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**Alternative Things Considered:
A Comparative Political Economic Analysis of Honolulu
Mainstream And Alternative Print News
Communication and Organization**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

SOCIOLOGY

AUGUST 1999

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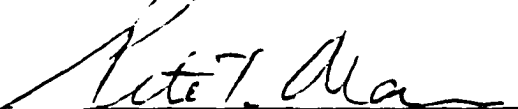
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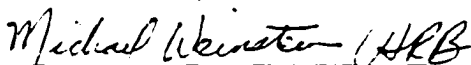
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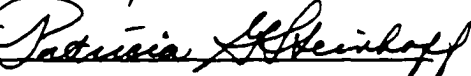
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank the following for their assistance in the completion of this research:

The University of Hawai'i Department of Sociology's, Alvin So, and Graduate Division's Ray Jarman, for letting me in. Georgia Niimoto, Kiyoshi Ikeda and Rose Ancog, for all your kokua along the way.

Peter Manicas, my dissertation chair, whose passion for ideas is exceeded only by his passion for life.

Deane Neubauer, for being both a brilliant academic and an inspiring human being.

Tom Brislin, for his joie de vivre, his patient, understated, approachable, supportive and humorous manner, his powerful knowledge of the media industry, and for talking tirelessly with me while I struggled to define this study.

Pat Steinhoff, who helped immensely with the content analysis and Laura Edles and Michael Weinstein, for helping as well with the field work.

Successive graduate chairs in the University of Hawai'i department of Sociology – Alvin So, Pat Steinhoff and Herb Barringer. Gene Kassebaum, for helping me when I was in computer trauma.

Shelly Habel, Frank Karpel and Fumi Nawa, for weathering grad school with me.

The Hawai'i Community Foundation – Hawai'i Community Scholarship and Hawai'i Veteran's Memorial Scholarship; The University of Hawai'i Arts and Sciences Advisory Council; The University of Hawai'i Department of Sociology – Bernard Hormann Social Research Fund; and the University of Hawai'i Foundation, for financial support.

U.H. Manoa's Department of Sociology for their constant interest and guidance.

Laurie Carlson, who allowed me entry into the newspaper world and Elizabeth Kieszowski, who showed me what an alternative newspaper is all about. The men and women, particularly at the *Honolulu Weekly*, who shared their lives and work.

Peter Phillips, Sonoma State University, and Ben Bagdikian, Dean Emeritus, UC Berkeley, who allowed me to present the research at the 1998 American Sociological Association Conference in San Francisco and contributed important feedback.

Tom O'Malley, Glamorgan University, Wales, who allowed me to present the research on labor relations at the 1998 Media History Conference at the University of Westminster, London, England, and who contributed important feedback.

James Hamilton, University of Georgia, a kindred Internet colleague who studies alternative media, who also contributed important feedback.

Robert Owen Stayte Senior and Robert Owen Stayte II, who practically held the computer shop under siege until they agreed to fix my five-days-out-of-the-one-year-warranty-period crashed computer hard drive both immediately and properly *and deliver it to my door*.

Angus Anaku Gibbs Stayte, for helping me to write up the final, crucial stages of the dissertation.

Robert Stayte II, who, upon learning that my entire coded newspaper sample had been, under suspicious circumstances, deposited in the recycle bin at Kaimuki Middle School, fearing not the dark of night nor pouring down rain, said "You get the flashlight, I'll get a ladder. Let's go and get those newspapers back."

Mahalo Nui Loa to you all for this long and happy journey.

ABSTRACT

The dissertation is a political economic comparative analysis of mainstream and alternative newspaper communication and organization in Honolulu, Hawai'i. The research draws on the findings of a content analysis of a sample of approximately 3,000 alternative and mainstream newspaper articles and from three years' worth of participant observation at two Honolulu-based publications – *The Honolulu Advertiser*, a Gannett owned mainstream daily, and the *Honolulu Weekly*, an independently and locally owned and operated alternative weekly. Chapter one provides an introduction to the study. Chapter two sets forth the multi-methods approach, a literature review and raises important epistemological issues around mass public opinion formation that does not get formulated independently of a whole system of opinion-production, including, of course, mass media. Chapter three introduces the field sites and explains the socio-spatial processes at the two newspaper agencies. Chapter four explains the historical development of Hawai'i media in light of political-economic news filters. Chapter five examines the labor processes and relations at both agencies and reveals surprising labor practice differences between them. Chapter six examines the politics of style, and, more so in the case of the *Weekly*, “hip style,” focusing on policy language differences at each news agency. Chapter seven explores the politics of rhetorical features of news accounts and the ways in which they represent community life. Coding variables discussed here are “timeframe,” “quotes,” “approach,” “voice,” “tone,” and “political slant.” Chapter eight examines the connections between the publications and their markets, their marketing strategies, and the relationship between editorial and advertising copy. Chapter nine explores communications and community through an analysis of common

story topic areas (such as “government,” “the military,” “economy,” “tourism,” “transportation” and “crime”) and routine story construction characteristics (such as “authorship origination,” and “outreach”). Chapter ten discusses the role of mainstream and alternative publications in the public sphere, the market in constraining the media *as well as* the implications of this for the media’s “consumers” (those with their own beliefs and politics), and that of American ideological understandings. The concluding chapter presents a mainstream-alternative nexus and recommendations for change in the media system.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

I have been interested in the role of media in social change for the past several years. Having been familiar with the more “formal” alternative media publications that grace (or disgrace) newspaper stands in grimy downtown areas of any major American city, I was interested in their potential to make change in contemporary society.

I discovered that in 1981 David Armstrong published a book on the more contemporary history of alternative media in America. Even since then, “alternative media” have flourished. They have increased their reportage so dramatically that very much has been written or reported *by* the alternative media. But I also discovered that very little has been written *about* them.

Alternative media have claimed to be substantively and qualitatively different than mainstream media. They claim to be politically oppositional to them. Mainstream media, on the other hand, largely ignore the alternative press – rarely acknowledging their presence and, when consulted, asserting that they have little or no contribution to make to news telling in America.

The parameters of each in relation to one another have not been well mapped. Are alternative media oppositional to mainstream and, if so, in what ways? And, if so, what explains both the similarities and differences? This research aims to answer these central questions and to map out the contours of the alternative press.

Purpose

Understanding forms of media is critical to our understanding of the powerful aspects of communications. Media and other popular culture forms are ubiquitous; they are omnipresent. Daily, we are exposed to a myriad of messages from the media. These

messages affect our perceptions of reality and of place, encourage us to think in certain ways and not others, have a profound affect on public opinion and are used as the basis of decisions upon which public policy is decided. There is a growing body of literature that provides a critical analysis of mass media, its messages and its forms. Most, if not all, of these studies recommend the potential of “alternative” forms of media in addressing media problems.

The purpose of this study is to gain a greater understanding of what alternative media both claim to be and actually are; in terms of how stories are selected, constructed and presented, and their labor and business operations, levels of inclusiveness, relationship to their communities of readers and ideological emphases. The research focuses on several related issues. First, it offers, in considerable detail, an account of the agents, practices and outcomes of one alternative media publication. Second, as a reference point, it offers a much more brief analysis of its mainstream counterpart. And third, it evaluates how successful the alternative publication has been at meeting its fundamental *raison d’etre*.

Chapter Outline

Stemming from a political-economic approach, this research draws upon findings from field data and content analysis of two media agencies to answer these questions. I use the theoretical works of Bagdikian (1990), Chomsky (1997), Coser (1974), Giddens (1984), Gitlin (1980), Habermas (1973; 1979), Lippmann (1922), Mills (1959), and Williams (1961) to explain the relationship of the data to larger social systems and media processes.

Chapter two provides a methods, literature and theoretical review. Here, the strengths of a multi-method approach to studying media are discussed. The research methods are explained in detail. Mostly, this research is based on hundreds of hours of field experience, participant observation and interviews, along with a content analysis of approximately 3,000 articles taken from a ten-month sample of two publications, one alternative and the other mainstream.

Chapter three provides a very brief introduction to the two Honolulu field sites upon which this research is based. Readers are given some basic descriptions of some of the main features and work processes at a mainstream daily newspaper, *The Honolulu Advertiser*, and an alternative newsweekly, the *Honolulu Weekly*.

Chapter four explains some of the more recent history of contemporary Hawai'i print media, focusing on the ways in which it has been organized. Here, I draw upon the ideas of Noam Chomsky and his "propaganda" or "institutional" model of the news to highlight one set of institutional pressures and predominant news filters and reveal some of the very political ways that the "news" is socially constructed.

Chapter five begins an account of the fundamental conditions which structure the practices which produce outcomes. This chapter explores the labor processes and relations at both organizations. Here, the field research and interviews with employees from both publications reveals surprising labor practices differences between the mainstream and alternative agencies. This chapter comparatively analyzes the ownership filter in particular to examine these differences. And the chapter suggests the usefulness of adding a filter on "news workers and working conditions" to the propaganda models'

series of filters so as to better situate news workers' labor as a variable institutional practice.

Chapter six continues the account of how agents respond to the institutional enabling and constraining conditions. This chapter focuses on one significant feature of both publications, that of style. Style is examined here in terms of its historical roots and contemporary meaning for workers. Content analysis data is used to highlight some aspects of style and in particular the "hip" style of the *Weekly* as compared to the more conservative style of *The Advertiser*. For example, the data is used comparatively to show the two publications' vastly differing approaches to language use in terms of swear words, Hawaiian words, pidgin, slang words, and play on words. As well, the politics of style is explored by showing differences in the language used in organizational policies at each news agency.

Chapter seven uses the content analysis to set forth variations in the news frames used by both publications. Here, rhetorical devices such as timeframe, use of quotes, approach, voice, tone and political stance of articles are analyzed to show vast differences in the news frames. As well, the critical sub-text of these frames is examined by presenting and discussing the meaning of narrative examples from both publications.

Chapter eight examines a dominant feature of media produced in a capitalist society, the role of advertising in each publication. Here, the proportion of advertising to editorial content is presented and analyzed, as are the types of advertisements placed. This chapter discusses the connections between the publications and their markets in terms of their marketing strategies and the relationship of the editorial and advertising

copy. I explain here both why these are different but why also they critically constrain news copy.

Chapter nine uses both content analysis and field data to explore the critical relationship between media and community. Here, it is argued that alternative media aim to produce an alternative voice to the community it addresses. This chapter examines the picture of the social order offered by the two publications.

Chapter ten continues this then by examining the role of mainstream and alternative publications in the public sphere. The work of Lippmann (1922), Manicas (1989), Mills (1959), and Williams (1961) is used to discuss the role of media and opinion formation in the public sphere. In particular, the chapter discusses common American beliefs, and both readers' and media producers' relative support of the structural conditions of American society or, at least, their participation in "right" and "left" versions of this "consensus" or set of beliefs.

And chapter eleven, the concluding chapter, presents a beginning alternative-mainstream media nexus and discusses recommendations for changes to the present role of media in society.

Throughout the course of this research, I became a "journalist." I do not like this label and I do not refer to myself as a "journalist" or a "reporter" partly because as soon as you refer to yourself as one, you are asked: "where did you go to journalism school?" But mostly because I have come to associate the role of a "journalist" with one who is detached from social life and dispassionately records events, a neutral observer. I am neither dispassionate nor neutral. If this were a different kind of dissertation – for example one completed more in line with the fields of creative writing or anthropology, I

would have focused more centrally on my experience of learning how to work at an alternative news agency. I would have used as a basis for this research, the articles (four covers, several features, and numerous shorter pieces) that I wrote and the work responsibilities I fulfilled during the more intense field research stages as case study material. This would make an interesting study no doubt. But I wanted to avoid being the unit of analysis. And realizing the strength of the field data used along with the content analysis has made for a better balance between more “qualitative” and more “quantitative” data. Ultimately, in terms of reflexivity, as the researcher, everything – all the data, from the study design, to the data collection, analysis and connection to theory – all of this flows through me. I am the lens through which all of this is has been presented. I hope that I am successful at conveying the absolutely, fundamentally, critical role of media in society. And I hope you enjoy the read.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

History of Hawai`i Newspapers

Communications in early Hawaiian society were primarily non-literary based. The first printing press was brought to Hawai`i in 1820 by New England Protestant missionaries, with many of the first newspapers in Hawai`i being religiously influenced. The missionaries established schools. The first of these was Amos Starr Cooke's "Royal School" for the children of the *ali`i* (Hawaiian royalty) where English and other Western subjects were taught. According to Chapin (1984): "The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1834 decided to start... a newspaper 'to exhibit the truth in an attractive form'- in other words, to inform and entertain" (Chapin p.51).

The first newspaper, the *Ka Lama* (the Hawaiian Luminary) was printed in 1834 at Lahainaluna School on Maui, a school for Hawaiian men. In the same year, the Protestant mission in Honolulu obtained a printing press and used it to produce the second newspaper in Hawai`i. This was *Ke Kumu* (The Hawaiian Teacher) and it was intended to produce religious materials for the local schools.

In the ancient Hawaiian land tenure system, land was considered to be sacred. There was no private ownership of land, it held no monetary value and could not be "owned." Hawai`i newspapers played a role in the conversion of this land system to a Western "property and land development" scheme. Despite resistance from Native Hawaiian people, the King, in concert with his foreign advisors and in reaction to the drastic decline of the native population from imported diseases, signed a new land conversion system into law. Convinced of the value of this type of land system, the Hawaiian monarchy enacted the 1948 *Mahele* (land divide) where the land was divided

(unequally) and awarded in ownership first to the king, then to the chiefs and then to the commoners in descending order. An 1850 act extended property rights to foreigners who could acquire fee simple land titles. These acts laid the foundation for later land developments for *haole* (Caucasian) owned capitalist operations starting with the plantation system (see Manicas 1989).

As Chapin argues, all the newspapers of the time in Hawai`i:

advanced this concept of Western property that forever – and for Native Hawaiians, tragically – altered the social system of Hawai`i. Their basic argument was that all “civilizations” had property rights specified by law. (p. 32)

This position on land development holds today as all newspapers in the state, with the exception of a few: “actively promote the development of land and acquisition of property” (Chapin 1984 p.38).

After three decades of control over the Hawaiian language press by missionaries, their descendants, or the Hawaiian government, a Hawaiian nationalist press was begun with Chief David Kalakaua’s *Ka Hoku o ka Pakipika* (The Star of the Pacific) (1861-1863). It was the first Hawaiian language newspaper run solely by Native Hawaiian people. Other Native Hawaiian controlled newspapers were started in the 1880s and 1890s that, as Chapin argues: “laid the foundation for the arguments for Hawaiian sovereignty that would reemerge in the late twentieth century” (Chapin 1996 p. 59).

The drastic decline in numbers of the Native Hawaiian population meant that the work force necessary for the plantations had to be secured from elsewhere. Foreign workers were brought in from Japan, China, the Philippines, and Korea. Gradually, they started presses in their respective languages. This is evidenced today in a vibrant multi-

cultural mix of peoples, with descendants of these immigrants considered “locals.” As a result of the many ethnic groups in Hawai`i, there is also a vibrant ethnic press.

Those who led the Hawaiian nationalist press in the late 1800s were dedicated to preserving Hawai`i as an independent country. However, those who led the establishment-official press (whose supporters comprised only 5-6 percent of the population) were in a more powerful position as they controlled the government and economy. As Chapin argues:

The unified money and power of the oligarchy and its press would control events and forge the Islands' future... from 1893 to 1895... the oligarchy's press dedicated itself to justifying its actions in the Islands and projecting a favorable image abroad to the United States to influence public opinion there. (Chapin 1996 p.95)

For example:

Sanford Ballard Dole and Lorrin Andrews Thurston were political activists and newspapermen... They helped engineer the overthrow of the monarchy in 1893 and influenced American public opinion to bring about annexation in 1898. (Chapin 1996 p.97)

Throughout the history of communication agencies in Hawai`i, ownership and control of the media has been almost exclusively by non-Hawaiians. Whereas newspaper ownership and control in the territorial period was very often by locals and local families in particular, the statehood period has witnessed large scale buy outs by huge media corporations such as Gannett Company Incorporated (which has owned both of the largest and oldest daily newspapers in Hawai`i) and the concomitant loss of local influence in the mainstream press. (Rees October 11 1995; Rees October 18 1995)

Classified Papers

Many discussions of Hawai`i media have involved classifications of print media. Chapin (1984) classifies newspapers of Hawai`i, in particular focusing on the era

between 1834 (when the first newspaper was published in Hawai`i) and 1903 (with the arrival of the Pacific Cable). The intent of the classification system is to document shifts and changes in the role of newspapers in Hawai`i. She states that the newspapers:

present a unique opportunity to study several distinct but interrelated events. One is the universal technology of newspapers functioning within a confined place and time. Another is the evolution of newspapers from those in the Hawaiian language to those primarily in English, a phenomenon tied to American domination of Hawai`i. Still another is the development of ethnic and bilingual papers, both illustrative of Hawai`i's multicultural society. (Chapin 1984 p.47)

In order to make sense of the complex array of newspapers, she proposed a classification system corresponding to the development of newspapers in the context of Hawaiian history.

Based on her research on Hawaiian newspaper history, she categorized the newspapers into four distinct types which: "...sometimes shifted positions when the fortunes of the country, alliances, or interests changed" (Chapin 1984 p.47). The four categories of newspapers are "establishment," "official," "opposition," and "independent."

She defines a newspaper as:

a publication which appears serially and regularly, with a masthead, on newsprint, and without covers.... [which] is mainly designed to present to the public a variety of matters such as current events, public affairs, international activities, and politics. (Chapin 1984 p.47-48)

And describes the purpose of newspapers as being threefold, namely:

to publish the news and thereby inform and entertain the public; to interpret that news and influence public opinion, and to succeed as a business enterprise. (Chapin 1984 p.48)

She also emphasizes that, more broadly:

A newspaper's general nature includes other factors: exercising control over information, the public, and one's own labor; literacy itself; and the concept of free speech. (Chapin 1984 p.48)

Briefly, an “establishment” paper is described as being: “...that which holds the chief measure of power and influence in a community or country and is in the hands of a dominant inner circle” (Chapin 1984 p.49). She further divides “establishment” papers into three sub-categories; “periodicals in Hawaiian published by the Protestant mission; newspapers in English published by the same mission; and secular newspapers in English representing the *haole* [Caucasian] elite” (Chapin 1984 p.51). An “official” newspaper is one that is published by the government. “Opposition” newspapers were primarily combative and in opposition to the establishment and official press. Attesting to the large and complex nature of the “opposition” press, Chapin breaks them down into four groups:

One, in English, spoke for the interests of non-missionary allied American businessmen and their European allies. Two, dissenting religious organizations, Roman Catholics and Mormons, printing their papers in Hawaiian. A third cluster was produced by native Hawaiians in Hawaiian and represented a majority of that population. A fourth group consisted of those in Chinese, Portuguese, and Japanese, and represented an immigrant population. Such a diverse aggregate made the opposition press in Hawai`i an unusual phenomenon which has contributed handsomely to Hawai`i’s rich newspaper life. (Chapin 1984 p.61)

Last, are the “independent” newspapers which Chapin describes as being:

a small cluster... allied to no particular interest save the editor-printer’s requirement for a living. [They] ...usually tried to steer among the conflicts of Hawaiian politics, religion, business, and ethnic interests. Few survived long. (Chapin 1984 p.76)

Chapin’s classification represents an immense amount of ground breaking and painstakingly detailed work. She does fail to suggest a theoretical framework from which the classifications arose, or document the process by which she arrived at such a scheme. However, she succeeds in documenting and classifying a seminal history of Hawaiian newspapers (and see Mookini 1974).

Other classifications of Hawai'i media have been conducted. For example McMillan and Morris (1987), in their compilation of newspapers in Hawai'i, classify them into categories by "date of first publication" (from 1834 on), by "intended audience" (general, religious, political, labor, military, Japanese, Hawaiian, Filipino, and Korean), by "language of publication" (Austronesian, Chinese, English, Hawaiian, Ilocano, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Samoan, and Tagalog). As well, the Aloha United Way briefly published a media list for the state during the 1980s and today there is a recently updated listing of media agencies broken down into various categories (publishers, editors, departments, advertising, publishing frequency, distribution area...) called the "Crucial Hawaiian Media Directory" (and see Brislin 1993; Johnson 1976; Media Council).

In a recent issue of *Social Process in Hawai'i*, Manicas (1995) outlines some of the foremost historical, political and economic dynamics of Hawai'i over the past century. Briefly, he draws on various accounts which provide a strong picture of social relations in Hawai'i. These had to do with disastrous foreign impacts on the *Kanaka Maoli* (as the Hawaiians called themselves) which devastated their populations, the introduction of Christian values of productivity, the changing relationship to the land which had to do with exploitation for profit, the development of the sugar cane industry, and the need to import foreign workers to support the industry. In the territorial period, the growth in localism (see Okamura) and in a local identity was fueled by rising land prices, the downsizing of agricultural development, a drastic increase in off shore investment in the tourism industry, and the growing Native Hawaiian sovereignty movement (see Kim 1994; Manicas 1995; Okamura 1995; Stauffer 1995; Trask 1993).

Chapin's research provides a historical documentation of Hawai'i's plantation newspapers that existed during the rise of the sugar cane industry, and of the first feminist newspaper published by a woman in Hawai'i (Chapin 1984; Chapin 1989; Chapin 1996). Chaplin (1998) has chronicled fifty years of *The Honolulu Advertiser*, its ownership, workers and coverage of some prominent local issues. Brislin (1995) has focused on the role of the ethnic press in the territorial period. In particular, the study examines the divergent approaches of two Japanese language newspaper publishers in the period leading up to statehood. Henningham (1992) provides a developmental account of native Hawaiian media in which two newspapers created by and for Hawaiians are examined. The results however reveal that both papers resemble mainstream media papers in their somewhat conservative approach to Hawaiians and Hawaiian social conditions. The interview data reveals that each paper's editor claims that the aim of their paper is primarily to keep Hawaiians informed about legislation, or to be a public relations tool. Neither newspaper gives coverage to controversial Hawaiian issues or the activities of more radical Hawaiian groups. Henningham's (1993) study examines the multi-cultural characteristics of journalists who live and work in Hawai'i. The study concludes that journalists in Hawai'i:

are less likely to be Caucasian than are journalists nationally; however, journalists of Caucasian ethnicity are greatly over-represented in relation to the population of Hawai'i, while those of Japanese, Filipino, or native Hawaiian background are significantly underrepresented. (Henningham, 1993:555)

And finally Davis' (1995) study asks the question: "Does the local media provide an accurate representation of Hawai'i's diversity?" The answer is a qualified "no." She suggests that the strength of "alternative media" systems lies in supporting diversity

generally. And she puts forth access television and the Internet web pages established by various Hawaiian sovereignty groups as examples of where diversity may be fostered.

One thing that many of these studies have in common is their focus on media issues (such as the ethnic and labor press and diversity in characteristics of journalists) in hopes of shedding light on what is “diverse” or even “oppositional” about Hawai`i media. Their conclusions are similar in that they are able to report little that is diverse and less that is oppositional about Hawai`i media.

As regards the present study, two very critical issues need to be addressed: first, the question of what counts as a newspaper and second, what counts as “alternative.” Since this study will use a mainstream newspaper as a reference point in discussing the “alternative,” accepting Chapin’s relatively loose definition would make this task easier. That is, both of the publications examined “appear serially and regularly, with a masthead, on newsprint, and without covers.” Both are “mainly designed to present the public a variety of matters such as current events, public affairs, international activities and politics” and both “publish news and thereby inform and entertain the public.” This definition would allow as newspapers a wide variety of print vehicles produced by various sorts of groups with particular interests and/or angles of vision (eg. Mormons, Hawaiians, Filipinos, Latinos, unionists or businesspersons). Yet none of these media are what might be termed “organs of record,” or print media which assume the obligation to cover all the “news,” even if “all” is restricted to “all local” or “all regional” news. None of these, for example, assume the obligation to publish salient features of a police report or legislative decision. The alternative paper examined shares in rejecting this obligation, even if in terms of Chapin’s distinction, it qualifies very well as a newspaper. The

consequences of this are of some importance, as we shall see. Similarly, the term “alternative” requires some clarification to which I subsequently turn in chapter seven.

Nevertheless, while it is surely the case that an “alternative” paper is not strictly speaking comparable to a “mainstream” paper, the fact that both (again recurring to Chapin) do “interpret news and seek to influence public opinion” and both must succeed as business enterprises is critical for the present study.

Looking at structural level problems in the way American media are organized is helpful here. The net effect of this organizational pattern, other research findings show, is to seriously censor and distort the selection and presentation of news stories to the point where the media simply serve as a propaganda machine for those most powerful and privileged (see Downing 1980; Herman 1988). Other media analyses reveal that the ways in which news stories are constructed and the values they espouse clearly support those of the overall hegemonic liberal capitalist social system (see Gitlin 1980; Schiller 1992; Schiller 1989). Still other media studies illustrate the escalation of corporatism in news creation and dissemination, the consequences of increasing concentration of ownership, the mainstream news media’s approach of presenting a largely de-politicized view of social life, and the outright failure of news journalism to accurately report on the everyday concerns of a variety of people (see Bagdikian 1990; Mazzocco 1994). Are American media completely stymied by these conditions? Are they nothing short of elite and monolithic monuments that purport ideals of democracy at the same time turning them upside down?

Epistemological Issues

Walter Lippmann (1922), writing around the time of World War One, was interested in the ways in which people came to understand their world and form opinions about it. He argued that people develop mental images or “maps” of events and actions that they could not experience first hand and said: “The only feeling that anyone can have about an event he does not experience is the feeling aroused by his mental image of that event” (Lippmann , p13).

People adjusted to their rapidly changing social life increasingly through second hand (and more distant) accounts or “representations.” These representations were made up of “fictions.” Lippmann argued:

Certainly, at the level of social life, what is called the adjustment of man to his environment takes place through the medium of fictions. By fictions I do not mean lies. I mean a representation of the environment which is in lesser or greater degree made by man himself. (Lippmann , p.15)

And these “fictions” affect beliefs and actions on a wide scale. For example, Lippmann states:

what each man does is based not on direct and certain knowledge, but on pictures made by himself or given to him. If his atlas tells him that the world is flat he will not sail near what he believes to be the edge of our planet for fear of falling off.... The way in which the world is imagined determines at any particular moment what men will do.” (Lippmann , p.25)

Lippmann makes a distinction between public affairs and public opinion. Public affairs are:

Those features of the world outside which have to do with the behavior of other human beings, in so far as that behavior crosses ours, is dependent upon us, or is interesting to us.... (Lippmann , p.29)

Public opinion is: “the pictures inside the heads of these human beings, the pictures of themselves, of others, of their needs, purposes, and relationship” (Lippmann , p.29).

Examples of ideological understandings of social life are: “Those pictures which are acted upon by groups of people, or by individuals acting in the name of groups, are **Public Opinion with capital letters**” (Lippmann , p.29).

As the world is a complicated place and we can not know everything first hand, we increasingly rely on representations as explanations of it. The problem lies herein:

To traverse the world men must have maps of the world. The persistent difficulty is to secure maps on which their own need, or someone else’s need, has not sketched in the coast of Bohemia. (Lippmann , p.16)

The trouble with this is in being able to discriminate between representations. Manicas (1989) argues that:

Members of modern mass societies are not *polis*-dwellers directly engaged in a world where the causes and consequences of acting can be used to check one’s maps. Nor have they the time or the opportunity to range across the spaces of indirect involvement. Always subject to mediation by others, from the childhood books put into their hands to the representations of the *Official Bulletin*, they have no way to discriminate among the representations set before them or to judge whether someone’s need has not “sketched in the coast of Bohemia” on their map” (Manicas , p.367).

As we can not know about all public affairs, the press, beyond personal, first hand knowledge, can play an integral role in representing social reality and “making the unseen facts intelligible...” to us (Lippmann , p.31). However, the problem with the formation of public opinion is in the way it is organized by “leadership” in a representative democracy. Manicas (1989), after Lippmann and then Dewey in his 1927 *The Public and its Problems*, argues that:

There is a Great Society, but organized [as it is], individuals, who are impersonally dependent, commodified, alienated, and disempowered, are prevented from identifying themselves as members of publics. (Manicas , p373)

Newspapers, as do other media, represent social reality. Accordingly, there are alternative and mainstream frames of representation. This study looks at media in Hawai`i, officially an American state since 1959, and therefore in America, a liberal-

capitalist society from its inception. And this too must be taken into account. So, what role do newspapers play in the creation of viable publics? Do they merely help to sketch in “the coast of bohemia?” Do they represent simply their own needs? What, if any, differences are there in this regard between mainstream and alternative publications? And how are these to be seen in relation to ideology in American society?

The foregoing suggests that some version of structuralist theory will provide the most useful approach to our problems. Another alternative would be some currently fashionable version of cultural theory. Neither, I think, provide exactly what is needed here. Structuralist theories of the sort provided by Bagdikian, Chomsky and Herman, Schiller and Gitlin generally suffer from a sense that “the forces at work,” but especially the imperatives of capitalism, leave little room for alternatives. Cultural theories on the other hand, lead us to believe that the battle has to be fought at the level of culture. They hold, rightly, that structuralisms tend to be deterministic straightjackets, but fail to see that culture is constitutive of the structural conditions that are the materials of human action. For example, it is precisely the belief systems and values of liberal culture which propel and are propelled by “capitalism.” Understanding either side of these complementary aspects requires (as Weber insisted), understanding the other. Indeed, as I show in chapters 6 and 7, exploiting differences of “style” gives workers at the alternative paper resources which contribute to the identities, and, accordingly, gives them the resources to overcome what are manifestly exploitative work conditions.

I have adopted Giddens’ “structuration” theory as my meta-theory. For him, the critical problem is to see how a properly conceived “structure” is produced, reproduced and potentially transformed by the actions of agents. From this view, structure is not

“determining” since it is precisely the intended and mostly unintended consequences of action which “determine” it. Drawing on phenomenology and ethnomethodology, agents are seen as knowledgeable, but not omniscient “reality constructors.” Accordingly, explaining practices (and their outcomes) requires understanding not only the conditions of actions but the motivation and beliefs of agents. Giddens’ metatheory thus allows me to integrate easily considerations of macro political economy, ethnography and content analysis.

This research has three tasks. First, it is an effort to describe the production site and political economic context of an alternative paper (and to compare this briefly with a mainstream publication). Second, it provides a description and analysis of their products; the texts which they produce. And third, it explains, in terms of structuring conditions and the ways that they are reproduced, why they differ where they differ and why they are constrained not to differ more. This takes the form of identifying the enabling and constraining conditions of the actors, including the larger “macro-structure” called capitalism, the liberal culture which is part of this, and how agents working with these materials understand what they do and why they do it.

I turn first to gleaning the insights of the structural theories of Bagdikian, Herman and Chomsky and Gitlin.

"Mainstream" And "Alternative" Media Assumptions

Several authors have documented the increasing concentration of media ownership and its resulting consolidation of information control. According to Bagdikian:

Modern technology and American economics have quietly created a new kind of central authority over information – the national and multinational corporation. By the 1980s,

the majority of all major American media – newspapers, magazines, radio, television, books, and movies – was controlled by fifty giant corporations. These corporations were interlocked in common financial interest with other massive industries and with a few dominant international banks. Today fifty corporations own most of the output of daily newspapers and most of the sales and audience in magazines, broadcasting, books and movies. The fifty men and women who head these corporations would fit in a large room. They constitute a new Private Ministry of Information and Culture.” (Bagdikian 1990 p.xix-xx)

Here mainstream media are seen as a monolithic entity where space for alternative voices is expropriated by those more powerful. Bagdikian does not hold out much hope for other media voices in the equation. He says:

There are other media voices outside the control of the dominant fifty corporations. Most are small and localized, and many still disappear as they are acquired by the giants. The small voices, as always, are important, a saving remnant of diversity. But their diminutive sounds tend to be drowned by the controlled thunder of half the media power of a great society. (Bagdikian 1990 p.xix)

Alleyne and Wagner further describe the concentration of ownership where: “Five news agencies, headquartered in four countries, are responsible for relaying most of the world's news.” (Alleyne 1993 p.40). This increasingly concentrated, decreasingly diverse, and heavily market-oriented information monopoly of news making is commonly referred to as the mainstream or mass media.

Critical Analyses of Mainstream Print Media

In Manufacturing Consent Chomsky and Hermann, (1988), drawing on examples of press coverage of United States foreign policy and portrayals of foreign intervention, shed light on the ways in which the American press is dominated by elite interests and serves to marginalize dissent. They present a “propaganda model” and apply it to the manner in which international news about war is presented in the American mass media. The propaganda model points to inequality in the distribution of wealth and power in the American social system and its effects on the mass media in terms of which news is

considered fit to print, the marginalization of dissenting voices and the favoring of more powerful interests like wealthy individuals and high ranking government officials.

The propaganda model is comprised of five basic and interrelated elements that act as filters in the news production system. The first element focuses on the dominant mass media organizations – their size, profit orientation and concentration of ownership. The authors demonstrate that there is a high degree of media ownership by an elite group of large and powerful corporations (and see Bagdikian 1990). The second element is that advertising is the main source of income for the mass media. This factor gives advertisers power in the media. Many newspapers, particularly ones that do not charge a cover price for their papers or that do not have subscribers, are largely if not completely dependant on advertisers as their sole source of financial support. This makes it more difficult for newspaper organizations to be in any way critical of their advertisers specifically, or, more broadly, of the political economy of which they are an integral part. The third element is that mass media solicit the voices of those more wealthy and powerful in telling the news. Consequently, story sources are more heavily skewed towards the representatives of more powerful government agencies and private companies. The fourth element is the role of “flak,” or negative sanctions. When reports are not favorable to the powerful, “flak” campaigns are often lodged against newspaper organizations and their staffs in the form of verbal or written attacks. Herman and Chomsky find that “flak” is used extensively, often by those more powerful within news organizations, by editors, advertisers, publishers and readers to “encourage” reporters to cover stories in less critical, rigorous or investigative manners. The final element is

capitalist ideology, which shapes information, encouraging stories that are supportive of the status quo while discouraging those more radical in intent.

Herman and Chomsky find that:

The raw material of the news must pass through successive filters, leaving only the cleansed residue fit to print. They fix the premises of discourse and interpretation, and the definition of what is newsworthy in the first place, and they explain the basis and operations of what amount to propaganda campaigns. (Herman 1988 p.2)

Through these filters, the news becomes shaped and groomed to represent the status quo and show it in its best light. Here, “the news” – or the stories of peoples’ lives and experiences either remain untold or are told from the perspective of those more powerful and influential, often distorting, misrepresenting or misunderstanding the true nature of the varied life experiences of community members. “The news” is something that is then very narrow in scope, and increasingly exclusive of variety and representation. Instead of providing an invitation for community members to actively or meaningfully participate in the public sphere, covering the vibrancy of community life and struggles for voice and power, and/or a forum where social problems and issues of inequality are held up for critical examination, the media remains committed to the ideals of the status quo. Effectual or progressive social change is not on the agenda.

Several studies on the politics of the media find serious flaws in mainstream print media focusing on the ways in which they are firmly “patterned by the needs of power.” For example, one study highlights the ways in which journalists themselves are actively encouraged by their media employers to find and present news stories using techniques which highlight aspects of stories which show the status quo in the best light while suppressing those which do not (Pedelty 1995). Another study, focuses on the dominance of the hegemonic social order over the relations between the mass media and

the new left in the 1960s (Gitlin 1980). Gitlin examined the role of the media during the student anti-war movement of the 1960s and found that groups were actively framed in particular ways that would cause them to appear to be socially situated either more in line with conventional ideals or more marginal to them. In order for groups to gain important legitimacy in the press, which would usually determine whether or not they would be heard, journalists would have to present their ideas in a manner less threatening to the dominant social structure. If the groups were presented in this way, they were viewed as “liberal” and were more “tolerated.” If they did not, they were marginalized as “radical” and their credibility was critically damaged. In this study, Gitlin furthered the ideas of Goffman (1974) on frame analysis of social life, demonstrating its usefulness in explaining routines of news production.

On a more micro-level, mass media reports use “frames” or “spectacle” as labels for interpretations of reality, often with an over-reliance on the perceptions of public figures (Farrell 1989). Gitlin (1980) defines frames as: “...principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters” (p.6). Mass media both produce and reflect social and cultural definitions through their framing capacities. Therein they hold tremendous social power in focusing on certain aspects of reality, on influencing public opinion and social policy, on impressing certain definitions of the social world over others and in being a central force in the continuation of the social order. Gitlin argues that, by virtue of being part of the liberal capitalist system, the news media use routines and frames that do not fundamentally contradict dominant hegemonic principles. Examples of these frames are:

the legitimacy of private control of commodity production, the legitimacy of the national security State... the right and ability of authorized agencies to manage conflict and make

the necessary reforms, the legitimacy of the social order secured and defined by the dominant elites; and the value of individualism as the measure of social existence. (Gitlin 1980 p. 271)

Gitlin found other obstacles to the media ever being truly oppositional in that many journalists believe that they have considerable autonomy in their work. However, he argues, that due to being firmly situated in the capitalist system, mass media present strict bounds to the autonomy of journalism. Through journalistic actions, journalists:

systematically frame the news to be compatible with the main institutional arrangements of the society. Journalists thus sustain the dominant frames through the banal, everyday momentum of their routines. Their autonomy keeps within the boundaries of the hegemonic system. (Gitlin 1980 p. 269)

Herman and Chomsky concur, arguing that:

The elite domination of the media and marginalization of dissidents that results from the operation of these filters occurs so naturally that media news people, frequently operating with complete integrity and goodwill, are able to convince themselves that they choose and interpret the news “objectively” and on the basis of professional news values. Within the limits of the filter constraints they often are objective; the constraints are so powerful, and are built into the system in such a fundamental way, that alternative bases of news choices are hardly imaginable. In assessing the newsworthiness of the U.S. government’s urgent claims of a shipment of MIGs to Nicaragua on November 5, 1984, the media do not stop to ponder the bias that is inherent in the priority assigned to government-supplied raw material, or the possibility that the government might be manipulating the news, imposing its own agenda, and deliberately diverting attention from other material. (Herman 1988 p. 2)

Herman and Chomsky suggest that for journalists to be able to more clearly see the pattern of manipulation and systemic bias, they would need to have a macro, or structural, as well as a micro, or story by story, view of media operations – something that few journalists are encouraged to have. In order to affect change based on this view, journalists would also have to possess the qualities of mind to work against a system of which they are inextricably bound up in with the constant threat of ridicule, job sanctions and job loss.

A number of questions arise from this discussion. First, given the degree of structural-level constraints and extreme power of elites to shape the news, is there any kind of compensatory movement that could provide a counterbalance to the “manufacturing of consent?” Or is it that the system is monolithic, hopelessly blocked by those in whose best interest it is to protect their wealth and power? What happens where a media organization claims to work from frames that are at odds with conventional journalism? What happens when the journalists are perhaps familiar with, and inspired by, the ideas of Herman and Chomsky, and Gitlin, (or Watergate investigative journalist Bob Woodward) and are politicized by them? Are they merely naïve idealists who are doomed to fail, crushed by the structure? Will they merely end up replicating the oppressive features of the mass media in their attempts to work within it? And what happens when a realm of the mass media emerges that claims to be both informed by these oppressive and conservative features of the mainstream media *and* positioned in opposition to them? What is the effect of this on community members and journalists alike?

Critical analyses of mainstream media suggest the potential of “alternative media” to address these deep-seated problems. By this, they point to the capacity for change in alternative forms of media that have elements that are oppositional to more mainstream forms. Here, they prompt us to think of the possibilities of non-commercial, community-based, critical, issues-oriented and left leaning politicized media that are “multi-perspectival” and “polyvocal.” They advise that what is needed is a realm of media that challenges corporate-owned media and addresses the aforementioned problems (Mazzocco 1994; Pedelty 1995; Riggins 1992; Williams 1960).

In response to the criticism of mainstream media and as a result of the social and civil rights movements of the 1960s, a realm of media called “alternative media” formed. It has been described in several articles as providing a counterbalance to mainstream media (Utne 1994; Walljasper 1994a; Walljasper 1994b). Few studies, if any, however, exist which map out the parameters of more explicit “alternative media” in any systematic way. So what are the prevalent characteristics of “alternative media?”

Oppositional Media and The Progressive Press

Given the research findings about the monochromatic tendencies of the mainstream media, one might conclude that there is, and has been, a complete lack of variability in media offerings over time. Contrary to this, examples of great variability have not only existed, but many have thrived at various times and many more persist today.

Media history is rife with examples of journalism that is positioned oppositionally to more mainstream forms of print media. So much so, that the realm of “oppositional journalism” has been described as an “American tradition” and an important part of the American political landscape.

Kessler (1989) suggests that, in the 1900s, there have been two important waves of oppositional journalism. She describes the first as taking place from 1900 through 1915: “...when socialists and their dizzying array of splinter groups, feminists, recent immigrants and others published more than a thousand different periodicals...” (Kessler 1989 p.3). The second happened: “...from roughly 1964 to 1973, [an era] called ‘the 60s,’ when the so-called underground press flourished” (Kessler 1989 p.3).

More dizzying than the array of groups that published periodicals, is the vast range of descriptive labels given to the publications. A quick scan of journalism history reveals the following labels given to various forms of oppositional print journalism: “investigative,” “muckraking,” “yellow journalism,” “watchdog journalism,” “the labor press,” “underground,” “new journalism,” “community journalism,” “civic journalism,” “the dissident press,” “radical media,” “ethnic minority media,” “advocacy journalism,” “service journalism,” “the progressive press,” “the independent press,” and finally “alternative media” (see Altschull 1990). Still more confusing is that none of these forms is mutually exclusive and, although they share a starting point of opposing mainstream journalistic assumptions, this is occasionally where the similarities end. Their approaches can differ significantly as can their organizational structures, editorial policies and practices, target audiences and funding sources (see Downing 1984; Henningham 1992; Riggins 1992).

Problems with Studying Oppositional Media

These wide variations can present obstacles for the systematic analyses of oppositional print media. Chapin’s (1984) typology of media forms in Hawai‘i underscores at least three important points. First, what is considered oppositional is culturally defined so that an acceptable story in one publication may be considered completely unacceptable in another publication. Second, what is considered oppositional is relative to existing dominant values. For example, in a more conservative community or climate what is considered oppositional may be viewed as highly suspect, or could be so severely restricted as to be rendered virtually invisible (see Riggins 1992). What is considered oppositional and even celebrated as such in a more liberal community or

climate, may be completely frowned upon or actively repressed in others. And third, what is considered oppositional is historically contingent. Although telling melodramatic fictionalized stories in a newspaper today may be considered against current journalistic convention, doing so one hundred years ago was not only completely acceptable, but was fully expected by readers. Add to this the fact that different publications have slightly varied approaches to what constitutes news and how it should be gathered and disseminated and the waters become quite murky (for example, the President Clinton sex scandal was covered *ad nauseum* in various ways by commercial media outlets from the *New York Times* and the *L.A. Times* to print and electronic tabloids such as Matt Drudge's televised *Drudge Report*).

At least in part due to the politics of media control and these cultural, political and historical contingencies, "oppositional" print media have in fact not been well studied. Kessler attests to this and comments that the few studies or "scant literature" on the subject is "largely descriptive" and offers "little context or analysis" (Kessler 1989 p.3). Certainly, more systematic data gathering and analysis that maps out the intersections of oppositional media in comparison to more mainstream varieties would not only help to situate media forms but would also provide useful and fruitful insights into the role of oppositional media in the overall media system and the greater realm of communications in communities and the social structure.

Alternative media see themselves as providing a vehicle through which private troubles can be voiced as public issues (see Kessler 1984; Patner June 19 1990; Utne 1994; Walljasper 1994a; Walljasper 1994b). How successful are they at doing this? If the parameters of alternative media are not well mapped, where could we begin? No

empirical research has been done on the more explicit examples of Honolulu's alternative press such as the *Honolulu Weekly*. The following section describes this comparative political economic research study of Honolulu's mainstream and alternative press – one that is systematically aimed at answering these questions.

The Research

Drawing on cultural studies and grounded theory, this study focuses on revealing the prevalent features of one local Honolulu-based alternative arts, entertainment and politics weekly newspaper organization. Content analysis data is used to compare it with a local Honolulu-based mainstream daily newspaper. The overall aim of this research is fourfold. First, we can begin to both map out the parameters of alternative media and, through the use of both qualitative field research and content analysis, get a better understanding of its more subtle and more profound operations and its relationship to community, to society and to ideology. To do this, I will first offer a description of production sites of the two newspapers and their location in the contemporary political economy. Second, I will analyze their similarities and differences. Third, using aspects of Giddens' (1984) structuration theory, I will explain the differences and similarities in outcomes at the two newspaper organizations and conditions in the larger Hawai'i media scene. And fourth, I will suggest a beginning typology of a "mainstream- alternative" media nexus.

Methods

Methods of data collection for this study are both quantitative and qualitative, have spanned a period of four years, and are primarily fourfold. Beginning in the spring of 1995, I spent six months attending editorial meetings at a Honolulu alternative

newspaper agency, the *Honolulu Weekly*. Second, I spent nine months during 1997, 1998, and 1999 gathering data for a content analysis of the *Weekly* and *The Honolulu Advertiser* – a mainstream daily. I spent a further six months developing a coding scheme, coding the data and analyzing it. Third, I conducted interviews with staff members of both newspapers over several months. And finally, in the last fifteen months, I became a proofreader and then a writer for the *Honolulu Weekly*. This last phase of the research enabled me to get solid first-hand experience of the organization's operations as well as exposing me to many different community groups and members, most whom I became involved with in selecting and constructing stories about Hawai'i social issues. At the time of this writing, I have contributed over thirty articles, including four cover stories. This multi-method approach has left me feeling that this research process is exhaustive and that I have become very close to the data.

A methodology which stems from the interpretive paradigm of social enquiry is phenomenology. A phenomenological approach to social research seeks to understand the participants' perspectives through methods such as participant observation, semi-structured interviews and the examination of personal documents (Carr 1986). In a discussion of phenomenology and human agency, Whitson (1976) states that if we hope to discover social life, we must experience life as much as possible as our research participants do. But we do this so that we can understand what they do and why they do it. We do not assume that agents understand fully the conditions which enable and constrain their practices. For example, as I show, "style" is critical in the reproduction of practices whose outcomes are often unintended.

There are several limitations to this study. First, this research concentrates on the day to day actions and outputs of the *Honolulu Weekly* organization and its relationship to the community at large. It is less so focused on the actions at *The Honolulu Advertiser*.

If I had it to do over again, I would make some adjustments to the coding scheme I used in the content analysis portion of the paper. The content analysis process, consisting of two major passes through roughly 3,000 articles was tedious, and extremely labor intensive; requiring great attention to detail. The changes to do with this process would be fairly minor adjustments, and could perhaps only be revealed in retrospect, but I would make some changes next time primarily to do with streamlining the process. Another limitation of this study is that, due to the difficulty and cost of contact, it does not include in any real systematic manner the stories of many of those who are “ex” employees of either paper. Their stories need to be heard and I believe that they hold considerable insight that is as yet largely untold.

Field Methods

Field data was collected at the *Honolulu Weekly*, a Honolulu based alternative arts and entertainment weekly newspaper. Explicitly “alternative,” it offers continual and unabashed claims of: “something different than the dailies,” and “providing a true alternative to other news sources in Honolulu” (Field Notes, C.10.02.96). The names of any individuals discussed in relation to the *Weekly* are pseudonyms used to protect anonymity. Although I was not asked by anyone at the organization to use pseudonyms during the initial period of these observations, an editor eventually expressed: “serious concerns about confidentiality” (Field Notes, C.10.02.96). Eventually, we reached an agreement that the name of the publication could be revealed, but that those of the staff

and related persons could not. As a result, I have used pseudonyms and occasionally pseudo-titles to preserve confidentiality.

Data collection included unstructured, informal interviews with ten staff members, and semi-structured interviews with the publisher of the *Weekly* as well as with staff members of the two mainstream daily newspapers, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* and *The Honolulu Advertiser*. I observed in-house organizational activities at the *Weekly* on at least fifty occasions and examined printed documents used by members of the organization as well as those directly produced by them. I was a participant observer at twenty editorial meetings. Eventually, I participated in activities more directly involved with creating the paper; namely entering letters to the editors on computer, writing parts of one section of the paper which reports short-clip general news items of interest about Honolulu (called *Honolulu Diary*), researching articles, interviewing community members for article submissions, and writing roughly thirty short pieces on Hawai`i social issues (under twelve hundred words each) and three, three-thousand word cover articles (one on rental housing issues, one on local environmental issues and groups, and another on the experience of recent welfare cutbacks and a shrinking job market on local families). I also contributed one more cover article that is more of a “puff piece” on the topic of summer day trips. I socialized with members of the *Weekly* on several occasions. And I served as the *Weekly*’s proofreader and copy editor from February 1997 through August 1997.

The interviews ranged in duration from twenty minutes to two hours. The editorial meetings ranged in duration from twenty-five minutes to one hour and fifty minutes. The more direct participatory contribution to creating the *Weekly* was done in

consultation with two managing editors and ranged in duration from short five minute phone calls to in-house sessions lasting three to six hours at a time. The majority of data was collected over a thirty-four month period from April 1995 through January 1998. Field notes were written up during and after field visits.

With regard to interview and participant observation activity, a coding scheme was devised whereby each written comment and observation was accorded a different number and successively coded according to the date or chronological order of collection. Thematic categories emerged from this process as well as more intuitively from my feeling that certain aspects of the data were more sociologically interesting than others. These themes have been used to reconstruct the social processes at the *Weekly*. The data analysis is built around real categories that emerged from all of the collected and experienced data.

Content Analysis

Content analysis of media products is an effective research method. On the subject of content analyses, Brian Winston states:

The function of content analysis within critical communications studies is... clear. It is to provide an account of the content of ... media ... that can be used to raise consciousness as to the nature of the output, as well as to demonstrate the underlying ideology governing its production. (Winston 1996 p. 15)

He posits that there is a lack of media research that uses content analysis methods, particularly to do with broadcast media. He states that the:

systematic and quantitative description of communication, certainly of mass communication... is ... a thing to be sought after. If we cannot have such as description of television's content, then how can we know what it is? And how can we plot its effects on audiences, or the uses and gratifications that such audiences have in viewing it? Or, finally, how can we understand the processes of production without knowing what is being produced? Content analysis is the logical center of [media]... research... if the academy fails to provide a "map" of ... content... it is difficult to see how effective social requirements can be generated... Without the "map," no case can be sustained as

to any kind of cultural skewdness except on the basis of one-off examples... And if no case can be made, then there is none to answer. (Winston 1996 p. 15)

Without content analysis, we are often left with a murky picture of media content from which to base our understandings.

In this study, the theoretical issue of framing as discussed by Gitlin (1980), is examined using the methodological tool of content analysis. In discussing computer-assisted content analysis, Robert Weber (1984) described the content analysis method as: “the process of making inferences from a symbolic medium such as text” (p. 126-7). Here, the content of both publications is analyzed as frames used in news story construction.

The unit of analysis in the content analysis portion of this study is the article. The data is used both quantitatively, in terms of reporting numbers of articles employing certain frames and about various topics that are statistically significant, and qualitatively, in terms of choosing narrative examples which arise in the data analysis as sociologically and statistically interesting. In some cases, the unit of analysis is the advertisement. For example, one section of the study deals with a comparative presentation and analysis of the levels of advertising to editorial content in each newspaper. The overall analysis will be used to suggest a preliminary typology of mainstream-alternative media.

The content analysis consisted of two phases. The first phase of the research consisted of deciding on what basis data should be collected and then collecting it. Special problems present themselves when comparing a weekly with a daily newspaper. This phase consisted of gathering a test sample of each issue of both the mainstream and alternative newspapers over a one-month period in November of 1996 to determine several things. First, which would be the most fruitful sample to collect? For example,

deciding which day of the week would provide the most corresponding coverage of the types of articles in both publications? Second, would it be more advantageous to choose to examine several sections of *The Honolulu Advertiser* daily from Monday through Sunday and compare these to the *Weekly*? Third, were there sections or story types in each publication that had no counterpart in the other? And fourth, were there sections or other content that did occur in each publication but, for the purposes of more clearly defining the sample, could be eliminated at this point?

Based on this preliminary analysis, the Sunday issue of *The Honolulu Advertiser* was considered to be the best source of comparable data for the *Weekly* for several reasons. First, pulling together bits and pieces of issues scattered throughout each week was seen to be logistically difficult and disruptive to the flow of the sample. The *Weekly* only prints one issue per week. So it seemed fitting, for comparison's sake, to choose a single daily paper issue that most exemplified the characteristics of the weekly. Second, the Sunday paper has an increased page count compared to other days of the week. It is the "fattest" single issue of the week thus enabling myself as the researcher to cast a wide net with which to gather data. Third, the Sunday paper contains a greater concentration of attention to arts, entertainment and politics than any other single issue of the week, all of which are self-defining characteristics of the *Weekly*.

Careful scrutiny of both papers also indicated that there were articles and sections for which there would by no means be a comparison. For example, the *Weekly* prides itself on "localizing" its stories. Therefore, to include all stories from the mainstream paper would mean that a great proportion of stories would be included that were not comparable to the *Weekly* in the least. An exception to this exists, however, as all stories

that began on the front page of any of *The Honolulu Advertiser's* sections (aside from the sports section) were included in the sample. This is because the *Weekly* occasionally deals with topics of interest to the nation, for example welfare reform. The best way to catch those stories and eliminate the stories of lesser if any significance to the *Weekly's* topic areas would be alleviated by doing this.

Certain section's stories were eliminated altogether. For example, content eliminated from *The Advertiser* sample was the sports section, advertisement flyers, crossword puzzles and bridge advice. Content eliminated from the *Weekly* sample was the entertainment calendar (except for the calendar cover section, which describes only a few offerings each issue in detail). Content eliminated from the sample of both publications was the letters to the editor, classified ads, the cartoons, the horoscopes, advertising flyers that are stuffed into each issue ("self-advertisements" or what I have come to call in this research tools of "outreach or solicitation" were included as were advertisements which are located in the "run of the print" or newspaper proper), the help wanted section, the personal ads and any other special advertising, magazine or cartoon inserts.

Articles that were included in the sample are cover or feature stories for each section of the mainstream paper (except for the sports sections) and all articles that pertained to politics, arts and / or entertainment or local activities from local and / or other sources. Articles that were included for the alternative paper are all "editorial" content about politics, arts and / or entertainment from local and / or other sources. Articles included in the sample spanned from December 01, 1996 through August 31,

1997. The data set, drawn from 91 newspaper issues and consisting of a total of 2896 articles, serves as a census of the population of articles.

A further point about the publications' content needs to be mentioned here. The daily newspaper makes a firm distinction between "opinion" (and "news analysis") and "news" by placing "opinion" on an editorial page and, as in *The Advertiser*, by having a section entitled "Focus." *The Weekly* does not draw this distinction, either in terms of presentation or, indeed, in principle. As we shall see, this is a critical feature of the rhetorical style of the two papers and figures importantly in their respective self-definitions. Even more importantly, it is critical in the ways in which opinion is "influenced." Since I do take here a critical stance and will argue that "objectivity" can not mean that the text is "neutral" between theory and / or politics, I did not code the conventional distinction throughout. Instead, the content itself was allowed to reveal its "bias," either intended or unintended.

The second phase of the research, the coding phase, took place in two stages. The coding categories were arrived at through three avenues. I surveyed the research on coding rationale and techniques used in studies like Gitlin (Gitlin 1980), Gans (1980), and Tuchman (1978) and by organizations such as Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) (see Jackson 1998). Second, I familiarized myself with both publications over the years. And finally, I made a decision intuitively arrived at by simply regarding categories that I surmised would yield interesting results (like some of the "style" codes and topic codes on "tourism" and "crime"). Throughout both stages, a total of 49 different coding categories and 234 different sub-categories were entered into a series of tables in a relational data based computer program (*Access*).

Chi-square is a standard statistical procedure for determining whether nominally sorted values are significantly associated. The basic logic consists of comparing a set of values that show how the data would appear under a state of zero association with how they actually appear. If there is a significant difference, then a relationship is presumed to exist. Chi-square has been used here to measure whether the distribution of the data between the two publications is significantly different or not. Where it is appropriate to include a significance level, the tables in which the majority of the content analysis findings are presented show a chi-square statistical measure of association.

At the end of two main data entry and analysis coding stages, the data was checked for coding reliability. Twenty articles from the publications that were varied in their distribution in the total population of articles were selected and checked. The results indicated a 99 per cent coding consistency level for the mainstream press sample and a 98.4 per cent coding consistency level for the alternative press sample.

The first set of data tables, the "Media Census," has to do with each article, its publication source (either "mainstream" or "alternative"), date, section, page numbers, identification number, title, author, type, subject, theme, length and whether or not there were accompanying graphics (see Appendix A: Table A1). This data, as well as subsequent coded data, was entered into a relational data base computer program. While this first stage of data coding represented the gathering of the media census data, the second stage consisted of a deeper coding process for information about topics and devices of story construction.

With analysis, the data clearly fell into four areas. Although the areas can be discussed separately, they are not mutually exclusive and will often be discussed in relation to one another.

The first area is that of “rhetorical” frames used to present material. This area is comprised of the coded data on approach, perspective, quotes, political stance, tone and time frame (see Appendix A: Table A2). The rhetorical frames will be discussed further in chapter five.

The second area concerns “style” frames. This area is comprised specifically of data coded on the use of Hawaiian language, pidgin English, slang, swear words, play on words and outreach (see Appendix A: Table A3). The style codes will be discussed further in chapter seven.

The third area has to do with story topics. This area is comprised of 23 coding categories containing topics from “accidents” to “welfare” and will be discussed further in chapter six on style and chapter nine on community (see Appendix A: Table A4).

The last area has to do with readers profile information and proportional differences in advertisement levels in both publications. Tables containing this data can be found in the Appendix section (Appendix E Tables E9-10).

Occasionally it has been necessary to provide background data on the extent to which the newspapers have covered certain topics and issues. Here, I draw on *Advertiser* articles accessed through the Hawaii State Newspaper Index (1999) and hard copy back issues of the *Honolulu Weekly*.

The following chapter on socio-spatial process and organizational culture begins the discussion of the data findings.

CHAPTER 3: SOCIO-SPATIAL PROCESS AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE – INTRODUCTION TO *THE HONOLULU ADVERTISER* AND *THE HONOLULU WEEKLY*

The physical reality of the production of texts is not irrelevant to practices involved in their production. The following text describes the place and space occupied by both *The Honolulu Advertiser* and the *Honolulu Weekly*. This is followed by an introductory discussion of how the physical setting is implicated in everyday social and labor processes at *the Weekly*.

Place

The Honolulu Advertiser

The office is located in an historic three story stone building on a main city street just outside of the downtown area. The offices take up the entire building, but the building is shared with the other mainstream daily newspaper the *Star-Bulletin*. There is a large sign above the entranceway that is highly visible from the street as well as statues outside the building. A large parking lot sits adjacent to the building exclusively for the use of staff and visitors to the newspaper offices.

The Honolulu Weekly

The office is located on the top corner of a two-story wood frame building that sits beside a river downtown. The office is not visible from the street. There is a small sign beside the door as you approach. The office is located in a run-down area of downtown adjacent to Chinatown near a large homeless encampment where many inner city problems are evident.

Space

The Honolulu Advertiser

Entering the building through the front doors you are standing in a foyer with very high ceilings. There are three information desks, one to your right, one to your left and straight-ahead is the security desk. Behind the security desk is a large open room with high ceilings that houses works of art collected by the past owner of *The Advertiser*. To the right and left of the foyer is a large wrap around staircase with pieces of contemporary art hanging overhead and all over the walls.

The administrative offices are tidy, not overly done up, and are quite plain, but they have matching furniture that is in good repair and the carpeting is also in good condition. They have separate offices with doors. The staff writers' areas are more messy and often they are in large offices with partitions between them.

All in all, the two building spaces could not be more different. *The Advertiser's* offices are spacious, well established, highly organized and in much better repair in comparison to the *Weekly*.

The Honolulu Weekly

The office space is small, around 1,000 square feet (see Figure 3.1 for office layout). It has windows and a lanai (porch) that run all along the riverside of the building. The other three sides of the office have no windows. The space is divided into six subsections, most divided not by permanent walls but by movable office dividers about 6 feet tall. Take one step inside the small door and you are standing directly in front of an office desk. This is the reception area. There is a stool directly to your left against the back wall of the office area.

Directly to your right, is the classified ads area. There are two desks here, both manned daily, usually by two men who are constantly taking telephone calls for classified ads.

As you walk a few steps down a small clearing in the desks towards the front wall of windows, on your left and behind the reception area is the sales area. Here, tucked away in a corner behind an office partition are six desks, usually with only one or two people there at any one time. On the wall above the desks are long bookshelves holding *Honolulu Weekly* T-shirts in either black or gray.

One more step down the hallway clearing on your left as well is a brown office table that seats six. Behind it against the sidewall is a water cooler, a small bar-sized refrigerator, a small bulletin board and a shelf with cups and paper towels on it.

Three more steps down the central clearing hallway on your left is a conference room with a glass window on the front of it. It holds a table that seats seven people, a telephone, a small chalkboard and a chart paper holder with pens.

Two more steps down the hallway, past the fax machine and on the left is the administration office. It is fronted by about a third of the front window space. It holds three desks. Two office assistants and the publisher work out of this office.

Straight-ahead is a small office with one desk. The head of the sales team uses this office.

To your right off the hallway at the end by the windows is a large bookshelf upon which are back issues of the paper. Behind that is the circulation manager's desk and the production team's area. It is fronted by the rest of the windows. There are three

production desks with computers and two computer printers and a scanning machine located here.

The last area, located directly behind the production area back towards the reception area on the right side of the office is the editorial area. There are three computers and four desks in this small area of about 100 square feet. This is the area used primarily by the managing editor, arts editor, calendar editor, regular columnists, the copy editor / proofreader, freelancers and several interns.

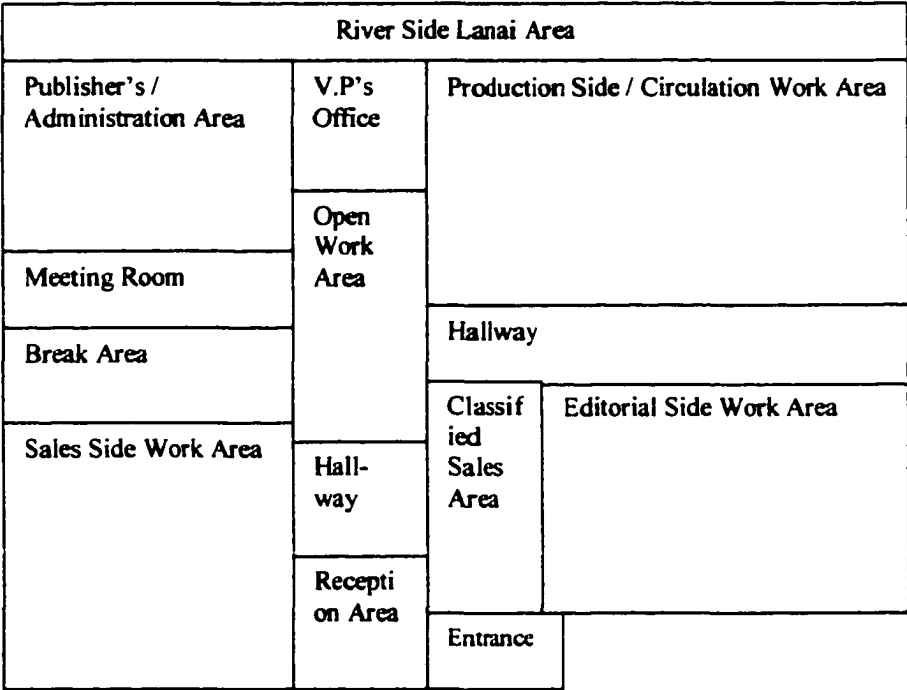


Figure 3.1: Honolulu Weekly Office Lay-Out

Stuffed in every nook and cranny in any space of the office area are office supplies, reference books, newspapers, back issues of the *Weekly* and other publications, recycle paper bins, notices, and personal belongings. Two walls are decorated with back

issues of the paper's covers. Other walls contain framed awards and personal effects of those whose desk is nearby.

The wall to wall carpet is dirty and worn. The office furniture is a hodge podge of styles and is worn and chipped. There is air-conditioning that occasionally goes out. Once, when this happened, the production team guys told me that they never open the front windows in their area. "Why not?" I asked. They said "Because you wouldn't believe the stench from down below." Along the river there is a cement walkway, "A promenade," they jokingly say... as if it was really a high-class area. In reality, there is a large group of about 50 to 100 homeless persons who gather out there daily to talk and sit. The smell of urine and excrement is strong and it wafts in the windows if they are open. This renders the lanai (porch) useless as well.

Initial Interactions

Strangers

If you walk into the foyer at *The Advertiser*, the security guards, who watch who comes and goes on television screens, will approach you and ask what the purpose of your visit is. Many people come to the building to see the art displayed in a gallery that is in a large room located behind the security desk. You would be directed there if that was the purpose of your visit. If you needed to make an appointment to see a staff member, the security guard will arrange that for you. But you can not come and go of your own free will. The security guards act as a buffer between the staff and the public at this check-in point.

If you walk into the *Weekly's* reception area and stop at the secretary's desk, hesitate there, or overtly ask for assistance, you will be treated as a relative stranger. If a

secretary is at the desk, in between answering the phones and doing clerical work, he or she will ask if they can help you. The receptionists' job is to "run interference" for those who work for the paper and do not want to talk to members of the public or clients for fear that it will either interrupt their work flow or waste too much of their limited time.

Particularly those who work in the editorial and production areas are under considerable time pressure. This is because they do the vast majority of their work in house (unlike the sales staff who are frequently out selling ad space) and are on a constant work deadline tied to the papers' weekly printing schedule. If you have a pre-arranged meeting with someone, the receptionist will ask you to please have a seat on the stool in the corner. She or he then walks a few steps to the area where the staff person is working and whispers that there is someone there to see them. A conversation occurs in a low tone, so that the visitor will not hear, as to whether or not to tell the person to come in or to go away. The receptionist then walks back to the desk where, depending on the instructions that have been given, either says "go on in" or "I'm sorry the person is not available" or lies, and says "I'm sorry they're not here."

This is not done because the staff members are anti-social. It is done to protect them from people who will interrupt them from their work. Everything runs on a very tight schedule and often the quality of a story depends on the ability of the editor or worker to concentrate without interruption for as long as necessary. One editorial worker has his desk situated so that all you can see when you enter his work area is the top of his head sticking up from behind his computer screen. If you start a conversation with him and he is in the middle of something, he will raise his arm above his computer as if to say "Sorry! Not now! Can not!" Realizing that he is too busy to talk, other workers stop,

often in mid sentence, and leave. They do not resume the conversation until they see him around the office later.

If an editorial side member answers their phone because they are waiting for a call from someone who they must talk to in order to complete their work and the caller is someone else, they will say: "I'm sorry but I can't talk with you right now, I'm on deadline. Please call back and leave a message and I'll get back to you when I can." Most of the time, they do not answer their phones unless they know exactly who is calling. Some time or day later, they will read their voice and email messages and answer them when they get the time to.

Insiders

The Advertiser

Staff members can come and go as they are easily recognized by security personnel at *The Advertiser*. If you are a visitor to *The Advertiser*, you are required to sign in at the security desk. You are issued a visitor's pass - a large, colored, laminated tag which you are instructed to pin on your shirt and wear at all times. If you have an appointment to see a staff member there, the security guard pages them by telephone and arranges for them to come down to the foyer to meet you. You are then escorted to other areas of the building to meet with that person. One day when I met with a staff member there, we had arranged the meeting day and time a week in advance. David, the editor I was meeting, had told me to pull into the parking lot and park in a visitor's stall. This I did. There was plenty of parking and it was free. I entered the building at the designated time and was asked by the security guard who I wanted to see. He called David. David then instructed the guard to have me meet him at the top of the main staircase. The guard

issued me a visitor's pass, which I signed for on a sign-in sheet. When I got to the top of the stairs, David was not yet there. I tried the door- it was locked. I waited a few minutes and David came out and apologized for keeping me waiting. As we talked briefly, the door closed behind him and locked again. He got out a set of keys and unlocked the door. David asked me to follow him inside. We went to a small boardroom on the second floor and then, when others needed to use that room for a meeting, we moved to an open-air cafeteria on the top of the building. The pace of work there seemed brisk and professional, but not as frenzied as at the *Weekly*.

The *Weekly*

My first meeting with one editor of the *Weekly* was a markedly different experience. We had arranged the meeting a week in advance. But this was only after a two month period where I had left several messages with an editor that the publisher had told me to contact about getting more involved with the day to day operations of the paper. Finally, after I had almost lost hope that this editor would ever contact me, she called and left a message on my machine saying: "I've just found a note from you at the bottom of a pile on my desk and realized I was supposed to call you a long time ago and I apologize for that. I have some projects I could get you working on if you're still interested, call me...."

I had been to the offices many times before to sit in on editorial meetings and so was familiar with the fact that there is no parking lot reserved for the news agency or even some reserved visitor parking stalls. I parked at meter parking on the street and walked a short block to the building. As I made my way up the stairs, a woman and a man, both editors, were sitting outside the small entrance to the offices on the landing.

They were sitting on old worn chrome meeting chairs. The chairs were tilted back, they had their feet up on the landing railing, and their hands folded behind their heads. One editor I recognized, but the other, I did not know. Kal, the one I had seen before gestured a “Hey.” I asked him if he knew of someone named Trina. “I’m Trina,” the other said. “Oh, I’m Patricia? I’m supposed to meet you today?” “Oh, yeah.” The two finished a conversation they were having. Then Trina said. “Well... you picked a good day to come down here. The power’s out.” The power was out all over the downtown area. This meant, not only that there were no lights on in the office and no computers would run, but also that there was no air conditioning. The air was thick and muggy in the office when we went in to have a brief meeting. Initially, we sat on the floor of the publisher’s office with three other staff members for an editorial meeting. We did this because that office has natural light that comes in from the windows. The meeting room does not. Rather than pull chairs in from the meeting room, we just sat on the floor. The publisher said: “I have a headache.” She had gone out to the break area to look for some pain medicine. When she returned, she had a very large bottle of ibuprofen in her hand. “We are out of these. We seem to go through them really fast.” A few others around the office were complaining of headaches from the heat. No one left or was planning to leave. They were just waiting out the power outage. If they did leave and go home, this would have meant losing pay. But that could have been caught up on at another time. Certainly, the newspaper agency can not be responsible for power outages. However, that the workers were relatively unfazed by the conditions, as if it was just another situation requiring flexibility, underscored the casual nature of the office environment there.

On a more typical day at the *Weekly*, if you do not hesitate at the front desk - for example if you simply make eye contact, smile and walk in, you will not be stopped. From an insiders' point of view, the place runs on extremely casual grounds. Rarely are you introduced to anyone. It is perfectly routine to just start up a conversation with someone who looks like they have time to talk, and they will talk. The lunch area is where most people hover around when they are taking a break. Most people bring their lunches to eat or buy them at nearby vendors and bring them back to eat. There are newspapers strewn on the table and water to drink from the cooler.

There is a constant banter in the office during day hours. The phones ring continuously and there is always a lot of action in terms of people coming and going, talking and interacting, and criss-crossing the floor. For example, the ad sales people work their phones and then go out to meet potential advertisers. They prepare contracts at their desks and take ads over to the production side where it is part of one person's job to prepare or create the ads. The production team relies on a constant flow of information from the editorial side to insert and properly layout into the paper as it is being constructed. The circulation manager also works part time in classifieds. He goes back and forth between the two areas. Workers in the administration area take care of all the accounts. The publisher has regular meetings with ad sales workers and with editors regarding the content and direction of future stories and how those can be paired with ads. The interns and proofreader constantly search for quiet areas that they can sit and do their work or use the telephone because there is often no room for them to sit or no computer for them to use in the cramped editorial area.

Everyday Process

The division of space in the *Weekly* office reflects the division of labor there. Work processes have been organized and compartmentalized duties take place in respective office spaces. For example, the whole work area is divided up into nine sub-areas. The first area is reception. Here there is a small desk right at the entrance where a receptionist is stationed. The second area, directly adjacent to reception, is the ad-sales area. Each sales representative has their own desk and small work space with a telephone. On one side, sit the three or four regular outside ad sales persons. On the other side, sit the two classified sales persons. The classified ad sales persons each have a computer on their desks. The third area is a small break area. Here there is one large table that seats eight, a water cooler, a small fridge, microwave, and bulletin board (the only permanent notice here is about Hawai'i minimum wage rates), and a coffee pot and cups. The fourth area, next to the break area, is an enclosed office with one large table that seats eight, a flip chart, a telephone, and a door that closes. The fifth area is where the mailboxes, fax machine, postal machine sit on a high table. The sixth area is the business office, an enclosed office with a door, where the publisher and her assistant work. The seventh area is a small, enclosed office with a desk, telephone, computer and shelves, where the marketing director is. The eighth area is the production and circulation area. Here there are four desks, three for production staff and one for the circulation manager. The production desks each have a computer and a telephone. The last area is where the editorial staff are located. Here there are four desks, each with a computer. Two are for editors, one is for interns and freelancers and one is for the proofreader-copy editor and calendar editor.

There is a politics to the use of space. For example, the publisher's office and marketing director's office areas are considered the most desirable spaces because they each have large windows and are enclosed offices with doors that close for privacy. Once when the marketing director had just hired several new employees, he was looking around for more spacious areas for them. He wanted to give them desk space in the back of the editorial area where there was a small futon mattress on the floor for people to take naps on. The editorial side was highly resistant to the suggestion saying things to him like:

Look, there's no way that you're taking that space. Why don't you put them in your nice office with the windows and the door? Unless you want to give us that space, but it's not big enough... We are cramped enough as is in here and we need every inch. So *no*. And go away! (Field Notes, 07.15.97).

Conversations anywhere else in the office area, on the telephone or in person, save for the meeting room, are heard widely. In particular, the production and editorial areas are cramped and piled high with papers and books. All areas that are not enclosed are separated with fabric office dividers.

The receptionist answers the phone, greets visitors, and does office duties assigned by the publisher or the marketing director. Often, this work is completed on the break table. That work is done very much in public. She or he must answer the phone, greet clients, run interference, and do excess marketing and administration work in the public eye.

The outside ad sales people call prospective advertisers, explain the intent and circulation information about the paper as well as its appropriateness for particular kinds of businesses and services, move in and out of the office to meet clients and take orders for ad lay outs over to the production area regularly.

The publisher and business office personnel work mainly in the business office. The publisher occasionally comes out to talk with people in other areas, but most of her work is done in private, out of the public eye. The publisher holds regular ad sales, production, and editorial meetings in the meeting room.

The marketing manager organizes the ad sales team and holds regular meetings with them in the meeting room. Occasionally, he or she discusses initiatives and coordinated efforts with the editorial side in terms of upcoming special issues that can be “pre-sold” to potential advertisers. Again, most of the work is done in private meetings behind closed doors.

The circulation manager organizes the delivery staff, maintains services and arranges stand placements. He also fills in in other areas, such as classifieds or reception, when they are short-handed.

The production employees take information that is sent mostly via computer to them for set up and lay out in the paper each week. Successive rounds of information are passed in hard copy back to respective areas and persons for editing and the edited hard copies are then deposited back into files for production workers to enter changes into their computer copies of the documents. For each Wednesday’s paper, the production area begins set up and lay out a week and a half in advance, on the Monday (ten days prior). There are deadlines for each type of information that will go into the paper. These differ for editorial and sales initiated content. Of the three production workers, one is responsible for ads, the other for editorial and the other for cover and cover story art and design.

The Monday of the week that the paper goes to print, the production side produces heavy cellophane galley proofs of each page of the upcoming paper. The proofreader examines each page on a light board checking for last minute errors in the penultimate product. As proofreader, I caught many mistakes – from front page, cover story, and headline spelling mistakes, to pagination errors and missed or overlapping text lines. I missed a few mistakes as well – a situation that became evident as staff members or readers would read the published editions and comment on mistakes made.

The editorial employees are responsible for creating, delegating, editing, and proofreading all editorial content and for meeting production deadlines. This work requires “big picture” thinking in terms of creating and selecting story ideas, and delegating the work to a large assortment of freelancers, and middling work like creating story headlines, sub-headings, photo captions (called “cut lines”), and inserting article headings (called “black boxes”). It also requires “extreme detail” work like constructing and constantly updating entries that change weekly in the arts and entertainment calendar section.

In the editorial area, there is a large white board with upcoming dates and story ideas slotted in. The story ideas are discussed and selected in consultation with the publisher at weekly editorial meetings. The editors follow up on delegated story work and its progression. There are two main full-time editors, one managing, the other arts and entertainment. There is another part-time editor in charge of the calendar section. Both main editors are responsible for contributing regular columns of their own and both often contribute content beyond that. The job positions shift frequently, they do not

remain the same depending on vacancies and the papers' responses to filling them or creating different job positions and categories.

Despite the demarcation of specialized work areas in the office, there is a lot of flow of people between areas. For example, the administrative assistant walks over to the editorial area regularly to check on paperwork. The production and editorial area employees just talk to one another directly or over the one office divider that separates them so regularly that you would hardly recognize them as distinct areas most of the time. The circulation manager works in the middle of the workflow between editorial, sales and production. And all workers regularly meet and converse at the break table area.

Most of the people working for the paper are haoles (Caucasians). There is one part-Hawaiian woman, one part-Hawaiian man (both of whom came and left working for the organization in the duration of this research), one Chinese man (who came in new part way through the research and has since left), and one African- American man (who also came and left during the duration of the research). Those who have left have been replaced by persons of various ethnic backgrounds, but mostly haoles. It is difficult to say if this is a trend as the turnover rate is so high. There are certainly a higher percentage of haole employees here in relation to their overall percentage of the work force in Hawai'i. This is discussed in the next chapter but the *Weekly* is an essentially haole operation.

The work is low pay and low security. It is however, high prestige or high status work (these issues are addressed further in the labor chapter). Many who work here feel that there is a "hip and cool" connotation to being associated with the *Weekly*. And, in a

smaller organization such as this, it is easier to have a high status titled job than for workers in larger organizations.

Two everyday process characteristics stand out at the *Weekly*. One is the high stress level attendant with the cyclical, weekly pressure to get the paper out well. This requires that it be relatively mistake free, with insightful political pieces, thought provoking and informative arts and entertainment pieces, a comprehensive arts and current events calendar, classified ads, well illustrated editorial pieces, a well laid-out overall appearance, and that it is “sold well” in terms of having enough sold advertising space to support the editorial content. All of this occurs on a daily basis under severe resource constraints. This process is repeated by the staff from Monday to Monday for Wednesday release, every week of the month, and month of the year. It is fraught with problems to do with frequent miscommunications due to time pressures and a constant reliance on a shifting pool of freelance writers and photographers, computer break downs, missed deadlines, unpaid ads that must be pulled at the last minute, and telescoping the editorial content to fit with weekly ad sales levels that vary on a daily basis. Tempers run hot, workers stay late, and later and later. These labor processes are discussed further in the labor processes chapter (chapter five).

The other predominant characteristic is the importance of *style* in the day to day organizational culture or interactions and content of both papers. The *style* both at and of the newspapers, as illustrated in day to day interactions there and in language use in each issue, is examined in the chapter six and seven. Before turning to this, however we need some additional historical background, paying special attention to the genesis of both newspapers and to these relations. In the case of *The Advertiser*, this is to Gannett,

Company Incorporated and in the case of the *Weekly*, to its original goals and legitimating associations.

CHAPTER 4: THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF HAWAII MEDIA

The mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. (Herman 1988, p.1)

This chapter will use aspects of Herman and Chomsky's (1988) propaganda model to highlight one set of institutional pressures and predominant news filters at two Honolulu-based newspapers, one a mainstream daily and the other an alternative weekly. Explaining some of the historical background of the two newspapers helps to illustrate the present day news organizations.

Ownership

If you don't like what your newspaper says, you are perfectly free to start or buy one of your own. (A.J. Liebling) (see Liebling 1961; Liebling 1963)

Contrary to the above quotation, it is virtually impossible for the vast majority of Americans to simply buy or start a newspaper organization at will. Herman and Chomsky note that, for over a century the cost of purchasing a newspaper organization is extremely prohibitive to all but the most wealthy. They explain:

The start-up cost of a new paper in New York City in 1851 was \$69,000; the public sale of the *St. Louis Democrat* in 1872 yielded \$456,000; and city newspapers were selling at from \$6 to \$18 million in the 1920s. The cost of machinery alone, of even very small newspapers, has for many decades run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars; in 1945 it could be said that "Even small-newspaper publishing is big business ... [and] is no longer a trade one takes up lightly even if he has substantial cash – or takes up at all if he doesn't." (1988, p. 4)

The ownership of a media organization with substantial readership or effect is limited by the vast investment required. Bagdikian (1990) has documented the more recent increasing concentration of ownership of media organizations in the United States and has revealed that there is a small "agenda setting" group of corporations which own a

substantial proportion of all the media organizations in the country and abroad. Has this situation affected our local Honolulu newspaper organizations? And if so, how?

The Honolulu Advertiser

Background

Thank heaven the day at length has dawned when the Hawaiian Nation can boast a free press, untrammelled by government patronage or party pledges, unbiased by ministerial frowns or favors – a press whose aim shall be the advancement of the nation in its commercial, political and social condition.

The Advertiser's First Editorial, Wednesday, July 2, 1856

The Honolulu Advertiser was first published in 1856 as a four-page weekly by the son of a missionary family. As Chaplin (1998) explains:

it was the first enduring non-government owned or subsidized newspaper published in the Hawaiian kingdom, ...became the most successful commercial English language newspaper in the Islands... [and] is one of the oldest newspapers still operating west of the Rockies (1998, p.2).

As such, *The Honolulu Advertiser* has been a dominant force in news reporting in the state.

To understand the operations of *The Advertiser* today, it is helpful to briefly sketch out some of the major events in its history and its relationship with the other major Honolulu daily paper, the Honolulu *Star-Bulletin*.

In the early 1890s, after *The Advertiser* had changed hands many times, it was acquired by the Castle family, one of the so-called *Big Five* plantation owners which dominated Hawai'i's political economic system until the 1960s. In 1898, the year of annexation, the Castles sold the paper to another kama'aina (established white) family descended from early missionaries, that of Lorrin A. Thurston. In 1961, Lorrin Thurston's nephew, Thurston Twigg-Smith staged a hostile takeover of the newspaper and ran it until 1993 when he sold the paper to its current owner, Gannett Company,

Incorporated (see Chapin 1996; Chaplin 1998; Rees October 11 1995; Rees October 18 1995).

Honolulu's other mainstream daily paper, the *Star-Bulletin*, was first formed in 1912 by the merger of two smaller papers. By 1931, the *Star-Bulletin* was outpacing *The Advertiser* in revenues and circulation. It continued to be financially successful and, in 1962, the *Star-Bulletin* was sold to a powerful local *hui* (group) of business and government leaders. In comparison, over a fifteen-year time span from 1945 to 1959, *The Advertiser* had lost over half of its circulation and was reportedly struggling financially. In 1972, the *Star-Bulletin's* manager passed away and the group of owners decided to sell the paper to Gannett Company, Incorporated.

In 1993, Thurston Twigg-Smith sold *The Honolulu Advertiser* to Gannett Company, Incorporated for \$250 million. Due to legal requirements barring one company from owning two newspapers in one city, Gannett was forced to sell the *Star-Bulletin* to Liberty Newspapers, a much smaller, Arkansas-based company.

As with all other aspects of Hawai'i's political economy, resident ownership has given away to non-resident ownership by trans-national corporations. The history of the ownership of the two major dailies is marked by the fact that it is only very wealthy individuals, those who gained greatly from their positions as missionary family members who obtained large amounts of land and power or wealthy business owners who benefited from their status as plantation owners, that have had the means to own or start a large, influential newspaper here.

Gannett Company, Incorporated

It has long been noted that the media are tiered, with the top tier – as measured by prestige, resources, and outreach – comprising somewhere between ten and twenty-four

systems. It is this top tier, along with the government and wire services, that defines the news agenda and supplies much of the national and international news to the lower tiers of the media, and thus for the general public. (Herman 1988, p. 4-5)

Minutes from a recent Gannett shareholder's meeting demonstrate the company's concern with continual growth:

Management provided highlights of the company's newspaper, broadcasting and cable operations. It was also noted that by the end of May, 22 newspapers, not including *USA TODAY*, will have active World Wide Web sites, hosting more than 65 different products. By the end of 1997, all key community and metro papers are expected to have Web sites. The daily hit rate on *USA TODAY Online* now exceeds 20 million (Gannett Company 1998b).

Gannett shares are traded on the New York Stock Exchange with the symbol "GCI." While visiting the Company's web site, the prominence of access to the stock information is foremost. For example, one web page is dedicated to reporting current *GCI* stock prices. The page features a moving chart that shows in red the movement in Gannett stock prices. A scrolling message at the bottom of the page announces: "The prices quoted on this page are on a 15-minute delay. The price and chart update automatically every two minutes." The web page attests to Gannett's emphasis on progress, technology, growth, money and a constant desire to reach potential investors.

The company's logo is a large "G" that wraps around a globe. Gannett's "Basic Game Plan" is continued acquisition of "information properties" and expansion of capital for financial growth and increased profit (see Appendix B) (Gannett Company 1998a).

As of January, 5, 1998 it owned and operated the following "information properties":

NEWSPAPER DIVISION - 91 Gannett Community Newspapers (of which *The Honolulu Advertiser* is one, at a circulation of 107,252 a.m. and 191,636 Sunday), *USA WEEKEND*, Army Times Publishing Company, Gannett Offset, Gannett News Service, Gannett Retail Advertising Group, Gannett Media Technologies International, and *USA*

TODAY. GANNETT BROADCASTING - Television stations, Multimedia Cablevision Co., Multimedia Security Service, and GANNETT NEW MEDIA. (Gannett Company 1998a).

Gannett is an extremely powerful company whose aim is to expand its presence and its profits. It is evident that, at least for the last sixty years, the most influential and widely read newspapers in Hawai`i have been initiated and owned by affluent and powerful businessmen such as those connected with Gannett.

Aside from having the vast resources necessary to start or own newspaper organizations, government legislation can have a considerable affect on how profitable the company is able to be. Beyond the shared history of *The Advertiser* and the *Star-Bulletin*, the two newspapers have, in more recent times, very close ties largely as a result of specific government legislation that has been enacted to help them be even more profitable.

The Joint Operating Agreement

Many corporations lobby for favorable government treatment, but only media corporations control access to the American mind. The more media power possessed by a media corporation, the more a government leader has reason to feel its displeasure. (Bagdikian 1990, p. 91)

Historically, newspaper organizations have been very successful, through the use of their own political action committees and often by virtue of first amendment rights, at supporting favored candidates, and lobbying for and winning government favors. For example, they have obtained special favors in the form of reduced postal rates, tariffs and taxes, and exemptions from child labor laws (Bagdikian 1990).

In 1962, *The Honolulu Advertiser* and the *Star-Bulletin* entered into a first joint operating agreement called the Hawaii Newspaper Agency (HNA). A joint operating agreement, or JOA, more clearly defined in the Newspaper Preservation Act (NPA) of

1970, allows for two newspapers competing in the same market to combine their business operations if one of the two papers is facing business failure. A JOA also provides an exemption for both papers from anti-trust laws such as price fixing. The rationale for the NPA's JOA is that it is necessary and desirable to preserve two editorial voices in a community, even if the result is the creation of a business monopoly (Brasch 1991). It is interesting that the act was introduced in the Senate by Hawai'i Senator Dan Inouye (who himself at one time had published a small alternative paper on Maui) and in the House by then Representative Spark Matsunaga, so it has had a deep Hawai'i connection. As the actual HNA joint operating agreement began in 1962, they were anxious to have it grandfathered into the new law.

However, as Bagdikian observes, the NPA was enacted by then President Nixon in response to a request by Richard Berlin, then chief executive officer of Hearst Corporation, another top tier media conglomerate, in New York. Berlin, on behalf of Hearst Corporation and six other media conglomerates (who together held 74 newspaper organizations), asked the President to use his influence to exempt media organizations from Federal antimonopoly law, which forbids competing newspapers to "rig" prices. Here publishers had previously been convicted for appearing to compete with one another but, in reality, secretly agreeing on prices amongst themselves. Previously against the NPA, Nixon reversed his decision and announced that he favored the Act. The publishers received their NPA and Nixon received favorable press in those publications who asked for his support (Bagdikian 1990).

The JOA between the two Honolulu mainstream papers was modified in 1993 when Gannett sold one paper, the *Star-Bulletin*, and bought the other, *The Advertiser*.

Both the 1962 and 1993 JOAs have come under criticism for their tendency to promote a business monopoly in newspapers and ensure a “financially protected and affluent status” for both (Bagdikian 1990). Honolulu-based writer and regular contributor to the *Honolulu Weekly*, Robert Rees is strongly opposed to the JOA and explains:

The old [JOA] was in effect from 1962 until 1993 and was based on a prearranged split in profits. This meant that neither Twigg-Smith’s *Advertiser* nor Gannett’s *Star-Bulletin* had to worry about losing circulation to the other. Even if total circulation fell, advertising rates could be increased. The old HNA increased its ad rates on average of twice a year. ... the HNA rate card today shows nearly identical advertising costs-per-thousand for *The Advertiser* and the *Star-Bulletin*. More important, a separate full-page ad in *The Advertiser* costs \$10,393, and a separate page in the *Star-Bulletin* costs \$7,996, but an insertion in both costs only \$13,324. If one buys *The Advertiser*, one gets the *Star-Bulletin* for only an additional \$3,000. (Rees October 11 1995, p. 9-10)

This is a common complaint in the roughly 70 American cities where JOAs currently exist (see McCord 1996).

Rees explains that the relationship between the two papers is even closer than at first appears so that Gannett can make massive profits at the expense of news reportage.

For example:

The owner of the *Star-Bulletin*, Liberty Newspapers Limited Partnership,... for a small fee,... has agreed to help Gannett milk the market. This arrangement borrows from what Knight-Ridder’s *Miami News* and Cox’s *Miami Herald* learned in the late 1980s: That under a JOA it is possible for one newspaper to pay another to remain docile and frugal so as to increase total profits until the day comes to eliminate one of the papers. Liberty Newspapers has as its general partner Phillips Media Services Inc. Rupert Phillips ostensibly serves as CEO of the *Star-Bulletin*, but Gannett makes the big decisions for both papers. The HNA contract provides that the publisher of *The Advertiser* has general charge of both papers. It is Gannett that approves additions to the editorial budgets and determines the amount of reading content, the news hole, offered by the two papers. It is also Gannett that takes the profits. The *Star-Bulletin* no longer earns a percentage and is instead paid annual fees – \$1.6 million in 1995 and going up to \$2.5 million in 2012. For 1993, year one of the agreement, the estimated pretax profit figure was \$60 million. It increases to \$153 million by 2012, the last year of the agreement. (An HNA statement of Revenues and Expenses circulated by anonymous sources at the end of fiscal 1991 showed an HNA profit before taxes of \$53 million.) The new HNA agreement lays out in its “Schedule A” budgeted editorial expenses for both papers. What we learn is that Gannett expected to make \$60 million in pretax profits in 1993 while spending only \$4.1 million on its editorial payroll for both newspapers. ...the results of this agreement [are] a government – protected arrangement that allows for huge profits, discourages investment

in journalism and creates a huge void, a sort of black news hole, where there could be a powerful voice in our community.(Rees October 11 1995, p. 10)

Alternative Newsweeklies

Their Underground Background

Many of today's alternative newsweeklies have developed from a rich history of reflecting and actively constructing responses to the opportunities and constraints of American culture. The historical development can be traced as far back as 1776 when radical journalist Thomas Paine's pamphlet, *Common Sense*, violated current convention by criticizing slavery and called for the American colonies to declare their independence from England. According to Armstrong:

Paine's uncompromising journalism was the most dramatically successful use of media to spark social change in American history. Social and political activists in today's alternative media claim Paine as an honored predecessor, together with the abolitionists, suffragists, Transcendentalists, muckrakers, socialists, and others who have made extensive use of media to promote their visions of a better world.... The antiwar movement, the counterculture, the resurgence of American feminism and the ecology movement, among many others, owe much to independent media, often operated by activists themselves. These media – the alternative media and their predecessors, the underground media – serve as the central nervous system in the body politic of the adversary culture. Through that culture's media are transmitted the ideas, values, and visions that make up the shared language that radicals and dissidents use to communicate with each other and engage the dominant culture in dialogue. (Armstrong 1981, p. 15-16)

Armstrong offers a definition of alternative media:

Thomas Paine had only the printing press and the spoken word with which to give form to America in embryo. Contemporary cultural and political radicals use those media and others besides (video, radio, cinema and some access to cable television and computers), to inform Americans that there are radical alternatives available to how we live now – radical in the broadest, deepest sense, from the Latin *radix*, or root. Alternative media, in their most authentic forms, dig to the roots of issues as a means of clarifying problems and offering choices. (Armstrong 1981, p. 16)

In the early 1900s, many left-leaning papers were addressing the issues of the day.

Among these were the Communist Party's *Daily Worker*, the Socialist-informed *National Guardian*, and non-violent, leftist, social change oriented religious papers such as the

Catholic Worker and *Liberation*. I.F. Stone's *Weekly* provided sharp criticism and well-documented research on civil rights and the antiwar movement during the 1950s and '60s. The *Village Voice*, liberal, rather than radical, provided political and arts reportage and introduced a literate and stylish writing tone, but was a more traditionally owned and operated organization. The *Los Angeles Free Press* emulated the *Voice's* style, but gave extensive coverage to radical politics and the Los Angeles arts scene. New York's *The Realist* took a satirical approach to news, was libertarian-atheist informed and mixed fiction and fact in political reporting.

In 1966 a small group of underground papers formed a loose association called the Underground Press Syndicate (UPS). The original members were the *East Village Other*, *San Francisco Oracle*, *Los Angeles Free Press*, *Berkeley Barb*, and *The Paper*, of Lansing, Michigan. The purpose of the UPS was:

to pursue national advertisers, give the underground papers a collective identity, and allow members to reprint each other's material free of charge.... With the half serious, half tongue-in-cheek bombast characteristic of the underground, the organization's founding statement claimed that UPS' purpose was 'To warn the civilized world of its impending collapse.... To offer as many alternatives to current problems as the mind can bear.... To consciously lay the foundations for the 21st century. (Armstrong 1981, p. 59-60)

At that time, the UPS group papers had a combined circulation of fifty thousand. Four years later, the five member group had grown to four hundred member publications with a combined circulation of five million and an estimated total readership (based on a "pass along" rate of six persons per copy) of thirty million.

Hawai'i's underground press had its roots in the 1964 *L. A. Free Press* and the 1965 *Berkeley Barb*. *The Carrion Crow* (1967-1968) was the first local "underground" paper. It described itself as "... anonymous... through modesty and cowardice"(Chapin

1996, p. 272). A second paper, *The Roach* (1968-1969), its name derived from reference to a marijuana cigarette and a common island pest, was very committed to social action. Both papers were relatively inexpensive to set up, but they took in little revenue, were difficult to sustain financially and were subjected to constant harassment by government and other groups. As a result, they were short lived and did not reach a wide audience (Chapin 1996).

From Underground to Alternative Media

By the 1970s, a change was beginning to occur between underground and alternative media. Armstrong notes a shift:

the nuts-and-bolts practicality and live-and-let-live philosophy of alternative media attracted more support than did the heated language and to-the-barricades agendas of the underground. The process accelerated after January 1973, when the Paris Peace Accords and the end of the military draft removed the leading *raison d'être* of the underground media: the Vietnam war. (Armstrong 1981, p.182)

And there were more differences. The underground press had tended to be staffed by passionate amateurs and, although the alternative press started out this way, it began to be run by more experienced professionals. Whereas the underground press had celebrated free sex, the alternative press tended to provide in-depth critiques of the objectification of women and stories on changing family structures and demands on women. In terms of the arts, the underground press viewed rock and roll music as revolutionary, whereas the alternative press saw it more for its entertainment value. The acquisition of stereo systems and record albums represented an increased standard of living. Drugs, hailed in the underground press as “consciousness-expanding agents” were treated in the alternative press as “...hedonistic accessories or as vaguely embarrassing reminders of youthful excesses” (Armstrong 1981, p. 182-183). A final

factor indicating the shift in the focus of reportage from “underground” to “alternative” came in 1973 when the UPS, due to members’ reports of government harassment and beliefs that calling themselves “alternative” was less provocative and less dangerous than calling themselves “radical” and “underground,” formally changed its name to the Alternative Press Syndicate (APS). Syndicate members voted to change the name for several reasons – most notably a change in their approaches to activism. Armstrong writes:

Fear of repression was a grim reason for adopting a new name, but there were positive reasons for adopting “alternative” to describe grassroots media as well. Underground had always seemed a dramatic but somehow restrictive term, as though the media it designated were fated to remain forever out of public view, agitating *against* things. “Alternative” augured something better. It was positive, constructive, with an implicit message that working models of reality substantially different from mainstream culture already existed. Many alternative media, while forgoing the “off-the pig” rhetoric of the underground, were fully as activist as their predecessors. Theirs was activism predicated on persuasion rather than polarization as a means of effecting social and personal change. The tone of alternative media reflected this change of emphasis. They were inviting where underground media were abrasive. (Armstrong 1981, p. 183)

Despite the change in label, there were also some important points of continuity.

Many alternative newspaper organizations had cooperative work styles and more democratic and non-hierarchical staff structures (for example, the *Berkeley Tribe*, *New Age*). They were also widely critical of militarism and supportive of environmental issues (for example, *Liberation* and the *Whole Earth Catalogue*).

Similar in style to the mainland alternatives, *The Hawaii Observer* (1973-1977) was Honolulu’s first “alternative” newspaper. A bi-weekly magazine, the *Observer* was independently owned and operated and provided in-depth and critical analyses of local issues such as recaps of the state legislature activities, and investigative reports on Japanese investment in Hawai`i, land use and abuse, Waikiki over-development, and the operations of the Bishop Estate, a wealthy and powerful Hawaiian trust. Its staff were

mostly young and inexperienced journalists. According to one former *Observer* reporter: “We asked questions that nobody else was asking... [like] Who has the power? What makes the place tick?” (Chapin 1996, p.324).

Many felt that the *Observer* was able to significantly shift public opinion in its ability to reach legislators, business leaders, professionals and even the mainstream press that would often pick up stories that the *Observer* had introduced. Although it reached a circulation peak of 10,000, the paper was short lived and even its regular contributors doubt its long-term effect. (Chapin 1996). It closed its doors due to a combination of lack of funds and the considerable labor resources required to do the investigative journalism on which it depended.

The Honolulu Weekly

Background

In 1991, over ten years after the demise of the *Observer*, the *Honolulu Weekly*, a private, independently owned and operated business, was created. The paper’s owner and publisher, whom we will refer to as “Jane,” is a locally “born and raised” haole (Caucasian) (see Patner June 19 1990). Jane saw the need for an editorial voice that was different from the mainstream and spent over two years researching how to start a business and get investors’ financial support. She explained that she had had to work hard to get investors interested in helping her to start the paper, saying:

After I did a business plan, I went around with it to everyone I could think of here who might be interested in investing in a venture like this. For every one hundred people I went to, one would agree to help. (Field Notes, 01.29.95)

Today, the *Weekly*, published once a week, has a circulation of 50,000 copies per week at 450 distribution sites throughout O`ahu and some neighbor islands. Issues

average from twenty-two to thirty-two pages. The *Weekly* is available free of charge at local distribution points and is supported by a small group of local investors and the sale of advertising space. The *Weekly* initially did very well financially and in 1994 was considered the second fastest growing small business in Hawai'i. Today, however, it is not listed in the top fifty companies in the state and because information about company profits is proprietary, it is very difficult to determine how well the organization is doing financially. It employs a full time work force of approximately twelve, and numerous free-lance employees. In terms of wealth and influence, the *Weekly* is not a powerful corporation.

The Association of Alternative Newsweeklies

One of the first things that Jane mentioned to me in describing the *Weekly*, was that it is a member of the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies (AAN), a national trade organization which grants a type of accreditation for "alternative" newsweeklies who have won entry into the association. To gain the approval of the AAN is an important legitimating factor for "alternative" papers. Member papers can use the AAN's regional advertising service to better facilitate the purchase of advertising space (A.A.N. News: The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies. Pheonix 1994).

The AAN encourages its member newspapers to direct their content at metropolitan audiences (every AAN newspaper serves a metropolitan area). This is largely to do with target audience, or market, qualities that metropolitan residents might possess – namely larger average and expendable incomes and a heightened interest in the arts, entertainment and education. Market studies also indicate that this audience is

interested in “style.” Alternative papers are written and laid out in a different style than the dailies in their areas. So, for example, the 1994 AAN directory explains that in AAN metro weeklies you will:

find biting political commentary, off-kilter cartoonists and some of the best arts and entertainment writing around: each newsweekly’s comprehensive calendar section alone makes the paper an invaluable guide to its own hometown. Add to these weekly features the annual, city-celebrating “Best of” issues that many papers produce, and every member of the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies becomes an irreplaceable reference point for its readers.... Every week these AAN papers showcase award-winning writers who investigate, inform, argue, irritate, and otherwise celebrate the cities they call home. (A.A.N. News: The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies. Phoenix 1994)

The AAN is a powerful and growing organization. As Torres reports:

The AAN reports a combined readership of more than 12 million and ad revenues of \$502 million for 1991, from only \$100 million in 1981... [it] touts itself as “the pipeline to 18-49 year-old, upscale, urban adults” - an audience that has been slipping away from the mainstream papers. (Torres June 1993, p. 63)

Jane is very aware of the importance of strong business affiliations and, in the alternative news business, being a member of the AAN is an important legitimating factor. So, Jane was eager to become a member of the AAN. In the concept stage of the *Honolulu Weekly*, she used AAN’s suggested format. She began publishing the paper in mid-1991 and in 1992, after completing the AAN’s required waiting period, she applied for membership.

In 1993, Torres stated that:

At nearly 20 pages, the *Honolulu Weekly* is small by the standards of the AAN, whose median page count last fall was 56. But that didn’t stop the association from accepting the *Honolulu Weekly* as one of seven new members last year out of 23 applicants. (Torres June 1993, p. 63)

Despite the roots of the alternative press in underground and radical presses, the AAN is very focussed on the business of running a successful alternative paper. For example, as one AAN newsletter states:

Newspapers compete, like any other business, for dollars. The business of publishing is in large part the business of attracting advertisers willing to spend money to use the publication to attract customers. But the business of publishing is also the business of attracting readers who become the advertisers' customers. This is where the business of alternative publishing can be trickier than the business of mainstream publishing. In the past, the alternative press only had to report stories that the daily papers had missed. While people will pick up a daily paper for the latest from Haiti or the football scores, or a community paper for information on the local school board meeting, the expectation of alternatives are different, and there can be different expectations of different alternatives. (A.A.N. News: The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies. Phoenix 1994, 10.04)

The Independent Media Institute

Formed in 1983 as the Institute for Alternative Journalism (IAJ) and renamed in 1999, the Independent Media Institute (IMI) is the other agency that is strongly affiliated with the *Honolulu Weekly*. Unlike the AAN, it is a non-profit organization and its aim is mostly to develop services and projects that serve in: "...broadening the reach of independent media and expanding the scope of public debate in America" (A.A.N. News: The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies. Phoenix 1994; Independent Media Institute 1999). The IMI organizes several projects and campaigns. Among these are the "Media and Democracy Congress," which is a conference for independent media participants to meet and discuss the state of the media as well as to forge new models of media in opposition to the ways in which more right wing forces frame debate in America. *AlterNet* is the Nation's only news service and information clearinghouse for the alternative press. Through *AlterNet*, the IMI and its member papers:

seek to help independent news outlets cover issues overlooked or ignored by the mainstream press... provide a forum for a diversity of voices, and ensure a place for alternative journalism in the emerging online media.(Independent Media Institute 1999)

S.P.I.N (Strategic Progressive Information Network) is a section of the IMI that deals with making media skills and resources available to media activists and journalists who are fighting for social change. Participants in this program are:

trained... in environmental justice, economic empowerment, civil rights... [to] shape public opinion on progressive issues through the media.(Insitute for Alternative Media 1998)

The IMI also conducts and distributes media research. Its most recent publications are on media criticism, racial diversity at alternative papers, the influence of advertisers and media owners over news content, and how citizens can fight for media democracy.

Membership in the AAN and the IMI allows the *Honolulu Weekly* to have access to articles written by other AAN members. AAN members use the IMI's *AlterNet* service to download feature articles from any other AAN member paper to use in their own. Member papers share articles and can use them in their own papers. In this way, there is considerable information sharing between papers. Articles from other member papers are often published in the *Honolulu Weekly*. In every roughly fourth issue of the *Weekly*, there is an article from another member paper, usually it is not a feature article because the *Weekly* is mainly focused on locally-oriented stories, but the *Weekly* occasionally uses member papers' articles as feature articles.

Being "Alternative" A Clear And Engaging Vision – The "Alternative" Ideal

Analysis of the field data reveals broad based support for an idealized conception of "being alternative." Many of the research participants reported that they considered the ideal of alternative to be a strong factor in why they originally came to work for the paper. Most did not have to be prompted to discuss what "alternative" means to them (or even asked). They volunteered their thoughts and were very eager to discuss it. The

most vocal supporters of the philosophy are the owner-publisher, Jane, and an editor, Vicky (each person participating in the research has been given a fictitious name).

Jane believes that one of the secrets of a successful organization is to have a “clear and engaging vision” (Field Notes 1994). For example, Jane stated that she feels that the *Weekly* has a very grassroots approach to communications within the community and says that her basic vision is social change:

changing people's minds and presenting alternative views on topics of local interest rather than what is found in the more traditional papers available in Hawai'i. (Field Notes, A.04.05.95)

Jane was managing a local Co-Op food market in 1986 when a proposal for a community economic development newsletter crossed her desk. This gave her the idea to start the *Weekly*. The criticism that Honolulu's two daily papers provided a limited range of editorial opinion was there, and it was this discontent that fed her decision to try to create an alternative voice. She envisioned her target audience as the kind of people she had known from her days at the food Co-Op, those who were not satisfied with mainstream news coverage. Jane says that:

I started thinking, gee, there really isn't a kind of communication network that links these people together... We all feel kind of isolated although there are quite a few of us. (Torres, 1993: 62)

Her approach to news telling is that: “If it won't be told elsewhere, we'll tell it!” (Field Notes, A.04.05.95). And she describes the *Weekly* as:

a well-written product. Issues are covered differently at the *Weekly*. We pay attention to gay and lesbian issues and are concerned about being inclusive of a greater range of people in the community. We have an increased sensitivity to politics than other publications here. We have special ethics and we set parameters based on them. (Field Notes, A.04.05.95)

As a result, Jane feels that the *Weekly* has more of a grassroots, environmental, and inclusive focus and a sensitivity to politics than the daily publications. On a broader level

she feels that by presenting an “alternative” perspective on issues and events in Hawai‘i, the paper can become a change agent and a platform for isolated groups and individuals to meet and discuss issues. The paper occasionally features local articles that were first published in more grass roots publications in Hawai‘i (such as the environmental newsletter *Environment Hawai‘i*). In this way, she feels that readers can learn things from the paper that they do not get exposure to anywhere else in a broad-based way. Eventually, she feels that people begin to understand different sides of issues, get to know local grass roots organizers, and begin to see things differently than they did before. She feels that the paper can become part of a process whereby public opinion can shift to be more change-oriented than simply supportive of the status quo (Field Notes, A.04.05.96).

Vicky, an editor, says that:

Alternative papers like the *Weekly* don’t play the same game that the other daily papers do. We can be more creative and do more subjective pieces that are more passionate and more to do with people’s everyday lives here. We can get at what is really important to people here and because we’re not some big bureaucracy funded by some other big corporation, we have the freedom to choose what we want to print and to print articles that are from a different perspective than the dailies... ones that get at what is going on in Hawai‘i much more than the dailies can because they’re strapped by their owner, Gannett corporation. (Vicky Sat. 11.09.96)

Other employees at the *Weekly* also comment on their support for the “ideal of alternative papers.” For example Ruth, a contributing writer for the paper, said that she was:

really excited to work for the paper because I really loved the philosophy of the *Weekly*... in 1991 when it first started up... I liked that it was into causes and I felt like I could write about what’s really happening in Honolulu. (Field Notes, R.11.18.95)

Sue, an advertising representative, also commented on the importance of the paper’s philosophy when she said:

I really like the idea of working here. It’s such a great idea! I think that if we can bring people together using the paper that’s great! There’s all kinds of social issues and needs here and I think that the *Weekly*... can really bring people together on these things.... Also, you know that we can support local small businesses and get them involved too

through the ad sales and distribution boxes... It's so nice to be doing work that actually makes a difference. (Field Notes, S.08.28.95)

Through comments like these, it became evident that what is considered to be an enabling factor by many workers there is the "ideal of alternative." They feel that, through their work, they are creating progressive social change and doing so in a way that is not done elsewhere in the state.

The Mission – The Business of Social Consciousness

A graduate of a local private school and student of alternative organizational structure at a prestigious mainland university, Jane was interested in how she could have a socially conscious business and still make a living. She emphasizes that a lot of organizations may fail because they either do not have a vision or, if they do, it is unclear or they lose sight of it. In a business sense, the *Honolulu Weekly* is designed to fill a journalistic hole. As Jane says:

The first issue of the *Weekly*... appeared on July 17, 1991. It was intended to fill the gaps in editorial quality and critical outspokenness created by the city's two daily newspapers, which are published under a joint operating agreement. From the beginning, the *Weekly*... has concentrated on editorial excellence, investigative reporting, feature articles and interviews, and coverage of local culture, arts and entertainment. Its calendar section offers the most comprehensive listing of events available in Honolulu, with concise commentary that blends important information with a humorous point of view. The *Weekly's* ... stated mission is to provide its readers with independent, entertaining, provocative coverage, examining issues, arts and events in a visually striking format (A.A.N. News: The Monthly Newsletter for the Association of Alternative Newsweeklies. Phoenix 1994).

This, a more practical "mission statement," differs from a more philosophical vision that has to do with "changing people's minds and moving people's opinions to being more open than they are right now"(Field Notes 1995).

The Path of an Alternative Story

The publisher and editors also stress the importance of "localizing" stories and of giving the stories a "different twist." Most of the story material is contributed by either full-time *Weekly* employees or freelancers. Stories take similar paths to their final destination of appearing in the newspaper.

There are at least three standard approaches of generating story topics. First, the publisher, usually in an editorial meeting, suggests possible stories to include in the paper in future issues. Examples of these comments are:

Cigar smoking has become popular... Mike how's it going with going to R. Field for the interview? (Field Notes, A.7.3)

Or...

For the Anniversary Issue we usually pick 5 or 6 issues and update them... we have the ice [drug] issue coming up, right? And one on Star Wars, the East West Center, and another one on sovereignty. (Field Notes, A.C.1.4)

Second, the editorial team discusses the networks of people that they know of who they could approach to gain information about a news topic, or who could be prospective writers of a piece for the *Weekly*. For example Jane recommends calling Laura and Maria about stories on a local radio guy. She suggests other community experts to check up with for the fall book issues, a teen pregnancy story, and others for an economic development issue (Field Notes, A.4.7).

Another example of discussion about potential story writers is in the following comments by Mike the arts and entertainment editor:

I think we should do a story on [Gordon Howard]... he's up for a local award of distinction for his writing... He calls himself "local"... even though he left here when he was five... he'd be a good person to do a story on. (Field Notes, M.7.13)

A third way that story topics are generated is from information that enters the office either from press releases, letters or packets of information to the editor or publisher, or telephone calls from community members who will suggest that a particular story be told. This was the case with one of the cover stories, (“Join the Crowd”) (Gibbs February 26 1997), and one of the feature stories, (“Deadbeat Dread”) (Gibbs November 19 1997), that I wrote for the *Weekly*. In these cases, an editor asked me to respond to letters that had been written by a local homeless alliance group and a government agency in charge of child welfare programs. Along similar lines, one reader wrote a letter to the *Weekly* expressing his dismay at a recent article on upcoming movie features accusing the *Weekly* of ignoring a labor dispute at local theatres. The editor called the reader and asked if he would like to submit a story on the labor dispute. He did not feel confident enough in his writing to do this. When the editor told me this, I offered to write the story (“Not Peanuts to the Rank and File”)(Gibbs June 11 1997a).

Examples of “giving stories a different twist” are indicated in these comments. In one meeting Jane says:

I’d like us to do a penetrating look into the public library budget cuts. We should be asking questions like... What was the budget like ten to twenty years ago? Why are they not open on Sundays? Where has the money gone? They used to be open six days a week with a smaller budget... so what is it? Is it the unions? I think they have something to do with it... But I want to get at why is this so now. (Field Notes, A.11.08)

In another meeting, she says:

There’s apparently something called P.I.R.G. here? Its a Public Interest Research Group that was started by Ralph Nader, I think? I’m interested in what they’re doing... I’d like you, [an editor], to look into the new PIRG in Hawai’i... I’ve heard they’re here. I’d like you to trace its shaky history in Hawai’i and compare this to its development in other states... I think that would be an intriguing and worthwhile thing to do. (Field Notes, A.12.5, A.12.6)

And in another she says the following:

I heard that there's a bunch of scuttle on the Royals... apparently there's information on this in sealed files at the State Archives. I'd like to look into that... something about homosexuality... Pauahi being gay... and Kaiulani having a child by her father... things like that... wouldn't that be interesting? (Field Notes, A.13.3)

For the most part, the editors and the publisher make collaborative decisions about story topics. The collaborative process is on-going and work is delegated and re-visited from week to week.

Not Necessarily the News(journalist) – Employing Various Types of Writers

Journalists working on mainstream newspapers think of themselves as “professionals,” even if, unlike most “professionals,” a job as a journalist does not require a credential. Still, they think of themselves as professionals in the sense that they have had the appropriate “training” and have committed themselves to the appropriate norms that govern journalistic practice. While I do not develop the implications of this in great detail (for example, the idea that texts should be “objective” and unbiased), it is clear enough that this self-conceptualization and socialization contributes considerably to explaining the texts that they produce.

In marked contrast, another prevalent feature of the day to day operations at the *Weekly* is the extent to which freelance and other various types of writers are encouraged to write articles on particular subjects. Freelancers' work is used often. Although the occasional cover story is written by an editor or intern (in other words a more permanent employee), most cover stories are written by freelancers. Freelancers come to write for the paper usually by the following process. *Weekly* employees spend time throughout the week discussing issues and other “hot topics” of interest to Honolulu-ites. Immediately thereafter, they will discuss what potential writers would do a good job in writing an article on the respective topics. Then they contact the prospective freelance writers and

arrange to meet with them to discuss the article's topic. When the article is in the process of being written, the editors keep in touch with the freelancers to discuss the progress of the article and make themselves available for questions, comments, or to give suggestions about structure, in particular, length, and perspective. Of the approximately fifty active freelancers, very few, if any, have formal journalism training but most are experts in their fields. So the list contains the names of local academics, environmentalists, novelists, social rights advocates, and community leaders. If their work is published by the *Weekly*, freelancers are paid ten cents per word for "front of the book" (cover stories or features) and "back of the book" (film and entertainment reviews) submissions (12.10.96).

Not only does the *Weekly* rely on the work of freelance writers, it also makes good use of "newspaper interns." Interns are hired usually from local journalism schools such as the University of Hawai'i or Hawai'i Pacific University. They do not work for pay, they work for academic credit towards the journalism courses that they take at the educational institutions. At the *Weekly*, they are able to learn a lot about the newspaper business. This is partly to do with the small size of the organization. Because of this, they perform various duties that directly contribute to the paper. This means that as well as doing paperwork and other office duties, many help to input entries such as "letters to the editor," have specific duties to do with production and computer graphics programs used to produce the newspaper, learn to take photographs and art work, and / or write feature articles for the paper (12.10.96). If they write an article that is printed as a feature story, they are paid the ten cents per word. If they write an article for the *Honolulu Diary* section, they are not paid for this.

Another type of employee group hired is made up of those who do not have any formal journalism training, but who write well. For example, one such person, “Barbara” explained to me that she:

started out as an intern and worked for free because my background isn’t journalism but I have a Master’s of Fine Arts degree in creative writing and I write well. [Jane] was really great, she really took me under her wing and helped me learn things there. Then I did some freelance articles for her and she was really supportive of me. She offered me a full time job with health benefits and so I started to work full time there.(11.09.96)

As well, when I explained that I did not have any formal journalism training but I did have some computer, writing, researching and interviewing skills and was interested in doing some work for the *Weekly* to learn how the newspaper itself worked, Vicky, an editor asked me to come in and speak with her about some projects that she had and wanted done. After completing some preliminary work for her, she asked me to do some interviews and write up two articles (11.01.96/ 11.08.96).

Keeping track of all of these freelance employees presents problems. Certainly relying on this type of workforce as compared to a permanent staff means that editors have to be constantly relying on freelancers to do what they say they will do. Often, a story needs a lot of revisions when it is submitted and a story slot is reserved for it. Editors will call a freelancer and tell them that they are “behind the eight ball on the story.” Very often, editors are unable to reach freelancers and have to rely on phone messages to relay what needs to be done to a story to polish it. Sometimes, freelancers “drop the ball” here and do not do the work required to make the story printable. Then the work falls to interns, copy editors and proofreaders and requires fact checking, proofreading or substantial copy-editing. Problems arise here as these workers are all basically freelancers as well. In the end, a lot of pressure is put on editors, who then pass

along duties to freelancers because other freelancers did not do their jobs. Tensions rise in the office.

Consider the following example of the proofreader's work, how it is structured, and the response of editors to this. Proofreaders are paid to work about twenty hours per week. Due to Federal labor laws, they must choose the hours they want to work and work from somewhere other than the office – in fact they are not supposed to come to the office to work. However, because of the nature of the work, they are best off to come to the office. Whatever way they decide to divide the twenty work hours over the week, they are not at the office for the standard forty-hour work week. This means that they miss roughly half of the process whereby stories are crafted into articles. Unable to wait for the proofreader, editors and production workers will carry on with their work. Often, the first time a proofreader will see a story is when it is on the cellophane galley sheets that will be sent to the print shop within hours. And sometimes the proofs would go to print with entire sections that the proofreader had never seen. Perhaps more professionally trained copy editors and proofreaders could deal with this situation better, but because of the way that the work is structured, many mistakes are undetected. When found, usually in the finished hard copy text of the newspaper, the editors are the first to reprimand the freelance proofers. This happened on several occasions when I was fulfilling the duties of proofreader. When I explained to the editors that perhaps the reason why there were mistakes in many issues was because of the way that the proofreading work was structured and remunerated, they were not impressed. “But it is your JOB!” they would yell. As far as the editors were concerned, if you were there to

do a job you were fully accountable for it. The conditions of your employment did not matter to them (Field Notes 1997a).

Local Ownership

Unlike the Honolulu daily newspapers, the *Honolulu Weekly* is locally owned and operated. This means that the *Weekly* does not have the financial backing that the two major daily papers do. As Jane points out:

we don't have a large corporation behind us. I really worry about money at this organization and I'm careful to be sure that we keep things within limits. Otherwise, we just couldn't make it. (Field Notes 1996, 11.09)

As she does not have stable financial backing, Jane says that she is always concerned about expenses and revenues because: "We are locally owned and operated, we are not Gannett" (Field Notes 1996, B.11.09). But making money is important at the *Weekly*. Jane has a reputation of being a hard working, hard-driving, and uncompromising business-person. She herself comes from a management background and she is clearly aiming the *Weekly* to make a profit. Still, as Jane and Vicky, an editor, say: "The dailies don't inspire us, the alternative papers do" (Field Notes 1996, 11.09). For example, Jane stated that when it came time for her to choose a viable career in Hawai'i:

I didn't want the other two options that were open to me here... Real Estate Development or Tourism... they definitely didn't appeal to me. I started the paper as a way to have a career for myself doing something that I felt good about. (Field Notes 1996, 11.09)

First and foremost though, she considers herself a businessperson. For example, when I began to ask her how I could learn about how the paper was constructed on a day to day basis, she suggested that I get to know a managing editor saying:

Oh, for that you'd need to talk with Vicky – she knows all about alternative weeklies from an editorial standpoint. I really don't know much about newspapers, I am beginning to learn more about the newspaper *business*. I'm a *business person* really. Vicky is a newspaper person. (Field Notes 1996, 11.09)

Although Jane studied alternative business structures, there is very little evidence of this at the *Weekly*. For example, aside from the fact that the *Weekly* is an AAN member, there is no alternative organizational structure and no real emphasis on democratic, non-hierarchical, or cooperative work styles. These types of issues are further discussed in the following chapter.

The following two chapters deal with a discussion begun in this chapter, that of institutional obstacles. Chapters five and six further discuss how differences of “idealism” and “style” give workers at the *Weekly* resources to overcome often exploitative work arrangements. Similarly, chapter eight examines how advertisements critically constrain news copy.

CHAPTER 5: THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF MAINSTREAM AND ALTERNATIVE NEWS WORK AND LABOR RELATIONS

Between the idea and the reality, between the notion and the act falls the shadow.
T.S. Eliot

Previous sections have highlighted the development of the alternative press in Hawai'i and described the ownership and institutional affiliations of the *Honolulu Weekly*. The following section deals with an often ignored institutional factor, that of labor and working conditions.

The Newswriters

James Gordon Bennett, informed by his editors that a *New York Herald* reporter he had ordered transferred to the *Paris Herald* was indispensable and couldn't be spared, demanded a list of every indispensable person on the New York paper. Then he fired them all. "From now on," he said, "no one is indispensable." (Dale 1991, p. 4)

The Honolulu Advertiser

Gannett's editorial policy? That's easy. Simply put, it's SEND MONEY.
(Jake, HNA Employee) (Field Notes 1998b 01.26).

The profit orientation of Gannett, the owner of *The Honolulu Advertiser*, is clear. Beyond any other goal, it is a company that is squarely aimed at making a profit. However, several union organizations represent the news workers in the Hawaii Newspaper Agency (HNA). This makes for an interesting situation at *The Advertiser* because Gannett is forced to negotiate labor language with a strong union rather than deal with workers on an individual basis. For example, the International Longshoremen and Warehouse Union (ILWU) represents the outside circulation workers, and the GCIU, represents the pressmen and production workers. The typographical workers have their own union, as do the machinists. The largest union is the Hawaii Newspaper Guild (HNG), which is part of the national Newspaper Guild of America, that represents approximately 375 local news workers of the HNA. The HNG, the Union for newspaper

workers at both mainstream papers, was formed in 1934. It represents workers in the *Star Bulletin* and *The Honolulu Advertiser* who are reporters, copy readers, desk and rewrite people, cartoonists, columnists, full-time correspondents, artists, photographers, ad sales workers, business marketing personnel, inside circulation workers, maintenance and groundskeepers, editorial assistants and clerical workers. All the unions negotiate their contracts at the same time. Nonetheless, an HNG representative, who was one among many people I interviewed who had seen a leaked financial document, stated that Gannett still makes a healthy profit in Honolulu:

I have seen evidence that Gannett makes about a 50 per cent return on their revenue here. To compare that, the average supermarket here is very happy with a 2 per cent return, General Motors makes about a 4 per cent return and the San Jose Mercury News last year made what was considered a whopping 29 per cent return. Gannett won't keep a *property* if it returns less than 30 per cent. That's what we're dealing with here. (Field Notes 1998a 2.2)

I asked "John," an HNA employee, if being a newspaper worker was "a calling" and if the union might get in the way of that approach to news telling. He feels that because the journalists are increasingly part of the commodification of news, the need for a union is critical today. He explains:

Not having some kind of organization, union, or guild leaves workers wide open to exploitation. It's corporate greed that flourishes without some kind of worker's representation. Having none of this in a news work place is a means of avoiding their responsibility as an employer. There are no rights, no representation, people can be hired or fired at will as long as it's not illegal or discriminatory. So, yes, it's a calling, but it has been so commodified that it is now a commodity as well and so it is also a job. (Field Notes 1998a 2.6)

Nationally, the Guild has done much to protect the rights of newspaper workers. It has won:

severance pay, payable on dismissal or death, often on retirement or resignation,... job security, no discharges except with just and sufficient cause and [with the advice of]... an arbitrator, a work week shaved to 37.5 or 35 hours, with time and a half for work beyond that. Four-week vacations after ten years' service or less.... Nine paid holidays, paid

sick leave, night differentials, life and health insurance, fair employment practices, safety and health protections, pensions - all standard in the typical Guild contract. (Dale 1991, p. 7-8)

The Guild has also worked on behalf of journalists who are disciplined for doing investigative reporting that reveals more than what the employer is comfortable with. For example, reporter David DeKok is quoted in Dale (1991) in such a case saying:

The Guild came to my defense when the GPU Nuclear got upset that I was doing research on my own time for a book about their Three Mile Island plant and its famous accident. They pressured the Harrisburg *Patriot-News* to remove me from the TMI beat. Shamefully, management caved in. I was threatened with dismissal, and I believe only firm Guild intervention prevented it from happening. At the arbitration hearing, management brought in the public relations manager of GPU Nuclear to testify against me. Talk about an unholy alliance! When the chips are down, the Guild is a reporter's only friend. (Dale 1991, p. 5)

Of course, even such "victories" send a strong message to news workers who need always to worry about making waves.

The structure at *The Advertiser* affects the owners and workers differently. Occasionally *The Advertiser* hires workers from the *Weekly*. I saw this in the case of two writers, one who worked for the *Weekly* at its inception and could no longer pay her rent on the wages she was paid there and another who worked for the *Weekly* for several years before growing tired of his economic struggle to survive. Both had formal journalism training. In order to work for *The Advertiser*, they had to agree not to work for any other paper. So they both cut their ties with the *Weekly*. Despite the increase in pay and job security they got at *The Advertiser*, their values and perspectives remained largely intact. The nature of unionization at *The Advertiser* is a kind of worker power that reflects their separation from management and does have some positive ramifications on their ability to do their work there. But, subsequent to their hiring at *The Advertiser*, both complained

that they were not as free to shape the paper's direction as they had been at *The Weekly*.

On this, Christie said:

Since I have worked for *The Advertiser*, I submit many story ideas to my editor. He turns most of them down or just doesn't get back to me so I know he doesn't want me to do the kinds of stories I did at the *Weekly*. So, after a while, I just gave up trying. I can afford to live on the wages they pay there, but I think I'm going to save up and travel and do a different kind of writing when I can afford it. (Field Notes 1994)

And George said:

Now I sit in a cubicle all day. I make great money. But I don't enjoy it as much. The atmosphere is different – it's more constrained. (Field Notes 1997a)

John, an HNG member, states that there have been quite a few changes since Gannett took over *The Advertiser* operations. Among those, he has seen a decline in investigative reporting. As he says:

Doing investigative reporting takes time, more time than lighter stuff. And it also requires that the paper set aside enough space to tell the story. Gannett doesn't like to put in long stories because they take up too much space for one article. They'd rather put in several stories to fill the same space. Investigative reporting also ruffles a lot of feathers around town and could require that Gannett take an unpopular position in the community. Gannett is not interested in that. They simply want to make money and at the same time keep people in the community content – at least not angry with them. (Field Notes 1998a 2.6)

Even with the strong influence of the HNG, John feels that not only can Gannett still pull in healthy profits but it can have an extensive affect on the type of coverage presented in *The Advertiser*. So, even though Gannett would consider having to answer to a union a major inconvenience, the situation is still favorable to them. For example, John states:

Can anybody do anything about it? We probably bargain better here in the islands than other places on the mainland – would they like to beat us up and get us out of here? Yes, sure. But, they have a good thing going, they're paying a living wage to the union workers and still are managing to make a killing by having the JOA and cutting in other areas. And of course they like to insinuate that they aren't making enough and we should be worried, but that is just not true. They never really say "we are poor" because they know then that the union can ask them to provide evidence of that and that means they'd

have to open their books... and that they do not want to do because what would be revealed is a fantastic money making operation. (Field Notes 1998a 2.6)

Both John and James, another HNG member, were working for *the Advertiser* when Gannett owned *the Star Bulletin*. Both attest that there are major concessions to having a large chain newspaper company like Gannett have such an extensive presence in the Honolulu media scene. As James says:

There's people at the *Star Bulletin* who worked for Gannett for years and now they don't. And they now feel like they have died and gone to heaven. *The Advertiser* people used to have a more wonderful life. Now morale is low – the approach is now “cover your butt, don't question anybody's authority” – it's a stifling thing. They live with constant criticism, not even constructive criticism, of staff by management because their style is very autocratic from the throne on down. (Field Notes 1998a 2.4)

Another way to note the extensive influence of the Gannett chain in the Honolulu media scene is to compare the style of *the Advertiser* with that of other Gannett newspapers. As John attests:

Compare the style of the Gannett papers in Wilmington, Delaware; Olympia, Washington; Lansing, Michigan; Rochester, New York... which was their flagship paper... and *USA TODAY* with *The Honolulu Advertiser* and you will see a lot of similarities. (Field Notes 1998a 2.2)

The Honolulu Weekly

If news workers working for Gannett self-censor because they work for a large corporation, not having a big corporation raises other, and perhaps also similar, problems. “We don't have a big company behind us backing us up” says a manager at the *Honolulu Weekly*, and adds that “So, we take a very careful approach. We have to be, otherwise we just wouldn't be in business anymore”(Field Notes 1997a 10.03).

The *Weekly* employs approximately seven people full time (other than the publisher, there are two editors, one production manager, one advertising manager, one receptionist, two advertising sales persons, and one classified ads manager).

There are another approximately 14 part time employees (two office personnel, one classified ads worker, one part time ad sales, one ad lay out person, one distribution manager, five distribution delivery persons, one art director, one proofreader, and one arts calendar editor).

There are approximately three unpaid interns that are brought in new in five month periods throughout the year, are usually students from local universities who are studying journalism or English, and receive some kind of course credit for working at the newspaper.

There are approximately 16 more regularly contributing freelancers whose pieces are printed at least every two issues, if not in every issue (one theater critic, two film critics, two restaurant reviewers, two investigative/politics reporters, one club scene reporter, three photographers, and five cartoonists).

And there are numerous (approximately 50) freelancers who contribute on a more sporadic basis – everywhere from having articles published every other issue over certain months to writers who have a one time piece published. Occasionally, articles are pulled in from the *AlterNet*, the IAJ service.

That makes for a total of 7 regular, 14 part-time, 4 interns, 16 regular contributing freelancers and 50 less regular freelance contributors; or 8 full-time and 84 part-time employees. The workforce is made up of approximately sixty-five percent haole (Caucasian) workers and thirty-five percent local, Filipino, Hawaiian and mixed ethnic backgrounds. This is not reflective of the ethnic make-up of the larger population of the state where haoles comprise 24 per cent of total population. The staff is also overwhelmingly young, with most in their twenties and thirties and fewer, more veteran

workers, in their forties or fifties. Roughly fifty percent of the workers are female and fifty percent are male. Most have some writing, ad, business, photo or journalism experience. Some, particularly the interns, do not. (Field Notes 1997a 11.04).

Work-Load

A constant discussion topic in and out of meetings has to do with workload issues at the *Weekly*. In particular, workers have a lot of trouble getting the volume of work done to produce the paper each week in a reasonable amount of time. This causes problems between workers, many of whom stay late into the night to get the work finished. For example “Ri,” a production assistant who later became the production manager after that position was vacated, stated that:

It's not a good use of my time to be doing these kinds of things to do with the ads and the Calendar at the last minute... I don't want to complain, but it was so bad last week... I'm getting really frustrated by this... the amount of work... I had to work a lot of overtime to get the stuff done... a few of us were here until four in the morning... (Field Notes 1995 E 1.6)

And one freelancer told an editor:

I can only continue to write for you if there is no research required of any of the stories I do. It is just not worth my time... to put so much into a story and get so little out of it. (Field Notes 1995 10.17)

Of course, this greatly restricts what might become a story in the *Weekly*.

These comments lead to the next condition of employment, wages.

Wages

There is no union representing alternative news workers at the *Weekly*. Wages are generally reported to be low and there is a lot of grumbling, some louder than others, about the low wages. Minimum wage for the state is \$5.25 per hour. Freelancers make ten cents per word on the amount of words that go to print. The *Weekly* has paid this “word wage” since its inception in 1991. Industry standards are much higher elsewhere.

For example, mainland standards for freelance work that is understood to be poorly paid averages seventy-five cents to one dollar per word. Some *Weekly* freelance work is paid at less than ten cents per word. For example, freelancers who contribute regular columns to the *Weekly*, such as restaurant, film and theater reviewers, generally make \$75.00 per article. Those articles range from 500 to 1500 words.

Non-freelance workers strike their own deals with management. For example, the work required to proofread an average length issue takes anywhere from 20 to 25 hours per week. One proofreader was paid \$7.50 an hour to a maximum of 15 hours per week. Another was paid a lump sum of \$120.00 per week with no hour maximum. One proofreader, Kalani, discussed the financial aspects of this job:

Before I started doing the proofing, a friend of mine speculated that I'd have to be paid at least \$10.00 an hour – considering the skills required to do the job. But it was \$7.50 with a capped hour maximum and a promise that it might go up to \$8.00 per hour later. And when there's a big issue to proofread, the hours can be long. I can end up working for less than \$7.50 an hour. Sometimes, when this happens, they'll give me an extra twenty dollars or so. But not always. (Field Notes 1997a)

Occasionally workers discuss the individual deals they have agreed to with management. For example, two proofreaders (one past, one present) had a discussion one day about their wages:

How much is she paying you?, said one, the other said, 7.50 and hour. Oh, that's better than me... I used to get a flat rate of \$120 a week and it used to take me a long time to proof... maybe like 25 to 28 hours... that works out to around four something an hour. Yah, [they] ... always try to get you to work for the very least [they] can pay you. (Field Notes 1997a)

In another case, Chun, an advertisement layout person, revealed that he made \$6.00 per hour:

Yah, I get six bucks an hour... it is really bad. And I know that she charges the people who send their ads in for me to work on from 21.00 to 35.00 dollars an hour. My friend

here says I should go out on my own and offer to do the work for the advertisers at 15 dollars an hour and then send it in completed here. I'm thinking about it. (Field Notes 1997a)

He was upset about this because he knew that the company charged the businesses that advertised with the newspaper far more per hour for the service than he was paid.

Photographers generally do not work for pay, but instead agree to work for a fee in trade. For example, they get \$30.00 for a photo for the *Weekly*. This means that they get the \$30.00 in the form of "trade" (products or services) from a pre-arranged local photo shop. This arrangement does affect their desire to spend a lot of time on shoots.

As one said:

Well... I'm not getting paid for this, so I can't spend a lot of time on it. I mean I don't have all day to run around and chase pictures down. (Field Notes 1997a)

Workers can be broken down into two distinct groups, those who need the money and those who do not need the money. Those who work there for the money far outweigh the handful who can afford to work there for meager wages. Add to the situation of poor wages, the fact that Hawai'i has one of the highest costs of living in the nation, perhaps thirty percent higher, and the situation quickly worsens.

The workers deal with the pay situation in a number of different ways. For example, those who do not need the money can tend to become more regular contributors as they can afford to do the work and get paid little for it. There is often grumbling from readers and other contributors about this. For example, Jack, a sporadic contributor, commented about one writer, who has either a cover or feature story in every issue, said:

I for one am pretty sick of getting only one guy's opinion about everything that happens here. Maybe he can afford to write all the time for them, but there's no way you can survive at all on what they pay. (Field Notes, 4.05.99)

Others regularly contribute because they have a full time job elsewhere. But other workers, who try to rely on the work to support them somewhat, work for the newspaper in waves – working for them for a while, then leaving for good or until they try something else for a while and come back (only to leave again).

Most are angered by the low wages and poor working conditions. For example, after “hanging on” and working at the newspaper for many months, Roger and Denise just “couldn’t hang on anymore.” “I was tired of going further and further into debt. It’s partly the high cost of living here and it’s partly the low wages that the paper pays,” said Roger. Leilani said:

At first, I was so pleased to get the work there. And then I realized that there was no way that I could survive on it. So I told them that and they said “O.K well we can give you more assignments” and they did which was great. But even with those, I couldn’t pay my rent and for food and have anything left over at the end of the month. I had to find a better paying job. So I did and I left there. (Field Notes 1997a 03.11)

When I talked with James about his experience working at the newspaper, he said he was unable to work there after a while because:

There’s just no way you can support yourself on what they pay. I mean its impossible and after a while I gave up even doing the odd story for them because its just not worth the time and effort for what they pay. (Field Notes 1999 04.05)

Nell, who moved to Honolulu with her husband, held a masters of science degree and was actively pursuing a writing career here. She accepted as many jobs at the newspaper as she could handle. Unable to pay the rent on the wages she was making, a manager allowed her to put free ads in the classified section about her abilities to do “word work.” She lasted about a year, and then, having gone further into debt she and her husband had to move back to the mainland to live with family and try again there.

Those from the group who are not concerned with wages think about the *Weekly* in a very different way. Tony has contributed pieces regularly to the newspaper since its inception. When I asked Tony what he thought about the low wages paid by the newspaper, he said he was not surprised at all:

I think that [Jane] has a really tough time making any money. And alternative papers are notoriously struggling financially... Don't most alternative papers just barely make it? That's all part of it. So, I don't think wages are a big deal. (Field Notes 1998b 01.30)

The workers are generally very well educated. Approximately 80 per cent have a bachelor's degree or higher. Thus, they offer advanced writing and other skills. In a better economy, they could be making at the very least a living wage. Indeed, if they went to work for *The Advertiser*, they would make approximately double the money starting out; not to mention medical and dental benefits. Still there is considerable ambivalence about the poor wages and working conditions at the *Weekly*. Consider Vicky's comments:

I worry so much about holding on here. I have responsibilities you know, I can barely survive on this. You know I can't afford a car... well... that's not true, I can afford an old beater car that breaks down all the time and costs me under \$400.00. But I don't get a parking pass so I have to park it on the street and when I get a parking ticket... then I end up having to leave the car at home and start taking the bus. (Field Notes 1997a 11.03)

And then, also from Vicky:

But you know we don't have fancy equipment or the latest computer programs. That is really frustrating. But, if we did have those things, then we'd be *Time* or *Newsweek* or *People Magazine*. So that's that. We aren't like them for a reason. We don't want to be like them. (Field Notes 1997a 06.08)

Working Conditions

The *Weekly* is not a wealthy powerful corporation. Accordingly, in an expensive city like Honolulu with extraordinarily high rents, its choice for office space is severely restricted.

Safety is a big concern, especially for female employees, as the *Weekly* is located in a high crime, downtown area. Coming to and from the *Weekly* at night is definitely a safety concern. Those who take the bus, have to walk through an extremely high crime area to get to the building.

There are many homeless and itinerant people around. Dirty clothes and belongings are seen bundled up and tucked loosely behind nearby bushes or lampposts. One low wall adjacent the building has the names of homeless persons carved in it marking out their spots to sit. One younger homeless woman frequents the area. She is usually wearing a dress that is barely hanging on her emaciated frame. She never has shoes on, walking along the city streets. Her actions and movements are erratic, she sings out, talks loudly to no one, her gait is irregular as she weaves along, suggesting mental illness or drug abuse. She is picked up in cars that stop along the road, their occupants soliciting her services. There are other young women in similar states that are solicited and picked up. Others sleep on the sidewalk with a brown paper bag with a bottle in it at their side.

One day, as I was coming into the building, a homeless woman was using a parked light truck I recognized as one of the other workers' as a changing room. She had her clothes placed on the front of the car and hanging from the side mirror and over the backside rim as she took off the clothes she was wearing and put on the new ones. She was in full view of anyone passing by. Always, there is the smell of urine on the street. One worker warned me not to park in a certain stretch of the block as nearby residents had been urinating on the side of his car. I did witness this on several occasions.

On the other side of the building, which runs along a dirty stream, large groups of homeless people, mostly men, gather at picnic tables. The stench of urine is overpowering. Sometimes, the group gets quite loud as a disagreement or fight breaks out.

There is evidence of drug use with used hypodermic needles strewn in the bushes. Drug deals regularly go down as you walk to or from your car or the bus stops. Police cars frequently wind along the streets in their cruisers or Cushman scooter cars.

Inside the office, there is no bathroom facility for workers. Everyone in the building has access to a bathroom which is located in a corner of the top floor. Each tenant in the building has a key to the men's room and another to the women's room. Very frequently, one or the other of the *Weekly's* bathroom keys will go missing. This causes minor turmoil in the office. First off, there is a significant fee for replacement of a missing bathroom key. Rather than pay the fee every time a key goes missing, the publisher simply waits until the key reappears. To deter workers from losing a bathroom key, the keys are placed on larger and larger "key rings." Examples of items used as key rings are large kitchen utensils, like ladles and plastic spatulas, a plastic coat hanger and even a wooden chair leg.

This "system" causes problems for workers. Consider the following scenario. If a worker needs to go to the bathroom, they first go to the central spot where the keys hang and look to see if the mens' or womens' key is available. If it is not, that means one of two things: someone else is using the bathroom or the key is lost. Workers occasionally try to use another tenants' key. But this usually requires them to purchase something from that tenant. For a while, *Weekly* workers were eating at the Thai food

restaurant on the bottom floor, partly because of its convenient location, but also partly in hopes of establishing rapport with the owners who would then allow them to use their bathroom key when the *Weekly's* was lost.

Female workers are hesitant to use the men's room key because each bathroom has two stalls and any tenant in the building can give the key to their staff or customers. The women fear that they will get "caught" in the men's bathroom. But they also fear for their safety if they do this because they realize that they are locking themselves into a small room where any man can come in at any time. For example, June stated:

I'm just going to wait to go until I get home or something. Last time I used the mens' room key, there was a homeless guy in there smoking crack. So I got out of there in a hurry. (Field Notes 1997a)

Women also avoid using the bathroom at night due to fears about personal safety.

Parking is another defining element at the organization. Due to limited availability of affordable parking nearby, those who have cars frequently come in and out of the building every day. There is a pay parking lot adjacent to the building, but only a handful of employees are given parking as an employment benefit. For example, one advertising manager, who it was rumored was being paid "good money – like \$60,00 a year," was given a parking pass to the lot as part of his employment package. The rest have to park on the street. Often jumping up in a flash of energy, almost as if they are having a heart attack, they race out of the building digging in their pockets for change for the meters.

Parking tickets run from \$25.00 to \$40.00 dollars a piece and are a constant threat to workers at the *Weekly*. Occasionally, a worker's car is towed. This runs at about

\$100.00. And one freelancer angrily gave up writing for the *Weekly* saying that the parking tickets she was getting were overtaking her pay (Field Notes 1996 06.23).

Alternative News Workers as Independent Contractors

Nor are labor- management relations like those at *The Advertiser*. All of the freelance workers and some of the part time workers are officially hired (or not hired) as “independent contractors”(IC). Under the stipulations of the Fair Labor Standards Act, a position is determined to fit in the auspices of “independent contractor” if the employer answers a series of approximately twenty questions about the position correctly (Government of the United States of America 1985). Generally IC’s are not supposed to be approached by an organization offering work, but are supposed to independently contact them regarding each new job. Among other rules, IC’s are supposed to maintain a work place separate from the organization and are only supposed to work sporadic or arbitrary hours of employment.

George Seldes (1991) has studied the IC job classification in relation to its use with newspaper carriers. In 1935, Seldes explained that newspaper carriers, usually children, were:

Now called “independent contractors” so that publishers don’t have to pay social security, disability, or unemployment taxes, take out federal and state withholding taxes, pay employee fringe benefits, worry about minimum wage laws, health and safety codes, or child labor laws. (Seldes 1991, p. 433)

Comparing the use of the “independent contractor’s” employment category, he states that:

In “backward, degenerate, uncivilized and dying Europe” newspapers are sold by grown-up men and women; in [the United States] several hundred thousand children are employed by the newspapers to sell and deliver the morning and evening editions. Inasmuch as the publishers prefer to employ children at a small wage rather than grown-up men and women at a living wage, the Child Labor Amendment to the Constitution has

met with tremendous opposition. The press is against it and the press is the greatest power in America. (Seldes 1991, p. 433-4)

According to a locally based labor specialist, *The Honolulu Advertiser*, largely due to union pressure, limits its use of freelancers or independent contractors. "The fact is," he said, "that if more workers are hired as Independent Contractors, work that is protected by union rules is threatened" (Field Notes 1998a 02.11).

Being an independent contractor at the *Weekly* causes several employment problems for workers. First off, if they get injured on the job, they are not covered unless they have personal insurance. In order to account for the earnings, they have to have their own business licenses and pay the general excise, state and federal taxes on every dollar they earn at the *Weekly*. A business license costs about twenty dollars and the general excise tax is 4.166 cents on every dollar earned before other income taxes. If a writer contributes a 1,500 word article and roughly 1,000 words of it go to print, they would earn, at ten cents per word, one hundred dollars for it. However, after the cost of a business licence and general excise taxes are deducted, that one hundred dollars is reduced to seventy-five dollars and fifty cents. And this is subject to further state and federal income taxes. Even though the business licence is a one-time fee, the wages are very, very low. Even if a writer contributed a 1,000 word feature every week, they still would earn around four-hundred dollars a month before taxes. With an average housing rental price of around eight hundred dollars a month, *Weekly* wages do not go very far at all. Depending on how quickly a worker is able to produce a 1,000 word article, a lot of time and effort can be spent for a wage that cannot sustain even the most marginal lifestyle. Also, most of the workers are not entitled to medical, dental, or pension plans.

And their earnings are not unemployment insurable, so, if the work stops, they get no support beyond that.

Companies like the *Weekly* who use the IC employment classification must correctly answer a series of questions about the nature of employment they are offering. But this is not really regulated. The *Weekly* has used IC's vigorously and often, in violation of the terms of what an IC is able to do. IC's are never told that their work should not be classified as it is. But occasionally, when a worker learns that they should not have been working as an IC, they file a labor complaint against the *Weekly*. One worker revealed that the *Weekly* has lost in every case that a complaint such as this has been filed.

Responses to Working Conditions

Workers reactions to the low pay and poor working conditions at the *Weekly* are mixed, for a number of reasons.

One response is that workers "vote with their feet." In general, the turnover rate at the *Weekly* is very high. For example, only several months after conducting the initial field data gathering, I noticed that many people had vacated their positions in the organization. For example, in this relatively short amount of time, the managing editor, arts and entertainment editor, advertising manager, copy editor and the production assistant, three receptionists, and several other full time office staff had left the organization (Field Notes 1995; 1996; 1997a; 1998b).

Further analysis of the change in names listed on the band width (the list of employees and contributors found on the inside front cover of each issue) over the year from January 1, 1997 through January 1, 1998 indicates considerable changeover of

personnel in both the “full time” and “part time” categories. In the “full time” category, of the 7 employee positions, four have left in the year: the marketing manager, two sales persons, and the production manager. Of the 14 “part timers,” 10 have left, including approximately three people in classified ads, four sales persons, two proofreaders/ copy editors and one driver.

Although the ideal of the paper as being progressive and alternative is enabling to many who work there and sustains them in their employment, there are, as always, also constraints. Some workers have trouble reconciling the philosophical intent of the paper with the “organizational imperative” or the lived reality of working there. For example, “Don” had worked with the paper since early in 1995. He started out as a photographer for the paper, then got work as a contributing writer, and then as an arts and entertainment editor. He is highly supportive of the “idea of the paper.” However a close colleague of his at the paper, “Bill,” recently quit his job with the *Weekly* and went to work for a more mainstream publication. When I asked Don what had happened to Bill, he was eager to talk and said:

He doesn't work here anymore. He took a job with *Pacifica* you know the in-flight magazine? Yah, you know that the money is so much better there than it is here... He was so good here, ya know? But he took the money because he got tired of all the work here for like not very much money... So now everyone in the office - well, its like a big problem around here because everyone is saying “If we're so progressive, why isn't the money spread more evenly?... If we are growing so fast and making so much money... where is the money going?”... The salaries here are so bad! ...I think that this would be a really interesting place to look if you are researching the alternative media, you know? (Field Notes 1995 D 12.01)

Along similar lines, “Rae”, a former employee, commented that she eventually:

had to quit because [the publisher]... wouldn't pay us on time. I had to pay my rent and my landlady said I'd have to go if I didn't pay my rent on time. So I went to [the publisher]... and told her, but she wouldn't pay me on time. She'd always pay the investors first and then us after. I didn't think that was right... she was really expecting too much from us. I just couldn't survive like that so I had to leave there... I got a job at

the Star-Bulletin as a headline writer. It's ok, I get paid regularly but you get tired you know? I get tired of giving my editor story ideas and he says "yah, yah, that's great..." but they never print anything I write for them because they just wouldn't print that here. The *Weekly* might, but I didn't like the work environment there... she's [the publisher's] a real business-person first, too much. (Field Notes 1995 R 11.18)

Another employee, "Dec" had to leave because:

Even with working full-time with benefits for the *Weekly* and doing freelance work for them, I still couldn't make ends meet, I couldn't survive... I got fed up with that and now I work for a local bookstore. Even without freelancing, which I still do for them, I still make more money here at the bookstore. (Field Notes 1996 D 11.09)

Several workers decided to leave and seek further educational opportunities. At least three left with the intention of entering law schools on the mainland. They cited their reasons for choosing law school as having to do with being better able to find the idealism they thought they would be supported for working for the alternative media in a law career focused more on helping marginalized groups.

The door does not necessarily shut tight behind a worker who quits. Many workers return to work for the *Weekly* after leaving for other opportunities. Over the past four years, I have counted six persons who left for other opportunities and then returned on either a full or part-time basis.

Another reaction to the poor pay for the news workers is to simply get work elsewhere and continue to work at the *Weekly*. Most *Weekly* employees have at least one other job and some have several others jobs (Field Notes 1997a, 10.19). Those who are born and raised in Hawai'i and have family commitments here leave less readily than do those with more ability to pick up and move to another state.

The employees of *the Weekly* deal with the very real conditions of their employment in many different ways. Some, like Don, have "confidants" with whom they can confide their concerns. Some, like Ed and Cathy, just throw themselves into the

work and concentrate on doing what they love to do there; contribute to the paper. And others, like Bill and Rae, may not be able to reconcile the fact that they came there to make a difference through what they write and yet they either find themselves economically stymied. They end up leaving for jobs with more mainstream publications where they can still do what they love to do but where they may have more security, and better pay and working conditions. It is at this point, where employees are unable to reconcile the difference between the philosophy of the paper and the reality of working there, that many become disillusioned with the alternative ideal.

Unions, Alternative Newspapers and News Workers

Alternative news workers who are currently working as independent contractors do have opportunities to join professional and work associations. And the conditions of employment for alternative news workers here share common qualities with those working in other states. Often though the logistical difficulty of organizing disparate writers who are more often than not also physically isolated from one another, a common condition for freelancers at *the Weekly*, is considerable.

Indeed, as Justin stated:

Some people around here have been talking about unionizing. The topic seems to crop up every now and again when some of us get to talking and get more pissed off than usual about the way it is here. But then what happens is usually a bunch of people leave and the momentum is lost. You're so busy trying to stay afloat that you just don't have the time or energy, so it never happens. (Field Notes 1998b)

In 1981, at the American Writers Congress meetings in New York, the most well-attended panel of the conference was one on unionization of writers. Friedman (1991) outlines some of the problems with early efforts to organize freelance writers. Many thought that a union seemed impractical and unnecessary and that freelancers were too

independent to need one. For more marginalized and struggling writers, there was fear of losing jobs due to unionizing efforts. Others believed in the notion that it is a “privilege” to be a writer regardless of your economic position. They saw themselves as more “artists” than “workers.” And, as Friedman states:

because writers are college educated and middle-class, for the most part, they are not generally considered nor until recently have they considered themselves poor or exploited in classical terms. Yet they are both. As a group, freelance writers make an average income of less than \$10,000 a year, although some make a great deal more. Freelancers are also isolated and out of touch with one another’s pay scale and working conditions. They are subject to arbitrary practices. Pay rates are erratic and inequitable. Editing practices are frequently insulting and uncertain. Editors hold articles for unreasonably long periods, ask unreasonable rewrites without compensation, then reject without explanation, offering a “kill fee” of usually one-third the agreed payment, although many publishers pay nothing. Publishers and publications repeatedly demand ownership, or copyright, of writers’ work under “work-for-hire” rules. And, freelance writers have no protection when faced with censorship, libel, tax, or regulatory problems. They have had no health insurance, no vacation, and no real protective organization. Subject to sweatshop hours and abysmally poor pay rates, American writers had subsisted unorganized on the celebrity status of a few and the mythology of privilege and romance incumbent on garret life. (Friedman 1991, p. 31-32)

Slowly, American writers have begun to consider the weight of issues of their employment in relation to the benefits of organizing. Out of the seeds of this meeting, freelance writers began to organize and define issues of relevance to them. On May 1, 1983, the National Writers Union became an official union organization with one thousand members. The NWU constitution states that:

The purpose of the National Writers Union (NWU) shall be to promote and protect the rights, interests, and economic advancement of members; to organize writers to improve professional working conditions through collective bargaining action; and to provide professional services to members. (Friedman 1991, p. 35)

Interestingly, progressive papers that claim to be committed to social change and to speaking for those less powerful, often most vehemently resist unions organizing at their papers. For example, the NWU set out to win contracts with magazine companies, many of them considered to be progressive. In 1983, the NWU won contracts agreeing to

minimum pay scales, ethical and decent work rules and recognition of the NWU as the collective agent. Contracts were set with such publications as *Mother Jones, Ms., L.A. Weekly, The Nation, The Musician, In These Times* and *Ploughshares*. Setting the contracts was not an easy matter, however. States Friedman (1991):

Most of these contracts, renewed every two years, were negotiated with supposedly friendly politically progressive publications, but their liberal management, when actually confronted with the specter of unionization, fought nearly as hard against it as any other employer. (Friedman 1991, p. 35)

For example Friedman documents a two year long dispute with the “successful, committed [and] progressive” *Village Voice*, a New York-based weekly with a national readership. The two-year dispute left *Voice* workers unorganized. However, as a result of the NWU pressure, improvements in pay were gained. By 1991, the NWU had approximately 3,000 members in 11 locals.

The situation at the *Weekly* has not progressed very far when it comes to unionizing. For example, Paul recounted a story where:

One guy, [Ken] who worked here posted a story on the bulletin board over by the water cooler about how alternative newspapers were the most exploitative places to work... I forget what it was called. But, [the manager] saw it there and asked who had posted it. The guy said it was him. The manager took the article down and told him not to post things there again. She hauled him into her office and reprimanded him. It was lame. (Field Notes 1997b)

Greedy Institutions

The work of Coser (1974) and Giddens (1984) provides useful theoretical insight to understanding the labor and working conditions for newswriters at the *Honolulu Weekly*. Unlike Goffman’s total institutions (see Goffman 1961) where physical arrangements separate insiders from outsiders, Coser’s “greedy institutions” tend to rely on non-physical mechanisms or symbolic boundaries that separate insiders from outsiders. Workers are not physically separate, although this is sometimes the case,

because they are engaged in continuous social interaction with community members, businesses, government and other individuals and organizations. They are nevertheless socially distant from others because of the nature of their statuses and the prerogatives of their roles. *Honolulu Weekly* newswriters are in constant interaction with community members and in fact rely on this interaction for story material. But they are socially distant from most of these community members because of their explicitly “oppositional” status.

Coser argues that greedy institutions typically depend on:

voluntary compliance and to evolve a means of activating loyalty and commitment. [They]... aim at maximizing assent to their styles of life by appearing highly desirable to the participants... [they] are characterized by the fact that they exercise pressures on component individuals to weaken their ties, or not to form any ties, with other institutions or persons that might make claims that conflict with their own demands. (Coser 1974 p. 6)

Here, we can see the high degree of cohesiveness to the “clear and engaging vision” of the publication – social change, increased voice and other liberal principles.

Workers are held fast by the ideal of “alternative” and feel as if, in this organization, they have the potential to make a difference.

Coser argues:

In greedy institutions, conflicts arising from contradictory expectations are being effectively minimized because outside role-partners have, so to speak, been surgically removed or because their number has been sharply limited. These institutions concentrate the commitment of all of their members, or of selected members, in one overall status and its associated central role relationships. Being insulated from competing relationships, and from competing anchors for their social identity, these selected status-occupants find their identity anchored in the symbolic universe of the restricted role-set of the greedy institution. Members of greedy institutions must be so fully and totally committed to them that they become unavailable for alternative lines of action. (Coser 1974, p. 7-8)

Those who stay the longest working for the *Weekly* share this commitment to the ideal. And this is implicated in their identities. As one HNG member noted: “Workers

tend to get all puffed up when they are given a title.” At the *Weekly*, it is easier to have an important sounding title because there are so few workers overall. These are real incentives for those who are associated with the *Weekly*. For example, a managing editor says, with a high degree of incredulity indicating the impressiveness of the fact: “We all get titles... I mean God, I’m an *editor of an alternative paper!*” (Field Notes, 05.16.98).

Weekly workers are dedicated. And they have a very high degree of involvement with many community groups which span the political spectrum. They are not physically isolated from others. However, it is part of their identity that they will shape or present the materials and information they gather from an oppositional perspective. As one worker commented: “I could never go and work for the dailies because they would never let me write what I do here... it would be so depressing to do that.” And, as another noted: “What happens here is that our idealism is taken advantage of... [the publisher] exploits people’s idealism.”(Field Notes, 1998).

Practices, Patterns and the Reproduction of Structure

With regard to the newswriters filter, Gannett newswriters are enabled by the presence of the Hawaii Newspaper Guild, which represents workers and negotiates a labor contract on their behalf. The newswriters are constrained by Gannett’s “chain” approach to news work, with its high degree of bureaucracy and ability to hire highly “trained” workers who have been taught, and are expected to carry out, standard, often very conservative, journalistic practices ensuring the paper’s smooth news production. To note, this aspect is contested. For example, whereas some Gannett employees find this enabling, others find the same conditions constraining. *Weekly* newswriters are enabled by the ideal of working for an “alternative” organization that is locally owned

and operated and covers local issues. They are also enabled by the *Weekly's* acceptance of work from a wide variety of writers with little or no requirement that writers be formally trained in journalism. However, they are constrained by the very high cost of living in Hawai'i coupled with extremely low wages paid by the *Weekly*, and the fact that they have no immediate collective association to represent them in their capacity as news workers.

Giddens (1984) argues that practices have patterns because agents work with materials at hand. Therefore we can explain the actions of agents by seeing what these materials are, what they enable, and constrain. These resources both enable and constrain. A good case can be found in the corporate structure of Gannett and the very uncorporate structure of the *Weekly*. There are differences and similarities in action which these entail. For example, Gannett insists on a profit. It defines its corporate interests. It is not interested in news as such, nor surely, is it interested in being a good newspaper. So it offers pap, fails to fund investigation, entertains, and satisfies its advertisers. The *Weekly* needs to break even, even if it would like to do better. *The Advertiser* aims at a wide market and tries to be all things to all people; the *Weekly* does not. It seeks niches. Accordingly there is room for the unconventional in the *Weekly* and this becomes something that is sought, not avoided. But since the *Weekly* is poor, there are other decisions which follow: cramped quarters in a low rent district, exploited workers, high turnover of staff, lack of funds for research, and niche advertisers.

Second, for Giddens, people reproduce a structure because they either have no options, are not entirely clear on what is going on, or they have consciously made a trade-off. This is surely true of all parties at both newspaper organizations. Jane did not want

to do real estate or tourism; she wanted something good even if it would be a struggle. Her staff shares her idealism. Both can let their critical consciousness lapse so as to rationalize their everyday practices. The people at *The Advertiser* do the same thing. They are convinced that they are providing objective news. A union “victory” reinforces their belief that they are “independent” – even if such “victories” send very effective messages to self-censor. Self-conscious trade-offs go a long way to explain whatever constancy there is at the *Weekly*. For example, the style of the people at the *Weekly* explains their decision to work there because it is “them” and the newspaper seems to do what they are after. The newspaper has a style of its own.

Analysis of other structural features reveals both striking similarities and differences between *The Honolulu Advertiser* and the *Honolulu Weekly*. First, *The Honolulu Advertiser* is more clearly part of the hierarchical agenda-setting level of American media. Its ownership by Gannett has meant an increased emphasis on company policy, control and increasing profits. The *Weekly*, conversely, is independently owned and operated. Interestingly, this does not necessarily mean less of an emphasis on company control and profit orientation. But, the company is situated much more clearly in opposition to the agenda-setting media by virtue of its more marginalized position – its oppositional editorial orientation, small size, circulation and bottom tier position in the American media hierarchy.

Second, Gannett and *The Advertiser* are clearly suspended in institutional affiliations such as those obvious business favors guaranteed in the Federal governments’ JOA legislation. The *Weekly* lives in the shadow of this legislation. It has much more clearly aligned itself with two partners, one, the AAN, much more business-oriented, and

the other, the IAJ, non-profit and much more ideologically oppositional to the mainstream media.

Third, both papers have a strong profit orientation. This is attested to at *The Advertiser* in terms of its desire to align itself tightly with Gannett's lust for extremely high profits in relation to payouts through payroll. At the *Weekly*, this shows itself in part by the low wages paid to workers and the reliance on hiring workers as "independent contractors." As the *Weekly's* owner argues, Hawai'i is a very expensive place to do business and this most certainly needs to be taken into account in any discussion of wages. However the situation is very difficult to see clearly by virtue of the difficulty of access to business profit and loss statements.

Fourth, and very interestingly, in terms of labor, it appears that HNG members fare much better on almost any count than do those of the *Weekly*. HNG members are paid a living wage, receive benefits, job security and regular increments, and are represented by the union in matters of grievances or threatened firings. Although some members of the *Weekly* receive a salary and medical and dental benefits, most do not and everyone must strike their own deal with the management. Due to the high cost of living in Hawai'i, many remain only for short periods of time at the *Weekly* until they can find better paying or more secure positions. As one worker commented: "This place is a training ground. People come, get some experience, and leave." Regardless, there is certainly room for improvement in the pay and working conditions for "alternative" workers (see Colatrella 1991; Ovetz 1991; Wabbit 1991).

Fifth, evidence of cooperative, non-hierarchical or largely democratic practices at either paper seems scant. Although the chances of further democratizing work processes

at *The Advertiser* have seemingly been met by the existence of the unions, its chain ownership status and the comments of dissatisfied workers show that there is room for improvement in this regard. Still, in light of this analysis, certainly the *Weekly* seems the better candidate to develop some of these practices.

Understanding the institutional and day to day working conditions of news workers is critical to our understanding of the organizations, the institutional arrangement and dominant societal ideologies. It is clear that without understanding the dilemma of work at the *Weekly*, we would make the false assumption that alternative newspaper organizations are completely oppositional enterprises that challenge the dominant elite on every count. In some cases this may be true, but the data from the *Weekly* does not support this contention. It is also clear that adding the analysis of the filter of news workers' labor within media organizations, as well as considering the profit orientation and ownership of media companies, provides a much more fruitful account of the ways in which Hawai'i news workers at times reproduce and others reject the codes of behavior of the media as an institutional and ideological structure of American society.

CHAPTER 6: STYLE – THE POLITICS OF HIP

The surest guide to the wealth of a magazine or newspaper is its front cover – the collage you find there is its “list” - its key to what’s inside. Having observed magazines around the world – and in many languages – I can unhesitatingly say that one of the most stunningly beautiful front pages I have ever seen is of this *Honolulu Weekly*. Lines crisscross here like lightning; nude figures dance perpetually on needle points; words in reverse flash past you like streamers; and the generous splash of color you confront you won’t find even in a rainbow. Such an eye-catching periodical shouldn’t be given away “Free,” and I have every hope of persuading the editor to one day alter this amber sign on the cover to the more respectable “Complimentary.” (Letter to the editor, the *Weekly*, 04.01.98 p. 17.)

Style as Identity

Style is an important feature at the *Weekly*, a component in the construction of identity, and has been described as a shared aesthetic whose subtleties define group membership. As Jeff Ferrell notes:

Style is considered... not as a vague abstraction denoting form or fashion, but as a concrete element of personal and group identity, grounded in the everyday practices of social life. *Style* is... embedded in haircuts, posture, clothing, automobiles, music, and the many other avenues through which people present themselves publicly. But it is also located *between* people, and *among* groups; it constitutes an essential element in collective behavior, an element whose meaning is constructed through the nuances of social interaction (Ferrell 1995, p. 169-170).

Style is embedded in and informed by larger cultural understandings and can therefore include wide-ranging elements of conservatism or resistance to the status quo. In this regard, social historian Stuart Ewen describes a loosely defined alternative or oppositional culture and style that began to rise in popularity in the 1960s. He describes this oppositional culture as being centered on issues:

of war, the environment, racial and sexual equality, global inequities, and of an overly *commercialized* and *superficial* consumer culture. In the midst of its ebbs and flows, this oppositional culture has expressed itself in a number of ways. Widely defined political activism, challenging the dominant structures of social, economic, and political power, has been its recurrent mode of expression, along with a reflection of the prevalent values and iconography of the primarily white, “middle-class” consumer culture. These ideas have led to attempts to shape a new, alternative culture, whose symbols would reflect the “official society” and its rules, while pointing – hopefully – toward a more authentic and democratic way of life. (emphasis in original) (Ewen 1988 p. 248)

It is these seemingly at odds values of social issues and commercialism that Ewen believes are displayed in the *styles* of the oppositional culture. Historically, cultural forms of resistance have been co-opted by commercial interests:

These countercultural trends have, at times, caught the style industries by surprise. During the 1960s, and at other moments since then, the rise of alternative subcultures has generated renegade styles – verbal expressions, ways of dress, music, graphics – which particularly captivated young people, traditionally seen as the most lucrative sector of the style-consuming public. This sense of having fallen behind, and the attempt to catch up, shows up in the trade literature of the style industries. (Ewen 1988 p. 248-9)

Ewen argues that marketers, eager to sell products to members of a growing oppositional youth culture, began to pay attention to the style elements of the oppositional culture in an attempt to be able to speak to youth as potential consumers.

The following two examples illustrate this point:

Early in 1967, as a radical “youth culture” was capturing international attention, Daniel Moriarty (editor and publisher of *Madison Avenue*, “The Magazine for New York Advertising”) published a sixteen-question quiz for admen over twenty-five, designed to familiarize them with “what’s happening with the Now Generation.” In the glib patter of his introduction, it is clear that Moriarty saw the “youth culture” as both an antiestablishment challenge and a potential resource to be mined:

“This quickee quiz may seem as irrelevant as hell, but there are millions of teeny-boppers, hippies and Harvard sophs in Fat City with bread in their jeans and a lot of ways to spend it. You’d better know what they’re talking about – or you may find yourself out of the gang. As American’s great folk-poet-philosopher [actually a New York disc jockey] murray the K tells us, *attitudes are everything, baby.*”

From the questions asked in the quiz, however, it is clear that “what they’re talking about” or their “attitudes” were of little concern. The primary focus was on stylistic elements of the “Now Generation,” codes that could be deciphered and transformed into merchandising know-how and phrase-book fluency.

Questions included these:

1. To “blow your mind”:

- a) refers to sniffing glue.
- b) refers to a sudden lapse of memory at exam time.
- c) means to be overwhelmed by an idea or event. ...

2) Eddie Albert (you remember Eddie Albert) recently sang “Don’t Think Twice” on the Dean Martin Show. The song was written by:

- a) Bob Dylan.

- b) Peter, Paul and Mary.
 - c) Monti Rock IV. ...
- 3) Buffy Sainte-Marie and Phil Ochs are:
- a) leading singer-composers
 - b) student leaders at Berkeley.
 - c) inventors of skin jewelry. ...

The same thing can be seen in the December 1969 issue of *Hear, There & Everywhere*, a newsletter for department store promotions executives, and others in the business of predicting, promoting, and selling style. "Can You Rap with the Soul Generation?" asked newsletter editor Samuel J. Cohen. "How many English languages do you speak? Better add soul and rock 'n roll. A hip (not hep) business man should have a nodding acquaintance with such talk." Again, a quiz followed, this one focusing on "soul generation" vocabulary:

Check *a* or *b* for correct meaning...

- 1) HEAVY
 - a) *meaningful*
 - b) *villain*
- 2) EGO-TRIP
 - a) Soulful
 - b) self-centered...
- 3) FREAKED
 - a) left early, quit
 - b) fainted
- 4) RAP
 - a) knock opponent
 - b) a conversation
- 5) BUMMER
 - a) sponger
 - b) negative experience, bad job experience.

Here, as in the *Madison Avenue* quiz, language and style are lifted out of context, transformed into a meaningless, if potentially profitable, style. (Ewen 1988 p. 249-50)

What is particularly striking about these apparent countercultural trivia quizzes, is their focus on culture as amusing language or entertainment knowledge. At a time of great social unrest, questions about political or social issues are conspicuously absent. Cultural resistance is reduced to a "style code" that must be broken or deciphered rather

than understood as an expression of widespread dissatisfaction with ideologies of capitalism, patriarchy, militarism and/or conservatism. Ewen argues that the counter-culture, viewed in this way is effectively: “reduced to a disembodied constellation of styles” (Ewen 1988 p. 249). Both language and style, rather than being emblems of oppositional culture, have been increasingly co-opted as commodities. In this way, we can see *Weekly* workers’ *style* or liberal ideals as involved in the capitalist imperatives of the local newspaper business.

Therefore the greed of the institution feeds on the liberal ideals of the workers. Newswriters here deal with conflicting role expectations, when they try to reconcile liberal or sometimes left liberal principles with working for a business which commodifies liberal principles and generates profits from them. They also deal with conflicting status positions in that they see themselves as working for a higher good than the dailies, but at the same time, they must fight for respectability with mainstream journalists who discount their worth or contribution or often render it invisible. On another level, status contradictions occur as *Weekly* newswriters reconcile their near poverty existences with the “limousine liberal” ideals suggested in the ads for exclusive spas and boutique shops the proceeds of which make their jobs possible.

The newswriters at the *Weekly* follow the specific rationality of capitalism and consent to the established social relations there until they can no longer either bear or afford them. Looked at in this way, they become not unlike other “information workers” who contribute to and perpetuate their own exploitation by becoming engaged in voluntary servitude to capital and to the production of surplus value (see Lewin 1998). As more experienced workers leave, new workers, lured by either glamour of the status,

perceived challenge, or prospect of making a difference, take their place. This is how *Weekly* newswriters and the system in which they are embedded get reproduced, are sustained and mobilize to serve the interests of the organization. While the exploitation of workers around the state is not an uncommon topic both *at* and *in* the *Weekly*, it is not acted upon in any concerted or cooperative fashion when it has to do with *Weekly* newswriters. At the same time, individual workers, lacking any unionization or real political consciousness of common interests, are easy targets for manipulation and domination (see Lewin 1998).

In chapter five, it is noted that an oppositional style gives identity to *Weekly* workers. The workers then draw on their personal style and identification to produce what they do. In this chapter, we look at the stylistic differences to do with both the workers and the publications. This we will do by examining workers' interactions in explaining the mechanism of reproduction of the *Weekly*. Then we will look more at the stylistic differences in the newspapers that the workers produce.

One of the most predominant observations that an observer can make while comparing the *Honolulu Weekly* and *The Honolulu Advertiser* is that they differ stylistically. This, you can ascertain by merely glancing at the publications' covers. But it is evident elsewhere as well. If you take a closer look, there are differences in stylistic language use both at the agencies as well as throughout the publications' pages. Both publications are official public records for Honolulu. Readers look to publications such as these to learn more about their communities and they are, in turn, left with impressions about social life not only by *what* they read, but *how* it is presented. In this chapter, the

theoretical issue of style of the two publications is examined using the methodological tools of participant observation and document and content analysis of both publications.

Much has been written about style. But only a small section of this discussion has problematized style (see for example Ewen 1988; Gitlin 1995; Hebdige 1994; Williams 1976). Or it has been viewed in relation to public issues such as crime (see Ferrell 1995), the built environment (see Davis 1991), or the market (see Ewen 1977). The media use style as a vehicle to transmit messages about what is happening in communities. This chapter will examine the stylistic differences between mainstream and alternative media agencies and their publications to help more clearly understand style as representing a critically important “sub-text” of information. The chapter will argue that style is involved in political and economic processes in that it is an emblem of meaning and power. This helps us to further “problematize” style and show it in relation to the public issue of democratic communications.

The *Honolulu Weekly* claims to be “the only source of alternative news and entertainment reviews in the city” and to “deliver a fresh, politicized perspective in a news market dominated by a mainstream, chain-owned conglomerate.” It is largely an embodiment of oppositional or alternative culture in the state. I will address the issue of “alterity” by examining the organizational culture, style and language used by each newspaper agency.

Organizational Culture / Style

The Honolulu Weekly

A significant sub-text to the day to day action at the *Weekly* is the importance of being aware of and interested in the latest trends in music, popular arts and progressive

politics. These qualities are sought out as evidenced by advertisements for prospective employees. Consider the following advertisements seeking new editorial employees for the *Weekly*:

**ARTS WRITERS
BE ALL YOU CAN BE**

Honolulu Weekly is seeking a small (but feisty) army of freelance writers to cover all facets of the arts & entertainment scene. We are seeking music writers and theater reviewers, but all inquiries will be considered. Strong writing skills, a certain amount of wit, an ability to work on deadline and the capacity for critical thought are required. Have opinion, will travel.... (10.07.98 p.12)

**DESPERATELY SEEKING...
THEATER REVIEWERS**

with "alternative" attitudes and exceptional qualities of perception to become occasional contributors to *Honolulu Weekly*. Can you turn stagecraft into storytelling? Describe familiar drama in entirely new ways? If so, send.... (10.07.98 p. 19)

INTERNS WANTED

Seeking: Creative, intelligent, energetic intern candidates with a passion for analysis, fact gathering and wordsmithing.... Tip: The editor puts great weight on the letter of interest; stylishness, use of concrete background facts within your story proposals and originality in your "angle" count.... (04.22.98 p. 26)

The ads are written in language that is playful. For example, they explain the need for: "...a small (but feisty) army of freelance writers," use an army recruiting theme of "...be all you can be," and popular culture references such as "Desperately seeking," a phrase that is a popular personal ad heading as well as the beginning of the title of a popular camp 1980s film entitled "Desperately Seeking Susan."

At the same time, they are serious. For example, the ads stress the need for the importance of applicants' letters of interest, as well as: "...fact checking abilities," "...strong writing skills and the ability to work on deadline." They also stress the

importance of having a progressive intelligence. For example, the ads ask for such qualities as: “alternative attitudes and exceptional qualities of perception,” a “critical perspective,” “originality in your “angle,”” and “the capacity for critical thought.”

Hip Style

“Hip” style is conflated with these other characteristics. The ads ask for people who are “creative,” “original,” have the ability to turn a dry account of stagecraft into a captivating story, explain familiar stories in new and insightful ways, have “passion” and use “wit.” Here, style has more to do with demonstrating insight, progressive politics, and creative and original expression that is meant to inspire or provoke discussion than it does displaying faddish, commodified, or superficial commercialized symbols. These are the types of qualities that the *Weekly* wants in their workers, and, not surprisingly, people with these qualities are the ones who are hired.

Style is combined with youth culture. For example, most of the workers are young (20s, 30s and 40s). Those who demonstrate that they are “hip to what’s happening” are more accepted than others (see Appendix C). An essential element in the collective behavior at the *Weekly*, an element that is constructed through the nuances of everyday social interaction, is that of *hip*.

How is “hip” implicated in the day to day activity at the *Weekly*? It is easier to join in on the fast-paced, witty office banter that runs on this sub-text if you are “in the know.” If you demonstrate that you are “on the same page,” then you are establishing that you have the quality or the state of “being hip.” One way that group members in other settings demonstrate their dedication to a style is in the clothes they wear. At the *Weekly*, workers demonstrate their “hip-ness” by wearing particular styles of clothing.

Types of clothing styles that are worn consistently in the office are casual, vintage, aloha prints, surf shorts, used store look (like old gas station shirts with the name tag label still on), old t-shirts, *slippahs*, vans shoes, doc martens, old army pants, pork pie hats, and more hippie type back to nature articles like long flowing flower skirts, natural cotton blouses, and leather sandals. No one wears expensive jewelry or watches or other accessories. The women wear minimal or no make up. Few wear “logos.” Here, being “hip” is not considered having the latest “logo wear” from casual clothes designers popular with this age group (such as Banana Republic, Benetton, Tommy Hilfiger, Mossimo, Gap, Guess, Ralph Lauren Polo, or Nike). Hip style here is not overtly commercial in this way. When asked about clothing style at the office, workers said:

People just wear what’s comfortable because they can.

It’s a casual place, so that’s what people wear.

We don’t buy into a lot of conventions, so people are free to wear what they want and most don’t want designer stuff... it doesn’t represent who they are.

I think it’s more creative to wear things that you put together yourself, to express yourself that way.

I just hate getting dressed up. When I go out like that to places where other people are dressed like that, I just hate it. And I only go like that when I’m forced to... like this thing we got invited to for work. I feel obligated to go and the invitation says that we have to wear “aloha attire.” I feel out of place and as if I’m including myself with them and their values. Those aren’t mine. (Field Notes 1997a)

The emphasis in these quotes is on expressing individual style, rejecting conservative conventions or just wearing whatever you want, whatever is comfortable. Aside from the fact that designer clothing is more expensive than others, and most workers here do not make a lot of money, the emphasis is on expressing your style as casual. So, for example, if anyone were to wear more formal attire – like dress suits, or matching shoes, dress slacks and a more formal aloha shirt or designer label sportswear –

they would stand out as having a different style and being more “establishment” than the rest.

However, each person has their own style within this collaboration of styles. For example, one man routinely wears vintage aloha shirts, baggy chinos, and vans shoes. He rarely deviates from this look. A woman wears long, flowing skirts, natural cotton blouses and leather sandals. Another man regularly wears a pork pie hat, a T-shirt (no writing) and baggy pants. Another wears more biker attire of a black leather jacket, a jack shirt and black jeans with heavy “shit kicker” boots. Another woman wears an aloha shirt tied up in a knot at the front with jean shorts. Another man wears surf shorts and a T-shirt (no writing) with holes in it, no shoes and his hair is a mass of long curls (he works reception). And another man wears only black – black jeans and a plain black cotton T-shirt every day. Those who are in ad sales wear a slightly less casual style of dress. They come to interviews in suits and ties. When they work, they wear more formal pants and shirts or skirts and blouses (see Appendix D).

Although the comments and dress styles of workers here indicates that being hip is evidenced in a more casual style of dress, there is also a language and a politics to “hip.” This is about knowing who the top bands or artists are, particularly local and alternative ones, progressive politics, partying, going to certain entertainment events, and having critical opinions about social life in Honolulu. Those who do not demonstrate essential elements of this mix are often referred to as “losers” (those not in the know). This is evidenced in a number of different ways on a number of different topics.

Being Hip

There is a hierarchy of “hip” at the office. For example, if you are intelligent but progressive, you are considered ok (people who fall into this group tend to be students or others well versed in progressive politics, environmentalism, feminism and activism). If you are artistic (a writer, musician, poet, or artist), and produce things the paper can use, you are considered “very ok.” For example, the paper regularly hires freelance photographers. Some are very artistic and are connected to arts groups or programs. If you are laid back and artistic, that is even better. All of these people are considered “hip.” But others, for example photographers who are more mechanistic, and less artistic, in their approach to taking photos and are considered not very cool. If you are intelligent but “square,” more tentative, less witty, or have more conservative or naïve views (as do some of the interns), you are less liked and “picked on” jokingly to get you to “loosen up.”

The editorial side often receives a limited number of complimentary (or “comp”) tickets to arts events, openings, concerts, fundraisers, and promotional parties around town. The tickets are meant to be used to send staff to cover these events in the paper. Usually there are more tickets given than the one or two required to cover sending a freelance photographer or writer. The tickets are usually sent to editors who have to decide how to disburse them. One way to measure who is hip is to see who the comp tickets are distributed to. Always those considered more hip, are offered tickets. Those less hip, are not offered tickets. This is especially evident as the “hip value” of the comp ticket increases. For example, tickets to “The Great Mele” or “The Rolling Stones” are in great demand and many office workers come and ask if they can get a comp ticket. Other

events, like a “stuffy” or more formal arts event opening dinner at a fancy hotel, are avoided as are the performances of artists who might be considered more “square” (like Gloria Estefan, Celine Dion, or Don Ho). “Squareness” is a combination of being too commercial, too much like a stale lounge act or too mainstream. And going to comp events is an inexpensive way for those who are like-minded to spend time together enjoying an outing.

Knowledge / Intelligence

One way to demonstrate “hip” is to be able to converse about progressive left politics, and/or alternative music or art. These topics are the central focus of most of the information found in the paper and to be conversant with them is to be able to demonstrate that you are “like-minded.” For example, while referring to workers on the ad side, an editor said:

i really like him not because he’s an ad sales person but because he really understands what the paper is about. I’ve had many conversations with him about this. He’s involved with the Honolulu Underground Film Festival himself and he really knows what we’re all about. It’s really important that we get more ad sales people like that because they are going out and representing us to clients who really need to understand that we’re different than the rest. (Field Notes, 02.23.98)

Another worker there asked what kinds of things that I did at the paper. I told her that I did mostly social issues pieces about housing, poverty, labor, and environmentalism. She responded:

Oh! Wow. Cool. You do all the smart stuff! I don’t do that... but I do a lot of the photography and I may write a few pieces on the local band scene. (Interjected another worker...) She’s just had her artwork accepted as an album cover for a local alternative band. (Field Notes: 03.19.98)

Humor / Wit

Aside from serious work time (like structured editorial or ad sales meetings with the publisher) humor and wit is used constantly in office interactions. Common topics of humor are alcohol, partying, sex and dating, and mocking and the joking relationship.

Alcohol, Partying, Sex and Dating

Alcohol consumption is a common office topic. For example, Sharon says:

“I’m going to go out and get drunk tomorrow.” To which Beth, smiles and says “You are?” Sharon responds “Oh yeah. I can’t wait. I’m just going to get sooooo drunk.”(Field Notes 1998b)

Discussion of partying often accompanies that of alcohol. For example:

John: “Hey Todd, did you get drunk and fall over last night?”

Todd: “Yah, I did. I never made it home... I just crashed here. Besides, I figured that if people came in early, they’d think I’m just working hard and was here earlier than them. Ha Ha Ha. (Todd has a mat he unfolds and sleeps on for naps during the day or if he doesn’t make it home from a downtown bar at night.) (Field Notes 1997a)

The topics of alcohol consumption, partying, recreational drug use and sex and dating experiences are not moralized in conversations or print at the *Weekly*.

Recreational drug use is the least discussed of the topics and usually only occurs in one to one, more quiet conversations. The other topics are openly discussed and can often be heard across the whole office area.

In print, the paper runs a regular column called “Club Scene” whose title is changed to suit the whim of an editor (during the course of this research the title was changed once to “Ace of Clubs” and then again to “Clubbed to Death” for dramatic and humorous effect and also to demonstrate a witty flexibility). This column is written by a young, 20-something who frequents local clubs and raves, off beat concerts (like Marilyn Manson), drinking holes (like a country and western bar in Waikiki), and tourist traps (like Germaine’s Luau). The column generally follows the small, but vibrant local

drinking and club scene. His column is chock full of candid discussions mixed with wry humor about events as they unfold on his partying assignments. He often discusses how drunk he and or his friends get as well as colorful events and people he meets along the way.

In the office, the topic of sex and dating is often discussed openly. For example:

Joan: "I haven't had a date in so long, I forget what sex is like. That's not good is it?" (laughing)

Todd: "I'm not goin' there." (smirking and laughing softly)

Joan: "I'm starting to tell people that I have two boyfriends, Jose and Jack." (she pauses, no one says anything).

"You know, Jose Cuervo and Jack Daniels?!" (everyone laughs).

Todd: "well, that's pretty sad."

Joan: "Well, at least, unlike men, I can sleep with them and they won't ever leave me..." (laughing) Oh, and we won't talk about your love life will we now? It's so sordid, I can't even follow it."

Todd: (laughing). (Field Notes 1997a)

It is an unwritten policy at the paper that sex is not moralized. For example, at editorial meetings, the publisher and editors will talk about the need to present sex and sexual relations as: "...something the people shouldn't be made to have hang ups about." (Field Notes 1995). For example, the paper has been the only one in the state to distribute free condoms in an issue. It takes an "inclusive" stance when it comes to homosexual relations. For example, leading up to the 1998 general election, a steady stream of columns were devoted to explaining the benefits and necessity of voting down a proposed state constitutional convention that was being presented by local conservative groups as opening the door for the abolition of heterosexual marriage.

The paper also sells a lot of space to sex advertisers. For example, of an average length twenty-four page issue, two full pages are devoted to a syndicated personal ad company. Another full page is sold to "chat lines" or sex companies. This, in particular,

can be seen as simply being good for business. Having two full pages of guaranteed ad space sold for each issue is an important factor for ensuring the economic viability of the publication. An analysis of these sex ads is provided in chapter eight.

The paper's cover art is often extremely provocative and sexually explicit. For example the artwork for one cover story, by a local Japanese artist, showed a Japanese geisha in the heat of passion opening a condom package with her teeth. The publisher had been waiting for a cover story on a sexually explicit topic, this one was on Waikiki prostitution, to ask permission of the artist to use the image.

A final example of the playful, sexually explicit orientation of the paper is its use of a company slogan on its community advertising. The phrase used is: "*The Honolulu Weekly: Are you getting it Weekly?*" This has a double meaning. It can mean: "... are you having sex regularly?" And it can also mean: "... are you picking up the paper weekly?"

Two other ad slogans are used. The first is used in self-advertisements that promote the paper's intent within its own pages. It reads "*The Honolulu Weekly: Get the real scoop.*" This slogan suggests the ability of the *Weekly* to get at "the truth" more so than other sources due to its independent status and insight. In more conservative arenas, such as on the local public broadcasting radio station, the paper uses the quite different slogan "*The Honolulu Weekly: In-Depth, Insightful, Independent and Free.*" All of these slogans demonstrate the paper's connection to "hip" style: a mix of humor and playfulness, wit, progressive politics, sexual explicitness and inclusiveness, in-depth analysis, truth, openness, and independence.

Mocking / The Joking Relationship

Workers often demonstrate that they are “hip” by mocking being “hip.” So, for example, one worker says to another “I’m hip to your vibe, babe.” (this was delivered quite theatrically and while smiling) indicating that the one worker is telling the other “I understand what you mean,” using “cool lingo” to communicate that while, at the same time, mocking its premise.

Another way workers demonstrate their “hip-ness” is when someone who is normally hip, does something that is not hip. I was considered “hip” due to my awareness of social problems and ability to write interesting pieces about them. My politics fit with most others there. How can one tell if one is considered “hip?” You are given assignments, taken seriously, and you are joked with. For example, while I was working at the paper as a proofreader, a story that was running on Jamaican arts had the title of “Irie.” “Irie” is a Rasta / Jamaican patois term that means powerful and pleasing, excellent or highest, or the state of feeling great. I did not know what that word meant and asked an editor about it. She burst out laughing and the conversation went on:

Editor: “You don’t know what irie means?”

Me: “Well, ... No.” (smiling)

Editor: (louder) “You don’t know what irie means???” (with a twist of incredulity in her voice and still laughing.) “Hey, Owen, Patricia doesn’t know what irie means!!!” (laughing more)

Owen (who is African American): “You don’t know what irie means? (laughing) Don’t they have any blacks up there in Canada?”

Me: (having figured out that it is a term that has African Americans know and that probably most “hip” Americans would know in general, but that I did not) “No, well yes.” (picking up on the mocking tone, I give a clue that at least I understand the term has something to do with African Americans) “but there are no blacks on the hockey teams.”

Owen: “No, we don’t like the cold.” (laughing) “But irie man, you’ve got to know what irie is, mon. Yah mon, irie!” (doing a little dance) (Field Notes 1997a)

So, for a few weeks after this, the term “irie” is brought up by Owen or the editor in at least one conversation every time I am at the office. This is an example of how even when you are not “in the know,” you are still included, if you are considered “hip.”

Direct/ Serious Talk

Often, there are problems that need to be dealt with. Editorial staff members are very assertive. The following conversation illustrates this point:

Joan (to the publisher). I'm telling you that we are not able to attract good writers for the money we are offering. My list is getting very short and this needs to be addressed.
Publisher: Well we simple don't have the funds to pay more right now. Perhaps there are ways around this. Have you contacted those names I gave you last week....(Field Notes 1996)

On a daily basis, workers make and shape information in the form of politics, arts and entertainment stories. This information “costs” in that it costs the organization time and resources to produce. This information is then interspersed and carefully laid-out between material that is revenue, in that advertisers pay to place that information in each issue. This is the commercial reality. Workers are resigned to this. For example, in response to a question about the need for commercial sponsorship workers say:

That's just the way it is.

It's a reality.

That's how we make money to be able to produce the stories.

Unless there is a way around this – here we are.

I'm happy that we haven't been bought out by a chain – that's happening now. At least we're independent. (Field Notes 1997a)

Beyond this, the thinking is that there is a lot of room to make change within these pre-existing conditions of capitalism.

Contrary to Ewen(Ewen 1988) and Ferrell (Ferrell 1995), on a day to day basis “hip style” at *the Weekly* is not overly commercial, nor is it de-politicized. Although the paper’s very existence depends on a capitalistic set of conditions and the workers very presence is dependent on those conditions, the office’s “hip” culture itself is not an overly commercialized or superficial consumer culture.

The scene at *The Honolulu Advertiser* is quite different than at the *Weekly*. First, workers tend to be older there. The dress styles are more traditional, conservative and uniform. For example, males will wear aloha shirts and slacks more often there. Women are more likely to be wearing dresses and high heeled shoes. And the manner of conduct is more “professional.” Courtesies are extended to others regularly. For example, there you will be introduced to others when meeting new people.

At the *Weekly*, hardly anyone is ever introduced. Most people seem unconcerned with this and just carry on with their work regardless of social niceties. One worker who is brought in occasionally to do special projects, however, expressed his dismay about this:

I hate it that no one ever introduces anyone around here. I mean I feel like I should be introduced to someone before I talk to them, otherwise it’s just totally awkward. It just doesn’t feel right. And so I don’t initiate a conversation with someone even if I see them all the time. I just hate it! (Field Notes 1997a)

The Business of Style

The 1990s version of 1960s language appropriation by media companies has more to do with events such as the one Tom Brislin, professor of communications and journalism at the University of Hawai`i described. He explained that *The Advertiser* had gotten sufficiently interested in creating its own arts and entertainment calendar section and laying it out like the *Weekly*’s. This they did start to do with the Friday issue of the

TGIF, which stands for “The Great Index to Fun.” This calendar section is more standardized and “family oriented” than the *Weekly*’s “The Calendar” (an arts and entertainment calendar) which is more focused on young, urban hipsters. *The Advertiser* editors discussed printing the calendar on Wednesday’s to be in direct competition with the *Weekly*, but decided, in the end to print their calendar on Fridays (Field Notes 1998a).

The decision to print on Fridays was not a charitable move. As movie runs in the local theaters begin and end usually on Fridays, *The Advertiser* representative decided that their calendar section could always have more up to date movie listings than the *Weekly*’s if they printed it on Fridays. This, they decided, was more valuable than the even more direct tactic of printing on Wednesdays, like the *Weekly*. And, with the addition of TGIF, *The Advertiser* could make the case to prospective advertisers that they have a comprehensive calendar section that is published weekly.

McCord (1996) discusses anti-trust laws to do with newspapers. He cites a checklist of practices that would be considered either questionable or illegal with regard to anti-trust laws for a dominant newspaper business to use against a smaller company that includes the following:

Offering special discounts to advertisers that do not normally advertise in the newspaper. Maintaining advertising rates at an unreasonably low level during a period when most serious competition exists. Granting premiums or special rates to new advertisers. Threatening to cut off advertisers’ credit when such advertisers use competitive publications. Offering discounts to certain selected advertisers. Selling advertising only on the condition that the buyer not purchase advertising from another publication. Threats against advertisers to discontinue their ads. Refusing ads from clients using competitive publications. Monopolization or attempting to monopolize. (p. 78)

Late in 1998, *The Advertiser* began placing the TGIF insert as a free offering on stands located at businesses and colleges around Honolulu. This practice, of offering a free section, is in direct competition with the *Weekly*. Beyond this, the practice is

considered predatory by the *Weekly* and is either “an extremely questionable or illegal move” in accordance with state and federal anti-trust law (Field Notes 1999).

The *Weekly's* publisher was so upset about *The Advertiser* circulating the free insert that she contacted Richard McCord, author of the book *The Chain Gang* on the secret and illegal dealings of the Gannett empire (see McCord 1996). She invited McCord to come to Honolulu to speak about Gannett’s illegal and predatory practices in other cities. Two speaking engagements were arranged for mid-February of 1999. Advertisements about the talk were placed in the *Weekly* and a cover article called “Stop the Presses” was run just prior to the talks that argued that Gannett’s *Advertiser* drastically cut costs and quality in order to make more money in Honolulu (Honolulu *Weekly* February 17 1999; Rees February 17 1999). Another article listed illegal activities that Gannett had used in Salem, Oregon to crush a small community newspaper (McCord February 17 1999). The local chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists sent notices of invitation out to all HNA employees. Interestingly though, not a single HNA employee attended either talk and neither *The Advertiser* nor *The Star-Bulletin* covered the event in their newspapers. An editor at *The Star-Bulletin* did however take offense to the *Weekly's* “Stop the Presses!” cover article, accusing the author of being “a trained attack monkey of the *Weekly's* publisher” and repeatedly referring to the *Weekly* as “the Weakly” (Heckathorn April 1999; Rees April 7 1999; Rees February 17 1999; Shapiro February 20 1999).

Although *The Advertiser's* marketing approach is extremely thorough, it completely excludes mention of the *Weekly* as even a weak competitor. Interestingly though, at the same time, *The Midweek* (another local weekly that is largely a shopper’s

publication that includes weekly supermarket flyers) is always used in comparisons. Thus *The Advertiser* publicly treats the *Weekly* as if it does not exist. It tries to render it invisible. This is evidenced in comments from *Advertiser* staff members who stated things like: “The *Weekly* is not a newspaper.” They completely discount its existence, to the point where it is not mentioned in any of the comparative ad packets that are sent to prospective advertisers. Obviously, in order for *The Advertiser* to invent a whole new section devoted to arts and entertainment listings and designed to compete directly with the *Weekly*, they must officially recognize the power of the *Weekly*. So *The Advertiser*’s marketing tactic, in this case, is to appropriate the *Weekly*’s style or format while publicly denying its existence. Conversely, the *Weekly* lists *The Advertiser* as a competitor in all of its comparative ad literature.

A comparative analysis of language used to guide workers in the day to day operations, as found in the “Style Guide” at *The Honolulu Advertiser*, and in the papers’ content reveals a markedly different organizational style.

Organizational Language Use

A *Honolulu Advertiser* employee remarked that the greatest shift that happened at the organization when it was bought out by Gannett Company Incorporated was a distinct change in language used to refer to the organization and in day to day office life. He likened this to “Orwellian Doublespeak”

Orwellian doublespeak refers to what writer George Orwell examined in his book, *1984*, which depicts a totalitarian state where language is one of the most important weapons used to control thought and action. *Newspeak* was Orwell’s term for the official state language. And doublethink was his term for holding two opposing ideas at the same

time. Examples of this are: “War is Peace,” “Freedom Is Slavery,” and, “Ignorance Is Strength.”

In his essay “Politics and the English Language,” George Orwell claimed that the: “mixture of vagueness and sheer incompetence is the most marked characteristic of modern English prose, and especially of any kind of political writing.” People have to think less if they use vague or stale language, he said, and: “this reduced state of consciousness, if not indispensable, is at any rate favorable to political conformity.” According to Orwell, political speech is: “largely the defense of the indefensible” and thus “political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness.” As examples, Orwell cited the following terms and their real meanings: *pacification* means bombarding defenseless villages and machine-gunning cattle; *transfer of population* means forcing millions of peasants to take to the roads while their farms are confiscated; *elimination of unreliable elements* means people are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck (see Calder 1974).

Orwell reminds us that a critical thinker must be on guard not only against language which intentionally obscures thought by arousing emotions, but also against more subtle abuses of language: using euphemisms, jargon, and obscure language to deceive and mislead. Such language is called doublespeak and is described by William Lutz as language which:

makes the bad seem good, the negative appear positive, the unpleasant appear attractive or at least tolerable... It is language that conceals or prevents thought (Lutz 1998 p. 1).

Lutz identifies several kinds of doublespeak according to whether euphemisms are used to mislead or deceive about an ugly reality or embarrassing situation, or whether pretentious, inflated, obscure or esoteric jargon is used to give an air of prestige,

profundity or authority to one's speech or to hide ugly realities or embarrassing matters. Lutz distinguishes the use of jargon and “gobbledygook” and the use of inflated language to make the ordinary seem special (e.g. calling a used car a “pre-owned vehicle”).

Gannett Doublespeak

One HNA employee talked about changes in communication in *The Honolulu Advertiser* under Gannett ownership. He likened the style of conversation to Orwellian doublespeak and said:

the workers often refer to the Gannett managers as “Gannettoids” because they act like machines for the company. They do exactly what they are told. We now have these endless series of meetings where workers are shown these fancy diagrams and there is all of this jargon and then they are asked for their opinions. And this nice language is used to describe “corporate fit” and on and on. In the end, the company just does what it wants. It acts under the pretense that our input is valuable. But it is clearly not. Its just a way to have people buy into something on the feeling that they are part of the decision making process. But they are not. (Field Notes 1998a)

Under Gannett’s ownership, employees also complain that what was done on a more casual basis before, is now highly bureaucratized. As one employee stated:

This often causes problems which many staff members believe are unnecessary. For example, before Gannett, most of *The Advertiser* grievances could be dealt with very casually and the situation would have been resolved. Quite often someone would do something that they just didn’t know they weren’t really supposed to do. We could resolve these things quickly, usually with a call or a very brief and informal meeting between a shop steward and a lower level manager. Ah, ah... not any more. With Gannett now the company has told management that only one high level manager that he is to deal with all or any union issues or grievances. This has tended to escalate simple situations to become big deals... even a situation that before was easily resolved to everyone’s satisfaction is now a big problem. (Field Notes 1998a 2.2)

The Style Guide

The *Weekly* and Honolulu’s two daily newspapers, *The Honolulu Advertiser* and the *Star-Bulletin* rely on the *Associated Press Stylebook* and the *Webster’s New World Dictionary* as central style manuals that guide language usage. The *Star-Bulletin* uses a locally produced style manual specifically aimed at local language and ethical issues.

The Advertiser follows style guides as they are set out in various memos. Currently, a group of *Advertiser* editors have formed a committee to examine style. Jim Richardson, An *Advertiser* news editor, explained that the style and ethics guidelines are standard and similar to one another (Richardson 1999). The *Star-Bulletin* style guide, which was originally created by the *Star-Bulletin* when it was owned by Gannett Company, Incorporated, aims is explained here:

This style manual supplements the Associated Press Stylebook and the Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition, which remain our basic resources for style. It covers local style questions, style issues not covered by AP and Webster's and areas where our style differs from AP or Webster's (Star-Bulletin 1998).

Whereas the *Star-Bulletin Style Guide* encompasses both style and ethics issues, the *Advertiser's* ethics guidelines are set forth in a ten page memo (Gannett Newspaper Division 1999). Under the heading "Being Independent," the ethics memo states that employees are encouraged to "maintain independence," and "to be involved in worthwhile community activities so long as this does not compromise the credibility of news coverage." (Gannett Newspaper Division 1999). Although not delineated in the guide, Richardson explained that there are very specific guidelines as to items such as moonlighting for other agencies which he described as "not flexible or negotiable" (Richardson 1999).

There is no corollary to a style or ethics guide at the *Weekly*. Rules about outside affiliation do not exist, unless there is a clear conflict of interest. If there is, then this will be discussed with the staff member. For example, one freelance writer was assigned a story on a local tourist company. She did mention to the editor that her husband had recently worked on a court case against the company, but the two talked about it briefly and decided there was no conflict of interest. The writer paid a visit to the company and

acted in an aggressive manner while there. After the visit, the tourist company, however, made the connection between the writer and her husband, the lawyer, and started a fax and letter writing campaign to the publisher as well as to *The Advertiser* about the unprofessional actions of the *Weekly*. They also threatened to sue the *Weekly* if the writer was not taken off the story and if there was not an official apology. They suggested that *The Advertiser* cover the unprofessionalism of the *Weekly* in this case as a story. The editor called in the freelancer and asked why she had not been clearer about her husband's role, which, as it turned out had been as the lead prosecutor in the case against the company. The editor decided that even if it was unclear that there was a direct conflict of interest, the writer had behaved in an unnecessarily aggressive manner on the story. The editor sent a letter explaining the situation. There was no apology for the action, but there was for the misunderstanding. The writer was pulled from the story, but has been assigned other stories for the paper since then.

Other situations at the *Weekly* are handled on a case by case basis as well, and are discussed mostly between editors and the publisher. However, the level of attention paid to subjects such as "outside affiliation" and "moonlighting" (most everyone, even full-time employees, has other jobs – many of them doing for other publications or businesses what they do for the *Weekly*) is negligible.

It is evident here, that *Advertiser* guidelines reflect the prominence of more conservative or bureaucratized principles of professionalism in journalism – a precept that alternative weeklies are highly suspect of. In addition to "ethics" subjects such as moonlighting and outside activities at *The Advertiser*, there are also rules about more style-related subjects.

Language and Style Differences

Style-related subjects in the *Star –Bulletin Style Guide* that are similar to the *Advertiser*'s concern language usage in terms of Hawaiian, "Pidgin", and foreign words and profanities. Whereas ethics guidelines are described as "not flexible or negotiable," local style decisions are considered to be adaptable. For example, Jim Richardson, an *Advertiser* news editor explains that several editors are convening a committee on style guidelines. The committee can decide whether or not to use Hawaiian diacritical marks in text. Richardson (1999) explains that: "Gannett is not so concerned with this and we are able to make local style decisions and carry them out independently". At present there is a wide spectrum of sentiments about the use of Hawaiian diacritical marks. For example, whereas one editor believes that to not use the marks in a paper in Hawai'i is indefensible, others believe that the marks are essentially a haole (Caucasian) invention that do not necessarily demonstrate respect for Hawaiianness and so not using them is acceptable (Richardson 1999).

A comparative content analysis of language usage in *The Honolulu Advertiser* and the *Honolulu Weekly* reveals several important differences in creativity or flexibility in language usage and in moral approaches to use of swear words and "Pidgin" (Hawaiian Creole language) and activities such as drinking. The two publications were examined for language usage in terms of the use of Hawaiian, "Pidgin," slang and swear words, and play on words, as well as for references to food and drink and the arts.

As *The Advertiser*'s style guidelines are not available currently in text form, I consulted with Jim Richardson, who ensured that the *Guide*'s language is "virtually the

same as the style guidelines we follow.” Guidelines with regard to Hawaiian (i.e. *alii*, *kamaiana*, *pau*, *keiki*, *aina*, *kumu...*) and foreign words (i.e. *non*, *merci...*) are:

Hawaiian words

OK to use common Hawaiian words in stories. They give the paper a sense of place and acquaint newcomers with words they likely will encounter over and over. But they must be explained so that all of our readers can understand the story. Think twice before using esoteric Hawaiian words and phrases just for effect.

Foreign words

Italicize on first and subsequent references. Explain what they mean as necessary. Do not put in quotes as wire services do. Hawaiian words and common localisms should not be in italics as they are not foreign words. They should be explained when necessary. Foreign words that appear in Webster's dictionary can be considered to have been assimilated into our language and need not be italicized.(Star-Bulletin 1998)

Well over 90 percent of stories in both publications do not use any Hawaiian words. However, the *Weekly* is twice as likely to use Hawaiian words and is also twice as likely to use multiple Hawaiian words (see Table 6.1). As well, the *Weekly* uses Hawaiian diacritical marks to display more authentic spelling of Hawaiian words. The decision to include diacritical marks was made in order to be more respectful of the Hawaiian language. It took great pains, starting in the summer of 1997, to establish this system and requires constant attention to detail to maintain. Although under consideration, *The Advertiser* does not use Hawaiian diacritical marks.

Table 6.1: Hawaiian Words

| Hawaiian Words | <i>Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| None | 96.9 % (2159) | 92.1 % (615) |
| One | 1.0 % (22) | 3.1 % (21) |
| Two or more | 2.1 % (47) | 4.8 % (32) |
| Total | 100.00 % (2228) | 100.00 % (668) |

The *Guide* also advises writers about the use of “pidgin” in stories (i.e. *brah*, *da*, *ho*, *nah*, *jus'*, *I no tink*, *goin'*, *no moah...*), taking a very conservative stance on the topic.

Although not generally acknowledged, “pidgin,” or more properly Hawaiian Creole English (HCE) is legitimate language with a syntax and vocabulary whose genesis has a most interesting (but often misunderstood) history. It is the first language of many of those who would be properly identified as “locals” in Hawai`i, a term which itself is contested, but which today is contrasted with haole (Caucasian) (see Roberts 1998).

“Pidgin”

Avoid using in stories in any context unless they are common words with well-established spellings, such as “crack seed.” Pidgin is mostly phonetic, with no accepted spelling, and carries a high risk of making the writer or subject of the story look foolish. If you feel you must use it for accuracy or flavor, tread very carefully. (Star-Bulletin 1998)

Both papers rarely use “pidgin,” but the *Weekly* uses it in 3 per cent of stories and *The Advertiser* uses it in less than one per cent of its stories (see Table 6.2).

Since “pidgin” is a spoken language but has no standard orthography, the guide is correct in saying that there is no accepted spelling for “pidgin” words. Still, the real problem is the widespread prejudice that “pidgin” is “bad English” which marks the user as ignorant.

Table 6.2: “Pidgin” Words

| “Pidgin” Words | <i>Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| None | 99.7 % (2221) | 96.9 % (647) |
| One | .2 % (4) | 1.8 % (12) |
| Two or more | .1 % (3) | 1.3 % (9) |
| Total | 100.00 % (2228) | 100.00 % (668) |

Nevertheless, it is true that increased sensitivity to the use of both Hawaiian and “pidgin” does not entail that *Weekly* writers (or editorial policy) have broken what “post-colonial” writers term the “hegemony” of the dominant ideology: capitalist, liberal, and too often racist. As we noted in chapter three, Hawai`i is very much a colonized place and

historically “alternative” newspapers produced by and in the interest of Hawaiians, Japanese, and Filipinos were deliberate attempts to challenge this hegemony.

As was noted in chapter six, while 24 per cent of the population of Hawai`i is haole (Caucasian), some 65 per cent of the workforce of the *Weekly* is haole. One might argue that this is not a terribly meaningful difference however, since it represents a lower ratio than many other institutions engaged in the production of ideas including for example, the University of Hawai`i which is obliged by a well-enforced affirmative action policy. More pertinent is the question of the extent that texts being produced genuinely challenge the dominant ideology, but especially its racist undercurrent. I return to this difficult problem especially in my concluding chapters (where I conclude that the *Weekly* tests the boundaries of this, but does not overcome it). Still, as regards the problem at hand, the differences in the use of both Hawaiian and “pidgin” in the two papers should not be minimized. If, from a “post-colonial” perspective it would be easy to identify the content of the *Weekly* as reflective of a largely haole (Caucasian), middle class, well-educated culture, as we shall see, it is nevertheless true that the *Weekly* acknowledges the particular diversity of Hawai`i in ways that the mainstream paper does not.

The *Style Guide* lists policy on obscenity, profanity and vulgarity:

Obscenity, profanity, vulgarity

Don't use, even in a quote, unless it is absolutely essential to a story. Must be cleared by a section editor and the managing editor. It is pointless to needlessly offend our readers. Let's save our trailblazing for something more important.

Pissed

Unacceptable whether meaning anger, urination or inebriation. Avoid in direct quotes unless absolutely essential to the story. Also see obscenity. (Star-Bulletin 1998)

Here, it is clear that the best action to take is to avoid use of any profanities or vulgarities, classified here as “slang” words (i.e. barf, fart, get off your ass, pissed, piss off...), or “swear” words (i.e. damn, shit, fuck, what the hell, bitch...).

Weekly stories, on the other hand, use profanities, vulgarities and slang words (see Table 6.3) and swear words (see Table 6.4) much more frequently. The frequency of one slang word used in a story is six times more than *the Advertiser* and of two or more slang words used in a story is 155.6 times more.

Table 6.3: Slang Words

| Slang Words | <i>Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| None | 98.5 % (2195) | 16.2 % (108) |
| One | 1.0 % (22) | 6.0 % (40) |
| Two or more | .5 % (11) | 77.8 % (520) |
| Total | 100.00 % (2228) | 100.00 % (668) |

There are no swear words used in any story in *The Advertiser*. *Weekly* stories contain one or more swear word in over eight percent of stories.

Table 6.4: Swear Words

| Swear Words | <i>Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|-------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| None | 100.00 % (2228) | 91.6 % (612) |
| One | 0 | 6.4 % (43) |
| Two or more | 0 | 1.9 % (13) |
| Total | 100.00 % (2228) | 100.00 % (668) |

The *Style Guide* also sets forth clear guidelines on headline writing and the use of political labels in its stories:

Headlines

Be specific, zero in on the main point of the story, use punchy, active verbs. Use single quote marks. No periods, except for abbreviated words. Capitalization is identical to text style; general AP rule: avoid unnecessary caps. Explanatory sentences follow headline style, with one exception: They are complete sentences. Don't omit articles and conjunctions.

Political labels

In general, don't use political labels such as "right-wing" or "left-wing," "liberal" or "conservative" unless individuals or groups describe themselves that way. Instead, explain specifically what an individual or group advocates on a particular issue and let our readers take it from there. Please be attentive to this in wire stories as well as local copy. (Star-Bulletin 1998)

The *Weekly's* approach to writing is markedly different from this. This is illustrated in the use of creative language used in each publication. Whereas *The Advertiser* avoids using creative language and uses a more conservative, descriptive style, the *Weekly* makes extensive use of play on words. For example, a story on growing up in Hawai'i is entitled "*Small Kid Daze*." Many titles are "take-offs" of popular phrases such as "*Join The Crowd*" to highlight a story on crowded housing conditions. Often alliteration is used, as in the title of a story about a brew pub entitled "*Get Your Beer Here*" (also a popular phrase yelled out by concession sales persons at stadium events). Other take-offs on popular culture are also used often, as in a story on the city council entitled "*The City Council Bunch*" laid out to look like the opening graphics of the television show "*The Brady Bunch*" or a story on German food entitled "*Uber Grinds*." Other examples of this are a story on prostitution in Waikiki entitled "*Sidewalk Sale*" that emphasized the commodification of the women on the street, or one on homelessness entitled "*Home Is Where The Cart Is*." (accompanied by a picture of a homeless person lying beside their shopping cart) – using a double meaning of the usual "*home is where the heart is*" and emphasizing the forced nomadic movement of homeless persons in the state.

The findings of the content analysis on "play on words" (see Table 6.5) show that instances of one "play on word" occur in over 78 percent of their articles, 111 times the

rate of use of that in *The Advertiser*. In cases of two or more instances of “play on words,” the frequency is 105 times more than that in *The Advertiser*.

Table 6.5: Play on Words

| Play on Words | <i>Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| None | 99.2 % (2210) | 11.4 % (76) |
| One | .7 % (16) | 78.1 % (522) |
| Two or more | .1 % (2) | 10.5 % (70) |
| Total | 100.00 % (2228) | 100.00 % (668) |

The findings on reference to food, and more particularly drink, and the arts also indicate a more creative, flexible style of presentation in the *Weekly* (see Table 6.6). For example, the frequency of reference to drinking in the *Weekly* is over 12 times that of *The Advertiser*. This could be explained by the younger work force at the *Weekly*, however, older adults drink too. It is more likely that *The Advertiser* avoids references to drinks and drinking in its stories as this would be in line with the more conservative stance they take in general.

Table 6.6: Food and Drink

| Food and Drink | <i>Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| None | 96.0 % (2138) | 85.8 % (573) |
| Food, Restaurants | 2.7 % (60) | 6.3 % (42) |
| Drinks, Bars, Clubs | .5 % (12) | 6.3 % (44) |
| Mixed | .6 % (13) | 1.3 % (9) |
| Other | .2 % (5) | 0 |
| Total | 100.00 % (2228) | 100.00 % (668) |

Also attesting to style differences between the two publications is their attention to the arts (see Table 6.7). Even though the Sunday edition of *The Advertiser* has an arts and entertainment section, the content analysis shows that the *Weekly* devotes more stories to arts-related subjects in every category. In some categories, for example coverage of art house films, the *Weekly* devotes over thirty times more stories than *The Advertiser*.

Table 6.7: Arts

| Arts | <i>Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| None | 89.3 % (1989) | 48.7 % (325) |
| Arts | 2.8 % (62) | 4.0 % (27) |
| Books, Writing | 3.0 % (66) | 3.4 % (23) |
| Dance | .5 % (12) | 3.4 % (23) |
| Film, Foreign, Art House, Documentary | .3 % (7) | 9.1 % (61) |
| Movies, commercial, blockbuster | 1.9 % (42) | 6.6 % (44) |
| Music | 2.1 % (46) | 18.4 % (123) |
| Theater, Opera | .2 % (4) | 5.7 % (38) |
| Museums | 0 | .6 % (4) |
| Total | 100.00 % (2228) | 100.00 % (668) |

Style Matters

An examination of how style is used by both publications reveals several critical differences. It is evident, from this discussion, that the *Weekly's* style, and therefore approach to news telling, is not only markedly different from that of *The Advertiser's*, but that it is also less conservative and more creative and political. But the different styles used by both publications are also linked to owners' and workers' beliefs about the social order. For example, it is evident that style defines the social categories within which people live and the communities of which they are a part. As Ferrell argues:

Style serves as a ready and visible medium for negotiating status, for constructing both security and threat... To participate in a community – large or small, ethnic or ideological, criminal or noncriminal – is therefore to participate in style as collective action. When members of a community each choose particular haircuts, clothes, or postures, they knowingly and unknowingly engage in collective behavior – collective behavior lodged in the particular styles adopted. Collective style serves, in Durkheim's terms, as the social glue that holds subcultures and communities together; whether intentionally or not, it is to declare one's membership. (Ferrell 1995, p. 175-6)

However, the findings of this research indicate that there are differences in style as collective action or behavior at the *Weekly* and *The Advertiser*. Here, we can see that style is also embedded in larger social forces. For example, Ferrell argues, that style exists in a complex web:

of individual identity, groups interaction, market forces, and meaning – that is, a sort of stylized political economy of everyday life. For each person style becomes the medium for “presentation of self” and for defining that presented self as lodged within the larger stylistic orientations of the group, subculture, or community. These orientations, though, do not emerge from within the group alone but under the weight of heavy advertising campaigns, manipulative marketing strategies, and media saturation. Gang members, graffiti writers, and others invent their own styles less than they literally and figuratively buy into various sectors of mass, commodified fashion markets, and then homologously rework and reinvent the stylistic fragments that they pry loose for their own purposes. Reconfigured in this way, these styles do, in fact, come to represent internal group identity, but in so doing point once again beyond the group itself. At the level of capitalist commodification, these styles are often reincorporated into the mass markets from which they come, in an unfolding dialectic of subcultural innovation and market appropriation. Of more interest here, group styles become in everyday life *epistemic* and *symbolic* markers through which those *outside* the group also “read” group membership and subcultural identity, and thus come to “know” who is a gang member or graffiti writer. That is, these styles acquire further layers of meaning in the intricacies of social interaction. (Ferrell 1995, p. 177-8)

Style is involved in political and economic processes in that it is embedded in a media system that is largely a commercial enterprise that stands to gain from projecting certain ideological perspectives about the centrality of the economy, morality, propriety, and decorum. Style becomes the vehicle for transmitting an important sub-text of ideological understandings.

For Gannett, as a corporation, decisions flow from the top. All interactions are bureaucratized, workers must appear to be professional, be careful not to make waves, keep their noses clean and not offend anyone. The particular structure that is Gannett must aim at profits and, accordingly, this shapes all their decisions about newspapers which, in turn, defines the workworld of their staff and their product – a superficial, conventional, “objective” treatment of news.

However, the findings of this research indicate that on a political scale, style as communicated by the *Weekly* has more to do with resistance to conservative politics. The *Weekly* utilizes a “hip” style to project liberal ideological understandings about the social

order. Challenging more conventional journalistic approaches, language and office procedures are also creative, playful, flexible, vibrant and soulful. *The Advertiser* uses a conservative style that appears to have more to do with maintaining the status quo.

While the *Weekly*'s style usage suggests a more critical treatment of capitalism: as an economic system it also celebrates it. And it is here that the divisions are much less clear for both publications speak to a market. The *Weekly* speaks to a dichotomized market. On one side are the more politically radical "have-nots" that are the topic of many stories about social decay. On the other side is the more yuppie, or niche, market that perhaps sees social injustice in present political and economic conditions, but stops short of calling for major alterations there for fear of losing the system that has served them well. Both groups are spoken to clearly in the language of "hip." Although this is only one way to speak to an audience, it is the primary way in which alternative newsweeklies communicate. *The Advertiser*'s use of language and style is directed at a more mainstream, "family" market and as such, uses more traditional approaches and styles in their newstelling. "Hip" is no where to be found. In reality, social life is vibrant, creative, polemic and ironical. The *Weekly* uses "hip" to speak to this.

In *The Advertiser*, style is a dispassionate vehicle that masks conservative ideological underpinnings. In both publications, style is involved with ideology. In *The Advertiser*, the use of a "bland style" masks an often subtle but profound ideology.

CHAPTER 7: IMAGE IS EVERYTHING – THE POLITICS OF MAINSTREAM AND ALTERNATIVE NEWS RHETORIC AND REPRESENTATION

What is it that newspapers tell us when they address issues in the news? One of the “pictures” is regarding objectivity itself. Those who put newspapers together have been socialized as to what a newspaper is. And one of the routines of news construction is to deal with news by dividing it as in symbolic territory (see Nimmo 1980; Nimmo 1983; Sigal 1973). In this way, newspapers satisfy within their own norms of professionalism that they deal with objectivity and professionalism. One of the divisions lies in articles being labeled “op-ed” or “news analysis” as opposed to “news.” “Opinion” becomes “news analysis” and the rest is seen, or socially coded, as socially ambivalent as in sections such as “leisure” and “home.” But certain kinds of things drive content and this becomes a kind of bias as in a structural bias of question asking.

Cultural theory raises another set of questions about bias and about what kinds of things are embedded in news and why certain categories are not evident such as “colonialism” or “the social place of women.”

Written language uses rhetorical devices to tell a story. Examining rhetorical features of for example, newspaper accounts, enables us to understand more clearly how stories are constructed and what their main features are. Variations in the use of rhetorical devices produce distinctly different appearances in news accounts for readers. Information is therefore “framed” differently depending on variations in the rhetorical features of a story.

Scant literature exists on variations between mainstream and alternative newspaper accounts. Mainstream discussions focus on the importance of “objectivity” and “political ideology” in their news frame. Alternative media claims to use a news

frame that is oppositional to these. What are the differences and the similarities? And what distinct appearances, if any, of news accounts are we left with as readers, depending on which accounts we read? These are important questions that need to be addressed if we are to understand more clearly that *how* a story is told is as critical to our understanding of events as *what* a story is about.

The purpose of this chapter is to more clearly understand, comparatively, the ways in which news material is presented in mainstream and alternative print media. First, two predominant rhetorical devices – political ideology and objectivity – will be discussed in terms of how they are commonly understood and measured in the mainstream news media. Second, claims made by alternative media about their differences from mainstream accounts will be outlined. Third, data from the content analysis of *The Honolulu Advertiser* and the *Honolulu Weekly* will be examined to determine predominant rhetorical features. Results of the overall findings will be presented first and then a selection of narrative examples will be used to illustrate the overall findings. Fourth, the data will be analyzed comparatively to more clearly and systematically map out differences and similarities in the news frames of mainstream and alternative media accounts. Without content analysis, we are often left with a murky picture of media content from which to base our understandings.

This chapter focuses on three main research questions. First, what are the prevalent features of the newspaper articles in terms of their use of rhetorical devices? Second, what are the predominant similarities and differences between them? And third, how do these relate to the previously discussed claims and assumptions of mainstream and alternative media? Before examining the content analysis data, it is helpful to map

out discussions of what members of the media provide as explanations of predominant news frames. Two common discussions in the mainstream media have to do with political ideology and objectivity.

The Liberal News Bias

Examining the political ideology of the news media is not an easy task. This is so for a number of different reasons. First, and as mentioned previously, political ideology is dependent on many factors, not the least of which are history, culture, economic orientation and organizational structure. And second, contrary to a growing and convincing literature on the subject of political ideology and media content, there is a commonly held belief that media organizations and the news are overwhelmingly “liberal” in their political slant (Chomsky 1997).

Common understandings about the left-leaning ideological slant of the news media have been arrived at in several different ways as a recent article by Hickey (1998) explored. First, the position is simply a taken for granted and commonly held belief that is promoted by the opinions of journalists, readers or viewers. For example, when Rupert Murdoch started his Fox News Channel (FNC), (an all-news cable network in 1996 at a cost of \$475 million that is available in approximately 25 million American homes), promotional announcements flashed pronouncements like “Trust,” “Fairness and balance,” and “We report, you decide.” As well, clips of viewer mail were used that read:

“Finally, objective journalism... you’re long overdue.”
“We are thrilled with the unbiased and fair coverage.”
“Fox News Channel has boldly earned the right to declare they are fair and balanced.”
(Hickey 1998, p. 30-31)

An example of this technique of determining the extent of liberal bias of the media is where a story on a network newscast simply asks the question: "Are the media too liberal?" The findings of an unofficial poll such as this were presented on a nightly newscast. The reporter concluded: "Viewers reported in the majority that the media is too liberal" (Chomsky 1997). Another example promoting this view is from a Wall Street Journal op-ed piece in February 1996 that read:

CBS newsmen Bernard Goldberg hurled a hand grenade at his colleagues, saying: "The old argument that the networks and other 'media elites' have a liberal bias is so blatantly true that it's hardly worth discussing anymore." Even Walter Cronkite declared last year that most journalists "are probably tilted toward the liberal side." (Hickey 1998, p. 31)

And:

Brit Hume is even more vocal in defending FNC's ideological tone. "Surveys repeatedly and unfailingly show," he says, "that most viewers believe television news is biased, but most journalists insist the public is wrong. Our view is that the public is onto something, and that there are a lot of people out there whose sensibilities are continually offended by what they see on the other news networks." FNC does not "pander to the right," he insists, even though a lot of conservatives might flock to the network if it did so. (Hickey 1998, p. 33)

And Murdoch himself, when considering the ways in which his network would differ from the rest, decided to focus on: "... his conviction that most TV journalists are far more liberal than the population as a whole." (Hickey 1998, p. 31)

Second, the position has been arrived at by surveying newswriters as to their professed ideological leanings. For example:

In a 1996 Freedom Forum/Roper Center survey of 139 Washington-based newswriters, 61 percent of the sample professed to being either "liberal" or "liberal to moderate," and a paltry 9 percent "conservative" or "moderate to conservative." (Hickey 1998, p. 31)

Or it is measured by roughly determining how many "left wing" or "right wing" journalists are hired by different media outlets. The following passage illustrates this technique:

although you're far more likely to encounter conservative panelists like columnist Cal Thomas, Washington Times writer Liz Trotta, Weekly Standard staffer Tucker Carlson, right-wing humorist P. J. O'Rourke, and Nixon confidante Monica Crowley, you'll also spot a few notables from the left like Democratic speechwriter Robert Shrum and former White House lawyer John Quinn, as well a handful of undefinables from the vague center like McLaughlin Group veteran Morton Kondracke and Washington Post staffer Juan Williams. Only two well-branded and confessed liberals have a regular weekly spot on the schedule: Jeff Cohen and Laura Flanders of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), who alternate in the assigned leftie chair on Eric Breindel's News Watch series, which also includes a bonafide rightie (often John O'Sullivan of the National Review) and a putative centrist like the Los Angeles Times's Jane Hall. (Hickey 1998, p.33)

Another news analyst noted:

If you look at the number of conservatives in broadcasting altogether, there are almost none! There are an awful lot of people who would not admit they are liberals. But they are. They really are! Is there a single conservative on the air at NBC News? A single one at CBS? (Hickey 1998, p. 34)

Third, the position is substantiated by associating it with journalists' political party affiliations. For example, one study of the formal political party affiliation of reporters indicated that: "In 1992, Bill Clinton got 89 percent of their votes, George Bush 7 percent" (Hickey 1998, p. 31). Often, "left-leaningness" is associated with favoring Democrat party members, and "right-leaningness" with likewise coverage of Republicans:

A talk show guest, Tim Graham of the Washington-based Media Research Center, declared it "outrageous" that the indictments of two Clinton cabinet members received only "eight or nine seconds of network airtime," and that "so many Clinton scandals don't get sufficiently covered." The host, Eric Burns, wondered if that was because "the media are so liberally biased." Graham answered that if one compares Clinton's coverage to Ronald Reagan's, it's "hard to conclude that there isn't a liberal bias here." He added: "Clearly you can say there's a liberal bias when you've got CNN's president staying in the Lincoln bedroom and nobody seems to care at CNN." (Hickey 1998, p. 32)

Indeed, the sentiment that there is a "liberal bias" in the news is so strong that there is a great debate among some journalists about the need to provide a counterbalancing perspective. In this way, if media agencies are accused of being too conservative for instance, they contend that, by presenting stories from a *more*

conservative stance, they are actually being more “fair” and “objective.” They see themselves as providing a counter-balance to the overly liberal approach of mainstream media. For example, FNC overseers comment that: “The left already has a giant megaphone at all the other cable and broadcast networks”(Hickey 1998, p.33). This has led many commentators to the conclusion that the media needs to be much more conservative in order to balance the liberal bias. For example, Fox news chairman and CEO Roger Ailes stated that he:

makes no apology for trying to be fair and objective and reaching out to points of view that the mainstream media probably will ignore. But does that require that all the hosts of FNC talk shows be right of center? “How many conservatives do they have over at NBC?” Ailes counters. You need only watch their news, he says, to conclude that they’re liberal. “Do you think there’s any doubt about where Peter Jennings stands? Dan Rather? I don’t.” (Hickey 1998, p. 33)

News agencies are presented then as having a *responsibility to be conservative* because any overly conservative coverage would not be tolerated. For example, another FNC analyst and host, Fred Barnes, states:

the network isn’t as conservative as it has a right to be. The way to balance the news, he says, is to offer coverage “that’s quite candidly conservative” as a useful counterpoint to “the more liberal tendencies of the other networks.” But Kim Hume... FNC’s Washington bureau chief, argues that top Administration figures would boycott a self-branded, overtly conservative network. (Hickey 1998, p. 33)

The So-Called Liberal News Bias

Although reporters and news agencies have been accused of being too “liberal” (see Weaver 1991), there is a fundamental problem that needs first to be considered: what counts as “liberal.” Historically liberals were those who advanced the claims of liberty (freedom) and who therefore rejected Feudal and quasi-Feudal forms of society. They promoted “free enterprise” (capitalism), “constitutional democracy,” civil liberties, including rights of free speech, free press and free association, and political liberties such

as the right to vote. Twentieth century liberals agreed to all of this even if sometime after the New Deal period in America, “liberal” began to be associated with the Democratic Party and more generally with the idea that government had to play a role in sustaining capitalism. Even if there are arguments as to exactly what role needs to be played (no one denies, for example, that income and property must be taxed and that government must play a role in stabilizing the monetary system) there remains a broad consensus, shared by both media and the wider population in America that is properly defined as liberal. This “bias” excludes voices from the left who believe that substantial change in the institutions of American society is required if indeed “freedom” for all is to be realized. For example, Herman, Chomsky and Lewis argue that:

The bulk of the evidence shows that the spectrum of opinion goes from center to right. While voices on the left are generally absent. (Chomsky 1997)

Why would this be? Michael Parenti has argued that the exceptional power of media organizations has changed their form and messages to be more in line with the ideas and ideals of those who stand to gain the most from increasing their profits:

It is not enough to bemoan the biases of the make-believe media; we need also to try to explain why they exist in the form they do. What is called “mass culture” today is a communication universe largely owned and controlled by transnational corporations. These corporations are highly concentrated capital formations whose primary functions are (1) *capital accumulation*: making a profit for their owners and investors; and (2) *ideological legitimation*: supporting an opinion climate that is favorable, or at least not hostile, to the continuation of profit-making and corporate economic dominance. (emphasis in original) (Parenti 1992, p. 181)

Like Parenti, Chomsky, Herman and Lewis (1997) suggest that the reasons for this discrepancy are the agenda-setting role of the news media and their tremendous ability to structure communication to their liking. Chomsky, et al. argue that the agenda then becomes narrowed to one acceptable question, for example “Are the media too

liberal?" They state that questions such as this are at best unsupported and at least inarguable. As an example, they put forth:

There is massive independent research that documents the fact that the media are extraordinarily subordinated and influenced by wealthy business, conservative interests and external power. Now, when you have that power, the best technique is to ignore all that discussion totally and to eliminate it by the simple device of asserting the opposite. If you assert the opposite, that eliminates mountains of evidence demonstrating that what you're saying is false. That's what power means – and the way you assert the opposite is by saying "the media are liberal." So then the questions that are discussed, the only ones allowed to be asked, are "Are the media too liberal?" or "not too liberal?" (Chomsky 1997)

Starting and maintaining a media agency today requires an immense amount of capital. Therefore, there is great emphasis placed on media agencies' ability to make profits and fit with the ideological vision of their owners and investors. As a result, news telling is shaped by at least two definitive conditions. On the one hand, the news must be in line with the values of the organization's decision-makers. And, on the other, it must be based on growth in circulation or viewership to ensure advertising revenue and increasing profits. Take the case of Murdoch's FNC:

Derek Baine, an analyst at Paul Kagan Assoc. Inc., points out that cable networks need a critical mass of about 30 million subscribers before advertisers show up in force — which means an outlay for News Corp. of \$300 million just to buy circulation, plus the normal budget for covering the news. Says Baine: "Murdoch has always been willing to spend a lot of money to get what he wants." Meanwhile, FNC's 25 million subscriber base (projected by Ailes to be 40 million by 2000) trails MSNBC's 38 million and CNN's 73 million, but the actual tuned-in audience for each are tiny fractions of those numbers except when there's a gulf war, an O.J. Simpson trial, or explosive revelations about alleged sexual misbehavior in the White House. FNC's twenty-four-hour average audience, for example, on the day the Lewinsky story broke was 159,000, or five times its normal viewership. (Hickey 1998, p. 35)

Chomsky, et al. argue that systematic or empirical media analysts miss the point by resorting to asking questions of journalists rather than systematically analyzing news media content. For example, they state:

If you want to show that the media are too liberal, then you would try to show that it has

a slant or a distortion supporting a liberal agenda. Nobody does this. That would take a little work and if you did it, you'd immediately fall on your face because it works the other way. So what's done is to produce a proposal that's so idiotic that you have to wonder at the cynicism of the people putting it together and the contempt for the population. The proposal is this: let's ask journalists, how do you vote? - This is how the alleged "liberal bias" of the news media is investigated. If 80% vote democratic, we've now proven that the media is too liberal. It proves nothing. The differences between Democrats and Republicans is virtually nil. These are just two arms of the business party, they are virtually indistinguishable. There are marginal differences in constituencies and policy decisions, but they basically reflect the same system of power. (Chomsky 1997)

In the more recent past, beginning perhaps with claims made by Spiro Agnew, Vice-President under Richard Nixon, American conservatives have seen a "liberal" bias in the media. But this depends upon more specific differences within the broader consensus on specific issues. In my effort to code the political content of the two newspapers I provide some criteria for discriminating along a continuum from "liberal" to "conservative."

This makes a beginning also on the problem raised by Chomsky, namely, that there is no empirical evidence to sustain claims about the putative "liberal" bias in mainstream media.

Objectivity (and impersonal relations) in the News

A major problem to do with the analysis of news is what counts as "objectivity." The particular conception of "objectivity" that is widespread is part of liberal political ideology. It is a naïve positivism which holds that there is a radical bifurcation of "fact" and "value," that "values" have no place in "objective" reporting, and that there is no problem in establishing "facts" which are theoretically neutral. In *Discovering the News*, Michael Schudson describes "the ideal of objectivity" as:

consensually validated statements about the world, predicated on a radical separation of facts and values... not the final expression of a belief in facts but the assertion of a

method designed for a world in which even facts could not be trusted. (Schudson 1978, p. 122)

Attesting to the widespread belief in and use of “objectivity” as a perspective from which to tell news stories, Schudson characterizes the situation as: “the twentieth century’s passion for ‘objectivity’” (Schudson 1978, p. 121). He argues that the rise of the “democratic market” and its encouragement of social relations was based not on traditional authorities and personal relations, but rather on objectivity. He states:

In a democracy, the people governed, not the ‘best people,’ and one vote was as good as another. In the market, things did not contain value in themselves; value was an arithmetic outcome of a collection of suppliers and demanders seeking their own interests. In an urban and mobile society, a sense of community or of the public had no transcendent significance, and, indeed, one responded to other people as objects, rather than as kindred, and trusted to impersonal processes and institutions – advertising, department stores, formal schooling, hospitals, mass-produced goods, at-large elections – rather than rely on personal relations. All of this focused attention on “facts.”... what Alvin Gouldner has called “utilitarian culture,” in which the normative order moved from a set of commandments to do what is right to a set of prudential warnings to adapt realistically to what *is*. (Schudson 1978, p. 121)

Thus “the passion for objectivity” is itself ideological in exactly the sense that it masks political ideology.

Both assumptions have been extensively challenged, even in the physical sciences where one would suppose that “objectivity” in this sense reigns. There is a consensus that there are very few, if any, theory-neutral facts and that accordingly, what one brings to the inquiry in the way of assumptions affects what counts as a “fact.” (see Kuhn 1970). It is not that there is no possibility of “objectivity” in this view. Rather, objectivity is the product of critical review of all claims by the relevant scientific communities. Ultimately, “facts” are then the outcome of consensus by the relevant scientific communities – pertinent then to the availability of alternative, critical sources of news and entertainment.

It is not merely that the media decide *what* to report, but that they decide also *how what is reported is framed*. Political economy is a filter at the first level. But this explains at the second level, why it is that media go for the sensational, why they forego causal analysis, and prefer to entertain rather than inform.

There is a growing body of literature by media critics and theorists that critiques the “liberal” and “objective” media position and its proponents. For example, Ben Bagdikian (in Hickey), former journalism dean at Berkeley, argues:

the slogan “We report. You decide” translates to mean: “We decide what news you hear, and you make up your mind based on what we tell you.” Murdoch has never been known for giving balanced news in his newspapers or broadcasts... If he has had a religious experience, we have yet to see the results. (Hickey 1998, p. 34)

And Robert W. McChesney, associate professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, states: “The slogan “We report. You decide.” is “ludicrous,”... since they decide what to report”(in Hickey 1998, p. 34). Hickey (1998) concludes:

nobody can object to a “fair and balanced” news service, nor one that simply “reports” and lets you “decide.” [But] Those terms have become a marketing device and a fig leaf for Fox staffers who are otherwise perfectly candid... about their right-of-center convictions. But the same yardstick must apply to them as they demand from their competitors: keeping the hard news pristinely free of ideology. (Hickey 1998, p. 34)

Although correct in his assessment of the slogans “...fair, balanced, and letting viewers decide” used more as a marketing device, Hickey’s argument is flawed in that it fails to account for the concept of power. It is more likely that the news will reflect the political ideology of powerful media owners and investors and decision-makers that stand to gain the most from the status quo. As long as the news is put together by people, it will never be free of ideology. The proof of determining the degree of use of political slant and objectivity as presented in the news is in the proverbial pudding – the rhetorical

features and frames of the news content. But what news frames do mainstream and alternative media organizations profess more particularly?

Mainstream and Alternative News Frames

Among other things, mainstream media, consisting of print and broadcast journalism, have been described by media critics and theorists as relying on sensationalism, reporting stories with little or no depth, and being increasingly concerned with entertaining rather than informing the public (see Coffey 1994; Faludi 1993; Postman 1985; Tuchman 1978). Bagdikian (1990) describes mass media as typically profit-driven, where stories are presented based on more conservative or mainstream values. Mainstream media have also been described as remaining largely uncritical of the issues they report and tending to provide more superficial accounts of events (see Mazzocco 1994).

Alternative media, a realm of media growing out of the '60s underground press of the civil rights movement, claims to be both diverse and oppositional to more mainstream media. In comparing the differences between mainstream and alternative journalism, Walljasper (1994b) states:

Although mainstream journalists now are up to speed on issues like the environment and tattoo artists, they still rarely challenge the basic assumptions of our culture. They stop short of asking the fundamental questions that underlie discussion of issues like crime, education, transportation, and cities...The answers to these questions often point to abuses of corporate power, a topic off-limits in many publications. I would add that the mainstream media rarely critique our culture's worship of efficiency, technology, hierarchy, and progress, which leads to the typical journalistic conclusion that if

something is bigger, faster, newer, or more complicated, then it must be better.
(Walljasper 1994b, Nov/ Dec: p. 155)

Contemporary alternative media, formed in opposition to more traditional journalism, claim to operate on some common assumptions: It is important to report on

the lives of those who have been negatively affected by global economic forces, to provide alternative views from those typically depicted, to cover issues in people's everyday lives, and to reveal the political motivations behind many of the activities in society. As Walljasper (1994a) explains:

The alternative press is important... in providing a crucial counterpoint to the ironclad assumptions arrived at by councils of experts and editors... [it] is necessary to help fill in the gap between the world that many people experience in their daily lives and the world that is beamed back at us by the media. I've always been amazed at what a thin slice of the American scene gets portrayed in newspapers, magazines, TV, radio, books, and movies... Not only does the mainstream press overlook the working class in America (until they break the law), it also tends to characterize people's setbacks as personal failings. (Walljasper 1994a, Jan/Feb:142-3)

In discussing the historical differences between the mainstream and alternative press and the future of alternative journalism, Utne (1994) optimistically describes the new social movements of the 1960s in North America as providing the:

seed of an emerging culture that is now quietly and steadily transforming every institution in the land. And the central nervous system of this culture- the alternative press- is reporting, documenting, and encouraging these changes with more impact than the conventional press has yet realized and to a readership growing faster than anyone can imagine. I've counted over 2,000 change-oriented periodicals across America, and more pop up every year. The picture of reality you get from these periodicals looks decidedly different from the world views presented by the mainstream press.(Utne 1994, p.52)

And recent studies show considerable growth in the alternative media in the U.S. in general, and in Hawai'i as well (Patner June 19 1990; Torres June 1993).

Unlike more mainstream media, such as the daily *The Honolulu Advertiser*, alternative publications, such as the *Honolulu Weekly*, claim to provide a mechanism for people to voice many different views and to question authority:

Because alternative press publications are not the journals of record, they're biased. They don't pretend to be objective. New ideas surface in the alternative press first, not in coverage by trend-watching journalists, but in speculative musings or passionate polemic from the thinkers and visionaries themselves. The alternative press is where the emerging culture first reveals itself. (Utne 1994, p. 56)

An *Advertiser* employee's comments underscored the importance of remaining "balanced" and "objective" and indicated concern that *The Honolulu Advertiser's* owners' quest for profits was hampering this goal:

The quality of the paper suffers because of Gannett's greediness. So, we follow a standard approach to news telling including remaining objective and often trying to balance opinion, but the whole paper suffers due to the lack of funds put into investigative reporting and the view that the paper is a money making enterprise first and foremost. (Field Notes 1998a)

Comments by another *Advertiser* employee indicate that definitions of the mainstream press rely on their "objectivity" to distance themselves from the alternative press:

We're different than them. We're more objective and we don't pay much attention to them. They aren't really even a newspaper per se. I don't have time to read them... I mean every once in a while I will... but they seem to do more "advocacy journalism" and that's not what we do. If I want to read the news other than what we do here, I read the L.A. Times and the New York Times. Those are big, important papers and that is real news. (Field Notes 1997b)

It cannot be denied, of course, that an alternative paper is not, as the writer says, "even a newspaper per se." But defenders of the alternative press make no claims that they are a "newspaper" in the sense that they are organs of record. Rather, it is precisely their point that differences between *The Advertiser*, the *L.A. Times* and the *New York Times* are all well within the defining "liberal" frame and that they alone provide a necessary "alternative."

Many alternative media organizations claim to hold less faith in the value of "objectivity" in presenting the news. They describe themselves as being more critical of convention as well as more liberal in the political slant of their articles (see Armstrong 1981; Walljasper 1994b). For example, one *Honolulu Weekly* employee commented:

We don't look to the dailies for inspiration. We look at the other alternative papers and see what they're doing. And of course here, we are all following the same news. We are all in the same place. But we try to cover what the dailies don't or won't touch. Or we cover the same type of story in a different way, from a different perspective. Whether its our arts or politics coverage - I think that what exemplifies the best of the alternative press is its mix of perspectives in a story, like the use of first person. Our stuff is more political, more rabble rousing, meant to stir things up and expose wrongdoings. Our stories have more of a human face... the face of someone who the story is about not just an expert on the subject. They are local, definitely something that is affecting a local community. They are meant to inform people, educate them, help them to understand the issue. We try to be timely, and tie in with something coming up where a decision is about to be made or a hearing is going to happen... so that people can get involved. And, we take a tone that is fun, humorous or friendly. (Field Notes 1997a)

Scant literature exists on content analyses of news frames that comparatively examines both mainstream and alternative media forms. The foregoing discussion indicates that mainstream media claim to use a more liberal, balanced and objective news frame. Alternative media claim that this is not the case. They see mainstream media accounts as more conservative and detached. Alternative media claim that they themselves present news accounts from a more liberal stance, and focus more on human interest and political stories aimed at effecting change.

The question remains: what are the contours of alternative and mainstream news frames? And, if the parameters of alternative (and often mainstream) media are not well mapped, where could we begin?

Based on the previous discussion, mainstream and alternative news making assumptions make up news frames. These news frames are more clearly seen by examining "rhetorical features" of news accounts. As there has been more claims-making by the alternative media about their differences from mainstream accounts, clues as to where to start to measure claims are more plentiful for alternative media. However, this research uses six framing variable characteristics to map news content. They are:

story timeframe, quotes, approach, voice, tone and politics. They are summarized in Table 7.1 (see Table 7.1).

Table 7.1: Alternative and Mainstream Media Rhetorical Claims

| Rhetorical Feature | Alternative Publication Claims | Mainstream Publication Claims |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Timeframe (past/present/future) | "Cutting edge" trends, where culture emerges from. | Current / "breaking." |
| 2. Quotes (long/short/none) | Other voices included. | Expert voices. |
| 3. Approach (more detached/ more personal) | More Personal. | "Objective." |
| 4. Voice of author (more suppressed/ more explicit) | "Explicit," more focused on everyday lives or first person. | "Objective" distancing from subjects and as author. |
| 5. Tone (serious/light) | Light, creative, humorous, or polemical. | Serious- journal of record. |
| 6. Politics (conservative/ liberal/ neutral / mixed) | "Liberal:" challenge basic assumptions of issues like crime, education, transportation, and cities... often point to abuses of corporate power, critique efficiency, technology, hierarchy, and progress. | "Liberal:" as measured by party affiliation, political slant of commentators, monitoring news casually over time. |

Methods

The unit of analysis of this chapter is the article. The data set was coded for six variables to do with rhetorical devices used in the delivery of substantive news material (see Table 7.2). The timeframe of articles is used to measure whether or not *Weekly* articles are focused on future events (and therefore "where culture emerges from") or *The Advertiser* articles are more focused on current or breaking news. The frequency of quotes used in articles is used to measure whether voices other than the author's are used in newspaper accounts. The approach of a story or author is used to measure whether or not there is a more personal or "objective" presentation of newspaper articles in one or the other publications. The voice of the author is used to measure the level of objectivity or subjectivity in the articles. Alternative publications claim to have more of a sense of humor, a flexibility or a creative approach to writing and this was measured using the code of serious or light tone. Alternative publications are also more vehement in their

claim of being more liberal than the mainstream press and so the code for politics measures for liberal, conservative or mixed political stance.

Table 7.2: Coding Variables

| Rhetorical Feature | Coding Categories | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|---|---|
| 1. Timeframe | Future | Current or breaking | Follow-up (1-10 years) | Historical |
| 2. Quotes (use of) | None | Short (2 sentences or under in length) | Long (3 sentences or more in length) | Mixed (use of both short and long) |
| 3. Approach (of story or author) | More detached | More personal | Mixed with more detached | Mixed with more personal |
| 4. Voice (of author) | More explicit | More suppressed | | |
| 5. Tone (of story) | Serious | Light | Mixed – combinations of tone | |
| 6. Politics | More conservative | More liberal | Mixed | |

The overall findings of the content analysis for rhetorical devices presented next reveal many comparative differences between the publications.

Overall Findings

The first variable, “timeframe,” describes when an article takes place. This variable contains the categories “future” where the action is going to happen in the future, “current, breaking or new,” “follow-up” which are articles that cover events that had happened within the previous 1- 10 years, and “historical” where the action happened over 10 years ago.

In terms of the “timeframe” of articles in both publications (see Table 7.3), stories that are “current, breaking or new” are overwhelmingly the most frequent types. Although the *Weekly* has slightly less articles from a current timeframe when current and future are combined, it almost evens out. The “future” category contains articles that are going to happen after the article appears in the newspaper. Therefore, the weekly versus

daily publication of the newspapers interferes with this result. The *Weekly* contains more “future” oriented stories because it is printed only once a week and therefore covers more events that are about to happen in the coming week. In terms of stories about the past, there is a sharp difference with the *Weekly* being seven times more likely to run follow ups of recent past events and *The Advertiser* nearly three times more likely to run stories that are historical. This could have to do with the fact that *The Advertiser* is a much older publication than the *Weekly*. *The Advertiser* has files that go back a century whereas the institutional memory of the *Weekly* is less than ten years old.

Table 7.3: Timeframe*

| Timeframe | <i>Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Future | 6.8 % (152) | 10.8 % (72) |
| Current, breaking, new | 86 % (1917) | 80.4 % (540) |
| Follow up (within last year to 10 years) | .8 % (19) | 6.1 % (41) |
| Historical (> 10 years ago) | 6.3 % (140) | 2.2 % (15) |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

* = $p > .001$ $df = 3$

The second variable, “quotes,” characterizes the use of quotes, if any, used in each article. Categories of this variable include “none” for articles containing no quotes, “short” where there are quotes of two sentences or under in length, “long” where there are quotes of three or more sentences in length, and “mixed” where both short and long quotes are present.

Findings from the analysis of the variable “quotes” (see Table 7.4) indicates that the majority of articles in both publications contain no quotes whatsoever. And the overwhelming majority of articles in both newspapers contain either no quotes or use short quotes. The likelihood of others’ voices used in articles through quotes is also

similar. Therefore there is no evidence to support the contention that the alternative press includes more voices in their articles than the mainstream press.

Table 7.4: Quotes*

| Quotes | Honolulu Advertiser | Honolulu Weekly |
|---------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| None | 52.1% (1161) | 60.2% (402) |
| Short | 46.7% (1041) | 36.7% (245) |
| Long | .9% (21) | 3.1% (21) |
| Mixed | .2% (5) | 0% (0) |
| Total | 100% (2228) | 100% (668) |

* = $p > .001$ $df = 3$

The third variable, “approach,” measures the approach that the author of the article took in presenting the material. Here, the categories include “more detached” where the approach is more detached, emotional language or surmise is suppressed or absent, and where the author does not reveal his or her motivations or personal thoughts about the information. The category “more personal” characterizes an article that is delivered in a more personal manner and where there is more of an expression of the individual author(s). Then there are categories of “mixed” with more or less detached or personal characteristics.

The findings indicate a large variation in “approach” by the two publications (see Table 7.5). *Weekly* stories are overwhelmingly (97.9 %) personal while *The Advertiser* stories are evenly split between detached and personal style. These findings support the alternative contention that mainstream approaches are more “objective” and dispassionate and the alternative paper is more subjective and biased.

Table 7.5: Approach*

| Approach | Honolulu Advertiser | Honolulu Weekly |
|----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| More detached | 42.5 % (947) | 1.9 % (13) |
| More personal | 47.7 % (1063) | 97.9 % (654) |

Table 7.5: (Continued) Approach*

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Mixed with more detached | 5.4 % (120) | .1 % (1) |
| Mixed with more personal | 4.4 % (98) | 0 |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

* = p > .001 df = 3

Further to this, *The Advertiser's* “more subjective or personal” approach is not exclusive to the “Op-Ed” (Focus) section (see Table 7.6). Whereas the “Focus” section contains slightly more “subjective or personal” stories than “objective or detached,” the majority of other sections contain more “subjective” than “objective” content. The “Hawaii” section contains more “objective” information than any other due to the high degree of notification articles and short pieces on things like crimes committed in various neighborhoods. The “Focus” section has a “balance” of “objective” – “subjective” content most likely due to its commitment to the ideal of “balance” in things such as opinion as well.

Table 7.6: Advertiser Story Approach by Newspaper Section

| Approach | | More detached | More personal |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Section | Cover | 39.7 % (341) | 60.3 % (517) |
| | Hawaii | 61.6 % (418) | 38.4 % (258) |
| | Focus | 47.5 % (161) | 52.5 % (171) |
| | Island Life | 40.6 % (85) | 59.4 % (124) |
| | Business | 44.44 % (40) | 55.56 % (50) |
| | Travel | 39.1 % (9) | 73.9 % (17) |
| | Homestyle | 35.1 % (13) | 64.9 % (24) |
| Total | | 47.8 % (1066) | 52.2 % (1161) |

Total N= 2228

The fourth variable, “voice,” measures the voice that the author uses in the article. For example, the category “more explicit” describes an article where the author reveals his or her own voice more so than not. In this code, authors use more first person, human face or mixtures of these and other voices and rely more on individuals to tell the story. “More suppressed” indicates an article where the author speaks in a more detached form

and relies on the use of third person, expert or mixtures of these and other voices. Expert voices are, for example, those of local government and business representatives.

The “voice” that the stories take in the two papers differ in important ways (see Table 7.7). For example, the vast majority of *Advertiser* articles (approximately 93 %) are presented in a “more suppressed” voice. Conversely, the *Weekly*’s findings indicate that over 67 % of articles use a more explicit voice. The findings indicate that whereas *The Advertiser* uses more third person voice (where information is presented in a more detached manner), the *Weekly* uses more first and second person voice (with more “I” and “you” statements and a “human face”) which tends to create a more personal and “friendly” presentation.

Table 7.7: Voice*

| Voice | <i>Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| More suppressed. | 93.2 % (2077) | 32.9 % (220) |
| More explicit. | 6.8 % (151) | 67.1 % (448) |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

* = p > .001

The fifth variable, “tone,” describes how “serious” or “light” in tone the information is. This variable includes the categories “serious,” “light,” and “mixed” categories which indicate combinations of tone.

The “tone” of the two publications’ articles also shows some important differences (see Table 7.7). *The Advertiser*’s articles take an almost exclusively serious (94.7 %) or mixed with more serious tone (2.4 %) for a total of 97.1 per cent of all its articles. The *Weekly* has a somewhat lighter tone as it contains much fewer articles that are serious (37 %), but more that are mixed with more serious (59 %) for a total of (96 %) of all articles. This is achieved largely by mixing in a bit of lightness, creative expression or humor in stories that are predominantly serious. These findings do support the claim

that alternative accounts are more light, creative, humorous and polemical, but not as strongly as their assertions suggest.

Table 7.8: Tone*

| Tone | <i>Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Serious | 94.7% (2117) | 37.0% (248) |
| Mixed, more serious | 2.4% (53) | 59.0% (394) |
| Light | 1.6% (36) | 2.1% (14) |
| Mixed, more light | 1.0% (22) | 1.8% (12) |
| Total for both papers | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

*= $p > .001$ $df = 3$

The sixth variable, “politics,” measures the political stance taken in an article.

The variable includes the category “liberal.” This indicates a stance, for example, that tends to promote active government, support redressing inequalities (but without altering the existing social structure), express concern over social problems such as labor or feminist issues, be more secular, and/or acknowledge that increased law enforcement and more severe punishments are not the only response to crime. The category “conservative” indicates a stance that is more conservative in that it tends to be opposed to big government, support market approaches and solutions, hold that existing inequalities are more or less fair, defend “family values”, promote religion, and / or favor increased law enforcement and more severe punishments as the solution to crime. The category “neutral” indicates a more detached stance and one where the information simply seems to be imparted and a clear political slant is not evident. A “mixed” category is for those articles whose stance is less clearly attributable to one of the other categories.

Findings from the analysis of the variable “politics” indicate striking differences between the two publications (see Table 7.9). The *Weekly* is heavily liberal, while *The Advertiser* articles are more distributed across the political spectrum. The contrast is

sharpest in the liberal category, which accounts for three quarters of *Weekly* stories and only a quarter of *Advertiser* stories.

Table 7.9: Political Stance*

| Political Stance | <i>Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Liberal | 23.7 % (528) | 75.9% (507) |
| Conservative | 35.4 % (788) | 15.6% (104) |
| Neutral | 38.2 % (850) | 8.4 % (56) |
| Mixed /Other | 2.8 % (62) | .1 % (1) |
| Total for both newspapers | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

*= p > .001 df = 3

Excerpted narrative examples of the different categories on three separate story topics follow.

Excerpted Narrative Examples

The following two sets of excerpts briefly illustrate rhetorical features and representations of film reviews and the role of the Hawaii Visitor and Convention Bureau as used in both publications. A third example is used to illustrate a story topic used more exclusively by mainstream newspapers – that of “notification.”

The narrative excerpts are of *The Advertiser* and *Weekly* film reviews.

(1.1) *Film Review, The Honolulu Advertiser, “Hollywood kept adult fans in mind this Christmas”:*

Grown-ups must have been very, very good this year, because Santa Claus’ Hollywood division is rewarding them with a sleighful of worthy movies. Children on the other hand, might feel their stockings look a tad understuffed, at least by comparison. Not that the stars attached to kid-oriented holiday films are anything to sneer at: There’s Michael Jordan and pal Bugs Bunny in “Space Jam,” Arnold Schwarzenegger in “Jingle All the Way” and Glen Close and lots of spots in “101 Dalmatians.” There are dramas both classical (“Hamlet”) and intensely contemporary (“Ghosts of Mississippi”), and romances that are fanciful (“Preacher’s Wife”) and soulful (“Breaking the Waves”). Humor isn’t ignored (“Mars Attacks!” and “Mother”) and even the musical, that faded genre, is making a comeback (“Evita”). And for filmmakers caught in this holiday traffic jam, competing for audiences as well as industry attention for Academy Award nominations, it’s stress-inducing. “It’s like watching your baby crawl across the freeway,” said Scott Hicks, director of “Shine,” a wrenching Australian drama based on the life of brilliant, emotionally disturbed pianist David Helfgott. Thoughtful films such as “Shine” and “The English Patient” are squaring off with other thoughtful films, as well as with the

sundry blockbuster such as Sylvester Stallone's latest action derby. Movies such as "Shine" can fight back with sharp advertising – "Shine's campaign emphasizes the musician's triumphs not tragedies – and with attention from impressed critics. Hicks is certain there's an audience for his film: "It's a matter of reaching them [the prospective audience], and giving themselves permission to go see 'Shine.'" (HA 1.50. 01.01.96. D10)

The "timeframe" of this article was coded as "current." "Quotes" used was coded as "one." "Approach" taken was coded as "more personal" due to the author's more personal delivery of the information and the inclusion of his personal opinion. The "voice" was coded as "more suppressed" as the author does not refer to himself or herself and his or her own feelings on the subject and does not address readers more directly as in, for example, speaking to them as "you" or "your." The variable "tone" was coded as "serious" as the author is offering a critique of the film and candidly advising potential viewers on that basis. Finally, the variable "politics" for this article was coded "conservative" due to its outright embrace of the market economy and its relationship to the Hollywood movie industry.

Overall the article uses bland, if not condescending, language (for example: "...grown-ups must have been very, very good..." and "movies can fight back with sharp advertising"). As well, the article overwhelmingly emphasizes what is positive about Hollywood movies (for example: "Santa Claus' Hollywood division is rewarding them with a sleighful of worthy movies..."). The article also suggests wide-scale choice (as in: "... the stars attached...", and "there are dramas... both classical... and intensely contemporary... and romances that are fanciful... and soulful..."). The film industry is presented here as very earnest and as if there is real competition to win audience attention with great range and quality (as in: "... for filmmakers caught in this holiday traffic jam, competing for audiences as well as industry attention for Academy Award nominations,

it's stress inducing..."). The understanding that we as readers are left with, is to go see all of these movies. Overall, the article is essentially an advertisement for the movies it supposedly offers a critical assessment of.

(1.2) Film review, Honolulu Weekly, "Alien (ated)":

Embarrassingly bad but hugely expensive Hollywood "blockbusters" usually don't get the scathing reviews they deserve until they come out on video. Knowing which side of the (downsized) bread is buttered, and by whom, our (nonfamous) national newspaper critics usually give big-budget bombs safely lukewarm reviews, biding their time until the turkeys finish their theater runs, and then lambaste them. When powerful studios have really expensive losers to pimp, they know how to manipulate the largely compliant puff-press. A few favors called in, a little money spread here and there, and the bad news is softened or delayed a little – that's worked ever since Lucille Ball's *Mame*, George Lucas' *Howard the Duck* and, most recently, Francis Ford Coppola's *Jack*. Add to that list director Tim Burton's desperately uneven, amazingly extavagent *Mars Attacks*, a comedy – though in this context, that word should always be in quotation marks. It's a space opera spoof that saves itself from being a complete disaster only because it finally wobbles into place in its last 15 minutes or so, when the special effects, deliberately cheesy, bludgeon us with computer-generated know-how. However, *Mars Attacks* is clearly in trouble – especially if the 12- to 15-year old set doesn't have enough money to see both it and *Beavis and Butthead Do the World* (a much better movie, by the way). *Mars Attacks* will probably have the biggest second-week box office drop-off since *The Frighteners* or that Eddie Murphy Vampire flick. Funny? Well, sort of... sometimes. The most accurate comparison to its humor is to that of one of those in-front-of –the – brick-wall, untalented stand-up comics, all hostility and self-hatred, railing at his half-drunk audience on one of those late night cable comedy shows. It's difficult to know, sometimes, whether the movie is about flying-saucer aliens attacking Earth (in alleged parody of those low budget sci-fi flicks of the '50s) or about an alienated, self-destructing director attacking his Hollywood masters. It's supposed to be deliberately bad, this movie, but not this bad. Not in a long time has so much on-screen talent been stranded on the screen with nothing to do except lure suckers into their theater seats. The biggest stars here are encouraged to overact monstrously, as if that in itself were automatically funny – and, occasionally, the movie does intermittently sputter to half-life – but the big laughs just aren't there. Apologists will be quick to point out that Tim Burton loves bad, cheesy movies and that his last (low-budget) film was *Ed Wood*, and inventive tribute to no-talent director Ed Wood. Before that film, Burton directed the darkish *Batman Returns*, an odd movie that the good ladies of the Beverly Hills/Hancock Park Hollywood thought-police decided was anti-Semitic, launching a campaign against it; that's a dirty little secret you won't hear about on "Entertainment Tonight." Whatever its reasons, *Mars Attacks* seems, finally, an angry, alienated film, solacing itself with expensive, violent F/X – and perhaps the amusement of seeing how much it can get away with. No, *Mars Attacks*, Warner's big holiday release, is not an awful movie. It's worse than that: It just isn't very good, and certainly not worth your time. (HW. 12/18/96 55.P.14)

The "timeframe" of this article was coded as "current." "Quotes" used was coded as "none." "Approach" taken was coded as "more personal" due to the author's more

personal delivery of the information and the inclusion of his personal opinion. The “voice” was coded as “more explicit” as the author refers to himself and his own feelings on the subject and addresses readers as “you” and “your.” The variable “tone” was coded as “serious” as the author is offering a critique of the film and candidly advising potential viewers on that basis. Finally, the variable “politics” for this article was coded “liberal” due to its criticism of the market economy and its relationship to the Hollywood movie industry. The article also appears to be critical of the role of reviewers in the power relationships of the Hollywood movie industry and their complicitous promotion of poor quality blockbuster movies.

Comparatively, this article uses strong language (such as: “turkeys” and “really expensive losers to pimp”) to build its critical assessment. It is highly critical of the film industry and the “puff press” as evidenced in the phrases: “...embarrassingly bad but hugely expensive Hollywood “blockbusters,” and “...usually don’t get the scathing reviews they deserve until they come out on video.” It also strongly suggests corruption on the part of the studios (as in the phrase: “... powerful studios... know how to manipulate the largely compliant puff press.” And “...a few favors called in, a little money spread here and there, and the bad news is softened or delayed a little...). The patrons of such movie offerings are constructed as “suckers” (as in: “Not in such a long time has so much on-screen talent been stranded on the screen with nothing to do except lure suckers into their theater seats...”). And recommends to more discerning moviegoers to save their money and pass on this Hollywood blockbuster (as in: “No... *Mars Attacks*, Warner’s big holiday release, is not an awful movie. It’s worse than that: It just

isn't very good, and certainly not worth your time."'). Not going is a common recommendation in the *Weekly*, particularly for blockbuster-type movies.

The next set of article excerpts draws on information from two different types of articles – editorial and news items. It is standard practice for mainstream daily newspapers to make a distinction between “op-ed” articles, which are supposed to present more subjective views of an editor, community or other experts, and “straight news” articles, which are conversely supposed to be more “objective.” Alternative newsweeklies make no such distinction. They do not claim to be “objective” and one result of this is that they contain no “op-ed” sections. Their articles are demarcated more so based on topic areas such as “culture,” “politics,” or “community.” That the mainstream newspapers demarcate their articles in this way is interesting in that they insinuate that information found inside the “op-ed” pages is “subjective” and that therefore articles placed outside of the “op-ed” pages are “objective.” This leaves readers’ with the impression that the newspaper is mostly “objective” news copy. However, this is simply not true. The distinction between “op-ed” and “news” items is false as the entire product of a newspaper is more or less subjective. If this was not the case, then all newspapers would present all the news that happens everyday. Alternative newsweeklies do not make the same demarcation. The content analysis codes of “approach,” “voice” and “tone” provide a clearer understanding about the “objectivity” of newscopy that is at a deeper level than how the organization marks information itself (in this case as “op-ed” or “news”).

The following article is about the role of the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB).

(2.1) HVCB editorial, The Honolulu Advertiser, "HVB chief – New leader must set a mission":

Most people understand that tourism is key to our economy. But they have a hard time accepting the idea that they should pay to promote the industry. That feeling is reflected in the criticism and micro-management that comes to the HV&CB from the legislature. New studies may help prove the link between promotion expenses and tax revenues returned. Intuitively, everyone may recognize that dollars spent on promotion mean more visitor-derived tax dollars. But hard numbers will make the tale easier to tell. Still, it takes more than statistics. The next head of the bureau must have the leadership and marketing skills to "sell" tourism at home in the Islands as well as overseas. ...If marketing were the entire story, the state might want to simply consider putting this big advertising contract out to bid. But if there is more – research, strategic planning and leadership into new and evolving forms of tourism – then there is a huge continuing role for the Hawaii Visitor & Convention Bureau. And that is what's needed. Hawaii's tourism industry is changing. It's no longer sufficient to simply let the world know that we are here. As soon as possible, a new head of the HVCB must be chosen who has the charisma, leadership skills and imagination necessary to take our No. 1 industry into the 21st century. (HA. 03/02/97 12:42)

Variables for this article were coded as follows. The variable "timeframe" was coded as "current." "Quotes" used as "none." "Approach" was "more personal" due to the more personal approach taken and that the author shared his opinion. The "voice" taken was coded as "more explicit" as it talks about "most people" and "we." The "tone" taken was coded as "serious." In terms of "politics", the article was coded "conservative" for its boosterish and uncritical approach to the role of tourism in the state's economy.

The article plainly depicts tourism as key to Hawai'i's economy (as in: "...tourism is key to our economy."). Further, it suggests that to have knowledge (as in: "... most people understand...), is to understand this concept of tourism as being central to the economy. Only the ignorant, therefore, would not agree to pay for or otherwise support this precept (as in: "But they have a hard time accepting the idea that they should pay to promote the industry.). This situation is evidenced in: "...the criticism and micro-management that comes to the HVCB...." The situation is presented as a problem to be solved and those who criticize the precept are dissenters – or part of the problem, not the

solution. What is the solution to the problem? The answer lies in hiring an appropriately-minded and aggressive businessperson (as in: “The next head of the bureau must have the leadership and marketing skills to “sell” tourism at home in the Islands as well as overseas...”).

(2.2) HVCB article, Honolulu Weekly, “The HVCB’s \$53.6 Million Trip – The Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau wants to double its state funding, supporting private interests at public expense”:

The HVCB – the private organization contracted by the state’s Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism to promote Hawaii as a tourist destination – wants to take a trip at the expense of the taxpayers. The HVCB’s plan, still somewhat under wraps until the governor and the legislators can be lobbied, is to ask the 1997 Legislature to *double* the HVCB’s state funding. When asked about this, the HVCB at first attempted to stonewall. Chief spin doctor Gail Chew, even after having developed a proposal to more than double her own public-relations budget, responded, “I don’t know anything about that.” But HVCB documents show that plans to ask for increases in state funding are well along. Astoundingly, the HVCB wants to go from its current state appropriation of \$24 million to \$53.6 million in the 1997-1998 fiscal year and to \$61.5 million in 1998-1999. All this from taxpayers. The HVCB is made up of visitor industry representatives who are engaged in the pursuit of their own private interests. As a result, the HVCB has never been known for its altruistic pursuit of what’s best for Hawaii. It has always been known for its willingness to ask for more taxpayer money to be used on behalf of its private interests. [In the past] it ... has learned to take full credit for the increasing number of visitors to Hawaii even though it had very little to do with it.... [it] also learned how to con the state into more and more money for things like kickbacks of pork (travel and tickets to trade fairs, for example) to friendly legislators, travel to Europe for entourages of VIPs, \$500,000 for a 1992 TV commercial that never ran and even memberships for its then president... in two country clubs. (HW. 55.5. 12.18.96)

Variables for this article were coded as follows. The variable “timeframe” was coded as “current.” “Quotes” used as “one.” “Approach” was “more personal” due to the use of a more personal approach and emotional language, and that the author shared his opinion. The “voice” taken was coded as “more suppressed” as, even though the information given is quite candid, the author uses more of a third person voice in the article. The “tone” taken was coded as “serious.” In terms of “politics,” the article was

coded “liberal” for its concern over the misallocation of government funds to a quasi government organization.

The *Honolulu Weekly*’s treatment of the HVCB is constructed critically. Descriptors of the goings on at the agency are strong (as in: “...taking a trip at the expense of taxpayers.”). They also suggest greed and mistrust (as in: “... to ask ... to *double* the HVCB’s state funding.” and “...chief spin doctor... developed a proposal to more than double her own public relations budget...”). The article strongly suggests that there is a powerful hidden agenda – that public monies are being pursued for private gain (as in: “The HVCB is made up of visitor industry representatives who are engaged in the pursuit of their own private interests... it has always been known for its willingness to ask for more taxpayer money to be used on behalf of its private interests”). It also describes the agency as ineffectual (as in: “...it... has learned to take full credit for the increasing number of visitors to Hawaii even though it had very little to do with it...”). And corrupt (as in: “...it... also learned how to con the state into more and more money for things like kickbacks of pork...”). In short, the *Weekly* piece describes the HVCB as a greedy, ineffectual, and corrupt arm’s length agency that is completely unworthy of receiving any more, if any at all, government funds through taxpayers. We are encouraged to think very critically of the organization and those in charge of it. This is far from a typical treatment of a tourism-related agency or topic in Hawaii.

Some local writers and other constituents in *The Advertiser* are critical of the large sums of money given to the Hawaii Visitor and Convention Bureau (HVCB) from the state in light of budget cuts to human services, education and other social services. Some articles on the subject of tourism are critical of the role of the HVCB for first,

being publicly funded but largely serving to increase profits of private businesses who the public believes can well afford to pay for their own advertising (Trask 1993). Others suggest that the state should actually be looking to diversify its economy and stop touting tourism as the number one industry. They argue that doing so has lead us down a precarious economic path in which the state distributes greater concentrations of funds to a local “growth coalition” and at the same time becomes increasingly dependent on foreign investment (Kim 1994).

(3.0) Notification article, The Honolulu Advertiser, “Plan to improve radio reception for police cars in local tunnels”:

The city plans to improve police radio reception in the Pali and Wilson tunnels by installing a series of cables and antennas through each portal. “Currently, police cars lose much of their radio reception as they go through the tunnels,” said Randall Fujiki, director of the city Building Department, which is proposing the project. Plans call for cables to run through each tunnel and for dish antennas to be mounted outside of the tunnels to improve receiving and transmitting signals. Fujiki said he hopes the system will be in operation sometime this year.... (03/02/97 HA 12:27)

The “timeframe” for this article was coded as “current.” “Quotes” used was coded as “one.” “Approach” taken was coded as “more detached” due to the more detached manner of delivery of the information and the lack of any personal opinion of the author in the information. The “voice” used was coded as “more suppressed” as the article relies on a third person account from a government agency and an “expert” representative or city administrator for its information. The “tone” of the article was coded as “serious.” Although its sole source, Mr. Fujiki, could be considered a more conservative and an expert source, the article’s politics is not particularly charged one way or another. This article simply imparts information in a more detached manner. It can therefore not be coded as “conservative” or “liberal” and was coded as “neutral.”

Since, unsurprisingly, a comparative article in the *Honolulu Weekly* could not be found, the point to be made here is just that notification articles of this sort are in abundance in a “real” newspaper and are nearly totally absent in the “alternative press.” Newspapers compete for contracts to publish more formal government notifications (such as for Government job and legal notices). At the beginning of this research, these formal notices were published in the daily newspapers. When it came time to renegotiate this contract, the dailies missed the deadline. Consequently, these more formal notifications are now published in the weekly *Mid-Week* shopper. On a less formal level the dailies perhaps feel a responsibility to notify the public of occurrences such as this as a public service. However, there are two interesting points to be made here. The first is that notification articles are usually written in a dispassionate, detached manner. This is consistent with the style of the dailies at large and so their wide-scale display as news accounts is not at odds with mainstream publications. Indeed, this functions rhetorically to perpetuate the image of “objectivity.” Second, notifications are inexpensive filler. They can be written up quickly off of public announcement notices that are regularly sent by government agencies to media outlets. Journalists can write up notifications without so much as even having to make a phone call of inquiry. This is much less expensive journalism than other types, such as that requiring investigation or research.

Discussion

From these findings, we can make some important substantiated observations about the similarities and differences in use of rhetorical devices by the two publications. First, there are more differences than similarities in the rhetorical devices used by both publications to frame articles. The most striking differences are the *Weekly's*

overwhelmingly more personal approach and explicit voice, mixed with more serious tone, and liberal political stance. Other differences lie in *The Advertiser's* focus on historical events, more detached approach, and its overwhelmingly more suppressed voice, serious tone, and conservative politics.

Overall, the findings support the claims made by alternative media about their own rhetorical features as well as their differences with those of mainstream accounts.

Work along these lines helps us to more systematically examine the claims made by both types of papers as to their framing of events as well as to their role in the media system. For the most part, the findings substantiate the claims made by and about alternative media's role and framing of events. Although the findings indicate there are some similarities, there are certainly more differences in the use of frames by the two types of publications.

One critical difference must be restated here. The alternative paper self-consciously produces "advocacy journalism." In the mainstream paper, advocacy is identified and contrasted with "objective reporting." But the reader needs to be wary. First, he or she is very apt to accept uncritically the idea that what is not labelled "opinion" is "fact." My analysis supplements the arguments of Bagdikian and others regarding the bias in determining what is selected as newsworthy and what is not with an analysis of the rhetoric of what is selected. The impression of "objectivity" is accomplished rhetorically by writing which is consistently detached and impersonal, by suppressing the voice of the writer, by offering texts which deliberately lack humor, sarcasm, irony, etcetera. The *Weekly* does not risk this confusion but, of course, it does

so at perhaps a heavy price: the price of losing its legitimacy as a vehicle of understanding and influence.

Second, mainstream articles which are acknowledged “opinion” pieces are loaded with non-explicit ideological content. This is well illustrated in the comparison of the two movie reviews.

The *Weekly* differs in norms of professionalism and objectivity on several important counts. First, unlike a mainstream paper, it is not a “journal of record.” Aside from the earlier discussion of the *Weekly*'s similarities to being a newspaper, it is not a *real* newspaper and is more like a magazine structurally. Second, it abjures the whole notion of objectivity and in so doing, the *Weekly* feels it goes beyond the self-image of image. It does not respect the segmentation of distinction between professionalism and objectivity. Third, the *Weekly* has its own set of structural conflicting biases, one example of which is the link between advertising and news content that censors the questions that can be asked. And fourth, there is similarly a cultural bias within the *Weekly* that is as unreflective and insensitive about social issues as is evidenced in the cultural categories. For example, the *Weekly* is essentially a haole operation. It tries to get around this by including more language that is “Hawaiian” and “pidgin” (Hawaiian creole). In this act of setting Hawaiian aside, it tries to appropriate a Hawaiianess that is not there. It is a false pretension.

Print media are highly socially constructed artifacts, and the ways that they are framed speak to their underlying assumptions about the social structure. Gitlin (1980) outlined the relationship between more radical and more liberal, or reformist groups with the media. His study found that those more radical were quickly marginalized and

deligitimated, whereas those more reformist were shown as more moderate. In the end, neither group, whose ideas were filtered through the news frames of the media, were successful at making any real change in the hegemonic order. This, coming from the claims of the media as a social change agent, shows that the alternative paper is much more “liberal” and reformist in its presentation of news stories than the mainstream paper. Although the alternative paper does not “cross the radical line,” it does go up to it by taking risks in departing from journalistic convention, and challenging more conservative notions of “proper” politics, approach, voice and tone.

Giddens’ (1984) structuration theory discusses how there are both intended and unintended consequences of social action. The findings of this study indicate that social agents of the alternative paper have been largely successful in attaining their intended consequences of using news frames that challenge more mainstream approaches. However, the everyday activity of these social actors essentially draws upon structural features of the wider social system, in this case those standards set by more mainstream publications, and produces variations of those themes.

These findings reveal that the rules and resources and generalized framing techniques used at the alternative paper are similar to those techniques used by the more mainstream paper. However, these frames are also the means of system production and they both draw upon and are contingent on larger mainstream structural features. In this way, they produce alternative structural features within the wider Hawai’i media system.

In this case, the alternative paper has been largely successful at reaching its intended goal. However, as Giddens’ (1984) points out in his discussion on the duality of structure: “...the structural properties of social systems do not exist outside of action but

are chronically implicated in its production and reproduction”(Giddens 1984 p. 374).

Due to its reliance on the liberal capitalist system, the alternative paper does not fundamentally contradict the hegemonic order, but instead works, often at odds with it, but always within it. From here, it may have the effect of moving journalistic conventions away from their more conservative assumptions. The issues this raises about the role of the alternative media in the overall media system help us to explore variations on social systems that would create openings, and offer more enabling conditions for more media organizations to better realize being alternative and perhaps even being radical.

CHAPTER 8: RADICAL CHIC AND THE READER'S PROFILE – THE ROLE OF ADVERTISING IN MAINSTREAM AND ALTERNATIVE PUBLICATIONS

Paul Miller, when he was chief executive officer of Gannett, told his peers: And let us remind readers regularly, in editorials, in our promotional advertising, in speeches to civic groups and others, that advertising helps people live better and saves them money. This fact needs constant selling. (Bagdikian 1990, p. 150)

Newspapers are in the business of information. But what is the information they are reporting? This study would be remiss to leave out a comparative analysis of the two newspaper organizations as business operations with particular consumer orientations, continually searching for specific “target” markets. To understand newspapers in this way sheds much light on a frequently left out analysis of the very active role of newspapers in the social construction of news as linked to specific readers’ characteristics as well as to the construction of readers as consumers.

The Advertising Filter

Herman and Chomsky (1988) argue that advertising is an increasingly powerful determinant of media concentration that has the ability to drive out: “an alternative framework of analysis and understanding that contested the dominant systems of representation.”(1988). Centrally concerned with “audience quality,” “successful” contemporary media organizations match advertisers’ products to appropriate buyers. The mass media become increasingly interested in attracting those with the ability to buy their products, not those who can not. The idea that mass media organizations are somehow democratic because of their quest for new, larger markets is flawed in that in this democracy, the system of representation is weighted by income. This chapter will use aspects of the advertising filter to examine the newspaper practices at *The Honolulu Advertiser* and the *Honolulu Weekly*.

The following set of questions is germane to the discussion: How dependent are the two Honolulu newspapers on advertising revenue? Who are their readers? How do the newspaper organizations create an environment that is enticing for present and potential advertisers? And what are the relationships between the three groups: the newspaper organization employees, the advertisers and the readers? These question can best be addressed by examining the factors surrounding the development of the publications, their circulation systems, advertisement ratios and affiliations, regular columns or sections, and their target markets and reader's profiles. It is helpful to set the context for an account of the development of urban alternative weekly newspapers. We then take a closer look at the comparative operations of *The Honolulu Advertiser* and the *Honolulu Weekly*.

Commercialization and Newspaper Organizations

Since the late 1800s, there has been an increasingly strong relationship between newspaper organizations and businesses through advertising (see Shore 1988). This had the effect of not only the increasing commercialization of many newspaper organizations, stifling the creativity and variability of the scope of editorial opinion and offerings as well. As Ewen (1977) noted:

Newspapers, which throughout the nineteenth century had provided an arena for literary serialization and popular expression and whose diversity had provided for varied audiences, became increasingly commercialized and centralized in their direction. From 1900 through 1930 the number of daily newspapers in America declined steadily if not monumentally. More important, there was an even greater decline in the existence of a diverse press. In 1909-10, 58 percent of American cities had a press that was varied both in ownership and perspective. By 1920, the same percentage represented those cities in which the press was controlled by an information monopoly. By 1930, 80 percent of American cities had given way to a press monopoly. The role and influence of advertising in all of these developments is marked. In the period 1900-1930, national advertising revenues multiplied thirteen fold (from \$200 million to \$2.6 billion), and it was the periodicals, both the dailies and others, which acted as a major vehicle for this growth. (Ewen 1977 p. 62)

Seen as an answer to the problems of mass production, mass advertising promised to partner products with “consumers.” Elevated sometimes even to the level of spiritualism, many leading citizens of the day spoke of mass demand and advertising as a glorious process, signifying the heights of civilization and foreshadowing the hopefulness of the American dream. As Bagdikian stated:

In 1926 the president of the United States, Calvin Coolidge, said: Mass demand has been created almost entirely through the development of advertising.... The most potent influence in adopting and changing what we eat, what we wear, and the work and play of the whole nation... Advertising ministers to the spiritual side of trade.... It is a great power... part of the greater work of the regeneration and redemption of mankind. (Bagdikian 1990, p. 149)

Bagdikian further argued that newspaper organizations filled a key role in the process of commodification:

If advertising was part of “the regeneration and redemption of mankind,” then the newspapers, magazines, and broadcasters that got paid for the ads were its appointed agents on earth. They began the process of adapting their content to the needs of advertising and of adopting its ideology as their own. They also adopted the ingenious practice of their advertising sponsors: They charged the readers and viewers for propagandizing themselves but told audiences they were getting something for nothing. (Bagdikian 1990, p. 149-50)

They were needed as a business and power mechanism by large businesses and increasingly became owned by them:

Mass advertising is no longer solely a means of introducing and distributing consumer goods, though it does that. It is a major mechanism in the ability of a relatively small number of giant corporations to hold disproportionate power over the economy. These corporations need newspapers, magazines, and broadcasting not just to sell their goods but to maintain their economic and political influence. The Media are no longer neutral agents of the merchants but essential gears in the machinery of corporate giantism. And increasingly they are not only needed but they are owned by the corporate giants. (Bagdikian 1990, p. 150)

Advertising and The Development of Urban Alternative Newsweeklies

As explained in chapter four, alternative newsweeklies developed out of the underground press of the 1960s. However, they are a particularly interesting case because of the essential tension between their socially progressive politics as their content focus blended with their need for economic viability.

One of the first urban newsweeklies to stake claim to a market was the *Village Voice*. Armstrong (1981) argues that alternative newsweeklies developed from three interrelated sources:

The urban weeklies that came of age in the seventies are hybrids incorporating features of several older publications and types of publications. The *Village Voice*, for one, is a marked influence. The *Voice* was the first American weekly newspaper to successfully “target” the young, mobile, educated, urban reader with both advertising and editorial content. The *Voice* covered what that group wanted to read about: theatre, film, books, art, city politics, and the politics of race, gender, and class. And it told readers where to find their hip oases in the concrete jungle. In the process, the *Voice* greatly aided the growth of off-Broadway theatre and the prosperity of small merchants who catered to the market of young urban professionals. Equally importantly, the *Voice* did all that with literacy and wit which the alternative periodicals... respect and to which they aspire. (Armstrong 1981, p. 277)

The second major influence on the development of a marketing approach used by alternative newsweeklies has been that of the urban “shopper.” Usually a colorful weekly newspaper, they are comprised of only a few regular news columns, and are filled with advertisements for local goods and services, (which includes the grocery store flyers for the week), and emphasizes bargains and shopping savings through coupons and articles. The alternative weeklies adopted the free circulation of the shoppers, as well as their focus on service-oriented classified and display ads.

A third source of influence in the development of the consumer orientation of alternative newsweeklies was that of *New York* magazine. As Armstrong notes:

Founded in 1968 as a spinoff of the deceased *New York World Journal Tribune*, *New*

York soared in popularity in the early seventies with breezy, provocative formula writing and ads geared to affluent “upscale” readers. Published weekly on glossy paper, *New York* expertly combined shopping tips (a guide to ten great places to find croissants after midnight) and consumer muckraking (mouse droppings on the premises of the croissant manufacturers). (Armstrong 1981, p. 277-278)

The consumer orientation of alternative weeklies was shaped by targeting an upscale, “hip” market interested in arts, politics and entertainment, and appealing to their desire for local services to leverage their buying power, in other words, get a good deal, and their interest in consumer abuses and protection.

The Advertising Filter – Mainstream and Alternative

We can understand the fundamental but often more hidden aspects of newspaper organizations’ operations through the advertising filter. Advertising income is the lifeblood of alternative and mainstream organizations. Without advertising revenue, neither newspaper organization would be in business. Both organizations place a heavy emphasis on advertising as a fundamental revenue generator. Connected to this, is the matter of circulation.

Circulation

The Advertiser’s newsstand price is .50 cents per Monday to Saturday issue and \$1.75 for the Sunday paper. Home delivery reduces the price to .31 cents per Monday to Saturday issue and \$1.50 for the Sunday paper (Field Notes 1998a). *One Advertiser* employee downplayed the benefits of charging a price for the paper by saying: “The revenue from the cover price barely covers the cost of the ink, not newsprint or circulation” (Field Notes, HA. 12.09.97). The *Weekly* is circulated free of charge. Although the free paper could be seen to be at an advantage due to the possibility of more widespread appeal of its “free” price, the situation is more complex than this. For

example, the *Weekly* has one principal money generator, aside from the initial private investors' contributions, and that is advertising revenue. Conversely, the revenues generated by the cover price on *The Advertiser*, however modest, complement those also raised through advertising. The free paper at first glance seems to have a business advantage. For example:

Free circulation has undoubted advantages for publishers. It reduces the amount of returns (unsold papers, or papers not picked up by readers); eliminates the handling of small change by merchants, distributors, and readers; and allows publishers to expose their papers to more readers (the *Bay Guardian's* circulation nearly doubled to 40,000 after the paper went free) without requiring a commitment on the part of the reader to purchase the paper. Some two-thirds of the NAAN members give away their papers. (Armstrong 1981, p. 293)

However, there are many other disadvantages:

The business advantages to free circulation are, however, more than offset by disadvantages on the editorial side. It is difficult for editors of a free-circulation paper to gauge reader response to editorial content. Letters to the editor and readers' remarks are helpful, but seldom representative, since only people who care deeply about something bother to write or call a periodical. Issue sales are a more reliable indicator, but for free-circulation papers there are no issues sales. That makes advertising the main measure of reader response: did the paper's audience clip and return so-and-so's discount coupon, or patronize such-and-such a store that was featured in the supplement on outdoor gear? Free circulation fundamentally changes the relationship between a periodical and its readers. In place of constituents who pay to support a paper they like are consumers whom the paper delivers as a market to advertisers who, in turn, bankroll the paper. (Armstrong 1981, p. 293-4)

We can infer that offering a paper free of charge causes a newspaper organization such as the *Weekly* to be more dependent on advertising dollars. But the story does not stop here. Circulation is political. If circulation is increasing, you are wise to broadcast this. If it is declining, many prefer to keep this information to themselves. HNA publications have been experiencing declining circulation recently in part due to the prolonged economic downturn in the state. However, the HNA, feeling competition from the *Weekly* and other publications, refuses to disclose this information publicly as I can

attest. And, as the following publisher's letter demonstrates, the *Weekly* emphasizes its growing circulation in relation to declining numbers for the dailies:

While *Honolulu Weekly* has forged a growing, loyal readership, the Hawaii Newspaper Agency (HNA, the company that manages the business efforts of *The Honolulu Star-Bulletin* and *The Honolulu Advertiser*) has seen its circulation drop. As I have predicted since the *Weekly* was only a gleam in our investors' eyes, our circulation will eventually outstrip that of the afternoon daily. Back in 1991, *Honolulu Weekly* printed 15,000 newspapers and the *Star-Bulletin* had a distribution of over 90,000. The *Weekly* now prints 43,000 copies each week. The latest audit shows that the *Star-Bulletin's* O'ahu circulation (excluding employee copies) is down 24,500 in seven years to 65,500. Over the most recent five-year period as of the first quarter of 1998, the *Weekly* is up 40 percent and the *Star-Bulletin* is down by 22.5 percent. No wonder Gannett Corporation sold it and bought the *Advertiser*. HNA tries to keep this audit information from its readers and advertisers, so it can justify increases in advertising rates each January despite declining circulation. HNA pays ABC auditing service good money to produce an audit statement every month – but just try to get a copy from HNA's advertising department. (HW 07.15.98 p. 4)

The "Look"

Upon inspection, the two newspaper organizations' products have different appearances. *The Honolulu Advertiser* is a morning paper. It is delivered door to door by carriers, and circulated to stands and businesses around the state. The *Weekly* is only available on stands, mostly on the Island of O'ahu. *The Advertiser* has a more conservative "look." For example, the front page is mostly black and white. The only color used is usually in the form of a center photograph with occasional small color splashes in corner areas dedicated to such items as weather forecasts. These are relegated to areas on the frontpage margins. Color is used throughout the publication, mostly in advertisements and many of these are full-color glossy magazine style ads, all with coupons. A large section of advertisements as "flyers" are tucked in each issue. The page count of these flyers varies from 1 to 4 pages on weekdays, to over 45 pages in Sunday issues.

The *Weekly* achieves a different look. Here, color is used extensively, as are widely varied font sizes and styles. The orientation of the print throughout is often changed so readers will see a caption going sideways or even upside down as if in a reflection. The publisher and editors of the *Weekly* attempt to make the cover visually striking with the use of color, varied scripts, and many illustrations, photographs and artists' renderings that grace every cover. The publication is made to look appealing and therefore to be picked up off the stand. Achieving the proper look is important. There are significant resources devoted to the "look." It is one employee's sole task to develop and coordinate the cover and cover story artwork for each week's issue (Field Notes 1996).

For example, when the *Weekly* was putting out an anniversary issue, the publisher, editors and art director agreed that the cover should be special. They placed a subdued photo of a local artist on the cover with the caption "Anniversary Issue" on it. One reader wrote a letter to the editor about how she liked this change in style. However, the cover art returned to its usual style in the next issue. The art director explained:

We have to look different than the rest of the papers in town. A single head-shot photo is too close to *The Midweek* [a shopper]. This way, we stand out. And people recognize us. (Field Notes 1997a)

Newspaper Sections as Critical Social Process Indicators

Both papers' content is divided into subject areas and these vary between the publications. Each publications' sections highlight social processes which they consider to be critically important to their business success. *The Honolulu Advertiser's* run of the press is divided into nine different sections. The first section is the cover section. It averages 20 pages per issue and always has at least one large color photo showcasing a breaking local, national or international story. The next section, the *Hawaii* section,

averages 8 pages and contains stories about various events in the state. The third section is the *Focus* section that averages 4 pages where the “op-ed” opinion, editors and news analysis articles about state, national and international politics are discussed. The fourth section is the *Sports* section that averages 10 pages and contains sports stories and scores. The *Home* section is the fifth section. It averages 4 pages and contains articles about home decorating and plants and gardening. Section E, the sixth section, is on *Entertainment*. It contains entertainment listings and advertisements, show and movie reviews and lifestyle puff pieces. Section F is on *Travel*. This section contains a cover story on a particular travel destination and is surrounded by ads from travel companies. The eighth section, on *Business*, is usually 12 pages in length. The front page of this section will have a business-related article and the rest of the section will have classified advertisements. The ninth section is on *Real Estate*. This section usually averages 28 pages and contains no news copy, it is completely devoted to real estate company’s and developers’ advertisements. A tenth section only appears in longer run paper issues. It carries supplemental classified advertisements and averages 12 pages.

The *Honolulu Weekly* has only one main section. It averages 26 pages and contains sub-section “black box” headings. Major sub-sections are an in-depth cover story (one per issue) which is announced on the front cover and usually runs between 2,800-3,500 words in length. Then there are the following sub-sections: *Letters* to the editor; a short piece news section, called *Honolulu Diary*; *Politics*; *Culture*; *People*; *Books*; *Comedy*; *Music*; *Arts*; *Museums*; *Media*; *Art*; *The Tube*; *Movie Clock*; *Sports*; *Grassroots*; *Feminist*; an arts and entertainment *The Calendar* cover; and listings called *The Scene*; a club scene column called *Clubbed to Death*; *Theater* and *Film* reviews and

listings; *Literature* reviews; a syndicated answer column called *The Straight Dope*; a restaurant guide whose black box title changes depending on the eatery, for example there is *Dining, Formica Tables or Restaurant Review*; a syndicated astrology column called *Real Astrology*; a *Classifieds* ad section; *Chat Lines*; and a syndicated personal ads section called *Honolulu Weekly Datemaker*.

On the basis of their topic areas, the publications' contents are quite varied. For example, *The Honolulu Advertiser* is more focussed on local and national news (the cover section), the state (*Hawaii* section), has a significant consumer orientation (*Entertainment, Sports, Home and Travel* sections), and includes more business stories with an emphasis on land development (*Business, Real Estate, and Classified* sections). According to Mike Wallace, decisions about what sections will be in newspapers are guided by business concerns:

The New York Times decided twenty years ago that it was going to expand and do a Home section, a Science section, a Business section and so forth. Why did they do that? For the news? Hell no! They did it because *The New York Times* was in financial trouble, and they wanted to get a certain kind of audience, and a certain kind of advertising. (Kurtz 1998, p. 47)

Newspaper sections reflect a consumer orientation. This is more evident with the sections of *The Honolulu Advertiser* than the *Weekly* by virtue of the fact that *The Advertiser* is clearly divided into sections. However, measuring the degree to which financial concerns are bound to news copy sections can be done by examining the ad to news copy used by each newspaper organization in each issue.

Ad Copy

Of the two newspaper organizations, the *Weekly* is solely dependent on advertising revenue for income. Because of this, one could surmise that it contains a far

higher ad ratio than *The Advertiser* does. Dr. Tom Brislin, journalism professor and former city editor for *The Honolulu Advertiser*, estimates that the industry standard percentage of ad to news copy:

is 60-40. Although there is some dispute on how "inserts" should be counted -- or if they should be, it's safest just to count the main newsprint sections (called ROP for run-of-the-press). Main news, local news/business, sports, lifestyle (and occasionally an extra section for classified ads, such as Friday's auto section). Of course a good way to get the information on the percentage locally would be to count it. (Field Notes 1998a)

Analysis of the two newspapers over a six-month period from October 1997 through March 1998 revealed the following proportions of advertising to editorial copy (see Appendix E Tables E1-E7).

The six-month sample indicates that advertising copy in *The Advertiser* averages 67.08 percent of each issue's run of the press. That leaves 32.91 percent of the run of the press as news copy. Inserts were not included in this sample. They average a minimum of 20 – 25 pages per issue. If they were included, the average ad copy would obviously increase significantly to approximately 80 per cent ad copy to 20 per cent news copy per issue.

Comparatively, the *Honolulu Weekly's* ad copy levels are significantly lower at an average of 49.81 per cent of the run of the press. Conversely, 50.19 per cent of each *Weekly's* run of the press is comprised of news copy. Here, it is evident that although the *Weekly* is more dependent on ad copy sales, it goes to print with less ad copy sold than *The Advertiser* and relies on an ad to news copy ratio more than 10 per cent less than the industry standard. Whether or not this is for philanthropic or other reasons is unclear. Whether the "correction" from low ad sales is made up elsewhere in the organization (i.e.

in reduced labor or overhead costs) is less clear. Still the *Weekly* does present a higher percentage of news on average than *The Advertiser*.

Love on the Phone

Analysis of the yearlong sample of newspapers indicates that *The Advertiser* contains advertisements for most of the states' large corporations as well as for small businesses. For example, ads from all of the major banks and government agencies are regular features. The ads are generally more standard or conservative than those in the *Weekly*. Ads in the *Weekly* tend to be more focused on small and local businesses in the following categories: health (health food stores and natural medicine), leisure (bicycle shops, fitness studios, massage services), arts (the opera, ballet, dance classes, radio stations, music shops, pottery and craft shops, art centers, theaters, and plays), travel (airlines, hotels, travel agencies and cruise lines), education (universities and colleges, bookstores and computer services), consignment (used clothing and thrift stores), and restaurants (coffee shops, bistros, plate lunch places, ethnic food).

A striking difference between the two papers is the amount of attention paid to, for lack of a better descriptor, sex. The *Weekly* averages a minimum of two pages at the back of each issue in personal ads. *The Advertiser* has a few scant columns dedicated to such purposes scattered throughout its sports section. In addition, the *Weekly* runs a minimum of one full page of sex-related advertisements, most of which are for phone-sex companies. Common advertisements are for businesses that offer "confidential connections," "hot live talk," "free young talk," "very hardcore phone" and "party lines" where readers can call the telephone numbers and partake of "barely legal" sexual relations over the phone (Field Notes 1998b).

The variation in types of advertisement is not a coincidence. One needs only to look at the organizations' readers' profiles to understand the differences. And this point will be discussed further in an upcoming section. First however, it is important to discuss the varied rates of ad copy content in the two newspapers.

Land As "Real Estate"

There are several striking differences between the advertising content of the two newspapers. *The Advertiser* section with the highest percentage is the cover section. The cover section contains an average of 75.86 per cent advertisements, with some issues reaching as much as 83.33 per cent ad copy (see Appendix E Table E8).

The *Business* section has an average of 76.50 % ad copy with one issue that reached a high of 93.75 % ad copy. The *Real Estate* section averages 75.26 % ad copy with two issues consisting completely of advertisements. The *Weekly* does not have a section devoted to Real Estate. It has a very small section in its classified ads devoted to *homes for sale*, but, taking usually no more than 2 or 3 column inches, this is very small scale in comparison. The *Travel* section also contains high percentages of ad copy. It averages 69.58 % ad copy with one issue reaching 80 % ad content. The *Weekly* has no travel section, although there are frequently individual ads for travel companies in the *Weekly*. The *Restaurant Review* section is 100 % ad copy in every issue of *The Honolulu Advertiser*. Conversely, the *Weekly* has a regular restaurant review in each issue. The review is done by one of three freelance restaurant review writers. More recently, the restaurant review is being laid out with condensed previous restaurant reviews surrounding the feature review. But the text is not written by the restaurant staff as it is in *The Honolulu Advertiser*.

Only four sections out of the total of eleven sections per issue had ad copy less than 60 %. These are *Entertainment* (51.10 %), *Sports* (35.41%), and *Home* (24.65 %). In addition, the fourth section, is the only one out of the eleven sections per issue that has no ad copy. It is the *Focus* section, containing the editors column, two syndicated columns on political commentary and international politics, letters to the editor and a feature piece usually contributed by local professionals or experts.

Reader's Profiles – "Radical Chic" and the Mass Market

There are two words I have come to despise: marketing and demographics.... Replacing the belief that a good story well told, will appeal to and inform a broad range of people, we ask ourselves, what is our target audience? When you start trying to shape news for the people your advertisers want to attract, you've already perverted the process. You've stopped talking about what is information for all of us; you've started asking, "What does a woman aged 18-49 really want?" Newspapers engage in the same dumbing down. (Kurtz 1998, p. 45)

Potential advertisers for both newspaper organizations are given a package of documents which contains information about the company's financial fitness, a "readers' profile," and other advertisers' and distributors' testimonials as to their successful use of advertising in the respective publication. The readers' profile is a summary of information gathered about readers' characteristics. Readers' profiles for both organizations focus on demographic information, such as socio-economic indicators, and psychographic, or "lifestyle" characteristics.

The Honolulu Advertiser's market research information is assembled by the Hawaii Newspaper Agency's (HNA) marketing research department. It is presented in a full color report cover with several picture-postcard type photographs of O'ahu. The front of the report cover reads: "Hawaii – Sun, Sea and Serious Business" (Field Notes 1998a). The information in the report has been gathered by the Gallup organization, a

national statistics and marketing organization that conducted the research in 1997. The larger report, entitled “1997 Gallup Poll of Media Usage – Hawaii Market” is considered proprietary information and HNA will only gather and send out pieces of information from this larger report to potential advertisers. The report that was sent to me contains twelve one-paged sheets of marketing information.

It presents general characteristics of the readership according to age, ethnicity, and education, marital status, occupation, income, and rate of home ownership. It emphasizes “market reach,” or how far the paper penetrates the Hawai`i market, and “effectiveness,” for example, that it is the “most useful advertising source” for “restaurants / where to eat,” “clothing, accessories and jewelry,” “entertainment,” “movies,” “real estate,” “cellular phone services,” and “sporting goods and equipment.” So the marketing information from *The Advertiser* focuses on readers’ level of affluence as well as the publication’s ability to penetrate this market more effectively than other papers in the state (see Appendix E: Table E9).

Prominently displayed in the *Weekly*’s package is the reader’s profile that focuses on nine different items (see Appendix E: Table E10). Aside from basic demographic information like gender and age, the profile emphasizes that readers are “highly educated,” “almost completely (95%) registered voters,” and that “52% own their residence,” and “32% own their own business.” It emphasizes the readers’ levels of affluence. For example, the information states that: “80% of readers use a computer at work, 63% at home, and that the mean household income is \$53,000 per year with 30% exceeding \$85,000 per year in household income” (Reader’s Profile, 1995) (Field Notes 1997a). As well, the *Weekly* provides information that indicates strongly that their readers:

“...immerse themselves in the arts,” “...relish fine food and drink,” and “...are committed to healthy living” (HW: 10.95) (Field Notes 1995).

Examination of the *Weekly*'s self- promotions also emphasizes the affluence of their readers. For example, one ad reads:

Going Places? Our Readers Do! *Honolulu Weekly* readers are frequent flyers on average making more than 5 neighbor island trips last year and 6 to the mainland. (HW. 05.10.95: 24) (Field Notes 1995)

Quite clearly, having an affluent readership is a top priority because it is good for business.

The *Weekly* emphasizes four main characteristics in its marketing approach. The first has to do with providing a “fresh editorial environment” (as discussed in chapter six on style). The second has to do with growth. The *Weekly* advertises that it is growing in age, distribution and availability, and that it is still free. Third, the *Weekly* emphasizes that it is a good value for both advertisers and readers. This is made clear in literature like the following:

An uncommon advertising value: Unlike the dailies, our weekly is often kept around for a week or more as stories and reviews of interest are read, reread and passed around. For a fraction of the cost of running your ad one day in the daily newspapers, you can run an ad for weeks in *Honolulu Weekly*. And you'll be speaking directly to the best audience in Honolulu. (Field Notes 1997a)

And fourth, it advertises the wealth and affluence of its readership. For example, ad promotions read:

Our readers are premium consumers: educated, affluent, socially active people who work hard, play hard and spend hard. (Field Notes 1997a)

A loyal audience of upscale readers: Every week, *Honolulu Weekly* is read faithfully by the most elusive group of consumers in today's marketing landscape: active, urban adults between the ages of 25 and 50. They're affluent (53% of... reader households earn more than \$55,000 per year). They're educated (94% have attended college). They're open-minded and contemporary. They depend on *Honolulu Weekly* to keep them informed on

what's important, what's hip and what's happening. And they pay attention to your advertising. (Field Notes 1997a)

The *Weekly's* promotional information indicates that it serves a specialized market and provides a different product that is not available anywhere else in the state (HW 25.10.96) (Field Notes 1996). Conversely, *The Honolulu Advertiser's* information focuses on affluence more generally speaking and the publication's ability to *infiltrate* more broadly than others in the state.

The Relationship between Ad and Editorial Copy

“Advertorial” Versus Editorial Copy

In an interview, the *Weekly's* publisher expressly made the point that: “...the editorial copy is very independent of advertising” (Field Notes 1995). In fact, the paper has run a self-promotion advertisement about this point. It reads:

NO ADVERTORIALS! At *Honolulu Weekly* we keep our ad and editorial copy separate. Our readers appreciate that fact because they know we can't be bought. Our advertisers appreciate that fact, too, because they know our editorial integrity is what sets us apart from other publications - and makes us the most sought-after alternative news source. (HW 10.11.95:11) (Field Notes 1995)

Members of the *Weekly* do not turn down prospective advertisers due to philosophical differences, a practice of past underground and anti-establishment newspapers (see Shore 1988). For example, an editor was very interested in the politics of the building of a local highway that interfered with Native Hawaiian sacred land. One freelancer contributed several articles on the history of the land and highway struggle arguing that the highway should never have been built where it was. When the highway was officially opened, there was a commemorative running race along it as well as other celebratory events. Protestors gathered at these ceremonies and along the highway. Even though the articles printed in the *Weekly* indicated strong opposition to the building of the

highway, the *Weekly* ad department accepted and ran a large advertisement for the opening ceremonies of the highway without question (Field Notes 1997a).

However, the situation is not as clear-cut as it would first seem and overlap that is more “mutually supportive” between advertising and news copy does exist. As an example, the *Weekly*’s publisher often comments on the importance of contacting potential advertisers whose products and services would coordinate well with the editorial copy or of balancing the ad and editorial copy. Common comments about this from Jane are:

we should make sure that we put an ad in about the upcoming internet issue... we’ll attract a lot of potential advertisers with related products and services for that one.... (Field Notes, A.7.6) (Field Notes 1995)

and:

I think that you all did a good job... the editorial, the ads, the product is good... it [the paper] was well sold, and well distributed.... (Field Notes, A.1.9) (Field Notes 1995)

An editor says:

I’m really frustrated I guess because there’s so much pressure to get the ads in that the editorial just ends up getting thrown together... there was no time last week for conceiving, no time to think! (Field Notes, A.1.7) (Field Notes 1995)

Pulling Ads, Placement Fighting and Dissin’ and being Dissed

As well as instances where ad and news copy is “mutually supportive,” there are also cases where advertisers will exert pressure on the *Weekly*. For example, in one case the *Weekly* ran a full-page ad thanking local businesses for their advertising patronage. One business, a law company, wrote an angry letter to the publisher demanding that their name be pulled from the ad. They explained that they were upset with the publisher for running an ad without their permission and using their name to advertise the paper. The letter’s author made it very clear that they never wanted to be associated with the paper

again. The publisher felt that the reason for their anger was in part due to the fact that the paper had printed information in a news piece that was unflattering to the law company (Field Notes 1997a).

Another example of this “withdrawal of support in the form of ad revenue” involved a concert promotions company that sent the *Weekly* free promotional tickets to a local arts event. The *Weekly* did not use the promotional tickets, did not send a freelancer to cover the event and then printed a piece highly critical of the event. One editor explained what happened:

Now they are not placing an ad for the [alternative rock] concert with us, the cheapskates, because they say they sent us tickets which we requested, we didn't send our concert guy to cover it but he dissed 'em anyway. I guess I can see their point. But I still don't like it that they do that. I mean our concert writer's piece is more satire than anything most of the time. But people take it so seriously. (Field Notes 1998b)

Another situation occurred where a department store that was unhappy with the placement of their ad next to an ad for a lingerie store that uses provocative pictures in its ads. The department store representatives complained that they did not want their store associated with the “sex store.” The publisher was clear that they would keep their request in mind, but that ad placement was the *Weekly*'s decision. The department store continued to run ads and the production workers were more “careful” in their placement of the ads. Even though, as one production worker noted: “In the Valentine's issue, [the department store]... ran an ad that is just as risqué as the sensual lingerie store ad” (Field Notes 1997a).

Special Issues Paired With Industries

A minimum of eight issues a year are devoted to particular economic activities that can be used to “pre-sell” advertising space in the *Weekly*. These issues revolve

around such special topics as: a “Fall Arts Guide” (designed to inform readers about arts offerings and sell advertising space to arts businesses); “Christmas Gift Guides”; “The Best of Issue” (where the results of a reader’s poll on goods and services are presented and businesses are invited to buy ad space); a “World Wide Web Issue” (where the cover article was about the WWW and advertisers were invited to place ads for their computer-related goods and services); and a “Summer Movie Issue” (where movie theaters were invited to place ads around a cover story on upcoming films).

Puff Pieces

Both publications contain news stories that are more serious in intent and tone as well as ones that are more light or consumer-oriented. The latter type is referred to as “puff pieces.” Puff pieces in the mainstream press are generally cheaper types of stories to produce because they do not require in-depth and time-consuming research and the material is usually readily available either by local individuals (if the piece is more “talk story” or “gossip” oriented) or by businesses in the related industry (if the article is more consumer oriented). *The Honolulu Advertiser’s* yearly bridal news coverage as are its many fashion specials in its lifestyle section are examples of puff pieces. The *Weekly* can not produce puff pieces any more cheaply than it can investigative reports. This is because the *Weekly* pays freelancers by the word count for any kind of story. A cover story is approximately 2,800 to 3,500 words whether or not it is a puff piece or a more serious investigative story. This does not always work smoothly though. For example, *Weekly* freelancers realize the extra time required to write a serious investigative piece as compared to a puff-piece. The more idealistic writers continue to accept poor pay for hours worth of intensive research required for more investigative type stories. Also, if

they are interested in building a serious portfolio, they want the experience writing more serious pieces. However, there is a very high rate of turnover due to labor issues such as this. For example, one freelancer who was frustrated by the amount of money given and the amount of hours required to write a serious article stated: "You tell [the publisher] that I'll only write stories for the *Weekly* from now on in that require *no research*. That's the only way I can afford to do them." (Field Notes 1997a). The *Weekly* does run puff pieces in its cover stories, but only occasionally (for example usually a maximum of 2-3 cover stories per year).

Bagdikian argues that mainstream papers' discussion of real estate, where articles that appear as "news" are more likely promotional pieces for developers, real estate agents, or industry associations, qualifies as "puff" or "fluff." He argues further that whole sections of large metropolitan daily newspapers have been turned over to their ad departments. Bagdikian provides the following examples:

The fashion section... is almost always either taken from press releases submitted by designers and fashion houses or written by fashion editors who attend the fashion shows with all expense paid by the fashion houses. The result is an annual flood of gushy promotion of exotic garments, all in a "news" section. The same is true of travel and usually food sections... [which] produces copy that is not marked "advertising" but is full of promotional material under the guise of news. The advertising department of the *Houston Chronicle*, for example, provides all the "news" for the following sections of the paper: home, townhouse, apartments, travel, technology, livestock, and swimming pools. The vice-president of sales and marketing of the *Chronicle* said: "We do nothing controversial. We're not in the investigative business. Our only concern is giving editorial support to our ad projects." (Bagdikian 1990, p. 165-6)

Real estate reporting at *The Honolulu Advertiser* seems to have been taken out of the hands of reporters and has been largely given to the ad department.

Restaurant Guides

Both newspapers focus on restaurants and eating and drinking establishments in their ad and news copy. *The Honolulu Advertiser* has a regular Sunday insert that is 8

pages in length that is paid advertisement copy from restaurants that write up their advertisements. These are made to look like a cover news story on several restaurants with ads and coupons surrounding the “news” copy. The section is 100 % ad copy. At the *Weekly*, the publisher and managing editor stress the importance of doing stories on health, in particular food and nutrition. The advertising staff, when doing “cold calls” to attract new advertising clients, often mention how:

Our readers, because they are well-educated, want information on health related issues, information, and services. (12. 10.96) (Field Notes 1996)

Related to this, a lot of time and effort is spent on reviewing local restaurants. The “Restaurant Review” is a regular feature appearing in every issue. Over the time period of the initial research, many readers were writing into the *Weekly* complaining about the quality and accuracy of the restaurant reviews. For the most part, employees agreed that the restaurant reviews lacked the tone that they should have. They described them as “stuffy” and “overly harsh.” There is much discussion about this problem. In one meeting, an arts and entertainment editor says:

We are still having problems with the person who does the Restaurant Review... still taking flak from his [“Jeffrey’s Place”] review. We just can’t seem to find someone who can write and be critical, [“Michael”] seems to have the “unemployed white male with an attitude” approach, and who knows something about food. (Field Notes, 11.02.95) (Field Notes 1995)

And:

Can you put in another ad for a restaurant reviewer?... Yes, we can try again. (Field Notes, 10.09.95) (Field Notes 1995)

And:

What restaurants do we have coming up to review? Do we need to be coming up with more? (Field Notes, A.3.12) (Field Notes 1995)

The emphases are on such things as local, small, vegetarian and healthy, and are infused in restaurant listings and reviews. Over the period of this research, the space around the restaurant review has become increasingly commodified in that the column's title has been dropped down on the page and advertisements and mini-reviews are displayed all around the stories' text. These kinds of emphases tend to point the news copy more clearly at an interested, affluent target - market. In these ways, we can see the commodification of the subject of food in both newspapers.

How To Save Money – Budget Buys, “Best Of” And Christmas Shopping

Another way that the newspaper organizations attract readers is to suggest that readers will save money by using their publication. Both papers are filled with coupons and announcements of sales. The *Weekly* runs a special issue once a year called the “Best of” issue where local businesses and services are ranked according to a readers’ service poll. Award winners are congratulated by the paper in the ad copy that they purchase. Both publications also run special features in the Christmas season, a season when ad sales increase and both papers’ page counts grow. The two newspaper organizations approach the Christmas gift-giving season differently. *The Honolulu Advertiser* runs articles on “gift etiquette” while the *Weekly* focuses more on where to get “affordable,” “socially conscious,” or “politically savvy” gifts. The emphasis here is on low-cost or no-cost, environmentally friendly type gifts. As well, the *Weekly* advertises that its ad rates are substantially lower than the dailies, making the service of helping advertisers reach an affluent “market” of readers make all the much more good sense (Field Notes 1997a). However, neither newspaper’s news copy questions the underlying assumption of consumerism.

Where Business Meets Business

The advertising department at the *Weekly* is active in terms of job demands as well as in turnover rate. The ad sales personnel literally beat the pavement daily searching for new and potential advertisers. The sales team, whose number fluctuates from one to five persons at any time, meet weekly to discuss problems, issues and how to convince potential advertisers that the *Weekly* is a viable and promising place to advertise. One technique that ad sales people use to attract advertisers is to “cold call” them. Here, they call a list of potential advertisers and ask to speak to whoever is in charge of arranging advertising. On the phone, they list reasons why placing an ad would help the business. They constantly refer to the marketing literature they draw from. “Our paper is read by an active and affluent group of residents,” they say (Field Notes 1997a). Another technique they use is to simply draw up a list of potential advertisers and go out to their place of business to meet with them and discuss the possibility of them taking out an ad in the *Weekly*. During these visits, the ad sales people always take a number of back issues of the *Weekly* that they think might interest the potential advertisers. For example, an issue with a cover story on an environmental topic might appeal to an environmental organization. In another technique, if a person calls in to place an advertisement, ad sales people will let them know what current special deals are running and help them to choose the best option on the basis of that information. Often, ad sales people will “sponsor” a local event, often a concert or special film showing. They will appear at the event and give away prizes with the company logo to raise the level of awareness of the organization and attract new readers and advertisers. Ad sales people also work closely with in house (but freelance) ad designers who use high powered

computer programs to specially design advertisements for organizations that can not or do not want to design their own. In this way, small businesses can purchase an ad and have it made to suit their needs at the same time without having to have a pre-made advertisement ready to submit. Rates are kept at a reasonable level (compared to the daily papers) so as to expand the reach of *Weekly* services to include small businesses with very limited advertising budgets as well as larger businesses with more substantial ad budgets (Field Notes 1997a).

The Flak Filter

“Flak,” or hostile criticism, comes in many forms. Local groups or individuals use flak to put pressure on publications in various ways. The *Weekly* is considerably familiar with “flak” campaigns lodged by competing publications such as *The Advertiser*, local conservative groups and powerful businesses who are displeased with the publications’ political stance.

One tactic is for local groups who disagree with the opinions or outlook of particular articles to use a “smear campaign” with a strong undertone of morality. For example:

In 1992, both the *Honolulu Weekly* and *Honolulu* magazine came under heavy attack by an anonymous organization that was apparently upset over two unrelated articles exploring then-state senator Rick Reed’s ties to Chris Butler’s (a.k.a. Sai Young, a.k.a. Siddhaswarupananda, a.k.a. Jagad Guru, or “world teacher”) splinter faction of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (known variously as Hare Nama Society, Holy Names Society, Identity Institute and Science of Identity Foundation). Just prior to the publication of *Honolulu* magazine’s article, publisher Ed Cassidy received an anonymous letter (tacked to the front door of his home) warning him that proceeding with the story would lead to the public airing of a variety of accusations regarding his personal life. Shortly after the magazine article appeared, another anonymous letter was faxed to various media outlets, alleging that Cassidy was a bisexual, had fathered a secret child with the daughter of a Democratic politician’s daughter, was taking money from the homosexual community and Dan Inouye (whom Reed was running against in the 1992 elections), that his mother was the mistress of a prominent businessman and – ta daaah! – that he was having an affair with [the publisher of the *Weekly*]. When the *Weekly*’s

article came out two weeks later, 6,000 copies – more than a quarter of the paper’s 1992 circulation – mysteriously disappeared. A subsequent police investigation failed to find the perpetrators. (Dawrs July 9 1997, p.5)

Politicians and advertisers also lodge “flak attacks” on the *Weekly*. Consider the following example:

Despite our popularity with readers, we continue to face retaliation from politicians and advertisers. For example: Paul Casey (former head of the Hawai’i Visitor’s and Convention Bureau, current CEO of Hawaiian Airlines) dislikes Robert Rees’ take on Island politics. Therefore, Hawaiian Airlines will not place ads with us, regardless of the strength of our demographics and circulation. When the *Weekly* features a Pritchett cartoon lampooning Jeremy [Honolulu Mayor] or Mufi [city council member], whole stacks of issues have been known to mysteriously vanish from our Honolulu Hale [city hall] rack. (Honolulu Weekly July 15 1998, p. 4)

And at times the pressure is put on those who advertise in the paper. As Dawrs explained:

Sometimes it’s a coin-flip on whether to laugh or call the FBI. A few weeks ago, *Honolulu Weekly* advertisers began receiving telephone calls, with the callers urging advertisers to cancel any existing contracts with *HW*. Going beyond questions of taste or appropriateness, however, these callers assumed various dubious identities, made veiled financial threats and even raised the possibility of... gunfire. The callers, who sometimes claimed to be part of a “coalition of decency” – a coalition that, as far as we can tell, numbers two members – were apparently upset over the “terrible and sleazy” lifestyle the *Weekly* condones, as well as the fact that [the] ... publisher... is a “self proclaimed lesbian.” One advertiser made a transcript of the call, during which the woman on the line claimed that a number of advertisers had already heeded her advice, and that the military (every sane citizen’s litmus test on issues of socio-sexual decency) no longer allows the *Weekly* onto its bases. All of which is laughably false... but also increasingly disturbing. One *HW* advertiser... received a call from a woman saying that the paper was promoting “a homosexual lifestyle and was racist.” The caller, who became increasingly hostile, ended the conversation with the bizarre assertion that the people she represents were ready to “go down to the airport and start shooting people when they got off the plane.” American Savings bank received a phone call from a woman who described herself as the wife of a prominent lawyer and “a Catholic who works with other church organizations at the Capitol, tracking [the *Weekly*] and those who advertise in it.” The caller, who refused to identify herself because she was “very busy placing calls regarding their tracking,” threatened to withdraw her family’s supposedly substantial accounts from the bank if American Savings continued to advertise in the paper. None of this is without precedence. At the same time, the paper’s advertisers began receiving anonymous, and ominous, phone calls. “We were getting phone calls almost every week from supposed customers,” says Mary Wilson, who at the time was a partner in the now-defunct Mo’ili’ili restaurant Detlef’s. “They were calling the paper ‘subversive, threatening to our lifestyles, poisoning the minds of our youth,’ that sort of thing.” Like the current wave of callers, Wilson says these were middle-aged women who insisted on anonymity.

“They would leave messages at the restaurant late at night, when they must have thought no one would be around,” she recalls. “But sometimes I would be there to answer the phone. Since they were claiming to be customers who would stop eating there if we kept advertising in the paper, I would constantly ask what their name was, so that I could remedy the situation. But they always refused to identify themselves. “It felt,” she now says, “like some sort of vigilante movement.” Apt words. Because advertising is the sole source of income for the free press, this sort of intimidation has become something of an institution in the world of alternative media. (Dawrs July 9 1997, p.5)

Competing publications will also use flak against each other. This usually occurs where more powerful publications will use flak in very aggressive ways in attempts to destroy competitors and is a significant factor in the increasing concentration of ownership of media organizations. For example, Gannett Company, Incorporated, *The Advertiser's* owner, has been charged with predatory practices aimed at destroying smaller publications in other “key information property areas” (see McCord 1996). Gannett uses similar tactics in the Honolulu market. As a *Weekly* publisher's letter explains:

Gannett has a history of using predatory pricing in its efforts to eliminate competition, and its approach is no different in this market. HNA now offers selected advertisers special weekly rates. “Selected” in this context means those advertisers who advertise in *Honolulu Weekly* and other weekly publications and do not yet advertise in HNA. These rates are generally not offered to all clients, only to those who have been approached by HNA after having advertised elsewhere. (Just remember to ask for the special weekly business-builder rates.). (Honolulu Weekly July 15 1998 , p.4)

Discussion

There is an increasing concentration of ownership of media organizations that severely alters the type of news and information that is delivered. Bagdikian argues that:

Media consumers pay artificially high prices for goods advertised through their media. They pay high and hidden prices for the media themselves. And the media are no longer neutral agents selling space and time for merchants to promote their wares but are now vital instruments needed by major corporations to maintain their economic and political power. This raises questions about the role of the mass media in the American economy and politics. Advertising is not a luxury to large corporations but an activity with profound economic and political consequences. The media are now dependent upon these corporations for most of their revenues and increasingly they are owned by such corporations. The media have become partners in achieving the social and economic

goals of their patrons and owners. Yet it is the newspapers, general magazines, and broadcasters who are citizens' primary source of information and analysis of precisely this kind of economic and political issue. This raises the question whether our mass media are free to exercise their traditional role of mediating among the forces of society at a time when they have become an integral part of one of those forces. (Bagdikian 1990, p. 150-1)

Although both papers rely heavily on advertising revenue, the *Weekly*, due to its local and independent ownership status, is in a very different financial position than the chain-owned *Advertiser*. And there is a very interesting relationship between the *Weekly's* attempts to "reach" their yuppie readership through ad and news copy. Armstrong (1981) asserts that there are varying degrees of "alternative" at "alternative" newspaper organizations. Those who are less social change oriented are often more market aware. He states:

At the marginally alternative urban weeklies that comprise the majority of members of the National Association of Alternative Newsweeklies (NAAN), alienation from the old and poor is not viewed as a limitation, but as a marketing advantage. Most NAAN papers have a near-obsession with bombarding the postwar Baby Boom generation with products, especially the affluent young whites who compose the most desirable consumers in that generation. This, of course, is not accidental. Before the *Advocate* newspapers were started in 1973, their cofounders studied *The Statistical Abstract of the United States* to find the most lucrative market for their embryonic enterprise. Targeting – and staying with – the Baby Boom was the smart thing to do for young entrepreneurs. (Armstrong 1981, p. 361)

This illustrates the essential tension at the *Weekly* between the ideal of social change and the need to bring in money and attract affluent readers. Anderson suggests the necessity of "more authentic alternative newspapers" to provide more of a balance of social conscience in both editorial policies and marketing approaches:

More authentic forms of alternative journalism are produced with, or even by, minorities and the poor (such as the minority-owned and run KPOO radio in San Francisco); they don't merely convey information about suffering people, at beneficent remove, to a "new privileged class." However, the commercial corporate structure itself- which presupposes a top-down management structure and a need to maximize profits by directing a media product at consumers with enough money to support advertisers in high style – almost guarantees that conventionally operated media will remain remote from disenfranchised people, minimizing their potential for empowerment and maximizing their dependence

on the advertising supplements, guides, and articles on “coping.” (Armstrong 1981, p. 362)

Often the ways in which alternative newspapers justify their content is to argue that they provide extremely useful information in the form of restaurant and movie reviews and other lifestyle guides. The emphasis is never on questioning the underlying values and practices associated with “lifestyle” activities, but is more to acknowledge that there are problems and here is how we can get around them. For example, Armstrong states:

Journalists such as *San Francisco Bay Guardian* editor-publisher Bruce Brugmann embrace such editorial policies not only because they bring in advertising dollars, but because they can, he said, be considered as a useful form of information. Brugmann told the 1980 NAAN convention that lifestyle guides for coping in a recessionary economy were one way to score points with media consumers... “We find it useful to say, ‘Yes, there are problems, and here are ways to deal with them, to keep on enjoying the good life in hard times.’” (Armstrong 1981, p. 362)

The *Weekly* does exactly what it claims to do in terms of presenting insightful stories that are supported by local advertisers. It does fall short, though, in examining the underlying reasons why the very system that supports the existence of the *Weekly* is flawed. As Armstrong explains:

Everyone likes to save money, of course, and there is nothing wrong with publishing budget guides per se. But such material usually begs important questions. *Why* are we experiencing hard times? Who’s to blame and who can help? What can we do to resolve – not just survive – a time of crisis? When budget guides largely supplant hard-hitting reporting and analysis in an era of worldwide convulsions, such material seems trivial, even cynical. Media outlets that follow the ten-great-places-to-find-croissants-after-midnight path to success have exchanged the windows on the world they could provide for mirrors. (Armstrong 1981, p. 363)

The Commodification of Information

Examining the relationship between advertising and the day to day activity at the newspaper organizations reveals a process of information commodification in a number of ways. First, there is a relationship between businesses that place advertisements and

the respective newspaper organizations in that the *Weekly* contains more ads from small, local businesses. *The Honolulu Advertiser* contains ads more from larger local companies like banks, real estate companies and airlines. Second, each newspaper organization is dependent on those businesses for their own existence. The *Weekly* is more dependent on ad revenues because they are its sole source of income. *The Honolulu Advertiser* is less dependent on ad revenue because it charges a cover price for each issue. Third, this situation can affect editorial content. There is a relationship between ads and news copy in that many issues of the *Weekly* are “pre-sold” on the basis of a consumer-oriented cover story that is of interest to select advertisers. Fourth, the relationship between advertising and market reach causes the organizations to place much emphasis on circulation numbers. And fifth, it causes the newspaper organizations to emphasize attracting more upscale readers who are potential buyers of the advertised products and who can further justify why businesses should place ads in newspapers at all.

There is an essential tension at the *Weekly* between the idealized conception of being alternative and the economic realities of running or working at a weekly newspaper. For all of the work by members of the *Weekly* and all their beliefs in offering an alternative, in terms of having a “clear and engaging vision of social change,” localizing stories, presenting information from a critical stance, looking like other alternative papers, and actively including submissions by writers without formal journalism training, the reality of the *Weekly* is that it more so reflects the conservatism of the larger Hawai`i media scene. This is so because of the inevitable conflict between economic survival and the pursuit of the ideals of the men and women of the *Weekly*.

The larger Hawai`i media scene has, since the 1970s, dealt with what journalism professor Tom Brislin calls:

Gannett's strip mining of the dailies of people and money... not the least result of the concentration of ownership is that not one paper in town covers investigative journalism. (!1.09.96) (Field Notes 1996)

This situation has meant shrinking dollars put into the daily papers with increased revenue expectations, largely through increasing circulation and ad sales and copy, and attempts at destroying competitors. All of this has the affect of constraining the editorial copy and span of opinions which in turn has led to increasing conservatism in the Hawai`i media scene.

There are essentially two levels of economic dilemmas at work here. On one level, Jane is forced to make the *Weekly* fit in with the social context of Hawai`i. In order to do this *and* make a profit, she chose to direct the paper at an affluent market group. In so doing, much of the activity at the *Weekly* is directed at connecting the paper's content and advertisers with the potential market. The editorial copy is affected by the ads and the "whole product" is judged on how well sold it is. This in turn does have some effect on what stories are chosen. As one publisher of an AAN paper in Seattle states:

We'd all like to believe that there's a strict dichotomy between editorial and advertising, but there really isn't... And in the end, it's the people with the money - advertisers - that always win. (AAN, 10.04.94: 5) (Field Notes 1994)

Finally, and on a broader level, a central issue here is the reproduction of culture through the everyday actions of the men and women of the *Weekly*. Giddens' (1984) structuration theory discusses how an unintended consequence of social action is that the everyday activity of social actors essentially draws upon and reproduces structural features of the wider social system.

In their honest attempts to create something different, social agents like Jane and the other paper employees realize that they have to follow rules and draw on resources from the wider society. And in the process they lose a large part of what they started out to do. These findings reveal that the rules and resources at the *Weekly*, the generalized procedures and the place of persons in objective social relations, are at the same time the means of system reproduction which both draws upon and reproduces structural features of the wider Hawai`i media system.

The *Weekly* must, by current definition, be aimed at a particular market. This points to the essential contradiction at the *Weekly*: the desire to be different from the larger system, but the need to be a part of the larger system. This central contradiction is what the men and women of the *Weekly* grapple with on a very real basis every day, for the larger social structure places serious constraints on their goals and on their visions. In this case an unintended consequence of the actions of the men and women of the *Weekly* is that they actively produce and reproduce the larger social system of Hawai`i media. The issues this raises about the role of the alternative media in the overall media system help us to explore variations on social systems that would create openings, and offer more enabling conditions for media organizations such as the *Weekly* to be better able to realize “being alternative.”

CHAPTER 9: “MAINSTREAM” AND “ALTERNATIVE” COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY

You can create a crime wave any day of the week.
Ben Bagdikian

What picture of Honolulu do we get when we read *The Honolulu Advertiser*? *The Weekly*? What set of social relations do they suggest – what do they tell us about our selves, our neighborhoods, our communities, and our world? To answer these questions, we will examine the social order suggested in the two Honolulu newspapers. First, we will comparatively analyze the prevalent topics of the news and second, the routine story constructions displayed in each publication. The content of both publications was analyzed to get a clearer idea of what kind of story topics and story characteristics are prevalent – that is, had high rates of frequency – in Honolulu news reportage, if any.

For the purposes of this content analysis, two distinctions have been made in prevalent construction techniques used in newspaper accounts. The first area is comprised of the more typical story topics. These are referred to as “common story topic areas” and they break down into four sub-categories. First, is “politics,” “government” and the “military,” second, the “economy” and “tourism,” third, “transportation” and “accidents,” and fourth, “crime.”

The second area contains the more routine story characteristics that are necessary to any story. These are called “routine story construction characteristics.” These also break down into four sub-categories. First, is “authorship origination,” second, the story “locale,” and third, “timeframe.” Less recognized as a routine characteristic of stories, but highly related, is a fourth sub-category, that of “outreach,” or whether or not stories direct readers to other information (referral) or invite them to respond (solicitation).

Common Story Topic Areas

Common story topic areas are presented in eight categories. Table 9.1 gives a summary of the percentage of stories on the various topics in each publication.

Table 9.1 Common Story Topic Areas Summary*

| Topic Area | <i>The Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|----------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Government | 34.2 % | 14.7 % |
| Politics | 18.3 % | 16.9 % |
| Military | 3.5 % | .9 % |
| Economy | 34.1 % | 13.9 % |
| Tourism | 5.7 % | 1.5 % |
| Transportation | 9.9 % | 1.5 % |
| Accidents | 4.9 % | .3 % |
| Crime | 17.1 % | 3.4 % |

*Categories are coded independently so percentages do not total.

Government, Politics, Military

A very common topic area in *The Honolulu Advertiser* is that of government (see Table 9.2). The content analysis reveals that 34.2% of all stories have to do with some aspect of government. Conversely, less than 15% of stories in the *Weekly* are dedicated to the same topic. The approach to this topic is also quite varied. For example, while *The Advertiser's* stories often rely on powerful government sources for their stories, the *Weekly* presents stories more often from the perspective of more common individuals.

Table 9.2: Government*

| Government | <i>Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Absent | 65.8% (1466) | 85.3% (570) |
| Present | 34.2% (762) | 14.7% (98) |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

* = $p > .001$ $df = 1$

Politics is also a common topic in both publications (see Table 9.3). There is almost no difference between the two papers in the percentage of stories on politics. They devote about the same amount of stories to political commentary and lawmaking. *The Advertiser* devotes ten times as much attention to international news and twice as

much to local politicians. The *Weekly* devotes almost eight percent of its stories to civil disobedience and organized resistance, which is almost as much as it devotes to all other kinds of political stories combined. The *Weekly* chooses to provide more coverage of local social movements, rallies, and agencies aimed at progressive change. For example, regular features and cover stories are run on public issues in Hawai'i. Common topics in this regard have to do with poverty and welfare rights ("Poor America") (Neumann April 30 1997), homelessness ("Home is Where the Cart Is") (Frank December 24 1997), first amendment rights ("First Things First") (Rees April 9 1997), and same sex marriage ("Rude Awakening") (Rees October 14 1998).

There is also a difference in story approach. For example, one *Weekly* story, entitled "A Unified Theory of Hawaii's Universe of Power" (Rees October 13 1993), explained (and explicitly named names) in graphic detail the often corrupt goings on of prominent local decision makers. The article provided a full two-page graphic of how all of the key decision makers are related to one another in terms of power, status and wealth. Focusing squarely on political corruption in the state, one of the article's conclusions is that:

All of these diverse elements of our universe are unified by the single and simple equation:

$$\text{Power} = \frac{(\$ + \text{Votes} + \text{Favors} + \text{Contacts})}{(\text{distance from center})} \quad (\text{Rees October 13 1993})$$

During 1998 and 1999, the daily papers have reported on corrupt activities of board members of the state's largest trust, the Bishop Estate. This story differs from the "Unified Theory of Power" article in that most Bishop Estate articles are based on sources such as interviews with specific persons involved, court records, and other public and private documents. A "Unified Theory" type of article *has* never, and more than

likely *will* never, appear in *The Advertiser* for a number of reasons. First, the article breaks professional journalistic conventions of “fairness,” “objectivity,” “neutrality” and “balance.” Second, it is offensive to those with critical power here. And so third, publishing articles of this sort would significantly jeopardize potentially lucrative business relationships between the paper, these power holders and those that they are connected to. In short, it would be seen as being both unprofessional and very detrimental to business to print such a story.

A search of *Advertiser* back issues found that eight articles on government corruption have been presented in the period from September 1993 through March 1999 (Hawaii Newspaper Index 1999). Government corruption is discussed more commonly under the story types of political commentary and local politicians in the *Weekly*.

Table 9.3: Politics*

| Politics | <i>The Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Absent | 81.7% (1820) | 83.1% (555) |
| International | 4.7% (104) | .4% (3) |
| Politicians, local | 4.8% (106) | 2.1% (14) |
| Campaign | .4% (8) | 0.0% (0) |
| Political commentary | 4.9% (110) | 4.6% (31) |
| Lawmaking | 2.0% (44) | 1.6% (11) |
| Civil disobedience, organized resistance | 1.3% (29) | 7.9% (53) |
| Other | .3% (7) | .1% (1) |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

*= $p > .001$ $df = 7$

The military is not a prevalent topic in either paper (see Table 9.4). Although *The Advertiser* devoted three and a half per cent of its stories to the military, most of these stories report on military news and are not particularly critical of the military in general. This is an interesting finding given that roughly ten percent of Hawai'i's population is comprised of military personnel. Both papers argue that, along with other topics

requiring more investigative reporting skills, they cannot provide these kinds of articles due to financial restraints (Field Notes 1998c).

Table 9.4: Military*

| Military | <i>The Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Absent | 96.5% (2149) | 99.1% (662) |
| Present | 3.5% (79) | .9% (6) |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

* = $p > .001$ $df=1$

Economy and Tourism

The Advertiser devotes a hefty percentage, 30.6%, of its stories to the topic of the economy (see Table 9.5). Conversely, the *Weekly* dedicates roughly one-third of that amount, 11.4%, to the same topic. *The Advertiser*, interestingly, gives more coverage than the *Weekly* to non-profits and charities. Coverage of the topic of the economy varies between the two publications in important ways and, in others, is quite similar.

First, the *Weekly* is more commonly critical of the ways in which the economy is organized. For example, when the state governor appointed an “Economic Revitalization Task Force” (ERTF), *The Advertiser* ran 43 stories about it from August 1997 through July 1998. Although some articles were mixed or critical about the ERTF, most were supportive of the plan stating it was made up of a “dream team,” “urges tax reform” and that it “makes sense”(Advertiser August 05 1997; Advertiser August 06 1997; Advertiser February 01 1998). The *Weekly*’s stories (such as “High Rollers”) (Rees February 4 1998) were consistently highly critical of it, pointing out the ways in which the move would be damaging to average working class people.

Second, the *Weekly*, like *The Advertiser*, is generally far from critical of a capitalist economic system, as their consumer-oriented “puff” pieces demonstrate (see Sweeney July 2 1997). However, (aside from puff pieces) within this economic system,

abuses of corporate power and examples of greed are often topics of cover stories. For example, in the height of the Christmas season the *Weekly* ran a cover story called "Santa's Little Sweatshop" which highlighted the abuse of children in developing countries who: "earn pennies producing those famous-maker items you covet" (Scalcetti December 10 1997). The article listed some of the most exploitative companies such as Nike, Disney, Victoria's Secret and Esprit. It also discussed the work of human rights groups working to end child labor and sweat shop abuses and, in light of such information, called readers to re-consider their Christmas spending habits.

Third, what is missing from story topics is often as revealing as what is there. For example, neither publication devotes, with any regularity, stories about the labor struggles of average working class people. This is not the province of these two papers only, it is a nation-wide commonality (see Puette 1992). However, of the two publications, the *Weekly* dedicates more of its stories about the economy to this part of it. For example, it has run cover stories on the lives of Honolulu's stevedores called "On the Waterfront" (Sanburn February 5 1997). During 1997 and 1998 a local theater chain, Consolidated Amusement Company, was trying to destroy its union. The *Weekly* printed 8 stories about the theater chain during this time. All 8 were about the labor troubles. *The Advertiser* ran 42 stories about the theater chain during this time. But only 12 stories were about the labor dispute, while the remaining 30 were about ticket prices, theaters being torn down and others being planned and built, and the general expansion of local Consolidated theater offerings. What coverage there was about the labor dispute reported the events of the labor negotiations mostly from the perspective of the company and highlighted the inconvenience that strike activity may cause, describing workers' actions

as “threatening to picket” (Advertiser May 09 1997; Advertiser May 22 1997; Advertiser May 25 1997). The *Weekly* coverage was from a more critical perspective overall (beginning with “Not Peanuts to the Rank and File”) (Gibbs June 11 1997b). But stories about the problems to do with the economic structure and its effect on average people, more to do with a lack of dedicated resources, do not appear to a significant degree. *The Advertiser* does present working class struggle and other labor issues. For example, from 1993 through the spring of 1999, the local daily papers ran 1,950 articles on the topic of “labor news”(Hawaii Newspaper Index 1999). However, during the same time period, they ran 3,173 articles on “business news”(Hawaii Newspaper Index 1999). This leaves readers with the perception that what is important is more so “business,” not necessarily workers. As labor news is less reported on, it must be unimportant or, worse yet, because it does not occupy as important a spot on the agenda, it is difficult for people to conceive of as an important public issue.

Table 9.5: Economy*

| Economy | <i>The Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Absent | 65.9% (1468) | 86.1% (575) |
| Business, Economy, Finance, Technology | 30.6% (682) | 11.4% (76) |
| Non-profit, Charity | 3.5% (78) | 2.5% (17) |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

* = $p > .001$ $df = 2$

Research findings indicate that an over-reliance on tourism as the basis of the economy has been the cause of wide scale social inequality in Hawai'i (Auode 1994; Kelly 1994; Kim 1994; Manicas 1995; Stauffer 1995; Trask 1993). *The Advertiser* devotes a significant amount of its editorial space to the topic of tourism, at 5.7% (see Table 9.6). A search of the two daily newspapers revealed that 4,738 articles were devoted to the topic of “tourism” in the period from 1993 through May 1999 (Hawaii

Newspaper Index 1999). The *Weekly* dedicates far less coverage to the topic of tourism, at 1.5%. Again, there are differences in the approach to the topic. *Weekly* stories tend to be highly critical of the ways that many tourist organizations are run here. For example, one article entitled “The HVCB’S \$53.6 Million Trip” (Rees December 18 1996) is extremely critical of the ways in which tourism is organized. *The Advertiser* articles on tourism are generally very supportive of the topic and concerned with “tourist counts”(comprising 435 articles), “tourists” (1,019 articles) and the “tourist trade” (2,069 articles) as central to the well being of the economy (Hawaii Newspaper Index 1999). If they are critical, they present tourism as needing to be increasingly and more effectively marketed due to a decline in tourist numbers (as they are regularly reported in *The Advertiser*).

Table 9.6: Tourism*

| Tourism | <i>The Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Absent | 94.3% (2102) | 98.5% (658) |
| Present | 5.7% (126) | 1.5% (10) |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

* = p > .001 df=1

Transportation

Another prevalent topic area in *The Advertiser* is its devotion to the subject of transportation, particularly to do with automobiles (see Table 9.7). Overall, the *Advertiser* devotes 9.9% of its stories to the subject of transportation, and over 6 % of those have to do with cars. Another almost 5% of stories have to do with accidents (see Table 9.8), most of which are reports of car accidents. The number of *Weekly* stories on either of these topics is negligible in comparison. *The Advertiser* has one regular weekly column called “Drive Time,” located in the *Island Life* section, where all aspects of driving, licensing, tickets, accidents, and sundry driving related stories are told, often in a

humorous tone. As well, as a daily, *The Advertiser* devotes many (4.9%) of stories to reporting traffic accidents, fatalities, upcoming road work and road closures. If the *Weekly* covers transportation, it is usually more prominently featured as a cover story. For example, the *Weekly* has run a cover story about people who ride the bus, entitled "Riding TheBus." (Richardson March 4 1998). Although stories such as this do appear in *The Advertiser*, they never appear on the front page as a cover story. Unlike *The Advertiser*, the *Weekly*'s stories are also more consistently critical of further road construction. Examples of this are stories on the construction of the proposed, now completed, H3 highway that was built over native Hawaiian sacred grounds. When discussions in *The Advertiser* about the H3 in 1994 and 1995 praised the building of the new roadway, the *Weekly* presented contentious information about the H3 route. Although *The Advertiser* was initially editorially against the building of the H3, analysis of articles written about the subject from 1990-1999 show that the majority of the critical discussion occurred in stories from 1990-1993. This is when the majority of the discussion about the roadway occurred as well. For example, from 1990-1995, 30 articles about the roadway were printed, the majority of which were critical. Conversely, there were only 6 articles written from 1994-1999 about the subject and those were more "balanced" between being supportive of the roadway and critical of it (Hawaii Newspaper Index 1999). Both newspapers take a pro-environment approach to transportation. The daily papers printed 950 articles about mass transit from 1993-1999 with the great majority of those highlighting the environmental problems associated with not developing rail transit. The *Weekly*'s coverage of transportation ("The Wheel Deal") (Choo September 3, Volume 7 # 36 1997 36 1997) also demonstrates concern for the

environment as its stories often suggest that it is harder to rely less on private vehicles if we keep building roads rather than dedicate funding to rapid transit (“Approaching Gridlock”) (Leung October 15 1997). Even though the content analysis shows that the *Weekly* does not discuss transportation to a great degree, the fact that the *Weekly*’s stories are either front page or a feature article appearing early in the paper tends to accentuate their pro-environment, pro-mass-transit coverage.

Table 9.7: Transportation*

| Transportation | <i>The Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Absent | 90.1% (2068) | 98.5% (658) |
| Cars and or roads | 6.1% (136) | 1.0% (7) |
| Other | 3.8% (84) | .5% (3) |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

* = p > .001 df =2

Table 9.8: Accidents*

| Accidents | <i>The Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|-----------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Absent | 95.1% (2119) | 99.7% (666) |
| Present | 4.9% (109) | 0.3% (2) |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

* = p > .001 df = 1

Crime

Crime is very big news in Honolulu – at least as presented in *The Advertiser* (see Table 9.9). The content analysis reveals that the publication devotes over seventeen percent of its articles to crime or crime-related topics such as drugs and trial news. Conversely, the *Weekly* dedicates less than four and a half percent of its stories to crime. There are differences between the publications in the ways in which crime is discussed as well. For example, whereas *The Advertiser* tends to report on crimes as they occur, the *Weekly* sensationalizes crime less and discusses it more in terms of understanding the social realities of it or providing a critical analysis of the criminal justice system (“War Stories”) (Lichty October 22 1997). *Advertiser* accounts of crime have been emphasizing

the drop in local crime rates since 1997. However, they also report vigorously on victims of crime, juvenile crime, crimes against tourists, criminals and the need to build more correctional facilities.

Table 9.9: Crime*

| Crime | <i>The Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|--|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Absent | 82.9% (1847) | 96.6% (645) |
| Crime, police, criminals, upholding law | 13.5% (300) | 1.6% (11) |
| Drugs | .5% (12) | .3% (2) |
| Court cases | 3.1% (69) | 1.5% (10) |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

* = $p > .001$ $df=3$

One *Weekly* cover story “Did This Man Have To Die?” (Rampell February 25 1998) used first hand, eye-witness accounts and interviews with those who witnessed the police shoot Rodney Laulusa to death on a street in his Palolo neighborhood – a poorer area – who was threatening them with a knife in each hand. The officers had responded to a 911 call made by none other than Laulusa himself. They shot Laulusa fourteen times. The article argued that police acted irrationally and that Laulusa was gunned down unnecessarily. *Advertiser* coverage of this story spanned the time period from January 1998 through January 1999 from the original incident, through the police and residents’ reactions, to the probe of the incident and included 21 articles (Hawaii Newspaper Index 1999). *Advertiser* coverage of this story was more “balanced,” whereas as the *Weekly* clearly showed its allegiance to Laulusa (*Advertiser* January 23 1998; *Advertiser* January 24 1998; *Advertiser* January 28 1998).

Another *Weekly* cover story, “Free Carl Richie!” (Rees July 9 1997) argued that Carl Richie, an African American escort service owner who had recently relocated to Kauai and been convicted of running a prostitution ring, had been unfairly treated and

should not have been incarcerated at all. *Advertiser* coverage of the Richie story spanned from November 03, 1995 through June 28, 1998 and included 4 stories. All of these stories discussed Richie as a getting: “What he deserves” and that was a “sentence” of “10 years” (*Advertiser* August 15 1997; *Advertiser* June 13 1996; *Advertiser* June 28 1998; *Advertiser* May 22 1996).

In another cover story, “Strangers in a Strange Land,” (Rees August 13 1997) the author used extensive interview material with two prison doctors to investigate and present their accounts of the common occurrence of prison brutality in the state. Similarly, “Tortured Chambers” (Rees July 22 1998) used interview and other material from prison administrators, guards and inmates to document cases of prison torture and other abuse at Halawa, a local correctional facility. The article states:

This story has been drawn from interviews, court records, prison medical reports and the sworn depositions of former Halawa prison warden, Guy Hall, Internal Affairs investigator Raymond Low, prison chief of staff Theodore Sakai and current Halawa warden Eric Penarosa, along with many newly available documents connected with a whistle-blower lawsuit filed on behalf of former prison doctor Terence Allen and a related suit filed against Allen by prison inmate “Frenchy” LaPierre. The state’s disregard for human rights, which sometimes approached outright torture, cries out for an investigation that the state has so far declined to mount. The time for that inquiry is now. (HW 07.22.98 p. 6)

The article concludes with a “proposal and nominations” section where a call is made for the Senate Judiciary Committee and five special counsels (complete with names and contact numbers and email addresses) to investigate: “...the myriad charges of brutality and corruption.” The *Advertiser* ran only 6 articles from July 1989 through March 1999 on the subject of prison brutality, even though one in particular pointed out the severity of the problem by reporting that Hawai`i ranked: “6th in study of prison brutality complaints” (*Advertiser* May 22 1992).

The Laulusa, Richie, and prison brutality stories prompted public pressure on the police and courts to re-investigate in each case. Eventually the Carl Richie story, and public pressure because of it, led the Governor to call a special task force to review Richie's situation with the intent of throwing out his conviction. This, and other public attention to local social issues, is something that pleases *Weekly* editors. On news of public pressure resulting from the Carl Richie story, one editor stated:

I'm always really pleased when what we write prompts people to take action like this... or to re-consider a decision that is really unfair. This is what we aim to do. (Field Notes, 10.22.98)

Other local social scientists have begun to study the degree to which crime is covered by the media in relation to actual crime rates. There is mounting evidence that crime as a topic in the local news is poorly understood and presented. For example, Perrone and Chesney-Lind (1997) argue that newspaper accounts sensationalize and mislead readers as to the causes of crime:

media reports that have been shown to affect audience perceptions tend to broadly influence ideologies. If this is the case then it might reasonably be argued that media reports with the strongest ideological content are most apt to persuade audiences. It was only the most controversial and inaccurate of the Hawaii newspaper articles that contained high levels of ideological content, and so it is at least possible that these account for the most persuasive stories that appeared throughout the entire ten-year period. ... even careful readers of Hawaii's newspaper accounts of youth crime would be left with two significant impressions. First, there must be far more juvenile crime today than in years past, and second, that the youth involved are either demonized thugs who must be incarcerated, or blameless victims of circumstance who can be saved by particular, high profile, programs. Unfortunately, absent from these media accounts are the gritty complexities of life for youth in communities heavily impacted by gangs and violence. (Perrone 1997 p. 114-115)

An article in *The Advertiser* by David Johnson, professor of sociology at the University of Hawai'i, states that crime is over-reported in Hawai'i, as elsewhere, even with falling crime rates. He argues that the result is inflated levels of public fear and an increasingly punitive criminal justice policy. This has led to a situation where:

Last year,... Hawaii led the nation in prison population growth, as the number of people incarcerated in its already-overcrowded prisons rose to 21.6 percent (versus 4.7 percent for the nation)... nearly half of prison admissions were for parole and probation violations. (Johnson February 12 1998)

Perrone and Chesney-Lind (1997) found that coverage of juvenile crime in local daily newspapers had markedly increased in the ten-year period from 1987-1996. They state:

An obvious explanation for the marked increase in youth crime media attention would be that the output of newspaper articles simply reflected a corresponding sharp increase in juvenile crime. However,... total juvenile arrests (excluding non-criminal status offenses) and juvenile arrests for serious offenses have actually decreased in Hawaii during the past decade. (Perrone 1997 p. 99)

The authors found that: “the actual extent of juvenile crime in Hawai`i has certainly not increased between several hundred and a few thousand percent, as has the output of newspaper articles *about* juvenile crime” (emphasis in original) (Perrone 1997 p. 100). The authors also argue that not only does the amount of coverage not reflect the amount of crime – this affects the public’s perception of crime rates as being very high.

They state:

Although content analysis cannot prove causation – it is impossible to state that the huge increases in local juvenile crime media coverage directly affected people’s perceptions of juvenile crime – we can certainly hypothesize about such things. And even with the qualification that causation cannot be established, a few things seem self-evident. Given that most people are not directly confronted with youth crime, few other sources seem as likely as mass media to provide the necessary information on which to base opinions. ... Even if people tend not to “believe everything they read,” they ultimately have to believe *something*, and unless they actively seek out more official, firsthand, and/or otherwise valid information about juvenile crime, print media are likely to provide what seems to be the accurate information available. ... That more than nine out of ten respondents [of a statewide crime victimization survey] felt that juvenile arrests had increased, while considerably more than half of this group believed that the increase had been large, may go a long way towards supporting the contention that the amount of media coverage juvenile crime receives provides the public with the most convincing gauge of the actual extent of juvenile crime. (Perrone 1997 p. 104)

Altheide and Michalowski (1998) argue that examining the increase in stories about fear in news reports furthers our: “understanding about the communication process and the role of the news media in creating social reality” (1998 p. 24). In this way, the news can be viewed as a window on how social reality is ordered, and maintained in particular ways. This raises questions about how different versions of social reality could be realized.

Routine Story Construction Characteristics

The second content analysis area to do with the relationship between the media and society is in routine story construction characteristics such as locale, authorship, timeframe and outreach.

Locale

The coverage of stories from various locales is more balanced in *The Advertiser* (see Table 9.10). This could be attributed to the publication’s adherence to the journalistic convention of “balanced” reportage. The geographical scope of the *Weekly* is much more limited and concentrated in more affluent areas or government or business centers such as downtown, Manoa, Waikiki, Oahu island, the state and mainland. The focus on certain geographical areas for both publications more than likely has more to do with attempting to speak or present areas of interest to corresponding market segments and seats of power.

Table 9.10: Locale*

| Locale | <i>The Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| None listed | .6% (13) | .3% (2) |
| Honolulu, Downtown, Chinatown | 21.0% (467) | 38.8% (259) |
| Waikiki | 2.6% (57) | 4.5% (30) |
| Manoa | 2.5% (56) | 7.0% (47) |

Table 9.10: (Continued) Locale

| | | |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|
| Leeward (Pearl H. Kalihī) | 2.3% (52) | .4% (3) |
| W. Oahu (Waianae, Kapolei, Kunia, Ewa) | 2.6% (58) | .6% (4) |
| Central/North | 6.5% (151) | 3.6% (24) |
| Windward (Laie, Kaneohe, Kailua, Waimanalo) | 5.2% (116) | 2.7% (18) |
| E. Oahu (Kap/ DH/HK) | 1.2% (26) | 3.3% (22) |
| Oahu Island | 4.9% (109) | 10.6% (71) |
| Kauai/Niihau | 1.2% (26) | .4% (3) |
| Molokai/ Lanai | .6% (13) | .3% (2) |
| Maui/ Kahoolawe | 3.4% (76) | 1.5% (10) |
| Big Island | 4.5% (100) | 1.6% (11) |
| Hawaii – state | 19.3% (431) | 13.6% (91) |
| U.S. General / Mainland | 16.7% (373) | 7.5% (50) |
| Other | 4.6% (104) | 3.0% (21) |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

* = $p > .001$ $df = 16$

Authorship

The *Weekly* uses local authors far more than *The Advertiser* (see Table 9.11 and 9.12). As well, they attribute a far higher percentage of their stories to an actual author whereas *The Advertiser* will often (23.1%) list no author for a story. This demonstrates that the *Weekly*'s stories are majority written by locally based authors. Consequently, they tend to be from a locally situated person's perspective on local issues. It is more difficult to have this orientation when you rely on writers who are not situated in the community, for example as in wire reports. Although comparable data was not available on *The Advertiser*'s workforce, the *Weekly* publishes almost ten percent of its stories as written by "local experts." These are persons that write a story based on their first hand experience in a topic area. For example, a former foster child published a story on adoptive families entitled "Finding Family" (Edmon January 8 1997). A local surfer published a history of local surfing entitled "The Yin and Yang of Surfing" (Coleman

May 28, Volume 7 # 22 1997 22 1997 #247). And a sovereignty activist published a story on Hawaiian sovereignty entitled “Statehood Revisited” (Laenui August 13 1997). None of these writers are journalists. Their stories were solicited because they were considered local people who had first hand knowledge of a local topic and who could write a story about that.

Table 9.11: Authorship Origination*

| Authorship Origination | <i>The Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| None listed | 23.1% (526) | 4.1% (28) |
| Local | 59.3% (1320) | 93.6% (625) |
| Mainland | 13.7% (305) | 2.2% (15) |
| International | .2% (4) | 0.0% (0) |
| Wire | 3.2 % (71) | 0.0 % (0) |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

* = p > .001 df = 4

Table 9.12: *Honolulu Weekly* – Author Type

| Author Type | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Absent | 25.3% (169) |
| Freelancer | 49.1% (328) |
| Local “Expert” | 9.0% (60) |
| Part Time Employee | 5.5% (37) |
| Full Time Employee | 5.4% (36) |
| Intern | 4.2% (28) |
| Other | 1.5 % |
| Total | 100 % (668) |

Findings from the cross-tabulation of the author origination with the story locale (see Tables 9.13 and 9.14) show that both the *Weekly* and *The Advertiser*, in 90.4 % and 89.9 % of the cases respectively, use mostly locally-based authors to write stories about Hawai‘i. Whereas *The Advertiser* uses local authors in its stories with no locale (97.9 %), the *Weekly* does this to a slightly lesser degree at 92.9%. The *Weekly* uses mainland authors to write about national topics 66.7 % of the time whereas *The Advertiser* does so 80.0% of the time. The *Weekly* uses local authors to write about mainland topics 26.7 % of the time whereas *The Advertiser* does this in only 5.9% of cases. *The Advertiser* uses

22.7 % local authors for its international news. This is a result of such articles that are written by local authors about international cultural traditions of interest to Hawai'i's ethnically diverse population as well as by such things as a locally based writer who travels the world and whose stories about his experiences appear in a regular column.

Table 9.13: Honolulu Weekly Story Locale by Author Origination*

| Author Origination | Story Locale | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | None | Hawai'i | U.S. | International |
| None | 0 | .3 % (2) | 0 | 0 |
| Local | 92.9 % (26) | 90.4 % (565) | 26.7 % (4) | 0 |
| Mainland | 7.1 % (2) | 6.1 % (38) | 66.7 % (1) | 0 |
| International / Wire | 0 | 3.2 % (20) | 6.7 % (1) | 0 |
| Total | 100 % (28) | 100 % (625) | 100 % (15) | 0 |

*Total N: 668

Table 9.14: The Honolulu Advertiser Story Locale by Author Origination*

| Author Origination | Story Locale | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | None | Hawai'i | U.S. | International |
| None | .8 % (4) | .3 % (4) | 1.0 % (3) | 1.3 % (1) |
| Local | 97.9 % (514) | 89.9 % (1187) | 5.9 % (18) | 22.7 % (18) |
| Mainland | 1.1 % (6) | 5.9 % (78) | 80.0 % (244) | 60.0 % (45) |
| International / Wire | .2 % (1) | 3.9 % (51) | 13.1 % (40) | 16.0 % (12) |
| Total | 100 % (525) | 100 % (1320) | 100 % (305) | 100 % (76) |

*Total N: 2226

Although the papers are virtually identical in their use of local staff to cover local stories, the *Weekly* appears to have a stronger local voice because of style differences. This, together with the absence of mainland and international stories plus the smaller number of stories with no particular locale, strengthens the overall impression of local voice.

Timeframe

There are some important distinctions to be made between the use of timeframes in stories by both publications (see Table 9.15).

Table 9.15: Timeframe*

| Timeframe | <i>The Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Absent | 1.1% (25) | .4% (3) |
| Future (event to happen in future) | 6.8% (152) | 10.8% (72) |
| Current, breaking, new | 84.9% (1892) | 80.4% (537) |
| Follow up (within last year) | .7% (16) | 6.0% (40) |
| Historical (> 1 years or focus is historical) | 6.4% (143) | 2.3% (16) |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

* = $p > .001$ $df = 4$

The Advertiser runs more current and breaking stories as well as a high percentage of those stories that are historical or future-oriented. The *Weekly* runs more current stories as well as many more follow up type stories, less historical ones and more future oriented stories.

The reasons for the higher percentage of future oriented stories have to do with both publications' focus on calendar sections that list and often present extended information on up-coming arts and entertainment events. However, the *Weekly* tends to align stories with upcoming politically related community events. Only three examples of these types of articles are "Stop the Presses!" and "Chain Gang" (McCord February 17 1999; Rees February 17 1999) which were published to promote a series of lectures to do with wrongdoings in the Gannett newspaper empire, and "First Things First" (Rees April 9 1997) which was published to coincide with a local conference on first amendment rights.

The publications' treatments of history vary considerably. For example, *The Advertiser* frequently runs stories that depict historical accounts of life in old Honolulu. The stories are unfailingly positive and portray life in the "olden days" in an overwhelmingly positive light. Conversely, the *Weekly* publishes far less historical stories. Instead, it uses a historical perspective to refer readers for example to the background history of continuing stories. This is done repeatedly. A story will include a brief description of the background story behind the current story as well as a note that says for example "(see 'story title' *HW* 'story date')." This directs readers to a semi-archive of information on a particular topic and connects pieces of a story. In this way, readers are not only encouraged to follow the historical development of a story, but to consider the complexities of stories as well. In order for this to work, readers would have to either recall the content of earlier articles or request back issues of the paper. The *Weekly* does send out back issues free of charge to those who request them. However, the *Weekly* is not indexed in any official form anywhere.

The publications demonstrate two very different treatments of history and of time in general. The *Weekly* tends to use story timeframe to connect issues and notify the public of when, and how they can get involved in often politically motivated local groups, associations and events. *The Advertiser* is inclined to use story timeframe to present a saccharine view of past history or de-politicized view of present and upcoming stories. Indeed Schudson (1996) has touched on this aspect of the media when he argues that the contemporary mainstream press uses the timeframe of stories to actually prevent:

the political activity of its readers because in some situations it avoids publishing what James Lemert calls "mobilizing information." That is, it will report about a political demonstration after the fact but it will not announce it the day before and provide a phone number or other information on how to reach the organizers. Where there is a celebration

or demonstration that unites the community (the Fourth of July parade), in contrast, “mobilizing information” is ready at hand, with parade routes and locations for watching fireworks. (Schudson 1996 p. 197)

Outreach

Both publications use techniques of “outreach” (see Table 9.16). This means that each makes attempts to reach their audience, rather than completely bar their participation in the paper. For example, one technique that publications use in this regard is to invite readers to submit letters to the editor (see Croteau 1997). Another common outreach technique used regards how often readers are “solicited” or invited to write in to a publication to respond to a particular question. This technique was used extensively in *The Advertiser* (11.4%) as opposed to the *Weekly* (1.8%). This could be viewed as an honest attempt to invite readers into the publication in an active way. Unfortunately, in the mainstream papers, readers are usually encouraged to participate only in more benign ways (such as sending in family photos or stories about good times with their pets) than in a more hard hitting, politically challenging, or serious manner. Another aspect of this process is that, although *The Advertiser* receives feedback from readers, it uses this material to fill up its pages. This information is “free” in that publications do not have to pay a reporter to fill the space with a story. So not only does it tend to trivialize the readers’ role in the publication process, it is also good for the bottom line in that space that would have had to be filled with paid for stories, is filled for free.

A second technique that is used by the publications is that of “referral” or “mobilization.” This technique, which is used much more extensively by the *Weekly* (57%) compared to *The Advertiser* (18%), directs readers to more information on a particular subject.

Table 9.16: Outreach*

| Outreach | <i>The Honolulu Advertiser</i> | <i>Honolulu Weekly</i> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| None | 68.7 % (1531) | 40.3 % (269) |
| Referral/Mobilization | 18.0 % (402) | 57.0 % (381) |
| Solicitation | 11.4 % (254) | 1.8 % (12) |
| Both | 1.8 % (41) | .9 % (6) |
| Total | 100 % (2228) | 100 % (668) |

* = $p > .001$ $df = 3$

Of the “issues topics” (such as crime, economy, same-sex, labor, Hawaiian issues, welfare and current issues) printed in the papers, the *Weekly* uses mobilizing information an average of 48.26 % and *The Advertiser* does so an average of 13.39 % (see Table 9.17).

Table 9.17: Percent of Articles Giving Mobilizing Information by “Issues Topics”

| Topic | | Crime | Economy | Gay | Labor | Welfare | Current Issues | Hawaiian Issues | Total N |
|------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|----------|-------------|------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|
| Mobilizing Information | <i>Advertiser</i> | 11.81 % (45) | 12.90 % (88) | (0) | 10.84 % (9) | 23.8 % (5) | 16.21 % (6) | 18.18 % (12) | 100 % (165) |
| | <i>Weekly</i> | 17.39 % (4) | 28.9 % (22) | 60 % (6) | 30.76 % (4) | 50 % (1) | 88.88 % (8) | 61.9 % (13) | 100 % (58) |

Of the “arts and entertainment” articles printed in both publications (see Table 9.18), *Weekly* articles also include more mobilizing notes than do any of the corresponding *Advertiser* articles (an average of 75.06 % and 19.15 % respectively). Both publications use mobilizing information in arts and entertainment articles more so than issues ones. The *Weekly* uses much more mobilizing information in its arts and entertainment pieces than its issues type articles (48.26 % and 75.06 % average respectively). *The Advertiser* has mobilizing information less so overall (19.15 % and 13.39 % respectively). This highlights the *Weekly*’s arts and entertainment business relationships as much of this mobilizing information will direct readers as consumers to entertainment companies and restaurants. Slightly more mobilizing information is given

in *Advertiser* arts and entertainment type articles than issues type articles. Referrals here range from information about less serious endeavors like “how to get the best view of the Kamehameha Day parade” and “where you can buy this wedding dress” to more serious ones that give a government office contact. And this is all very useful information. However, the majority of the *Weekly*’s referrals in issues articles are more politically progressive and will contain contact information with regard to smaller and more grassroots activist groups or persons working on public issues. Occasionally cover stories are published in concert with a public rally (as in the welfare rights demonstration and first amendment rights conference). In these ways the *Weekly* constructs not only a more active audience, but also a more *seriously* active and politically motivated audience than *The Advertiser*.

Table 9.18 Percent of Articles Giving Mobilizing Information by “Arts and Entertainment Topics”

| Topic | | Leisure | Arts | Food / Drink | Total N |
|------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Mobilizing Information | <i>Advertiser</i> | 15 % (24) | 39.81 % (43) | 16.66 % (10) | 100 % (77) |
| | <i>Weekly</i> | 81.81 % (18) | 51.37 % (56) | 92.0 % (39) | 100 % (113) |

Discussion

Initially, we see that both publications use techniques that give reader’s impressions about the social order. *The Advertiser* focuses its coverage on the importance of government and politics, business and tourism, private transportation, and crime. It also uses outreach techniques that invite an active, but often trivialized constituency.

With regard to common alternative story topics, the *Weekly* presents a much more politicized view and encourages critical analysis of social relations. As well, it presents ideas from a more local perspective (through more local authorship), and uses outreach

techniques to encourage increased consumerism or support of local arts and entertainment activities. It also uses mobilizing information to encourage meaningful action with regard to a host of community issues and concerns. As it is a commercial newspaper, it is, however, also focused on market concerns as the “locale” data clearly demonstrates. Indeed, both publications place the text of their stories in a frame of advertisements.

The discussion so far, has focused on what story topics and characteristics are prevalent. On a deeper level, we must ask *why* these are prevalent. One response is that prevalent topics and characteristics reflect a specific ideological order that is more oriented to structural level concerns. To get a clearer understanding of this, we can ask, for example, who stands to gain from the perception that the military, as it exists today, is essential? That history is a natural and inevitable “march of time?” That dependence on individual cars is normal and essential? That government policy is rational and democratic? That our economic and political systems serve all equally? That crime is a predominant force in our communities and criminals are rightfully caught and punished by a prudent, justified and egalitarian criminal justice system?

Interestingly, the topic of who stands to gain from the publics’ perception that crime rates are rising was discussed in a short *Advertiser* piece (attesting to the fact that mainstream dailies, as other publications, never simply present stories from an entirely ideologically seamless stance and that structures are at the same time constraining and enabling). Excerpts of the wire story state:

They are on the news almost nightly: car jackers, sexual predators, workplace gunmen, follow-home, takeover and home-invasion robbers, enraged killers. By the numbers, there are fewer and fewer of them. Yet a national ABC news poll... found that 51 percent of respondents were more afraid of crime than they were five years ago... That

fear has overwhelmed reality, causing many to feel more threatened by crime even as the nation has become a safer place in which to live. The reasons for that disparity are complex and sometimes deliberate. Police stoke fear partly because they take crime seriously, partly to prime their budgets. Politicians feel deeply about the issue, but also manipulate it to win votes. News organizations amplify fear by ratcheting up their crime coverage because it helps ratings. Security companies, theft-detection manufacturers, prison guard unions and others tap into deeply held fears and end up turning a profit. (*Honolulu Advertiser*. 08.23.98 p. A4)

The article makes it clear that who stands to gain from perceptions that, for example, crime is a predominant concern are the police, politicians, and fear and security-related businesses. For several years now, *The Advertiser* has reported that crime rates are dropping. But, as the data indicate, crime as a topic, whether it is to with changes in the crime rate, criminals, juvenile delinquency, police protection, tourist assaults or the need for more prisons, is still discussed frequently. More discussion of crime in this manner keeps crime on the agenda and encourages the way to buy expensive security products and services and feel confident in supporting often high profile government policies aimed at “fighting crime.”

Asking these kinds of questions leads us to an understanding of the important sub-text of media stories. By examining prevalent media story characteristics and topics, one’s understandings about life in Honolulu might look like the following: In daily mainstream accounts, readers are able to participate in the news process in more politically benign, less serious or more trivial ways. Big business and tourism are rightly so the bedrock of Hawai`i’s economy. Crime is at the top of the public agenda.

From the *Weekly* alternative perspective, news accounts are told almost exclusively by local people. Readers are taken more seriously and encouraged to become involved in social issues. Local government, politics and military establishments need to be constantly held up for critical analysis and made accountable for their actions. Big

business and tourism are the bedrock of the economy, but should be organized in more egalitarian ways. And crime is an important social problem that needs to be understood more broadly.

CHAPTER 10: THE PUBLIC SPHERE – MAINSTREAM AND ALTERNATIVE

Within the walls of a social establishment we find a team of performers who co-operate to present to an audience a given definition of the situation.... (Goffman 1978)

Mutual understandings make possible certain relationships amongst people. This is a basic process of society and of community. How does the media put forth a certain set of understandings? What is the role of the press in society and what role does it take in the making of particular social orders in communities? What set of social relations does it suggest? And, more specifically, what is the role of the mainstream and alternative press and how might a viable oppositional order be created in the public sphere?

Media are constrained by the imperatives of the market and the implications of this regarding their “consumers,” the people who buy, read, and listen to, what is being produced by the media, people who have beliefs and politics and other resources. This includes alternative media. How successful, given this, are they in providing an “alternative?”

There is a public with opinions and this is a mass in just the sense that opinions do not get formed independently of the whole system of opinion-production, including, of course, mass media. This is quite inevitable in any mass society and aspects of the process have been examined by several social commentators such as de Tocqueville (1969), Habermas (1973; 1979), Mills (1959) and Williams (1960; 1961).

Theoretical Explanations of the Role of Media and Society

Walter Lippmann, journalist, editor and political philosopher who is popularly considered the premiere theorist of American journalism (and to whose work I first

referred to in chapter two) argued that people develop mental images or “maps” of events and actions that they could not experience first hand. He said: “The only feeling that anyone can have about an event he does not experience is the feeling aroused by his mental image of that event” (Lippmann 1922 p. 13).

People adjusted to their rapidly changing social life increasingly through second hand (and more distant) accounts or “representations.” These representations were made up of “fictions” that affect beliefs and actions on a wide scale. For example, Lippmann states:

what each man does is based not on direct and certain knowledge, but on pictures made by himself or given to him. If his atlas tells him that the world is flat he will not sail near what he believes to be the edge of our planet for fear of falling off.... The way in which the world is imagined determines at any particular moment what men will do. (Lippmann 1922 p.25)

So newspapers as “representations of reality,” are in effect “maps” made up of “fictions” that shape our “Public Opinions” and this is a cycle or process whereby publics support or refute media coverage based on their set of beliefs about what is right, true, just or legitimate.

However, Lippmann argued that elites rule in a democracy and that the media is dependent on outside forces for its information. He held that the press: “can normally record only what has been recorded for it by the working of institutions” (Schudson 1996 p. 206). And this was its role – to be a “good machinery of record.”

Lippmann (1922) was hopeful about the role that the press *could* play in a democracy. He held that, as we can not know about all public affairs, the press, beyond personal, first hand knowledge, can play an integral role in representing social reality and “making the unseen facts intelligible” to us (Lippmann 1922 p.31).

In American society there is, if vaguely, a set of ideas which constitute the mainstream of "opinion." Roughly, Americans hold broad beliefs. These have to do with Protestant, or at least Judeo-Christian, understandings of life and work. They are "liberal," including the idea that people have rights and should be treated as "individuals" and that individual freedom, equality of opportunity, toleration, and a "free press" are good things. They are capitalistic, which is understood as "free enterprise" in which anyone can "make it" here if they work hard and are smart (the American dream). And "democratic" which, for Americans, means that "governments" are by, for and of "the people," which means concretely that there is a right to vote for "representatives" and executives of government who then somehow or other implement "the will of the people" (Roelofs 1992).

From the point of view of Chomsky's radical critique, this is most ideological in the clear sense that these beliefs are false or distorted and serve mainly to mask power and legitimate the status quo.

Lippmann argued that true democracy could not be realized:

unless there is an independent, expert organization for making the unseen facts intelligible to those who have to make the decisions. (Lippmann 1922 p.31)

He detected a problem with the press' role in democracy saying:

It is argued that the problem of the press is confused because the critics and the apologists expect the press to realize this fiction, expect it to make up for all that was not foreseen in the theory of democracy, and that the readers expect this miracle to be performed at no cost or trouble to themselves. The newspapers are regarded by democrats as a panacea for their own defects, whereas analysis of the nature of news and of the economic basis of journalism seems to show that the newspapers necessarily and inevitably reflect, and therefore, in greater or lesser measure, intensify, the defective organization of public opinion. (Lippmann 1922 p.31-2)

And he reached the conclusion that in order to reconcile the problems of the press in a democracy, what was necessary was a intermediary system whereby public opinions could be first formulated or organized for the press. He states:

My conclusion is that public opinions must be organized for the press... This organization I conceive to be in the first instance the task of a political science that has won its proper place as a formulator, in advance of real decision, instead of apologist, critic, or reporter after the decision has been made. (Lippmann 1922 p.31-2)

Following Lippmann, political sociologist, C. Wright Mills (1959) saw the role of media in society as severely flawed and he argued that the media contributed to the creation of a mass-like society:

we now have reason to believe that these media have helped less to enlarge and animate the discussions of primary publics than to transform them into a set of media markets in mass-like society. I do not refer merely to the higher ratio of deliverers of opinion to receivers and to the decreased chance to answer back; nor do I refer merely to the violent banalization and stereotyping of our very sense organs in terms of which these media now compete for 'attention.' I have in mind a sort of psychological illiteracy that is facilitated by the media, and that is expressed in several ways. (Mills 1959 p. 311)

Discussions linking the press with the creation of an informed democracy are common. Take, for example, the comments of Tom Brislin, professor of journalism at the University of Hawaii and former *Advertiser* city editor:

Our newspapers have joined the lemming-like trend to shorter stories, bigger photos, packages of "new briefs" and summary graphics. The franchise of newspapers used to be depth of coverage and analysis – helping us to make meaning of the news in our daily lives. Today's dailies are giving us "news lite" – less filling, and less nourishing for the civic mind. There is a reason newspapers were afforded constitutional protection in the First Amendment. The country's founders knew the press was an integral part of the citizen-democracy. The free flow of information was essential for citizens to make conscientious decisions about how they were to be governed. No other industry gets such top constitutional billing. A burning question is whether the quality of that information has decreased to the point that it is fouling the democratic machine. Just as it is no secret that people are turning away from newspapers, it is painfully obvious is that many also have turned away from public participation in civic affairs. The two are related. Newspapers need to regain their franchise as powering the machinery of democracy – the citizenry. It has to run on a fuel richer than "Infotainment." (Brislin Sunday, February 18 1996)

Mills, argued that modern day social life is controlled and manipulated by elites (see Altschull 1990). This system of exploitation and oppression, he explained, has arisen and is kept in place in several ways.

First Mills, following Lippmann, argued that very little of what people actually think they know of social realities of the world have they found out first hand. This is so much the case that people do not usually believe what they see before them until they see it as presented by the media. Therefore, he argued, that: “the media not only give us information, they guide our very experiences” (Mills 1959 p. 311). This experience is made up of meanings which are based in ideological stereotypes:

Stereotypes of loyalty underlie beliefs and feelings about given symbols and emblems; they are the very ways in which men see the social world and in terms of which men make up their specific opinions and views of events. They are the results of previous experience, which affect present and future experience. It goes without saying that men are often unaware of these loyalties, that often they could not formulate them explicitly... To accept opinions in their terms is to gain the good solid feeling of being correct without having to think... Such ideologies lead to a willingness to accept a given line of belief; then there is no need, emotionally or rationally, to overcome resistance to given items in that line; cumulative selections of specific opinions and feelings become the pre-organized attitudes and emotions that shape the opinion-life of the person. ... These deeper beliefs and feelings are a sort of lens through which men experience their worlds, they strongly condition acceptance or rejection of specific opinions, and they set men's orientation toward prevailing authorities. (Mills 1959 p. 312-313)

Second, Mills' analysis suggested that as long as the media are not completely monopolized, the public could compare differences amongst them, therefore having a better chance of resisting what any one outlet supports: “The more genuine competition there is among the media, the more resistance the individual might be able to command” (Mills 1959 p. 313). The trouble with this, Mills put forth, is that most people tend to select those media whose perspective they already agree with. As well, the media does not critically vary on public issues, demonstrating instead variations of similar themes rather than burning or clashing issues.

A third failing of the media is that they create and sustain a system of false realities. Not only do they filter our experiences of our realities, they also affect our self experiences suggesting new aspirations of who we should be and what we should like to appear as. The media, he says:

have provided in the models of conduct they hold out to us a new and larger and more flexible set of appraisals of our very selves. In terms of the modern theory of the self, we may say that the media bring the reader, listener, viewer into the sight of larger, higher reference groups – groups, real or imagined, up-close or vicarious, personally known or distractedly glimpsed – which are looking glasses for his self-image. They have multiplied the groups to which we look for confirmation of our self-image. (Mills 1959 p. 314)

More so, the media:

(1)... tell the man in the mass who he is – they give him identity; (2) they tell him what he wants to be – they give him aspirations; (3) they tell him how to get that way – they give him technique; and (4) they tell him how to feel that he is that way even when he is not – they give him escape. The gaps between the identity and aspiration lead to technique and/or to escape. That is probably the basic psychological formula of the mass media today. But, as a formula, it is not attuned to the development of the human being. It is the formula of a pseudo-world which the media invent and sustain. (Mills 1959 p. 314)

Fourth, Mills argued that the media encourage us to see news events and information on a small scale, thus destroying people's ability for the meaningful interchange of opinions. The media thus:

do not articulate for the viewer or listener the broader sources of his private tensions and anxieties, his inarticulate resentments and half-formed hopes. They neither enable the individual to transcend his narrow milieu nor clarify its private meaning. (p. 314)

The media do not help to connect private troubles with public issues for they:

provide much information and news about what is happening in the world, but they do not often enable the listener or viewer truly to connect his daily life with these larger realities. They do not connect the information they provide on public issues with the troubles felt by the individual. They do not increase the rational insight into tensions, either those in the individual or those of the society which are reflected in the individual. (p. 314)

The media instead serve to distract us from understanding ourselves or the largely impersonal forces which shape us by:

fastening [our] attention upon artificial frenzies that are resolved within the program framework, usually by violent action or by what is called humor. In short, for the viewer they are not really resolved at all. The chief distracting tension of the media is between the wanting and the not having of commodities or of women held to be good looking. There is almost always the general tone of animated distraction, of suspended agitation, but it is going nowhere and it has nowhere to go. (Mills 1959 p. 314-315)

In these ways, Mills argued that the media transformed America into a “mass society.” Although authority formally rests with individuals, Mills argued, the media are dominated by, or at the disposal of, elites of wealth and power. The media is made up of small circles of powerful owners who manipulate others into: “willing acceptance or cheerful support of their decisions or opinions – or at least to the rejection of possible counter-opinions” (Mills 1959 p. 317). He holds that some agents, by virtue of structural position, have power – including the power to form opinion.

These social commentators and theorists were concerned with the concept of power in the media. Most found power to be heavily balanced in favor of elites, the powerful, and market conditions that overtook the public and democratic potential of the media. However none of them examined the complex relationship between the media’s potential to put forth alternative or oppositional understandings of social order.

Given our earlier discussion of differences in perceptions of our community we get from the two publications and the media’s role in society, what role do *alternative* media play in the public sphere?

Alternative Media and the Public Sphere

Most political-economic accounts of the media have focused on problems to do with the role of increasing market forces in mainstream media (Bagdikian 1990; Croteau

1997; McChesney 1997; Mills 1959; Williams 1961). However, they have failed to take into account the pressures on alternative media.

Williams (1961) saw a central cultural problem in that institutions of communications had become increasingly distanced from average working people themselves, and were produced for them by others, usually those interested in making a profit. He argues that economies, or any other kind of productive order:

aren't machines that run themselves, just as society's material base isn't a thing. Rather, they are composed of and put into practice through working human relationships, and it is the mutual understanding, acceptance and practice of a specific set of relationships that comprises the bedrock of any social order. The production, circulation, adoption, and defense of these mutual understandings that make possible specific kinds of relationships can be seen as the basic process of society, of communication.... (Hamilton 1998 p. 8-9)

Williams' work on the media's role in advancing mutual understandings leads us to the idea that alternative media have the potential to:

enable alternative means of communication, which together make possible the articulation of a social order different from and often opposed to a dominant one. (Hamilton 1998 p. 8-9)

From a mass culture perspective, there are however several problems for alternative media. As Hamilton states, the:

problems of commercialism for alternative media are more fundamental than whether advertising conflicts with the political goals of the publication. In addition to the effect of pressures to adopt a corporatized, capital-intensive form, if media products are simply to be consumed by individuals, the very "content" of that relationship disables the political potential of even the most hard-hitting alternative media. The problem of commercialism is therefore not only due to the pressures to adopt a mainstream, professionalized mode of production, but due also to the perpetuation of a characteristic set of social relations brought about and maintained by certain kinds of cultural organization. It is this deep and powerful set of conventions which capitalist societies rest that alternative media must resist and challenge. (Hamilton 1998 p. 10)

Many alternative newspapers suggest a social order not significantly different than more mainstream ones. For example, Armstrong (1981) concluded in his 1970s examination of alternative newspapers that:

The political slant of the urban alternatives is liberal and left-liberal. They are a far cry from the radical underground papers of the sixties, few of which made the transition from the explosive, outer-directed activism of the sixties to the quieter, localized politics of the seventies.... The underground press, in effect, did the marketing research for its successors, identifying a large constituency of young readers – mostly the white children of the Baby Boom – and helped make them a self-conscious social and political entity through its first person, rally-round-the-flag advocacy journalism. The urban weeklies offer a very different agenda than did their radical predecessors: pleasure rather than struggle; status rather than the erasure of privilege, enjoyment of the world as it is rather than visions of the world as it might be. (Armstrong 1981 p. 278-279)

Much of Armstrong's argument can be taken to heart as the *Honolulu Weekly* proves to be along a similar commercial spectrum as Armstrong describes most 1970s urban weeklies.

Hamilton (1998) found that despite the extensive efforts of activists involved in the alternative media, a significant cohesive social movement or coalition of movements that offers a clear challenge to the status quo has yet to emerge. He suggests several reasons for the limited affect of alternative media. First, they are embedded in capitalist arrangements. This means that they are not organized in a significantly "alternative" manner than any other "traditionally conceived 'mass' media" and that they are then:

inherently incapable of playing a significant role in assisting alternative social and political movements, due to the professionalization of their practice and the resulting separation of media workers from the people whom they represent. (Hamilton 1998 p. 3)

A second limitation is that of "mass." The assumption that for alternative media to aid in the formation of a truly oppositional order in the U.S. is that it also must have wide scale distribution. The concept of "mass" is seen as necessary for "alternative."

However, Hamilton argues that:

the assumed necessity of using a "mass" medium determines its form and institutional imperatives, and vice-versa. A mass medium is an expensive proposition that requires capital, with advertising a ready source in a capitalist society... the resulting commercial relationship pushes the media venture into forms that solidify the need for capital. (Hamilton 1998 p. 5)

A third limitation is that professionalization of the field has tended to exclude broad participation. Here Hamilton refers to Raymond Williams, who argued that institutions of communications were not a direct product of working people themselves, but were instead produced for them by others, usually those motivated by economic gain.

Hamilton notes:

The structural pressures on producers to abide by the forms and conventions of “quality journalism,”... and the like in order to secure financial support means that other kinds of contributions that don’t fit that definition can’t be included. In addition, professional requirements of information-gathering, writing, editing, and production requires training, access to available resources, and time available to few people outside the academy or profession. ... Compelling material can be produced, yet at the price of a deep separation between journalists and readers, producers and consumers. Acceptance and practice of this distinction activates deeper kinds of social relations in capitalist societies, with perhaps the most disabling ones based in the notion of consumption, defined as a choice from limited options for the purpose of individual use or appreciation. In this way, the social goals of building a resilient, indigenous, democratic popular movement or coalition of movements are impaired from the start by the imposition of such individualizing social relationships. (Hamilton 1998 p. 6-7)

Our earlier discussion of politics underscores the point that no mass media can stray very far from the set of commonly held American beliefs. There is a “right,” “conservative” or “traditional” and a “left,” “progressive,” “liberal,” or “oppositional” version of this “consensus.” More radical publications like the *Left Business Observer* and Norman Solomon’s *Media Beat* are found in subscription newsletters and on the net. Mass media represent one side of this consensus or the other (for example, *The Advertiser*), or may sometimes take one side on some issue and another on other issues, especially if they are “cultural” issues (for example, pornography, abortion, and homosexuality). But almost any item taken up the “cultural left” is consistent with structural conservatism. It is not surprising that these get big play in the “alternative” press.

Social relations suggested by news reportage in *The Honolulu Advertiser* and the *Honolulu Weekly* do differ. Their common story topics and routine story constructions tell different stories about social relations in Honolulu. Without the *Weekly*, a more conservative, status quo view of social life here would further dominate our perceptions of how our communities are organized, what issues are prevalent, what the causes of social problems are and therefore what possible solutions to those might be. Without the influence of daily mainstream publications like *The Advertiser* (as it presently exists) readers and other community members would be missing a “journal of record,” but they also might have a much more liberal view of communities here. They would be asked to consider social life in more critical and politically progressive ways.

On another level though, both publications underscore deep-seated American beliefs about freedom of choice, individualism and commercialism and the American dream. As media critic, Ben Bagdikian has commented:

human attention is one of the most valuable commodities in the world. And as any good propagandist knows, The media don't tell us *what to think*, what's more important is that they tell us *what to think about*. (Personal communication, 08.23.98)

And so, for example, the *Weekly* takes a more liberal view of crime often focusing on it as less an individual act and more on some of the origins of crime as a whole such as long neglect of poor neighborhoods. This, in turn, may lead to increased understanding of the complexities of the issue and support for more progressive taxation as one approach to the problem. However, because the *Weekly* is involved in the commercial system, it stands to at least gain from this very inequity – less so than the dailies, but firmly so nonetheless. At the most, it stands to lose from suggesting radical alternatives

to the economic system as it presently exists. Both publications are in an essentially political battle over understanding and perceptions of community as a public issue.

What defines a radical left is precisely its view that progress requires structural change. As regards media, Dewey (see Manicas 1989) saw clearly that there could be no “public” in the sense adopted by Mills unless American society was changed structurally. Therefore there is no reason to believe that an “alternative” media could consistently be radical in this sense. Accordingly, it would be naïve to suppose that this could define the criteria for judging the “success” of an alternative press.

It is here that this study would be remiss to underestimate the force of constraints on the media in regard to *both* the imperatives of the market *and* the implications of this regarding their “consumers,” the people who read, listen to, and buy what is being produced by the media. These people have beliefs and politics (including cash and other valued resources, as the readers’ profiles highlight). And this *includes* the alternative media. These beliefs and politics ultimately and critically are the gauge of the success and failure of this explicit form of alternative (as well as mainstream) media.

The values of community are constructed and maintained through communication. The media as an “official” form of communications, largely supports a conservative ideological agenda. Embedded in a capitalist mode of production, *The Advertiser* and *Weekly* tell different versions of the same story. That media construct a picture of our communities that is, to a greater or lesser degree, a reproduction of the status quo becomes unproblematic. Media, rather than becoming critical change agents, feed, at best, a distorted, and, at worst, a false consciousness. To be truly oppositional, what is needed is a media that truly challenges the status quo – not only in terms of

content (as the *Weekly* does more so than the mainstreams) and process (as the *Weekly* does in terms of its increased use of “outreach” but less so in terms of focusing its stories on a “limousine liberal” market). But also in terms of being located at various distances, including being completely removed from, capitalist relations. This, of course, can not happen without the support of people interested in social change in the media.

A real change requires an overall shift in ideological understanding. As part of this, modifications are required at all levels of cultural organization as it presently exists – from corporate media, through independent alternative media, to communities and everyday communications. Without a re-constitution of the social, economic and political location of the media, conservative perceptions of the social order, and our role within it, will remain.

CHAPTER 11: CONCLUSION

It seems as if critical media studies were more important in the '60s civil rights era and then in the '70s and '80s Watergate era than they are now.

Richard McCord

Fruitful discussions of media must include a political economic approach because media are embedded in political economic systems. They do not exist separately.

Therefore they are at most shaped or dominated by political economic conditions and at least affected and informed by them. These systems do vary. They are for example, historically contingent and culturally informed.

Discussions of Hawai`i media from a political economic approach reveal the historical domination of wealthy local or kama`aina individuals – many of them having benefited immensely from Hawai`i's plantation and colonial economic conditions. In the thirty years from 1960 to 1990, Hawai`i's economy enjoyed steady growth. Mostly fueled by mainland and Asian infusions of capital, there was continual growth in housing, tourism, real estate development and construction. This of course caused serious social problems as Hawai`i experienced cultural and environmental degradation, and the displacement of indigenous and poor people.

Just as the plantation system has been altered by the globalization of economic activities, so have media systems. Originally, newspaper publications in the state were owned and operated by missionary and then kama`aina (long time resident) families. Since 1972, Gannett Company, Incorporated has owned one or the other of Honolulu's two daily papers. Contrary to their original intent of ensuring two strong editorial voices in communities, both the 1962 and 1993 Joint Operating Agreements have come under criticism for their tendency to promote a business monopoly in newspapers and ensure a

“financially protected and affluent status” for both. The introduction of ownership by a “top tier” media giant such as Gannett has meant a loss of local control or an independent editorial voice. For along with Gannett has come the importation of much of the resources required to run a commercial publication. Managers, high level administrators, editors and many journalists are brought in from the mainland rather than hired from locally raised or trained newswriters. These people bring a mainland approach to news story selection and presentation that is orchestrated by Gannett, Company Incorporated. And despite the state’s continuing economic downturn, Gannett continues to post extreme profits in its “Honolulu information property.” These profits are estimated to be so high that it is clear that Gannett could invest much more in this “property” and still make a sizeable profit. It therefore has no financial excuse for its poor editorial range and quality.

Largely, *The Honolulu Advertiser* operates no differently than a mainland Gannett paper. The publication is not substantially visually differentiated from other Gannett mainland publications. Gannett Company, Incorporated views *The Honolulu Advertiser* as an “information property.” The views expressed in the publication do not run counter to traditional journalistic precepts of objectivity and conservatism. The news is pulled away from local communities in terms of a lack of representation among newswriters in line with the state’s ethnic and gender make-up. Further, the views of the paper remain largely in line with those more powerful in Hawai’i’s communities. Conversely, readers’ perceptions of the prevalent features of their communities are often complete misrepresentations of reality. As one of the most accessible formal public records in the

state, *The Honolulu Advertiser* largely contributes to distorted impressions about prevalent features of community, from which readers gain inaccurate meaning.

Meaning can be distorted on a practical level. For example, that *The Advertiser* devotes approximately 17 percent of its coverage to crime or crime-related topics at a time when crime rates are falling has caused a continued increase in concern over crime and potential victimization, has affected public policy in terms of the construction of more prisons, and has lead people to consider tougher sentencing as the most viable solution to the problem.

Meaning is also distorted on an ideological level. *The Advertiser* prints stories that present a largely individualistic, conservative and consumerist perspective that contribute to a false consciousness (Mills 1959).

The Honolulu Weekly has been historically shaped by mainland publication trends from the 1960s underground presses. Independently and locally owned and operated, it appears to offer a different model of newstelling – one that is more in tune with localized stories, critical thinking and political rabble-rousing.

The Mainstream – Alternative News Nexus

A central question raised at the inception of this research was are the alternative press any different than the mainstream? The field and content analysis data reveal that the answer to this question is yes *and* no.

Clearly the content analysis findings indicate that there are several important distinctions between the editorial approach of the two publications. The *Weekly* is more critical, more liberal, more focused on the roots of social problems, gives far more mobilizing information, appears to be more local and is less interested in superficial or

celebrity accounts (for example, there was little or no mention of the O.J., Lady Di or Monica Lewinsky stories). *The Advertiser* (whose name speaks volumes about its approach) is more detached, conservative, “objective,” contains far less mobilizing information and more superficial and celebrity accounts (for example, a strong focus on the O.J., Lady Di and Monica Lewinsky stories) that often trivialize reader’s participation.

There are also differences in the way that work is organized at each organization. *Advertiser* employees enjoy the protection of union representation and all of the benefits that accompany that in terms of a living wage, overtime pay, parking, security, medical and dental plans, seniority, job security, and protection in the case of legal action. *Weekly* employees, without union representation, struggle with low or sometimes no wages, threatened security, high workloads with limited resources and no overtime pay. Suggestion of unionization on the part of the workers has been met with threats by management. Although the *Weekly* is connected to more progressive media organizations such as the Independent Media Institute, it is also closely linked to the highly consumerist, Association of Alternative Newsweeklies. There is also no evidence of an “alternative” organizational structure at the *Weekly*. The *Weekly* posted large gains in 1994 and was listed the top growing business in the state. Despite this, wages for freelancers have remained the same since the paper’s inception in 1991 and workers report having to quit because they can not afford to work there or spending years trying to argue for small wage raises or other benefits on an individual basis. And there is no apparent willingness on the part of management at present or in the past to seriously address these issues. Although alternative press employment on the mainland appears

only marginally better over all, the extremely high cost of living here exacerbates the problem. Freelance writers on the mainland also earn much more for the same work (one mainland freelancer reported that seventy-five cents per word was considered a poor wage there – the *Weekly* pays ten cents per word).

How does this situation perpetuate itself? How do workers accept these conditions? And how can management get away with it? First, job opportunities are limited here and the cost of living is high. So highly skilled and educated workers do not have the same opportunities to build their skills as they would in many mainland locales. Many workers accept the conditions of employment for short periods of time until they gain experience and can use that to get a “real job,” often on the mainland. Many, especially those who are mobile, interestingly, seem to enroll in law schools. Fueled by their strong idealism and desire to “make a difference,” they sell their skills to help the cause. When they are no longer able to live with the very low wages and long hours and find themselves literally unable to pay their rent – they leave. Management gets away with it by allowing workers to enjoy the liberal approach of the publication at the same time exploiting workers’ idealism. As long as there is a somewhat ready supply of persons willing to accept these conditions, management can continue to operate in this manner. Management is part of the very same political economic system as are the workers. Therefore they reproduced those same systems of inequality in an attempt to maintain financial and career success themselves. They, like the workers, are fighting for the same status. It is just that management, by virtue of the fact that they presently define the condition of employment for workers, is more able to control organizational rules and

resources. Proportionately more of those resources go to them than to the workers. This is how they meet their financial and career goals.

Without the *Weekly*, the editorial voice in the state would be severely one-sided. It tends to showcase various social problems by its tabloid appearance and focus on only a few stories each week. It fills a much maligned news hole that the dailies have created and sustain.

On a practical level, readers get impressions about their local communities that speak to more in-depth understanding of local issues such as poverty, politics and development. As the data on mobilizing information shows, the *Weekly* encourages more serious action on the part of its readers than does *The Advertiser*. *Weekly* readers are constructed as active participants in the process and are encouraged to get involved in local issues in critical ways.

However, the field research data indicates similarities between the two in this regard. For example, the commercial influences on the papers are the same. Whereas both papers give mobilizing information, they both do this to a higher degree in arts and entertainment type articles than in issues oriented pieces. This underscores the business relationships with local arts, entertainment companies, restaurants and the like without whose advertising dollars the newspapers could not survive. Readers of both papers are delivered more to local restaurants, coffee shops and entertainment businesses through stories than they are to local grassroots organizations.

On an ideological level, although readers get a much more liberal version of news telling, they are not encouraged to consider radical change or to challenge particularly the economic system as it exists. They are encouraged to consider minor variations in the

political economic structure such as changing the leadership of the Hawai'i State Tourism and Convention Bureau rather than continually questioning whether or not we should be relying so strongly on tourism at all. They are also presented with a very individualized approach to community life. The goal is to foster as many voices as possible in the name of *individual civil rights* to freedom of expression. This follows a highly individual-liberal perspective, not a more collective-liberal or socialist approach, and points to an essential American tension between individual and communal rights. In this way, alternative publications like the *Weekly*, to a lesser degree than the mainstream publications, support the same "mass public" ideology that Mills railed against.

It is evident that the alternative-mainstream nexus is comprised of a series of dualities. These have to do with the relationship between management and workers, between advertising and the social change ideal, between independent and corporate ownership of the means of communication, between the more critical and more conservative role of the press in the public sphere, between style as "hip" and political style as detached, deadpan or traditional, and between individualism and collectivism. These dualities point at the ways in which political and economic features of mass culture, of which both papers are a part, present certain historical contingencies where decisions are shaped largely in accordance with predominant ideological understandings. In this case, regardless of management and workers' commitment to alternative and liberal ideals, alternative publications, at the same time as providing liberal commentary, often do not exemplify left liberalism as their predecessors, the underground and radical presses, did. In their struggle to survive the ideal has been compromised, particularly in terms of alternative papers' relationship to capitalism.

Recommendations

If community television like 'Olelo: The Corporation for Community Television where community members produce programs of interest to them, is sustained by public policy then why can we not have legislation like this for newspapers as well? 'Olelo receives its funding from a portion of local cable companies' fees that are collected from cable subscribers.

There are several openings for change in the present media system. First, people need to know more about the media and how they operate in the U.S. This can not be left up to the media. It is not in their best interest to explain how they are involved in the constant maintenance of false consciousness. And, caught up themselves in this, they do not believe they are anyway. The school systems could develop courses for high school students on media literacy from a political-economic standpoint. As well, journalism schools have a responsibility to introduce more content on media literacy and critical thinking skills about the media system. We also need more non-profit, progressive and community media organizations. These organizations have more potential to localize issues that often seem out of reach of ordinary citizens. This would also encourage more lay participation in media organizations. Much of this will not happen without the support of progressive public policy.

If we allow JOA's and increasing conglomeration of media giants, then we must at the very least hold them responsible for sharing portions of their profits as is the case with community television.

And lastly, there is a small but growing literature that pairs sociological approaches with media studies. These two disciplines have everything to gain from their

combination. Journalists report daily on social life, but often have no formal knowledge of social problems or the benefits of a critical sociological perspective. Conversely, sociologists underestimate or at least often marginalize media studies as being trivial or commercial or socially unimportant compared to more serious social problems like violence, poverty, racism, environmental degradation and crime. What could these have to do with the media? The media just shape how the issues are presented and beyond that play a limited if not insignificant role, don't they? "End of story. It's not important. It just doesn't matter," sociologists have told me. The underestimation of media studies in sociology is evidenced by such things as the dearth of sociology of media teaching and research positions in American sociology departments and the lack of an American Sociological Association section dedicated to media studies. The media is strongly implicated in how we see public issues and therefore people's perceptions of their communities, of the roots of social problems, of the possible solutions to social problems. The public gains meaning from these perceptions. The media therefore holds tremendous power in how people understand social life and social problems. For this reason alone, sociology needs to take media studies under more serious consideration.

Until we can present a convincing case about the critical importance of communication in communities and the affect of political economic conditions on them and their implications with large scale ideologies of individualism and capitalism, we will continue to live with a false consciousness. Conversely, when we create systems that encourage people to see private troubles as public issues then real change can occur. Media, whether it is alternative, mainstream, community, or non-profit, is a critical public

issue because it is implicated in building consciousness – false or otherwise. Therein lies a social space with potential to fundamentally change consciousness.

APPENDIX A: CODING TABLES

Table A1: Media Census Codes

| Item # | CODE | DESCRIPTION | CATEGORIES / PARAMETERS |
|--------|--------------------|---|--|
| 1. | Publication source | Publication type | Mainstream Alternative |
| 2. | Date | Date of publication | December 01, 1996 – August 31, 1997 |
| 3. | Section | Newspaper section | None Cover Hawaii Focus Island Life Business Travel Homestyle |
| 4. | Page Numbers | Location of article by page number | A1- H25 1 – 60 |
| 5. | I.D. Number | An autonumber assigned by the computer program, unique to each article. | 1 – 2986 |
| 6. | Author | Author's name and local status (if available) | Name Local / Non-Local |
| 7. | Title | Article title | Narrative |
| 8. | Broad Subject | A description of the main idea (s) in article | Narrative |
| 9. | Topics | A more condensed description of article topics | Narrative |
| 10. | Narrow Theme(s) | A few words to represent main topic(s) in article | Narrative |
| 11. | Length | Article length as measured in column inches | .5 inches - 143 inches |
| 12. | Graphics | If graphics were used in relation to an article. | Yes No |

Table A2: Rhetorical Frames

| Item # | CODE | DESCRIPTION | CATEGORIES |
|--------|--------|-------------------|--|
| 13 | Author | Origin of author. | None Listed Local Mainland International Wire Mix of above types Other |

Table A2: (Continued) Rhetorical Frames

| | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| 14 | Locale | Locale of story or story is mostly about. | <p>None listed Honolulu, Downtown, Chinatown Waikiki Manoa Leeward (Pearl Harbor, Kalihi) W. Oahu (Waianae, Kunia, Kapolei) Central / North Oahu Windward (Laie, Kaneohe, Kailua) East Oahu (Kapahulu, Diamond Head, Hawaii Kai) Oahu Island Kauai / Niihau Molokai / Lanai Maui / Kahoolawe Big Island Hawaii – General State U.S. Mainland, U.S. general Asia Europe Canada Mexico / S. America Other</p> |
| 15 | Writing tone (light, serious, mixed) | Serious to humorous. | <p>1) Serious Light, humorous Mixed with more serious Mixed with more humorous</p> |
| 16 | Overall approach | More “detached” through more “personal.” | <p>1) Detached, objective, uninfluenced by emotion, surmise, removed. Personal, subjective – expression of the individual author Mixed, with more detached Mixed, with more personal.</p> |

Table A2: (Continued) Rhetorical Frames

| | | | |
|----|------------------------------|--|--|
| 17 | Stance on an issue | Political stance in article. | Conservative, boosterish, individualized, right leaning Liberal, radical, politicized, critical, left leaning Mixed/Other Neutral, detached, imparts information |
| 18 | Perspective | Voice in article. | More suppressed – more third person, expert, or mixtures of these and other perspectives. More explicit – more first person, human face, or mixtures of these and other perspectives. |
| 19 | Quotes (long, short, mixed), | “Short” quotes are two sentences or under. “Long” quotes are three sentences or more. “Mixed” – contains both short and long quotes. | None Short Long Mixed |

Table A3: Style Frames

| Item # | CODE | DESCRIPTION | CATEGORIES |
|--------|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| 20 | Language – Hawaiian (Hawaiian words) | Hawaiian words used. | None One Two or more |
| 21 | Language – Pidgin (pidgin words used) | Pidgin words used. | None One Two or more |
| 22 | Language – Creative | Use of “play on words.” | None One Two or more |
| 23 | Language – Casual | Slang words used | None One Two or more |
| 24 | Language – Offensive | Swear words used | None One Two or more |
| 25 | Timeframe | Timeframe when story or event takes place; present, follow up, past, future. | Current, breaking, new Follow up (within last year to ten years) Historical (> 10 years or focus is historical) Future (event to happen in future) |
| 26 | Outreach | Articles that directly refer readers elsewhere or solicit input. | None Referral Solicitation Both |

Table A4: Story Topic Codes

| Item # | CODE | DESCRIPTION | CATEGORIES/PARAMETERS |
|---------------|----------------|--|--|
| 27 | Accidents | Whether or not a story is about an accident | Absent Present |
| 28 | Arts | Article contains information or story on the arts | Absent Arts in general Books, writing Dance Film, foreign, documentary, art house, more independent Movies, blockbuster, more commercial Music Theater / Opera Museums |
| 29 | Crime | Article contains information or story about crime | Absent Crime, criminals, police, upholding law Drugs Court case War crimes |
| 30 | Current issues | Story topics about "hot" current issues such as environmentalism, road construction, tobacco, first amendment, and right to die. | Absent Campaign Spending First Amendment Disabled H3 Right to Die AIDS Tobacco Feminism / Women's Issues Racism |
| 31 | Economy | Story topics about economy, business or technology --related subjects. | 0) Absent 1) Business, economy, finance, technology Non-Profit Charity |
| 32 | Education | Story topics about education. | Absent Present |
| 33 | Environment | Story topics about the environment and environmental issues. | Absent Water Air Land Mixed Weather Other |
| 34 | Development | Story topics about land and construction development. | Absent Construction - Pro Construction - Con Construction - Critical Development - Planned |

Table A4: (Continued) Story Topic Codes

| | | | |
|----|-------------------------|--|---|
| 35 | Food / drink | Story topics about food, drink, restaurants and bars. | Absent Food / Restaurants Drinks / Bars/ Clubs Mixed Other |
| 36 | Gay / same sex | Story topics about gay, lesbian, same-sex and sexual orientation. | Absent Gay Lesbian Same-sex Mixed |
| 37 | Government | Story topics about government agencies, programs, services, departments at any level. | Absent Neighborhood / Community City County State Federal Mixed Other |
| 38 | Hawaiian issues | Story topics about Hawaiian issues. | Absent KSBE OHA Language Land Culture Sovereignty |
| 39 | Health/ medicine | Story topics about health and medicine. | Absent Health Medicine Health Care Delivery Illness Policy Research Inequality |
| 40 | Housing | Story topics about housing and rental issues. | Absent Housing – General Housing –Affordable |
| 41 | Labor | Story topics about labor and labor issues. | Absent Jobs Working Conditions Unions Policy Unemployment Wages Issues Mixed Volunteer Other |

Table A4: (Continued) Story Topic Codes

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------------|--|--|
| 42 | Leisure | Story topics about leisure, community events, entertainment, awards and spirituality. | Absent Leisure Entertainment Recreation Sport Beauty Pageants Gambling Shopping Etiquette Fads Mixed Awards Church, Religion, Spiritual Other |
| 43 | Media | Story topics about the media. | Absent Media Communications Newspaper TV Radio Computers Telecommunications Journalists Other |
| 44 | Military | Story topics about the military. | Absent Present |
| 45 | Politics | Story topics about local politics, international, national and political commentary. | Absent International Politics / Politicians – local Campaign Political Commentary Lawmaking Civil Disobedience / Organized Resistance Other |
| 46 | Relationships | Story topics about relationships, family, age groups and social relations. | Absent Sex, Dating Family Children / Kids Youth Teens Elderly Friendships Relationships – general Social Other |
| 47 | Tourism | Story topics about tourism related topics. | Absent Travel Hotels Venues HVCB Jobs Industry Other |

Table A4: (Continued) Story Topic Codes

| | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|---|--|
| 48 | Transportation | Story topics about transportation. | Absent Cars Buses Road Rapid Bicycles Mixed Alternative Planes Boats Mixed Standard Parking |
| 49 | Welfare | Story topics about welfare and welfare reform. | Absent Poverty Policy/Reform Issues Other |

APPENDIX B: GANNETT – BUSINESS OUTLOOK

The following entries are from the Gannett Web site (Gannett Company Incorporated, 1998):

Gannett Charity

Because Gannett management believes the company owes something to the people in communities where Gannett does business, in late 1990 the company announced the formation of Gannett Communities Fund. In 1996 this program, renamed the Gannett Foundation, channeled approximately \$6.4 million in grants and employee matching gifts to deserving causes in Gannett communities.

As Gannett progresses through the 1990s, the information age, it continues to serve the readers on Elm Street, the businesses on Main Street and the investors on Wall Street -- all across the USA.

Gannett's Basic Game Plan - Business Definition

Gannett is a \$4.4 billion news, information and communications company. We operate with the belief that improving products and sound management will lead to higher profits for our shareholders. The underlying theme in our ads is: "A world of different voices where freedom speaks." Our assets include: USA TODAY; Daily and weekly community newspapers and specialty publications; Television, cable and radio stations in Top 25 and growth markets; Alarm security services; Online news, information and advertising.

Strategic Vision

Create and expand quality products through innovation; Make acquisitions in news, information and communications and related fields that make strategic and economic sense.

Operating Principles

Provide effective leadership and efficient management. Achieve a positive return on new and acquired products and properties in a reasonable period of time, while recognizing those with high growth potential may take more time. Increase profitability and increase return on equity and investment over the long term. Enhance the quality and editorial integrity of our products, recognizing that quality products ultimately lead to higher profits. Guarantee respect for and fairness in dealing with employees. Offer a diverse environment where opportunity is based on merit. Show commitment and service to communities where we do business. Deliver customer satisfaction. Dispose of assets that have limited or no potential. In all activities, we show respect for the First Amendment and our responsibility to it.

The Hawaii Newspaper Agency

The Hawaii Newspaper Agency is a limited partnership of Gannett Pacific Corp. (the Advertiser) and Liberty Newspapers Limited Partnership (the Star-Bulletin), responsible for production, circulation and advertising for the two newspapers. Gannett Pacific is the general partner and is responsible for all business decisions. The Star-Bulletin and Advertiser are separately owned and editorially independent. This must be clear in our stories.

APPENDIX C: THE HISTORY OF HIP

According to *The Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang*, hip is defined as:

The oldest usage of the term, beginning in the early 1700s, was as an abbreviation of the word, "hypochondria" as in "hyp." It meant to be in low spirits, or to have the blues. It was also associated with "laying the hip" or "being on the hip" which, beginning as early as the 1914, meant to smoke opium (the position one often took while smoking opium) or to have or be carrying liquor in a flask on one's hip. Also in the early 1900s, the term became associated with "being fully aware," "in the know," "shrewd, sophisticated and smart," "splendid, fine and enjoyable," "insolent," "to inform or alert, make aware, tell." Around mid-century, the term was used to mean "stylish sophistication," and to be "in fashion, up-to-date." To be "hipped," beginning in 1895 meant to be "infatuate with, enthusiastic, excited, or fanatic about." And "hippie" or "hippy" came in to use in 1952 and was used widely by Black jazz musicians to refer to "a person who is or attempts to be hip." This term was often used derisively, as in someone who claimed to be hip, but who was actually square or those who, bored with their elite tastes, turned to "anti-art and such. ... These ... comprise the Madison Avenue Hippies... [and] a host of Ivy League symbol-manipulators."(Lighter 1997 p. 101-4)

An essential element of "hip" historically has been associated with "... a mournful humanism, an ethical nihilism..."(Woods 1987p. 95) The authors trace the history of the term:

... from "hep," the prewar jazz musician's sobriquet for an alert and intuitive performer; historically, the man may have taken Harry "the Hipster" Gibson, a postwar pianist in New York. This immediate identification with jazz, a music first mastered by blacks and long associated with drug use if not addiction... [became linked to] a social sub-culture [and] a street smart philosophy whose gnarled argument may be condensed to something like this ... : out of an era of conformity enforced by the postwar American peace would emerge the American existentialist, a new man driven by private imperatives to model his prospects on the plight of the American black, whose skin had sentenced him to alienation from the wider social order... The hipster... might serve society by countering its totalitarian drift with the example of his liberation, though often at terrible cost, since that liberation could sometimes require violent action against the status quo... from the black bank of jazz, crusading sex, bold dope, and private languages, the white man at odds with his official culture might draw the psychic funds he needed for survival. (Woods 1987 p. 95-6).

APPENDIX D: DRESS AS STYLE

Dress

Dress styles worn by those who work for the *Weekly* are generally quite casual, but vary within that. Clothing worn ranges from extremely casual to working casual. Take for example, the following employee's "looks."

The Men:

Dean: (a twenty-something receptionist, office worker, haole) surfer style. Wears long bermuda shorts, loose and t-shirts or aloha shirts. Always untucked. Usually wears no shoes at all. Has curly red hair that is not short and not long, but bushy, in between length. Short and medium build.

Todd: (a late 20's editor, haole). Wears old, worn shorts, long length. Old ripped t-shirts. When he dresses up for job functions at finer local establishments, reticently wears a vintage, but quirky aloha shirt untucked, black jeans and doc martens. He keeps his head shaved bald and wears wire-rimmed glasses. Tall and thin build.

Doug: (a forty something, haole, arts production worker). Wears long pants, usually old jeans and a tucked in aloha shirt. Wire rimmed glasses and a short to medium hair cut. Mustache. Tall and thin, slight build.

Jeremy: (a late twenties black production worker). Wears pants, usually newer jeans and long sleeve shirts with a T-shirt underneath. Usually black shirts and comfortable walking shoes. Usually has a ski jacket with him which he puts on when he takes cat naps in his chair at his computer. Short cut hair. Tall and medium build.

Hee: (an early twenties Chinese, local type production worker). Wears shirts with logos on them like "Nike" and "Cheerios" or sports team logos and baggy jeans with vans shoes. Very loose fitting clothes with gold jewelry. Medium length blunt hair cut. Very slight build.

Kaimana: (a late thirties haole circulation worker). Wears jeans and polo shirts. Short hair. Mustache. Immaculately clean and tidy daily. Slightly sporty, very fit.

Dave: (a mid-forties ad sales worker, haole, from New York). Wears black jeans and tight shirts. Often dress type, long sleeved shirts with the buttons opened up half way down the front. Wears a lot of

gold jewelry. Wears black leather, not shiny, dress shoes. Wears a leather jacket when he rides his motorcycle to work. Has short brown curly hair, no mustache.

Kahala: (a mid-twenties, part Hawaiian, sales side worker). Wears vans shoes, an antique but quirky, aloha shirt daily, sometimes a retro print one, with loose jeans. Carries a casual briefcase. Medium length black hair. Short and medium build.

The Women:

Kalei: (an early-thirties admin worker, part Hawaiian). Wears loose vintage style aloha shirt, tied in front with tight cut off jean shorts. Short, heavier build. Long straight, black hair. Gold jewelry. Red nail polish and slippers.

Camille: (a late-forties, haole, sales worker). Wears black and white. Usually a white cotton, long sleeved loose shirt and black long dressier pants. Nail polish, usually shades of white. Make up. Bleach blonde hair. Gold jewelry. Tall and thin.

Alec: (a mid-thirties, haole, editor). Wears nylon flippy short skirts, heavy leather, doc martens type shoes, and tight short sweaters. Assorted costume jewelry. Large nylon frame glasses. Medium build. No nail polish or heavy make up. Long straight brown hair.

Jen: (a mid-twenties, haole, sales). Wears high heels. Short skirts. Tight tops. Lots of make up and jewelry. Shows lots of skin. Tall. Thin. Long straight dark brown hair.

Cyndi: (a mid-twenties, haole, local, admin). Wears loose t-shirts and long jeans with tennis shoes with holes in them. A light jacket for when its cold in the building. Medium length blonde hair. No make up. No jewelry. Medium height. Thin.

Jo: (a late-forties, haole, local, editor). Wears natural fabrics always, cotton and linen. Long skirts and short sets. Dark colors. Loose fitting. More expensive type clothes than the rest. More dressy casual shoes made out of leather. Little jewelry or make up. No nail polish. Medium length gray hair. Medium height.

Esther: (an early-twenties, photographer, mixed-Asian local). Vans shoes. Cotton combat pants. Tight tank tops. Leather jewelry. Nail polish. Long, straight black hair. Medium build. Small.

Lim: (an early-twenties, intern, Filipino). Dark clothes. Always black. Tattoos. Little jewelry. Black jeans and black t-shirts. Black hair with a blue dye in it. Small build.

APPENDIX E: ADVERTISING TABLES

**Table E1: Advertising to Editorial (Run of the Press) Content – *Honolulu Advertiser*
October 19, 1997**

| Section | Total Section Page Count | Total Ad Page Count | Percentage |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Cover | 20 | 15 | 75.00 |
| Hawaii (A) | 8 | 5.25 | 65.62 |
| Focus (B) | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Sports (C) | 10 | 3.25 | 32.50 |
| Home (D) | 6 | 2.5 | 41.66 |
| Entertainment (E) | 12 | 6.75 | 56.25 |
| Travel (F) | 8 | 5.75 | 71.87 |
| Business (G) | 14 | 9.5 | 67.85 |
| Real Estate (H) | 14 | 9.5 | 67.85 |
| Supplemental (I) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dining Out (DO) | 8 | 8 | 100. |
| Total: | 104 | 65.5 | 62.98 |

**Table E2: Advertising to Editorial (Run of the Press) Content – *Honolulu Advertiser*
November 16, 1997**

| Section | Total Section Page Count | Total Ad Page Count | Percentage |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Cover | 26 | 21 | 80.00 |
| Hawaii (A) | 8 | 5 | 62.50 |
| Focus (B) | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Sports (C) | 10 | 4.25 | 42.5 |
| Home (D) | 4 | 1.25 | 31.25 |
| Entertainment (E) | 12 | 5.5 | 45.80 |
| Travel (F) | 8 | 5.25 | 65.62 |
| Business (G) | 8 | 5.75 | 71.87 |
| Real Estate (H) | 12 | 8.5 | 70.83 |
| Supplemental (I) | 28 | 28 | 100.00 |
| Dining Out (DO) | 8 | 8 | 100.00 |
| Total | 128 | 92.5 | 72.26 |

**Table E3: Advertising to Editorial (Run of the Press) Content – *Honolulu Advertiser*
December 07, 1997**

| Section | Total Section Page Count | Total Ad Page Count | Percent |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Cover | 24 | 20 | 83.33 |
| Hawaii (A) | 8 | 4.75 | 59.37 |
| Focus (B) | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Sports (C) | 12 | 4.5 | 37.5 |
| Home (D) | 4 | 1 | 25.00 |

**Table E3: (Continued) Advertising to Editorial (Run of the Press) Content –
Honolulu Advertiser December 07, 1997**

| | | | |
|--------------------------|------------|-------------|---------------|
| Entertainment (E) | 12 | 7.75 | 64.58 |
| Travel (F) | 8 | 6 | 75.00 |
| Business (G) | 16 | 15 | 93.75 |
| Real Estate (H) | 12 | 8 | 66.66 |
| Supplemental (I) | 26 | 26 | 100.00 |
| Dining Out (DO) | 8 | 8 | 100.00 |
| Total: | 134 | 101 | 75.37 |

**Table E4: Advertising to Editorial (Run of the Press) Content – Honolulu Advertiser
January 04, 1998**

| Section | Total Section Page Count | Total Ad Page Count | Percentage |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Cover | 20 | 16 | 80.00 |
| Hawaii (A) | 8 | 4.5 | 56.25 |
| Focus (B) | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Sports (C) | 10 | 3.25 | 32.50 |
| Home (D) | 8 | .5 | 6.25 |
| Entertainment (E) | 10 | 5 | 50.00 |
| Travel (F) | 8 | 5 | 62.50 |
| Business (G) | 12 | 9.5 | 79.16 |
| Real Estate (H) | 20 | 9.25 | 46.25 |
| Supplemental (I) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dining Out (DO) | 8 | 8 | 100.00 |
| Total: | 108 | 71.50 | 66.20 |

**Table E5: Advertising to Editorial (Run of the Press) Content – Honolulu Advertiser
February 22, 1998**

| Section | Total Section Page Count | Total Ad Page Count | Percentage |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Cover | 16 | 10.5 | 65.62 |
| Hawaii (A) | 8 | 4.5 | 56.25 |
| Focus (B) | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Sports (C) | 12 | 4.5 | 37.50 |
| Home (D) | 4 | .75 | 18.75 |
| Entertainment (E) | 10 | 4 | 40.00 |
| Travel (F) | 8 | 5 | 62.50 |
| Business (G) | 14 | 10 | 71.42 |
| Real Estate (H) | 30 | 30 | 100.00 |
| Supplemental (I) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dining Out (DO) | 8 | 8 | 100.00 |
| Total: | 112 | 77.25 | 68.97 |

Table E6: Advertising to Editorial (Run of the Press) Content – *Honolulu Advertiser* March 01, 1998

| Section | Total Section Page Count | Total Ad Page Count | Percentage |
|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Cover | 20 | 14.25 | 71.25 |
| Hawaii (A) | 8 | 5.5 | 68.75 |
| Focus (B) | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Sports (C) | 10 | 3 | 30.00 |
| Home (D) | 4 | 1 | 25.00 |
| Entertainment (E) | 10 | 5 | 50.00 |
| Travel (F) | 10 | 8 | 80.00 |
| Business (G) | 12 | 9 | 75.00 |
| Real Estate (H) | 28 | 28 | 100.00 |
| Supplemental (I) | | | |
| Dining Out (DO) | 8 | 8 | 100.00 |
| Total: | 114 | 81.75 | 71.71 |

Table E7: Advertising to Editorial (Run of the Press) Content – *Honolulu Weekly* October 1997 – March 1998

| Issue Date | Total Section Page Count | Total Ad Page Count | Percentage |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|------------|
| October 22, 1997 | 32 | 16 | 50.00 |
| November 5, 1997 | 28 | 13 | 46.42 |
| November 26, 1997 | 40 | 20.5 | 51.25 |
| December 17, 1997 | 32 | 16.5 | 51.56 |
| January 28, 1998 | 32 | 16.5 | 51.56 |
| February 25, 1998 | 28 | 14 | 50.00 |
| March 4, 1998 | 24 | 11.5 | 47.91 |
| Statistical Average(mean) | | | 49.81 |

Table E8: *The Honolulu Advertiser* Advertisement Copy Content by Section October 1997 – March 1998

| Issue Date | 10/19/97 | 11/16/97 | 12/07/97 | 01/04/98 | 02/22/98 | 03/01/98 | Mean |
|---------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------|
| Section | | | | | | | |
| Cover | 75.00 | 80.00 | 83.33 | 80.00 | 65.62 | 71.25 | 75.86 |
| Hawaii (A) | 65.62 | 62.5 | 59.37 | 56.25 | 56.25 | 68.75 | 61.45 |
| Focus (B) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Sports (C) | 32.50 | 42.50 | 37.50 | 32.50 | 37.50 | 30.00 | 35.41 |
| Home (D) | 41.66 | 31.25 | 25.00 | 6.25 | 18.75 | 25.00 | 24.65 |
| Entertainment (E) | 56.25 | 45.80 | 64.58 | 50.00 | 40.00 | 50.00 | 51.10 |
| Travel (F) | 71.87 | 65.62 | 75.00 | 62.50 | 62.50 | 80.00 | 69.58 |
| Business (G) | 67.85 | 71.87 | 93.75 | 79.16 | 71.42 | 75.00 | 76.50 |
| Real Estate (H) | 67.85 | 70.83 | 66.66 | 46.25 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 75.26 |
| Supplemental (I) | 0 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 100. |
| Dining Out (DO) | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 100. |
| Mean Total (Issue): | 62.98 | 72.26 | 75.37 | 66.20 | 68.97 | 71.71 | 69.58 |

Table E9: Honolulu Advertiser Reader's Profile (1997)

| Profile | Sunday Advertiser |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Age | |
| <i>18-24</i> | <i>11%</i> |
| <i>25-34</i> | <i>21%</i> |
| <i>35-44</i> | <i>23%</i> |
| <i>45-54</i> | <i>19%</i> |
| <i>55+</i> | <i>26%</i> |
| Education | |
| <i>High School or Less</i> | <i>37%</i> |
| <i>Some College</i> | <i>36%</i> |
| <i>College Graduate</i> | <i>27%</i> |
| Marital Status | |
| <i>Married</i> | <i>59%</i> |
| <i>Single</i> | <i>41%</i> |
| Children at Home | <i>39%</i> |
| Household Income | |
| <i>Under \$30,000</i> | <i>18%</i> |
| <i>\$30-39,900</i> | <i>17%</i> |
| <i>\$40-49,900</i> | <i>20%</i> |
| <i>\$50-74,900</i> | <i>21%</i> |
| <i>\$75,000+</i> | <i>24%</i> |
| Ethnicity | <i>30%</i> |
| <i>Caucasian</i> | |
| <i>Japanese</i> | <i>27%</i> |
| <i>Hawaiian</i> | <i>13%</i> |
| <i>Other</i> | <i>30%</i> |
| Home Status | |
| <i>Own</i> | <i>64%</i> |
| <i>Rent</i> | <i>36%</i> |
| Occupation | |
| <i>Profeshnl/Techncl</i> | <i>14%</i> |
| <i>Craft/Labor/Farm</i> | <i>11%</i> |
| <i>Service</i> | <i>10%</i> |
| <i>Administrative</i> | <i>11%</i> |
| <i>Exec/Admin/Mngr</i> | <i>11%</i> |
| <i>Sales</i> | <i>7%</i> |
| <i>Other</i> | <i>8%</i> |

Table E10: The Honolulu Weekly Reader's Profile (1996)

| Category | Sub-Category | Percent |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Gender | | |
| | <i>Male</i> | <i>48</i> |
| | <i>Female</i> | <i>52</i> |
| Business Ownership | | <i>32</i> |
| Computer Use | | |
| | <i>At work</i> | <i>80</i> |
| | <i>At home</i> | <i>64</i> |

Table E10: (Continued) The *Honolulu Weekly Reader's* Profile (1996)

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------------|
| Education | | |
| | <i>Attended college</i> | <i>94</i> |
| | <i>College graduates</i> | <i>78</i> |
| | <i>Postgraduate degrees</i> | <i>41</i> |
| Household Income | | |
| | <i>\$25,000</i> | <i>11</i> |
| | <i>25,000-34,000</i> | <i>12</i> |
| | <i>35,000-44,000</i> | <i>13</i> |
| | <i>45,000-54,000</i> | <i>11</i> |
| | <i>55,000-64,000</i> | <i>8</i> |
| | <i>65,000-74,000</i> | <i>9</i> |
| | <i>75,000-84,000</i> | <i>6</i> |
| | <i>85,000-94,000</i> | <i>11</i> |
| | <i>100,000-125,000</i> | <i>8</i> |
| | <i>125,000 +</i> | <i>11</i> |
| | <i>(\$85,000 +)</i> | <i>30</i> |
| Age | | |
| | <i>Under 20</i> | <i>5</i> |
| | <i>21-24</i> | <i>4</i> |
| | <i>25-29</i> | <i>7</i> |
| | <i>30-34</i> | <i>11</i> |
| | <i>35-39</i> | <i>15</i> |
| | <i>40-44</i> | <i>15</i> |
| | <i>45-49</i> | <i>13</i> |
| | <i>50-54</i> | <i>11</i> |
| | <i>55-59</i> | <i>8</i> |
| | <i>60-64</i> | <i>6</i> |
| | <i>65-69</i> | <i>3</i> |
| | <i>70 +</i> | <i>3</i> |
| Pass On Rate | | |
| | <i>Readers per issue</i> | <i>1.8</i> |
| | <i>Readership per issue</i> | <i>72,000</i> |
| Contributions | <i>Contribute financially to causes</i> | <i>> 80</i> |
| Home Ownership | | <i>52</i> |
| Voter Registration | | <i>92</i> |

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