

ENVIRONMENTAL "AFGHANISTANISM" v. PAROCHIALISM:
THE FLORIDA TIMES-UNION AND THE ORLANDO SENTINEL

By

TERESA R. VARNER

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN MASS COMMUNICATION

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1993

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA LIBRARIES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ii
LIST OF TABLES	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
CHAPTERS	
1 INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES	1
Introduction	1
Objectives	4
2 LITERATURE REVIEW, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, AND HYPOTHESES	5
Literature Review	5
Parochialism	5
"Afghanistansim"	7
Research Questions	12
Hypotheses	14
3 METHODOLOGY	17
4 RESULTS	24
Environmental "Afghanistanism"	26
Hypothesis One	26
Hypothesis Two	26
Hypothesis Three	27
Hypothesis Four	28
Source Types	29
Enabling Information	30
Coverage Type	31
Coverage Placement	32
Writers	33
Dateline	34
Coverage Type	34
Coverage by Day of Week	35
5 DISCUSSION	47
Environmental "Afghanistanism"	47
Hypothesis One	47
Hypothesis Two	51
Hypothesis Three	52

Hypothesis Four	53
Source Type	54
Enabling Information	64
Coverage Type	69
Coverage Placement	73
Writers	74
Dateline	77
Coverage Type	79
Limitations	79
6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	82
APPENDICES	
A NEWSPAPER INFORMATION AND BASELINES	89
The Florida Times-Union	89
The Orlando Sentinel	89
B ADIs AND PMAs	91
The Florida Times-Union	91
The Orlando Sentinel	92
C CODING MANUAL	94
D CODING SHEET	106
REFERENCES	108
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	111

Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts
in Mass Communication

ENVIRONMENTAL "AFGHANISTANISM" v. PAROCHIALISM:
THE FLORIDA TIMES-UNION AND THE ORLANDO SENTINEL

By

Teresa R. Varner

August 1993

Chairperson: Dr. Leonard P. Tipton
Major Department: Mass Communications

This content analysis assessed environmental coverage in two daily Florida newspapers, The Florida Times-Union and The Orlando Sentinel, to determine whether coverage focused on environmental problems outside the newspapers' main circulation areas while ignoring local environmental concerns--a practice referred to as environmental "Afghanistanism." Also evaluated were news sources of environmental coverage, practical information provided to readers by reporters, and predominant types of coverage.

Limited support was found for environmental "Afghanistanism" in both newspapers, although differences between percentages of local and nonlocal coverage were slight.

Hard news predominated, and most articles provided no enabling information, defined as practical information that could help readers take action on what they have read. Most articles were written by wire service personnel, not environmental, science, or outdoor reporters.

Based on this study and the literature, recommendations included the following: Environmental reporters should not cover nonlocal environmental problems to the exclusion of local ones, since to do so may set an agenda upon which distant problems are seen as more important than the ones next door; more enabling information should be provided to readers; and reporters should include more nongovernment sources. Increased media efforts to work with the scientific community are in order. Editors should employ reporters with formal science training and shift the focus of environmental coverage from immediate events to long-term issues and analyses of possible solutions.

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>		<u>Page</u>
1	<u>The Florida Times-Union</u> (FTU) and <u>The Orlando Sentinel</u> (OS): % Datelines	36
2	<u>The Florida Times-Union</u> (FTU) and <u>The Orlando Sentinel</u> (OS): % Source Types	37
3	<u>The Florida Times-Union</u> : % Source Type by Enabling Information (EI)	38
4	<u>The Orlando Sentinel</u> : % Source Type by Enabling Information (EI)	39
5	<u>The Florida Times-Union</u> (FTU) and <u>The Orlando Sentinel</u> (OS): % Coverage Types	40
6	<u>The Florida Times-Union</u> (FTU) and <u>The Orlando Sentinel</u> (OS): % Section Placement	41
7	<u>The Florida Times-Union</u> : % Writer by Dateline	42
8	<u>The Orlando Sentinel</u> : % Writer by Dateline	43
9	<u>The Florida Times-Union</u> : % Writer by Coverage Type	44
10	<u>The Orlando Sentinel</u> : % Writer by Coverage Type	45
11	<u>The Florida Times-Union</u> (FTU) and <u>The Orlando Sentinel</u> (OS): % Day of Week	46