with all selections made for a given edition. The analysis also provided valuable information pertaining to how pictures were played at the various newspapers.

Paper I: Circulation Over 100,000; No Photo Editor

Selections as Recorded By the Gatekeeper

At Paper I, only the "picture person" was asked to keep a log. On June 9, she selected from a pool of Associated Press and United Press International wirephotos, as well as staff-produced photos, twenty-one pictures for immediate use. She also chose to hold onto several other pictures for later use and she sent some pictures to the library to be filed.

Of the twenty-one pictures this gatekeeper selected for use, eighteen, or 86 percent* were wirephotos. Three of the wirephotos were file photos and the other fifteen had moved on the wire that day. Eleven of the eighteen wirephotos were head shots. Of the remaining seven, one was in the category of politics, one was a feature photo

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*All percentages are rounded off.

which accompanied a story, and five were feature pictures

which ran with cutlines but no accompanying article.

Only three of the twenty-one selected photos, or

14 percent, were staff-produced and one of these was a

file photo. All three staff-produced photos were feature

photos and all were accompanied by some copy.

There were almost as many reasons for selection as

there were selections. Some of the reasons were cited

more frequently and included "art was needed to break up

the page" (five times), "handy" or "useful" (four times),

"fit into a convenient size" (three times), and "good

illustration for story" (three times).

Only once was "news value" cited and only once was

"timliness" given as a reason for selection. Also, only

once did the reason include an appraisal of the picture

itself as a good picture. This was a shot of Jimmy Carter,

then involved in primary elections, with his family. The

picture was selected partly because it was timely and had

news value, and partly because the gatekeeper considered

it to be an interesting picture regardless of its other

value. Recorded on the log were the following statements:

"Carter's assured nomination was the day's top story.

Also, the picture of him with his mother and wife is

enough out of the ordinary for political pictures to war-

rant its use on page one."

Two of the staff-produced pictures used were chosen

for a half-page picture layout. One of them, a file photo,

was chosen because it was perceived by the gatekeeper as having "long been a local favorite" and because it "was a good illustration of the story." The second picture was selected because "it had people in it" and "it was all we had."

The third staff-produced picture selected that day, a picture of a sculptor with his work of art, was chosen because "it was the only locally produced picture that was worth using, and the story needed art in order to enable the reader to better understand the subject."

In reference to the photos chosen for possible subsequent use, the "picture person" gave the following reason: "Though most often never used, advance pictures are held until after the release date just in case the story, when it arrives, cries for illustration." Also, selected in that category were several head shots for the library files of "newsmakers not often seen or unusually clear or out of the ordinary shots of people often seen."

In addition to listing her reasons for selections, the "picture person" also wrote a wrap-up of the picture selection process:

> It's only fair to try to explain our peculiar picture situation at the (Paper I), particularly today's predicament. A 36 column news hole is very small, and enough copy moved to fill that and then some. Therefore, pictures were the expendable commodity . . . . The determining factor almost every time in using a picture at the (Paper I) is not if it is a good picture, but if there is room for it. If there is a nice horizontal picture and only a so-so vertical one, the latter may be used just because the space

will better accomodate it. A picture may look stun-
ning as five columns, but may appear as three columns,
if at all, just because there isn't room for any-
thing larger.

Content Analysis

A survey of the edition of the newspaper this gate-
keeper was working on indicates that a total of thirty-one
pictures were printed. Of these, 11 percent were staff-
produced, 69 percent were wirephotos and 29 percent were
from other sources.

Only 11 percent of all the pictures used were pro-
duced by the photo staff. This was the lowest percentage
among the six newspapers although Paper I employed the
greatest number of photographers and was located in the
largest city where, presumably, a greater number of news-
worthy events would be happening. The proportion of staff-
produced photos rose to 36 percent when mug-shots were
disregarded, placing Paper I as the second lowest in use
of staff-produced news pictures.

Attitudes Expressed by the Gatekeeper

In the follow-up interview, the picture person said
she chooses pictures that "go with the story" and that the
primary purpose of a news picture is to "illustrate" human
interest stories. Secondly, she said, photos are "useful
for graphic purposes like breaking grey space and not
bumping heads."

Ideally, she said she would run pictures on every

page "to catch the reader's eye and bring him into the stories, just the way snappy headlines do."

When discussing the qualities of a good news picture, she cited three characteristics as being very important. One, pictures should have people in them. Two, pictures should have action. And three, pictures must be of good technical quality "because our reproduction process is so poor."

She said she likes pictures of "the kind of thing you can't see just by walking downtown. I'm big on pictures from China because it's mysterious and we don't get many." However, in seeming contradiction, she said she likes pictures of "cute kids and animals." (She's also "big on whale art.")

This gatekeeper also said:

> It's better to use a bad picture than none at all. Even a bad picture will stop the reader's eye. You can have the greatest story, but if you can't get the reader to stop for it, what good is it?

Summary of Gatekeeping
Process at Paper I

The kinds of pictures selected at Paper I, on the date of this study, were: predominantly wirephotos; more likely to be mug shots than not; and if not mug shots, more likely to be free-standing feature pictures than pictures which ran with stories.

Proportionately, very few staff-produced photos were selected. On the day of the study, the photo staff carried

out twenty assignments. Of those, six were for use in
the newspaper's Sunday magazine section, five were for the
women's department, two were for internal use, three were
for various other departments (sports, travel), and four
were for the city desk. If this day's assignments were at
all typical, and no indication was given to the contrary,
then only one-fifth of the work assigned to the staff photo-
graphers is intended for use by the city desk. Of the four
photos taken for the city desk that day, two were held for
future use, one was used, and one was rejected by the
"picture person" for being a "horrible picture."

The criteria used for picture selection were: gen-
erally unrealted to the value of the picture in and of
itself; frequently based on make-up requirements, such as
a hole that needed to be filled or a grey page that needed
to be broken; sometimes story-related but in terms of
illustrative value rather than news value.

Picture play at Paper I was the lowest of any of the
six newspapers with only 12 percent of the news hold used
for pictures, over half of which (64 percent) were mug
shots produced by some source other than the staff photo-
graphers.

Generally, pictures were not viewed, or used, as a
device to communicate the news. For example, the picture
person wrote that when there was a tight news hole "pictures
were the expendable commodity." The primary reason for
using a picture, according to the "picture person," was

to fill a hole. Rather than a system wherein an appropriate space would be found for a valuable picture, it seemed to be more a matter of finding the right size picture to fill an empty space.

Paper II: Circulation Over 100,000; Photo Editor

Selections as Recorded By the Gatekeeper

The only person at Paper II who was asked to keep a log on June 9 was the photo editor. On that day, he selected eight photos for immediate use and two for subsequent use. He did not pull any photos for the library files.

Of the eight photos chosen for immediate use, six were wirephotos. All had moved on the wire that day and none were mug shots. Four of the wirephotos were in the category of politics, three related to the primary elections and a fourth related to the Wayne Hayes scandal. The other two were feature pictures which accompanied stories.

The two staff-produced photos chosen were feature pictures which ran with stories.

Other pictures which ran in that day's paper were handled the previous afternoon. It is worth pointing out that the proportion of staff-produced photos in that day's paper was forty-three percent, although staff-produced pictures handled on the day of the study were few.

The reason given for selection of all eight photos was that the picture "goes with the story." In the case

of the three primary-related pictures, which ran as a
group, the photo editor wrote: "These were selected
because the subjects needed were all gesturing, giving
the pictures similarity."

The two wirephotos selected for subsequent use,
in each instance, were selected because they were the
"only one sent."

It is interesting to note that, at the top of the
log, the photo editor had typed (and underlined in red):
"NO OUTSTANDING NEWS OR FEATURE PHOTOS THIS DATE."

Content Analysis

A survey of the edition of the newspaper this gate-
keeper was working on indicates that a total of twenty-
three pictures were used. Of these, 43 percent were staff
produced, 26 percent were wirephotos, and 31 percent were
from other sources.

Of these twenty-three pictures, seven were head
shots. Of the remaining sixteen news pictures, 38 per-
cent were wirephotos and 56 percent were staff-produced.
Only 6 percent of the news pictures (other than mug shots)
selected at Paper II were from sources other than the
staff or the wire services. More than half of the full-
size news pictures were staff-produced.

The sixteen news pictures used in Paper II were
categorized as follows: National Politics (19 percent),
Local General News (25 percent), Buildings and Objects

in the News (5 percent), Accidents and Disasters (5 percent), Feature (32 percent), and Other (14 percent).

A look at how pictures were played at this newspaper revealed that 19 percent of the news hold was used for pictures with the figure dropping to 14 percent when head shots were not included in the tabulation.

Nineteen percent of the sixteen news pictures were played on the front page while none were used on the back page. Thirty percent of the available pages had at least one picture while 10 percent had more than one. Twenty percent of the picture layouts were multiple layouts* and accounted for 50 percent of all the pictures used.

Forty-three percent of all used pictures were staff-produced with the proportion rising to 56 percent for the full-size news pictures.

Attitudes Expressed by the Gatekeeper

In the follow-up interview, the photo editor said he looks for pictures that are of good quality for re-production; have "impact or interest;" are timely; and are related to a story, with the exception being "an interesting feature picture or a picture that is unusually good and can run with just a cutline."

The photo editor also said he "pushes" for local pictures:

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*Multiple layout is a term used to describe a group of photos with a theme in common, laid out in conjunction with each other.

Our readers can get national coverage on television.
Our first preference is the local picture. I'll
pick a good local picture over an excellent wire-
photo, unless the wirephoto is obviously of Pulitzer
prize-winning quality.

Although this photo editor said that "a paper with

no pictures at all would be pretty dull," he also said

that he does not use pictures to break up space or to make

the reader stop and read a story. "Heads are what stop

people," he said. "They won't read a story unless the

headline catches their attention."

The purpose of news pictures, according to this

photo editor, is "to show the reader what happened." He

added that "the reader has to read about it and he has to

see it also. Neither photos or stories should be secondary.

They're both important and they have to work together, as

a combination."

He sees the position of photo editor as valuable

because it provides a central clearing desk for great

volume of pictures which, he feels, a desk man would not

have time to treat properly. "I have the time because

it's my job," he said. He also expressed the opinion that

it is very important to have a photo oriented person in

charge of picture usage if the newspaper is to receive

the greatest possible benefits from picture usage and use

them to their fullest potential. "Training is essential,"

he said, "although I don't necessarily mean formal educa-

tion. The person in charge of picture usage should be

familiar with the basics of visuals, what can be done

with prints, mechanical processes, what the camera people
can and can't do, and so forth." He also said an editorial
position is important because it provides communication
between the word and picture sides of the news department.
In this respect, he characterizes his role by saying: "My
job, really, is to sell the pictures. And I'm here in the
newsroom where I'm able to do it."

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Summary of the Gatekeeping
Process at Paper II

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The kinds of pictures selected for use at Paper II
were: predominantly staff-produced, covering a moderately
diverse group of categories with emphasis on feature,
local general news and, to a lesser degree, national poli-
tics. In comparison to the other five newspapers, a rela-
tively small proportion of the total pictures were head
shots.

Pictures were frequently chosen because of their
relationship to a story although picture content was also
often cited as a reason.

Usage of staff-produced pictures was fairly high at
Paper II and far higher than that at Paper I, its counter-
part in the large circulation category.

Picture play at Paper II, at nineteen percent of
the news hole, was higher than at any of the other five
newspapers in the study. Picture play exclusive of mug
shots, however, was only average at this newspaper.

As was noted in Chapter III, pictures are viewed

at this newspaper as valuable means of communication. They are not used simply to fill up space, nor are they used unless they can be run in the proportion which the photo editor decides is best.

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Paper III: Circulation
65,000-80,000; Photo Editor

Selections as Recorded
By the Gatekeepers

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At Paper III, two people were asked to keep logs on picture selection. These were the wire editor and the assistant news editor, each of whom had the most use for the control over pictures in the newspaper. Because the photo editor was not involved in picture selection or usage, he did not take part in the log-keeping phase of the study. It was determined that this photo editor, although he carried the title, did not serve in any editorial capacity.

First Gatekeeper

The wire editor, on June 9, selected fifteen pictures which, naturally, were all wirephotos. Of those fifteen, eight were mug shots. Of the remaining seven, two were in the category of politics, related to the primary elections, with a third in that category related to the Wayne Hayes scandal. Three of the selected photos were feature pictures, two of which ran together as a free-standing picture layout. The other two selections were hard news pictures, one local (state) and one international.

This editor's reasons for selection were diverse.
Of one of the mug shots she wrote: "had to pack a lot of
news in little space. . . wanted some art to prevent dead
page . . . (subject) is highly recognizable and therefore
draws attention." Three other mugs, grouped together,
were selected "primarily to illustrate copy and present
photos of highly interesting people." Yet another three
head shots, also grouped together, "were chosen to quickly
illustrate 'powers' on the political scene." Perhaps the
most thoughtful and content-related use a mug shot was a
picture of Elizabeth Ray, then in the news because of her
relationship with Wayne Hayes, showing just enough of her
shoulders to also expose her ample cleavage. The editor's
recorded reason for using that particular photo: "'Sexy'
story, sexy photo. Every element of the story suggests
that the woman's physical power is competing with some
important national powers. The photo helps illustrate
her power."

Among the reasons for selection of non-mug shot
photos were: "I considered this the most dramatic and
newsworthy photo available to me. Though quality was
questionable, the subject matter had impact." That photo,
in the cateogry of international news, did not accompany
a story.

Two photos in the category of national politics,
which ran with a caption only, were chosen because "the
Udall shot conveys end of primary season mood and the

Carter shot conveys victory and campaign trappings. The photos present the emotional aspects of the primary story."

Another photo, again run with only a caption, was selected because: "this was a good if not outstanding action photo. Unusually dramatic among photos available for state news pages."

Two feature pictures, a sequence of children blowing bubble gum, were run together with a caption but no story. The editor wrote: "The photo was used because it was fun to look at. Most inside copy was heavy. This was nice for contrast."

Generally, this gatekeeper chose pictures for their content and for what they conveyed. She was not oriented toward viewing pictures as illustrations for the written word. In fact, all the pictures she chose ran on their own merit, without an accompanying story.

This wire editor displayed an awareness of the mood and meaning of pictures although she sometimes sacrificed communicating what she saw in a picture by choosing to use poor quality photos which looked even worse after reproduction at this letterpress newspaper.

Second Gatekeeper

The assistant news editor at Paper II selected six pictures on the day of the study. Of these, three were wirephotos, two were staff-produced, and one was a file photo.

The page one picture, selected by this gatekeeper, showed a family sitting on the veranda of their home. The editor's reasons for choosing it were:

> It was a local picture which fit in rather well with the current weather situation. It killed two birds with one stone in that we were able to illustrate the weather situation and avoid taking additional space with a weather story. Also, it enabled us to run something from an area which receives little coverage.

This editor's stated reason for selecting one of the head shots was: "Just something to dress up the 'Today" box. Frankly, it also helped us to fill the box."

A staff-produced picture was described as "an unexciting picture which was used to give us a little art on the page and helped to dress up the story somewhat."

About a wirephoto of a school bus crash, the editor wrote:

> One of the few nonpolitical-type pictures of the day. It had more interest than most of the other available nonpolitical pixs, I feel. It also helped us to wrap up a news even in cutlines, rather than run the story which had been covered on TV the previous night. While TV mentioned it briefly in news reports, it carried no pictures.

Another wirephoto, of Koala bears playing in a tree, was used by this editor "as a throw-away type item. Since it appeared on a page that is constantly fluctuating (due to death notices), it had to contain little news value, since it might die between editions, yet it had to be worth looking at. I think just about everybody is a little bit in love with koala bears."

Generally, this gatekeeper displayed little respect
for or appreciation of pictures as visual tools of communi-
cation. Pictures were used by him to "dress up" stories
and pages, to help "kill two birds with one stone," and
to "wrap up a news event." He apparently had no qualms over
using "an unexciting picture" or using a picture as a
"throw-away type item."

Content Analysis

A survey of the edition of the newspaper these gate-
keepers were working on indicates that a total of twenty-
three pictures were printed. Of these, 13 percent were
staff-produced, 78 percent were wirephotos, and 9 percent
were from other sources.

Of these twenty-three pictures, eleven (or nearly
half) were mug shots. Of the twelve full-size news pic-
tures used, 25 percent were staff-produced and 63 percent
were from the wire services. Of the six newspapers in
this study, Paper III used the lowest percentage of staff-
produced full-size news pictures.

Paper III covered the broadest range of categories
in its picture selections, with photos in ten of the
twelve categories.

A relatively high 18 percent of the news hole at
Paper III was devoted to pictures and this figure dropped
only 1 percent when mug shots were excluded from the tabu-
lation. This was the highest proportion of the news hole

used for pictures at any of the newspapers in the study.

In terms of full-size news pictures, 17 percent were used on the front page (again the highest percentage) and none were on the back page. A full 50 percent of the available pages had at least one picture and 25 percent had two or more. Both of these figures are considerably higher than any of the other newspapers in the study.

Of all the picture layouts that were not head shots, 20 percent were multiple layouts and used 33 percent of the non-head shot pictures.

Attitudes Expressed by the Gatekeepers

First Gatekeeper

The wire editor at Paper III stated the primary purpose of news pictures was "to tell a story by itself, on its own." A secondary purpose, she said, is "as an illustration for, or dramatization of words. Things that can't be said in the words of a story can be conveyed in a photo--things like mood and emotion." "Also," she said, "pictures can be used to brighten a page, make it more interesting. For example, we use mug shots to prevent 'tombstones' and we do it a lot here because of space problems."

A good news picture, according to this wire editor, is one that "tells a story on its own or clarifies a written story by showing action or dramatizing the event." She said she prefers photos that have "action" in them.

Second Gatekeeper

This editor characterized the purpose of news photos as: "to illustrate a story or draw attention to a story." He later added that a news picture "may be a story in itself and may be used, in those circumstances, to tell the story or to make the page more attractive." He also said that he often uses pictures as "a packaging device, or presentation device" to aid in the layout and appearance of the page.

When asked to describe the characteristics of a good news picture he replied that "basically, the drama of the photo is the most important element. This may be in the subject matter. For example, if it's a cheesecake shot, then the drama is the skin."

Summary of Gatekeeping Process at Paper III

The kinds of pictures selected at Paper III were almost evenly divided between mug shots and full-size news photos. The full size photos fell into a broad range of categories, with Paper II using a far more diverse selection of categories than any of the other newspapers in the study.

The proportion of the news hole which was devoted to picture coverage of the news was highest at this newspaper as were the number of pages with at least one picture and the number of pages with more than one picture.

Use of staff-produced pictures was lowest at this

newspaper, with a heavy dependence on wirephotos accounting for a great deal (78 percent) of the picture usage.

The attitudes toward pictures of the two principal gatekeepers of photos at Paper III were more dissimilar than alike. The wire editor tended to view pictures as valuable aids in communicating non-verbal aspects of news events while the assistant news editor's views were oriented far more toward the use of pictures as illustrations of the verbal report and as devices to aid in layout procedures. Both editors expressed a willingness to use less than adequate pictures. However, the wire editor used a poor quality picture because she felt the content was important while the assistant news editor used an unexciting picture because he needed to fill a hole and improve the design of the page.

It is worth point out that the person at this newspaper who made the greatest use of pictures was the wire editor, a gatekeeper with no connection to the newspaper's own photographic staff.

Paper IV: Circulation 65,000-80,000; No Photo Editor

Selections as Recorded By the Gatekeepers

Three people at Paper IV were asked to keep logs on picture selection. The chief photographer; the assistant city editor, who does the layout of the local section of the newspaper; and the assistant news editor, who aids

him with the layout, were the participants. As has been
pointed out earlier, the chief photographer at this news-
paper exercises a considerable amount of control over
picture selection, particularly when picture packages are
used (as they were on the day of the study).

First Gatekeeper

The chief photographer was involved in the selection
of several picture packages on the day of the study. He
submitted twenty-five staff produced pictures to various
editors at the newspaper. In addition, he held two photo
packages for future submission.

The picture this gatekeeper submitted for page one,
which was used, showed swimmers and trackmen. He selected
it because "it relates to a long spell of good weather."

A four-photo package showing children playing with
tires was submitted because it was a "cute general inter-
est feature--also relates to good weather." Two of the
photos were used by the assistant city editor. Another
four-photo package showing clean-up efforts at a local
park was chosen because it was a "general interest feature."
Three of the photos were used by the assistant news editor.

A six-photo package of senior citizens playing shuf-
fle board was submitted "to show activities of local
senior citizens--also general interest because it shows
facilities available to all citizens." Three of the
pictures were used by the assistant city editor. Another

six-photo package of preparations being made to open local

public swimming pools was chosen for submission because

it was "timely--they open Saturday." Three of the pictures

were used by the assistant news editor.

A package of three pictures, all of which were used

by the assistant news editor, showed workers at an ice-

making factory and was submitted because it was "timely--

warm weather related."

A picture of a housing construction was submitted,

reluctantly. The chief photographer recorded on his log

that it was "not really a good picture but the state

editor was determined to run it even though I tried to

talk him out of it."

Generally, this gatekeeper showed a concern for the

content of pictures. He chose pictures which communi-

cated information about the goings-on of the community.

He also chose pictures which were timely and tried to

encourage photo coverage which was in step with what was

happening in the circulation area of the newspaper. Addi-

tionally, he apparently liked feature type pictures and

pictures which were weather-related.

Second Gatekeeper

The assistant city editor at Paper IV selected

thirteen pictures on the day of the study. Of these,

seven were staff-produced and six were file photos (all

mug shots). No photos were held by him for future use.

Of the thirteen pictures selected by this gatekeeper, eight were mug shots. His recorded comments frequently included the phrase, "stock head shot." For one of the head shots he wrote, "taken at press conference, it showed person actively speaking, good frontal view; no other picture offered, but it fulfilled need, so didn't look further."

On a separate sheet of paper, the assistant city editor wrote:

> Generally speaking, the following considerations are given 'stock head shots'--
>
> a. recent vintage, so picture looks most like subject at time of news story.
>
> b. good quality, neither too dark nor too light, nonconfusing background, etc.
>
> c. subject facing 'into' the story, so won't be published looking out of page or away from copy.

The five full-size news pictures selected for use by this gatekeeper were used in two separate picture layouts.

In the first layout, the editor chose two pictures from a total of four submitted to him. They showed boys playing with tires. The editor wrote:

> Several pictures were provided. Knowing the size 'box' I wanted to fill with art, I decided I wanted one horizontal picture at the top of the box, for strength, then a related square or vertical picture underneath to allow space for cutlines along side. I picked the two used primarily because they showed two different angles of different kids. Pictures not used were discarded because they either duplicated each other, or didn't show as much spontaneous activity.

The other layout created by this gatekeeper used three pictures of senior citizens playing shuffle board

(six photos had been submitted).   The editor wrote:

> Several pictures were provided.   Space limitations
> determined some of the choices.   I picked first the
> picture on the right, because it had the most action,
> the best expressions.   The picture of the white-haired
> man, top left, was picked next, because of unusual
> lighting, good character study.   Planning to put the
> cutlines next to this pic, in the middle of the page,
> left me with a 5 col. x 5 inch hole to fill.   Of
> the remaining pictures, the shot of the two studying
> the court offered the most variety, best composition
> within the layout.

This gatekeeper made the following written comments

concerning how he makes selections for picture groups, in

general:

> As far as picture layouts are concerned, it's a
> matter of picking the two or three pictures that
> show the greatest variety of activities, the best
> expressions, etc., and do not duplicate either sub-
> jects or activities.   Then, all pictures used should
> make up, in an aesthetic sense, a coherent package
> (in other words, pictures on the outside of the
> page should face in, pictures at the bottom look up,
> etc.).   Although aesthetics play a vital part, an
> outstanding picture is never discarded, even if it
> breaks one of the above 'rules."

This photo editor also wrote the following comment

about overall picture selection:

> One other point should be made: editors often have
> to rely on others' judgment.   Sometimes I'll simply
> ask for the 'best head shot' available, leaving it
> up to the librarian to choose.   Other times I'll
> tell the photographer to print up what he thinks is
> the best picture, either horizontal or vertical, de-
> pending on needs of the layout, of some particular
> assignment.   If the picture printed seems to be a
> good one, I may not ask to see any more.   Often
> though, I'll ask if some other view may not show
> some particular object not readily apparent in the
> picture he provided . . .

This gatekeeper, in his picture selections, displayed

a concern with subject matter in addition to looking for

things like action, angle, and facial expression. Because
he tended to use pictures in groups rather than singly,
he also showed a preference for variety of subject matter
and variety of proportions (such as vertical or horizontal).

Third Gatekeeper

The assistant news editor at Paper IV used nine
pictures, none of them head shots, in three separate
three-picture layouts. All of the photos were staff-
produced.

In the first layout, showing workers at an ice
plant, the editor used all the pictures submitted to
him and wrote: "used all three because they carry a
basic story line, from controls to the finished product."

A layout on preparations of city swimming pools for
opening day used three pictures. One picture was used
because it "set the scene," another because it "shows
some of the actual repair," and the third because it had
"some action, water, hose." (Three additional pictures
were not used because of "bad crop, bad angle" for one,
"shows only backs of people" for another, and "figures
smaller, action diluted" for another.)

The third layout created by the assistant news
editor used pictures of a clean-up crew at a park. One
picture was used because it was "scene setting," another
because it had "good action," and the third because he
"needed two-column with depth with action moving to the

left to keep reader's eye in the page." (One picture, which was not used, was described as "better than picture used, but action moved in wrong direction.")

This editor's picture choices reflected his concern with picture content. He chose pictures because of what they had to tell. In all three layouts, he chose photos which told a story, especially in his consistent use of a scene-setting picture in each. He also liked to include at least one action picture. His priorities were with making the pictures work together, as a unit, even if it meant eliminating a strong shot.

Content Analysis

A survey of the edition of the newspaper these gate-keepers were working on shows that a total of thirty-three pictures were used. Of these, 52 percent were staff-produced, 15 percent were wirephotos, 30 percent were file photos, and 3 percent were from other sources. Paper IV used the second highest percentage of staff-produced photos and the lowest percentage of wirephotos. When mug shots were excluded from the tabulation, staff-produced photos at this newspaper jumped to 94 percent of all pictures used, considerably higher than any of the other newspapers (with the next highest being Paper VI at 86 percent).

Of the thirty-three used pictures, sixteen (or nearly half) were mug shots. Of the remaining seventeen new pictures, 94 percent were staff-produced and 6 percent were wirephotos.

Pictures at Paper IV fell into the following categories: Local General News (17 percent), Buildings and Objects in the News (24 percent), Feature (53 percent), and Weather (6 percent). Seventeen percent of the news hole was devoted to pictures at Paper IV, with the proportion dropping to 15 percent when mug shots were discounted.

In terms of full-size news pictures, only 6 percent were used on the front page. This was by far the lowest proportion among the six newspapers. However, 18 percent of the pictures were on the back page and this figure was comparatively high. Thirty-one percent of the pages had at least one full-size news picture and 19 percent had more than one.

Of all the picture layouts that were not head shots, 63 percent were multiple layouts and accounted for 82 percent of the total pictures used. Paper IV had a far higher proportion of multiple layouts than the other newspapers in the study.

Attitudes Expressed by the Gatekeepers
First Gatekeeper

In the follow-up interview, the chief photographer at Paper IV said the primary function of news pictures is to "mirror the life of the community." He also said that pictures serve the purpose of "educating the reader" by showing what kinds of conditions and activities exist in the community as well as the world.

When asked to describe what makes a good news picture, he said:

> It should be of an event that is of broad general interest to the public. Many pictures are artistically good, or perhaps have an interesting compositional quirk, but a good news picture should be relevant to the community, something that people can identify with. I could apply a lot of technical standards, but first and foremost, it should provide a record. This can cause a problem in picture selection because you are faced with making a choice between a picture that accurately portrays an event and a picture which does not provide as good a record but is more visually interesting.

Second Gatekeeper

The assistant city editor said that pictures serve two "equally important" purposes: "one, of course, is that each picture should tell a story. On an equal basis is the esthetic value of catching the reader's eye and making the whole paper pleasant to look at."

This editor, who was once a press photographer, said that "photographers always think the picture is as important or more important than the story. This may be true in certain cases, but generally, pictures are primarily esthetics."

When asked to describe what makes a good picture, this editor said that the best photo is one which shows breaking news, "like President Ford stumbling and falling on his face." He added that "there just are very few good breaking news pictures." Additionally, he said that a good news picture "catches the eye; is pleasing to look at; has good composition; good tonal balance; and, last but not really least, it fits on the page."

This gatekeeper condemned the practice, common at many newspapers, of fitting the picture into the layout last. He said:

> It's really sloppy to just leave a hole for a picture. The picture should be seen first and the way it looks should determine the size and shape it will be in the newspaper. Cropping and sizing should be done according to the content of the picture, not because there is a hole of a certain size and shape.

He also expressed the opinion that many newspapers run pictures too small, adding that "bigger isn't always better, though."

In describing his own method of layout, he said: I don't layout the pictures first or last. I try to think of stories and pictures simultaneously, rather than separately."

Third Gatekeeper

The assistant news editor at Paper IV said that the purpose of news pictures is to "get something across to the reader by showing it instead of decribing it. This can be an event, an action, an emotion, a lot of things."

This editor said that a good news picture, in his opnion, was one which "makes it easy for the reader to tell what's going on in the picture." He also said he likes pictures which show "action" and facial expressions.

Summary of Gatekeeping
Process at Paper IV

The kinds of pictures used at Paper IV were almost evenly divided between mug shots and full-size news pictures. The full-size photos fell into four different categories which was just a bit below average among the six newspapers.

The percentage of the news hole which was used for pictures at Paper IV was slightly above average, while the number of pages which had at least one full-size news picture was average and the number of pages with more than one was above the average.

Use of staff-produced pictures was very high at this newspaper which used a far greater percentage of such photos than any of the other newspapers in the study. This placed Paper IV in sharp contrast to Paper III, its counterpart in the medium circulation range category, which used by far the least staff-produced pictures, proportionately.

The attitudes toward pictures among the photo gatekeepers at Paper IV were fairly consistent in that they all felt news pictures should show something to the reader. They were all very content oriented, with the chief photographer emphasizing that pictures should serve as "documents" of the life of the community. They also were all apparently audience conscious and often spoke of pictures in terms of reader reaction. Additionally, the assistant city editor, who does most of the layout using pictures,

viewed photos in terms of their ability to improve the overall appearance of the newspaper. He did not, however, advocate using pictures to simply make layout easier by, for example, filling a left over hole with a photo.

Paper V: Circulation 25,000-50,000; Photo Editor

Selections as Recorded
By the Gatekeeper

At Paper V, the photo editor makes all picture selections. On June 9, the photo editor recorded thirty picture selections. He did not make any selections to be held for future use.

Of the thirty pictures selected, 50 percent were staff-produced, 27 percent were wirephotos, 10 percent were file photos, and 13 percent were from some other source.

Eight of the selected pictures were mug shots, leaving twenty-two full-size news pictures. Of these twenty-two photos, 64 percent were staff-produced, 23 percent were wirephotos, 5 percent were file photos, and 9 percent were from other sources.

The photo editor's reasons for selection were diverse. Three wirephotos related to the primary elections were run on the front page because they were "timely and they went with the lead story." The particular photos chosen were selected because "they all showed gestures of victory and the repetition of all three candidates making upward gestures is visually appealing."

Another front page photo, staff-produced, which ran with only a cutline, was selected because it was "an attractive photo, with action, and shows an important event to the community."

An inside picture which was staff-produced showed some local high school students in a pose from a variety show being performed at the high school. "We use every picture we shoot in the studio," the photo editor commented, "and that was one we needed to use. We try to cover each high school with one picture a year. It's a community promo idea. We do it here in the studio and it's a quick way to get some filler art with high readership in the community."

A group shot, also taken in the studio, brought this comment: "We normally don't shoot a group shot like that at all. Someone else was on the desk when the call came requesting a picture. He set up the appointment. Once the picture was shot, it would have been bad PR not to run it."

In reference to a mug shot, the photo editor wrote: "We take head shots of all the new club officers. This town is made up of little groups like that who like to be recognized. It's a community service to do it."

A wirephoto was selected by this editor because "it's a state picture for the state page. Most good state art gets used."

Another wirephoto was "a classic case of breaking up

the type," according to the photo editor.

A photo sent in by a local club was used "because it's a promo for their rodeo and so would fall into the community service category."

A group of seven photos were selected and laid out by the photo editor as a group. His comments: "We covered it because it's a historic event--two of the town's oldest schools closing forever. It's a timely event--the last hour--a milestone, so to speak, signifies closing of schools everywhere, too." The pictures selected for the layout included "an inside scene setter;" a picture of a principal; a picture of a teacher handing out the last day's report cards which "appeals to teacher's point of view" and (in reference to the report cards) "a nice element that needed to be included;" a picture of one student using another student's back for a writing sur- face while signing a yearbook which was "a cute detail that can be read this small--didn't have to be there but a cute touch. If there had been a space problem, this would be first to go;" a photo of two students which the photo editor chose because it was "a cute portrait;" and an "exterior scene setter and conclusion."

Content Analysis

A survey of the edition of the newspaper this gate- keeper was working on reveals that a total of thirty pictures were used, twenty-two of which were full-size news pictures.

The full-size news pictures fell into the following categories: National Politics (14 percent), Local General News (36 percent), Buildings and Objects in the News (4 percent), Crime (5 percent), Feature (9 percent), Promotion of an Upcoming Event (18 percent), and Other (14 percent).

Fifteen percent of the news hole at Paper V was used for pictures with the percentage dropping off only one percent when mug shots were not included in the tabulation. Twenty-three percent of the full-size news photos were used on the front page and 5 percent were on the back page. Paper V had the highest proportion of front page picture usage among the six newspapers in the study.

Twenty-eight percent of the available pages had at least one picture and 8 percent of those pages had more than one picture.

Twenty-three percent of the picture layouts were multiple layouts, using 55 percent of the pictures in the newspaper.

Attitudes Expressed by the Gatekeeper

In the follow-up interview, the photo editor said the primary purpose of news pictures is "to communicate." He added that they also may "entertain" and "add reader interest to the page by making it more attractive to look at." He also said that "telling a story is the guts of a news picture while illustrating and attracting readership

are certainly a function, but not the sole function." The
photo editor said his overall approach to pictorial news
coverage is "sort of like a social studies approach. At
the end of the year I'd like to feel that we've covered
the town in the best possible manner."

When asked to describe what makes a good news picture,
this photo editor said:

> Several elements are present in a good news picture.
> What I look for are real situations, as they happened.
> I don't like posed pictures. I try to cover signi-
> ficant community milestones and things that will
> enable me to look back and know we've covered the life
> of the community. Good pictures must be visually
> exciting and interesting. They must have significant
> action, significant movement, and be taken from a sig-
> nificant angle that says something. They should co-
> incide with developing stories or provide full coverage
> of some event that the writers aren't working on. I'd
> say that content is the most important thing in a
> picture. Probably less than two percent of our readers
> are excited by aesthetics. They're more interested
> in content. Aesthetics are important, but they're
> only one of many contributing factors.

Additionally, this gatekeeper emphasized his opinion
that the photo editing process begins with the assignment,
or even the origination, of the idea.

Summary of the Gatekeeping
Process at Paper V

The kinds of pictures used at Paper V were predomin-
antly staff-produced. Paper V was the only newspaper in
the study which used full-size pictures from all sources:
staff, wire, morgue, and outside sources. Additionally,
in terms of the proportion of all used pictures, this news-
paper used the lowest percentage of mug shots.

The criteria used for picture selection can be placed in three broad categories: content and visual appeal, importance of event, and service to the community. Often, more than one of these reasons would be cited for the same picture. The photo editor at Paper V tended to cite "community service" or "PR" type reasons more often than the other gatekeepers in the study.

Picture play at Paper V was just below the average for the six newspapers. When mug shots were not included in the tabulation, picture play at Paper V fell right at the average of fourteen percent of the news hole used for pictures.

Generally, the photo editor at Paper V displayed an awareness and concern for the needs of the reading audience. This was especially evident in his frequent use of pictures as a "community service." Additionally, he expressed a desire to use pictures for the sake of providing an historical document of the activities of the community.

Paper VI: Circulation 25,000-50,000; No Photo Editor

Selections as Recorded By the Gatekeepers

Two gatekeepers recorded their selections on June 9 at Paper VI. These were the assistant city editor and the news editor.

First Gatekeeper

The assistant city editor recorded six selections for

immediate use and six pictures held for possible future use. All of the photos were staff-produced and none were mug shots.

This editor chose an accident picture for page one because it was "breaking news, our photographer was there almost immediately." A construction picture was chosen "to illustrate the story." A picture of a bicentennial quilt was "chosen especially for the color."* And three pictures of prize-winning sculptures were selected because they were "breaking news, but also very good art."

Reasons for selecting pictures for possible future use included: "its restoration is of interest around here and it is a nice action picture," "human interest story on animals always good and helps shelter find new homes for others," and "story better than art but represents about two years of work and gives kids a pat on the back."

This gatekeeper's selections can't be easily categorized. She cited one reason, "breaking news," twice. Other than that, there is no obvious pattern to her selections.

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*Paper VI was the only one of the six newspapers in this study which used color on the day of the study.

Second Gatekeeper

The news editor at Paper VI selected five pictures on the day of the study. All but one of them were wirephotos and all but one were mug shots (one of the mug shots was a file photo). The mug shots were all "chosen for news angle and as breaker for layout." The full-size news picture was a feature photo of a monster carved out of a fallen tree trunk and was "chosen for its oddity, eye-catching interest and page layout."

The three pictures saved for possible future use by this gatekeeper were all selected because they were "eye-catching and all feature-style pictures with accompanying cutlines requiring no text."

This gatekeeper added the following comment to his log: "Ideally, we'd like to have art on every page, but the printed news also has its demands in our tight space."

This gatekeeper was consistent in his use of pictures for their ability to break up the layout. Only one picture was chosen for the sake of its content. Indeed, only one full-size news picture was chosen at all. If the day of the study was typical, then this editor's style is to throw a few mug shots into the pages and thereby he has used pictures and kept the pages from being too grey.

Content Analysis

A survey of the edition of the newspaper these gatekeepers were working on shows that a total of eleven

pictures were used. Of these 55 percent were staff-produced, 36 percent wirephotos, and 9 percent were from the morgue.

Of these eleven pictures, four were mug shots. Of the seven full-size news pictures used, 86 percent were staff-produced and fourteen percent were wirephotos. Paper VI had the second highest percentage of staff-produced pictures.

Pictures at Paper VI were broken down into only three categories (only Paper I also had so few categories), which were: Buildings and Objects in the News (72 percent), Accidents and Disasters (14 percent), and Feature (14 percent).

Fifteen percent of the news hole was used for pictures with the proportion dropping to 14 percent when mug shots were excluded. This was average among the six newspapers and exactly equal to its counterpart in the small circulation range category, Paper V.

Fourteen percent of the full-size news pictures were used on the front page; no pictures were used on the back page. Only 16 percent of the available pages, the lowest percentage in the study, had at least one picture; 4 percent (the second lowest, with Paper I at three percent) had more than one picture.

Of all the picture layouts that were not mug shots, 20 percent were multiple layouts and accounted for 43 percent of the full-size news pictures.

Attitudes Expressed by the Gatekeepers

First Gatekeeper

In the follow-up interview, the assistant city editor said that news pictures serve the purpose of making "better, more interesting looking pages." She also said that pictures "whet the reader's appetite for reading the whole thing because pictures do tell a lot." And, she said, she uses pictures "to avoid having a grey page, which is bad."

When asked to describe what makes a good news picture this gatekeeper replied that "it should reach out and grab you; an expression on a face may do it and there's a lot in the way a picture is cropped, too. I crop a lot, to take out extraneous things and put the impact where I want it."

This gatekeeper went on to list the following qualities of a good news picture:

> First, it must be a good picture photographically, because of reporduction. In other words, it must be sharp, clear and have good contrast. It shouldn't have too many people or too many things because that just makes it confusing to look at. It should have some sort of action. It should be candid: portrait type pictures aren't that good; in a candid shot, expression is often the action. It shouldn't be static. Head and shoulders pictures are static; they break up the page, but they aren't really good news pictures. Finally, it should tell a story.

It should be noted here that this gatekeeper who claimed to like action, facial expression, and grabbing power in pictures, made six selections on the day of the study, a full five of which depicted buildings or objects.

Second Gatekeeper

The news editor at Paper VI said the purpose of a news picture is "mainly to amplify the story or to tell the whole story; we frequently use wild art with long cutlines in this way." He also said that news pictures serve "as breakers between heads," "to lighten the page," and "to give relief for the eye." He emphasized that "nobody hates grey pages as much as we do."

This gatekeeper said that a good news picture is "anything that's not a banality, like ribbon cuttings and awards presentations, which we have virtually banned from this paper." He also said that a good news picture should have "good composition" and be "unposed."

The news editor wrapped up his definition of a good news picture by saying, "I think everybody knows what a good picture is."

Summary of Gatekeeping
Process at Paper VI

The kinds of pictures used at Paper VI were predominantly full-size news pictures, although a fairly high proportion were mug shots. The full-size photos did not fall into a broad range of categories, with by far the greatest proportion (72 percent) of them being of Buildings and Objects in the News.

The percentage of the news hole which was used for pictures was about average at Paper VI but the number of pages with at least one picture was extremely low.

Use of staff-produced pictures at Paper VI was very good.

The attitudes of the photo gatekeepers were that pictures serve graphic purposes more than communication purposes. Very little concern was expressed for the content of the picture while the ability of the picture to break up grey space was emphasized.

Table 8.--Picture Sources.

Newspaper	Total Number of Pictures Used**	Staff-Produced Pictures	Wirephotos	Pictures from the Morgue	Pictures from Some Other Source
I	31	11%	69%	10%	10%
II*	23	43%	26%	22%	9%
III*	23	13%	78%	9%	--
IV	33	52%	15%	30%	3%
V*	30	50%	27%	10%	13%
VI	11	55%	36%	9%	--

*These newspapers employ a photo editor (by title).

**Excluding pictures used by women's and sports' sections.

Table 9.--Picture Sources Exclusive of Head Shots.

Newspaper	Number of Nonhead Shot Pictures**	Staff-Produced Pictures	Wirephotos	Pictures from the Morgue	Pictures from Some Other Source
I	11	36%	64%	9%	--
II*	16	56%	38%	--	6%
III*	12	25%	63%	--	--
IV	17	94%	6%	--	--
V*	22	64%	23%	5%	9%
VI	7	86%	14%	--	--

*These newspapers employ a photo editor (by title).

**Excluding pictures used by women's and sports' sections.

Table 10.--Breakdown of Picture Usage by Category.

Newspaper	Number of Pictures Used*+	National Politics	State and Local Politics	Local/General News	Buildings and Objects in the News	Accidents and Disasters	Crime	International General News	Feature	Celebrities	Weather	Promotion of an Upcoming Event	Other
I	11	9%	—	—	27%	—	—	—	64%	—	—	—	—
II**	16	19%	—	25%	5%	5%	—	—	32%	—	—	—	14%
III**	12	20%	8%	8%	—	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	—	16%
IV	17	—	—	17%	24%	—	—	—	53%	—	6%	—	—
V**	22	14%	—	36%	4%	—	5%	—	9%	—	—	18%	14%
VI	7	—	—	—	72%	14%	—	—	14%	—	—	—	—

*Excluding head shots, which are treated in Table 13.

**These newspapers employ a photo editor (by title).

+Excluding pictures used by women's and sports' sections.

Table 10.--Breakdown of Picture Usage by Category.

Newspaper	Number of Pictures Used+*	National Politics	State and Local Politics	Local/General News	Buildings and Objects in the News	Accidents and Disasters	Crime	International General News	Feature	Celebrities	Weather	Promotion of an Upcoming Event	Other
I	11	9%	—	—	27%	—	—	—	64%	—	—	—	—
II**	16	19%	—	25%	5%	5%	—	—	32%	—	—	—	14%
III**	12	20%	8%	8%	—	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	—	16%
IV	17	—	—	17%	24%	—	—	—	53%	—	6%	—	—
V**	22	14%	—	36%	4%	—	5%	—	9%	—	—	18%	14%
VI	7	—	—	—	72%	14%	—	—	14%	—	—	—	—

*Excluding head shots, which are treated in Table 13.

**These newspapers employ a photo editor (by title).

+Excluding pictures used by women's and sports' sections.

Table 11.--Picture Play.

Newspaper	Total Pictures Used**	Percent of News Hole Used For Pictures (Including Cutlines)	Pictures on Front Page	Pictures on Back Page	Percent of Available Pages Having at Least One Picture+	Percent of Available Pages Having More than One Picture+	Percent of all Picture Spaces which Contained More than one Picture (Multiple Layouts)	Percent of All Used Pictures which were Used in Multiple Layouts
I	31	12%	16%	19%	59%	16%	14%	26%
II*	23	19%	13%	--	43%	17%	19%	43%
III*	23	18%	13%	--	75%	38%	16%	30%
IV	33	17%	3%	9%	54%	34%	38%	66%
V*	30	15%	16%	3%	39%	19%	10%	40%
VI	11	15%	9%	--	33%	4%	9%	27%

*These newspapers employ a photo editor (by title).

**Excluding pictures used by women's and sports sections.

Table 12.--Picture Play Exclusive of Head Shots

Newspaper	Non-Head Shot Pictures Used**	Percent of News Hole+ Used for These Pictures (Including Cutlines)	Pictures on Front Page	Pictures on Back Page	Percent of Available Pages Having at Least One Picture+	Percent of Available Pages Having More than One Picture+	Percent of Picture Spaces Which Contained More than One Picture (Multiple Layouts)	Percent of Used Pictures Which were used in Multiple Layouts
I	11	10%	9%	18%	31%	3%	11%	18%
II*	16	14%	19%	--	30%	10%	20%	50%
III*	12	17%	17%	--	50%	25%	20%	33%
IV	17	15%	6%	18%	31%	19%	63%	82%
V*	22	14%	23%	5%	28%	8%	23%	55%
VI	7	14%	14%	--	16%	4%	20%	43%

*These newspapers employ a photo editor (by title).

**Excluding pictures used by womens and sports sections.

+Except for those segments of the news hole devoted to women's and sports news.

Table 13.--Breakdown of Head Shots

Newspaper	Total Pictures Used***	Head Shots of Less than One Narrow Column Width	Single Column Head Shots (Wide or Narrow)*	Total Number of Head Shots Used	Percent of All Pictures Used which were Head Shots	Percent of Head Shots from the Wire	Percent of Head Shots which were Staff-Produced	Percent of Head Shots which were from the Morgue or Some Other Source
I	31	16%	48%	20	64%	75%	--	25%
II**	23	--	30%	7	30%	--	43%	57%
III**	23	22%	22%	10	44%	80%	--	20%
IV	33	9%	39%	16	48%	25%	6%	69%
V**	30	7%	20%	8	27%	38%	13%	49%
VI	11	--	36%	4	36%	75%	--	25%

*None of the papers played a head shot wider than one wide column across.

**These newspapers employ a photo editor (by title).

***Except women's and sports pictures.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Photo Gatekeeping at Papers I Through VI

Although the selection and use of news pictures was

not standardized, nor did it follow distinct patterns, cer-

tain similarities in attitudes and practices were evident

in the process as it was performed at the six newspapers in

this study. In reviewing the findings of this study, the

following generalizations can be made:

1. Picture selection is a subjective decision on the part of the individual gatekeeper.

2. There are few widely recognized and accepted standards for newspaper picture selection and use.

3. Pictures are often used as filler.

4. Pictures are often viewed as graphic devices, much the same way that type size, or type style, might be viewed.

5. Editors seldom express much concern for the timliness, content, or news "value" of a photograph.

6. Pictures are often considered to be frosting for the written news.

7. Pictures are viewed as secondary, or less vital, than news copy.

8. Gatekeepers do not consistently select pictures that are "good," by their own definitions.

9. Space limitations have a significant effect on picture selection and picture play.

     10.   Use of staff produced photos is not as great as
           might be expected.

A 1961 survey indicated that most newspaper photos are

staff produced, with estimated percentage averages being:

61.7 staff, 26 wire, 5.4 publicity, and 6.9 other.[52] None

of these six newspapers used a sizable majority of staff

produced photos in their total photo usage and at only

three of the newspapers was there a sizable majority of

staff-produced photos among the full-size news pictures

selected.

     11.   Picture assignments are almost always generated
           by someone who needs a photo to go with a story.
           Yet, it is virtually unheard of to assign a
           reporter to get a story to go with a picture.

Although the observations listed above were not true

for every gatekeeper at each newspaper, they do represent

trends that were apparent to the majority of the gatekeepers.

Does the Photo Editor Make a Difference?

At the six newspapers in this study, the presence of

a photo editor did result in a significant effect on pic-

ture selection and usage.

The following differences were the most apparent:

     1.   Newspapers which employed a photo editor devoted
          a greater proportion of the news hole to full-
          size news pictures than newspapers at which
          there was no photo editor.

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[52]George S. Bush, "Survey Shows New Needs for Photo-
Journalism," Journalism Quarterly 38 (Spring 1961):216-217.

2. Newspapers which employed a photo editor played a greater percentage of their full-size news pictures on the front page than newspapers at which there was no photo editor.

3. Newspapers which employed a photo editor had an equal or greater percentage of pages with at least one full-size news picture than newspapers at which there was no photo editor.

4. Newspapers which employed a photo editor had a greater percentage of pages with more than one full-size news picture than newspapers at which there was no photo editor.

5. Newspapers which employed a photo editor used a greater percentage of multiple layouts of full-size news pictures than newspapers at which there was no photo editor, except in the medium circulation range category. However, it was in that category that the chief photographer at Paper IV assumed an editorial role when picture layouts were used.

6. Newspapers which employed a photo editor used pictures in a much broader range of categories than newspapers at which there was no photo editor.

7. Newspapers which employed a photo editor used a smaller percentage of head shots than newspapers at which there was no photo editor.

8. Newspapers with photo editors, except in the large circulation category, used a greater range of picture sources than newspapers at which there was no photo editor. Newspapers at which there was no photo editor tended to be more dependent on staff photographers.

In terms of attitudes, many of the gatekeepers shared opinions and preferences. For example, most of the gatekeepers said that good news pictures must be of good technical quality and should show action. All of them said that a good news picture either tells a story on its own or illustrates a written story. In describing a good news picture, there were no significant across the board

differences between the newspapers which employed a photo

editor and those which did not.

There was a more noticeable difference between the

two groups when the gatekeepers explained the reasons why

they use pictures, or the purposes that are served by news

pictures.

At the newspapers which did not employ a photo editor,

the gatekeepers expressed the opinion that pictures serve

to catch the reader's eye and/or draw him into the story.

The photo editors did not cite this as a function of news

pictures, with one even emphasizing that it is incorrect to

believe that pictures motivate greater readership of the

written news.*

All of the gatekeepers said that pictures aid in

breaking up grey space, or brightening the page. However,

the emphasis placed on this function varied greatly between

the newspapers with and without photo editors. The photo

editors cited this as a secondary function, while the gate-

keepers at newspapers without photo editors were more likely

to characterize this as a primary function of a picture and

sometimes as the only reason a picture, even a bad picture,

might be selected for publication.

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*Bert W. Woodburn, cited earlier in this report, is among the researchers who have reported on the stopping power of pictures. This researcher is not aware, however, of any studies which have shown pictures to be a primary factor in influencing a reader to read a particular story.

It is important to distinguish between those who say that a bad picture is better than no picture at all and those who say using no picture is preferable to using an inferior picture. In this respect, there were two distinct ways of laying out a page: one was to find a picture, virtually any picture, to fill a hole on a page; the other was to find a page with enough space to properly accommodate a picture. The latter method, in which pictures must be selected and sized and laid either before, or along with the stories, was preferred by the photo editors but rarely seen as a necessity by the gatekeepers at newspapers which did not employ a photo editor.

At all of the newspapers which employed a photo editor, telling a story was given as a purpose served by pictures. However, only in the medium circulation range category, did the newspaper without a photo editor cite this as a reason to use pictures in the newspaper.

The two strong photo editors (Paper II and Paper V) both spoke of news pictures as documents, or records of the life of the community. The chief photographer at Paper IV was the only other gatekeeper to express this point of view.

At each of the newspapers which employed a photo editor, the gatekeepers were adamant that a picture should never be cropped to fit a hole and that pages should not be made up leaving a space for an unseen photograph. At the newspapers wich did not employ photo editors, many of the gatekeepers freely admitted that pictures are often

cropped to fit a hole and seemed to take for granted that this was a perfectly logical way to decide what size and proportions a picture would be.

Finally, the photo editors viewed the editorial role as beginning with the conception, or assignment, of the idea.

The presence of a photo editor did make a distinct difference in how pictures were selected and used. Most often, the difference was favorable.

Generally, newspapers with photo editors used more pictures, on more pages, concerning a greater variety of subjects than newspapers which did not employ a photo editor.

If these newspapers are typical, however, the staff photographer may be wary of the photo editor who uses so many pictures, so few of which are staff-produced. This was true among the six newspapers in the study, except in the large circulation category.

Finally, the attitudes toward pictures were different between newspapers with and without photo editors. Photo editors were consistently more concerned with photo content and with photographs as visual communicators of news events. Gatekeepers at newspapers which did not employ a photo editor were more likely to treat pictures as graphic devices than as visual news "stories."

Questions for Future Research

Certain areas which would benefit from further study are suggested by the findings of this study.

For example, this research was not geared to study the idea assignment process. It would be interesting to take a closer look at how picture ideas originate. To what extent do editors generate and assign visual reports of community events? To what degree are picture assignments based on story assignments? Do photo editors create picture assignments more or less often than they process assignment requests from other editors and reporters?

More research into the role of the staff photographer will also be necessary to obtain a clear picture of the photojournalism process. To what extent does the staff photographer exercise her or his potential to be a gatekeeper? How much of the staff photographer's work is done on an enterprise basis? Does the staff photographer view herself or himself as a reporter or an illustrator? Why do staff-produced photographs not represent a greater percentage of the pictures used by the newspaper gatekeepers?

Finally, because subject matter has been determined to be one of the most important factors in determining picture readership,[53] a gatekeeper study which could assess photo usage on a qualitative basis is definitely needed.

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[53]Bert W. Woodburn, p. 198 and William R. Hazard.

APPENDIX

LETTER OF INQUIRY

Dear (Receiver):

This letter is to request your cooperation in a study I am preparing to do for my Master of Arts thesis in the School of Journalism at Michigan State University. The study will examine the process of picture selection at six daily Michigan newspapers, including the (Name of Paper), if you will consent to comply. I can assure you that the proposed study will not in any way disrupt your normal operations.

The project will be conducted during two periods of three days each, probably in April; and will require only the cooperation of, and a small amount of time from, the photo editor or person responsible for picture selection at your paper. The study will mention no names of persons or publications. It will cite only such facts as the circulation range (e.g., applicable example) and the frequency of distribution (e.g., a.m. or p.m.; daily, daily and Sunday, etc.).

I would appreciate knowing, at your earliest convenience, whether it will be feasible for me to include the (Name of Paper) in this study. Since I have spent a good deal of time planning this study and have concerned myself with selecting the best and most representative Michigan newspapers, I am certainly hoping that you and your staff will agree to take part in it.

Once I have received your reply I will, of course, send a much more detailed description of the study for your further approval. If you would be kind enough to send me the name of your photo editor, I will direct further correspondence to that person.

Thank you for your consideration.

<div align="right">

Sincerely,

Morna Moore

</div>

GENERAL INFORMATION

Wednesday, June 9, 1976

Your name:

Time you arrived at work today:

Time you finished work today:

Newspaper space allotted to your department today:

May I return on_____for the purpose of
talking with you about the pictures you selected today?

If not, when can I talk with you?

What time of day is best?

Wednesday, June 9, 1976

<u>PHOTOGRAPHS SELECTED TO GO IN THE PAPER YOU ARE WORKING</u>

<u>ON TODAY</u>

<u>Identification</u>   <u>Reason(s) for Choosing it</u>

Wednesday, June 9, 1976

PHOTOS SELECTED TO RUN IN AN ISSUE OF THE PAPER YOU ARE NOT WORKING ON TODAY

and
PHOTOS HELD ASIDE FOR POSSIBLE USE IN A SUBSEQUENT ISSUE

and
PHOTOS HELD ASIDE FOR THE LIBRARY--EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE NO USE FOR THE RIGHT NOW

Identification   Reasons(s) for Choosing it

Please note: If you choose a photo to go in the library
               file, please don't send it along until after
               I have come in to collect the materials so
               that I can take a look at it.

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