



Political Ads & Local TV News

The Honolulu Case

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--dy & pr

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Abstract

Political advertising is a structural feature of American political campaigns. That has become more prescient with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v Federal Election Commission* in 2010. The vast majority of that advertising comes in the form of political ads that are shown on local television stations. In fact, in the Presidential election of 2012, local TV stations received over \$2.9 billion (80%) of political ad spending. The political ads, by definition, raise questions about public issues that the candidates think will resonate with voters. Given these circumstances, an obvious question is to what extent are those public issues covered by the local news operations of the stations on which the ads appear. This study examined that question in the Honolulu, HI television market during the 2012 campaign. It extended previous analysis of the Honolulu market. Who bought the ads? What did they say? Were those issues reflected in news coverage during the campaign?

Table of Contents

1	Introduction
5	Local TV News
11	Political Ads
16	The Honolulu TV Market
19	Methodology
25	Findings
49	Analysis
59	Discussion
61	Implications
66	Conclusion
69	References

Introduction

There is more money in American politics than ever before. In 2000, candidates George Bush and Al Gore spent a combined \$300 million in the general election. Last year, candidates Mitt Romney and Barack Obama spent \$1.2 billion—a fourfold increase (Toner & Trainer, 2013). Most of this money was pumped into political advertising campaigns that consumed 51 and 52 percent of Romney and Obama’s campaign budgets, respectively (Washington Post/Kantar Media, 2012). Traditional media dominated ad revenues (Goldstein, Schweidel & Wittenwyler, 2012) and television alone “[...] remains the gold standard for political advertising” (Owen, 2013, p. 110). Speaking about televised political advertisements, senior Obama campaign strategist David Axelrod affirmed, “It’s still the nuclear weapon” (Nichols & McChesney, 2013, p. 138).

Candidates for office—and their political advertising firms—are eager to fill the information hole. In the past four presidential elections, the amount spent on political campaigns has more than doubled from \$3 billion in 2000 to \$6.2 billion in 2012 (Toner & Trainer, 2013). Some say 2012 spending was even higher—upwards of \$10 billion when “dark money” is included (Nichols & McChesney, 2013). Political campaigns spend enormous sums of money on political advertisements (Washington Post/Kantar Media, 2012) that describe issues on the public agenda (Fowler & Ridout, 2009; Freedman, Franz & Goldstein, 2004; Johnston & Kaid, 2002; Patterson & McClure, 1976; West, 2005).

In theory, a private press should repudiate misinformation through the content that it sells; but more recent changes in American telecommunications policy have limited the press’ ability to do so (Just, Levine & Belt, 2001; McChesney & Nichols, 2010; McKean & Stone, 1992). Today, there are fewer voices in the U.S. news media (Stearns & Wright, 2011; Stelter, 2013, 2012; Waldman, 2011; Yanich, 2013) that carry less critical political information (Kaplan & Hale, 2010, 2002, 2001; Karr, 2012a, 2012b; Owen, 2013; Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2012a; Schudson, 1995).

Political advertisements, alternatively, are a highly visible source of information about public policy issues (Cho, 2008; Freedman, Franz & Goldstein, 2004; Johnston & Kaid, 2002; Nichols & McChesney, 2013; Rosenstiel, Mitchell, Purcell & Rainie, 2011; West, 2005, 1994). They are also a structural feature of

American campaigns that have become more numerous in recent years (Daunt, 2012). Since 2000, campaign spending more than doubled from \$3 billion to \$6.2 billion last year (Toner & Trainer, 2013). Campaigns spend enormous sums of money on ads (Washington Post/Kantar Media, 2012) that are often geographically targeted (Nichols & McChesney, 2013; Stelter, 2013) and frequently describe policy issues in local places (Freedman, Franz & Goldstein, 2004; Johnston & Kaid, 2002; Patterson & McClure, 1976; West, 2005).

The influx of political ad spending has created something of an information imbalance. In the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010), local markets are seeing a deluge of political advertisements. These ads inundate citizens with an onslaught of issue information. Contemporaneously, it seems that local television news offers

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barren assessments of the issues presented by political campaign ads. Local news frequently presents information to the same audience that watches

political ads, but does local news evaluate the claims made in those ads? This research investigated the content of news programming and political advertisements at the intersection of two important political and economic phenomena: the consolidation of local broadcast news, and the proliferation of political advertisements on local television. We directed our attention to the epicenter of political advertising placement: local television news programs. We examined the newscasts in Honolulu, Hawai'i for two reasons. First, Honolulu, like over 100 other markets in the U.S., has a television market in which a shared services agreement (among three of the five stations producing news) has materially changed the face of local news in the islands. But, Honolulu was the only television market in the country in which a citizen group formally challenged the implementation of that shared services agreement through the Federal Communications Commission process. Second, we expanded previous research in Honolulu.

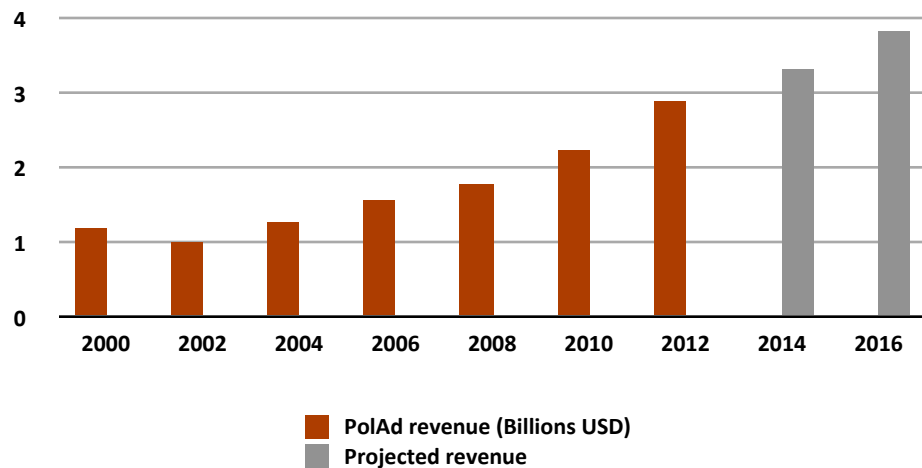
Political Ad Deluge

Much has been written about money in American politics. Less has described who benefits from the exponential increase in campaign spending. A simple and under-advertised fact in American politics is that local television station owners bring in the lion's share of political ad revenues. In 2012, they brought in \$2.9 of the \$3.1 billion spent on political ads (Potter, Matsa & Mitchell, 2013). Put another way, local television "captured 80 percent of total television

spending [...]” (TVB Local Media Marketing Solutions, 2013a, para 4). Much of this money saturated electorally competitive markets in “swing states” like Ohio, Florida, and Virginia, but not all (Baum, 2012; Washington Post/Kantar Media, 2012). Forty-two percent of all spending was directed at the presidential contest, but there was also the 37 percent that went to congressional campaigns, 18 percent that funded ballot initiatives, and the 3 percent that propelled local campaigns (Bachman, 2012). Beyond the marquee presidential contest, ubiquitous political advertising accompanied competitive races nationwide.

Any station with a transmission signal that reached an electorally competitive audience saw a boost in ad revenue, as did its parent company. The E.W. Scripps Company, which reaches 13 percent of U.S. households, reported a 41 percent increase in revenue over the third quarter of 2011. Sinclair

Fig 1: Current & projected political advertising revenues in local television markets (Daunt, 2012)



Broadcasting Group, which reaches 35 percent of U.S. households, widened profit margins by 49 percent (Potter, Matsa & Mitchell, 2013). While political advertising dollars seem to double every election cycle, the pool of beneficiaries shrinks. In 1996, there were 1,130 commercial television stations with 450 owners. By 2010, there were one third fewer owners and 172 more stations (Federal Communications Commission, 2010).

The outlook does not look any better. In 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down key provisions of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act that prohibited outside groups from broadcasting ads within 30 days of a primary

election and 60 days of a general election. *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* exponentially increased the amount of money in politics. In 2008, independent expenditure groups spent \$144 million. Four years later, they spent \$1 billion (Center for Responsive Politics, 2013a). “[In 2010] political advertisers spent an estimated \$2 billion to \$3 billion in local TV stations, which may be as much as 100 percent more than 2008—despite the fact that 2008 was a presidential election year and 2010 was not” (Waldman, 2011, pp. 74-75). According to Potter, Matsa and Mitchell (2013), local stations in the Roanoke-Lynchburg, Virginia television market felt the ad saturation. Four years ago local stations there earned \$5.6 million in political ad revenues. In 2012, profits soared to \$27 million—a fivefold increase. Nationwide, local station profits increased by 38 percent over 2010, and almost doubled over 2008 (Potter, Matsa & Mitchell, 2013). Current projections indicate that by 2016, local television stations will earn \$3.8 billion in political advertising revenues (Daunt, 2012) (Figure 1).

Local TV News

Television news remains the critical news source of information for the American public about their localities. Even in the age of the Internet, almost eight of ten Americans get their news from a local television station (Waldman, 2011). The Pew Research Journalism Project found that almost three-fourths (71%) of U.S. adults view local TV news over the course of a month (Olmstead, et.al., 2013). That compared to 65 percent and 38 percent for network news and cable news, respectively. To be sure, Pew also found that cable news viewers spent about twice as much time as local TV news viewers consuming news (25.3 vs 12.3 minutes per day, respectively). However, they made a distinction between heavy, medium and light news viewers. And, heavy news viewers regularly consume news across all three platforms (Olmstead, et.al., 2013). Moreover, even as engagement with news media is in decline (except for digital/mobile), almost half of the public (48%) indicated they regularly watched local TV news, more than all other media (Pew Research Center, 2012).

Beyond simple viewing, local TV news is a starting point for citizens' conversations regarding news of the day. TVB's research found that, "across all demographics, there was no comparison between Local Broadcast News and Cable News. Whether

In many ways, local TV news is more important than ever. --FCC, 2011

across all conversations or just News of the Day conversations, Local Broadcast News was cited as a spark or reference in twice as many conversations throughout the day" (TVB, 2013b, p. 5). The point is that local TV news remains a strong player in the news consumption. Indeed, the Federal Communications Commission's seminal study of the information needs of communities concluded that, "In many ways, local TV news is more important than ever" (Waldman, 2011, p. 13).

The prospect of capturing a slice of the political advertising pie has hastened the pace of media consolidation (Family, 2013). Media conglomerates know that political ad purchases flood local markets every two years. In Washington, where transmission signals reach the D.C. suburbs in Virginia, local stations raked in \$74 million in political ads (Washington Post/Kantar Media, 2012). WJLA, a local television station in D.C., earned \$33 million in political ad

revenue last fall. When the station went up for sale earlier this year, it was appraised at over \$300 million (Stelter, 2013). In June 2013, the Gannett Company bought the Belo Corporation and its 20 local television stations for \$1.5 billion. Gannett now controls local television stations in 21 of the top 25 U.S. markets—many of which will bring in political ad revenue (Stelter & de la Merced, 2013). Less than three weeks later, the Tribune Company bought 19 local television stations at \$2.7 billion. In that deal, Tribune sought to enlarge its holdings in politically competitive states like Ohio, Virginia, Colorado, and Pennsylvania (James, 2013).

The consolidation of local stations has reached epic proportions. In the first eight months of 2013, 211 full-power stations changed hands, the highest total in over a decade, with a deal value of \$10.2 billion, the fourth biggest year on record (Turner, 2013).

I would think that within two to five years, you'll see the emergence of three or four super-groups. --Perry Sook, Nextar President, 2013

Further, Turner identifies the "top 20" companies that dominate network affiliates in markets---the stations on

which the overwhelming majority of local news is presented. In the top 50 DMAs (Designated Market Areas as established by Nielsen Media), which contain 67% of all U.S. TV households, 15 companies control 84% of the stations (Turner, 2013). The pace of consolidation lead Nextar President Perry Sook to predict the landscape of future of local television ownership in bold terms:

I would think that within two to five years, you'll see the emergence of what I call three or four super-groups. Those companies will continue to drive the business, while those that are sub-scale will choose [to sell and] not to be a house by the side of the road as the parade passes by (Malone, 2013).

Local newscasts attract the largest audiences for local television stations. Seventy-four percent of Americans watch local news broadcasts or visit local news websites at least once a week—more than radio (51 percent), newspapers (50 percent), or online sources (47 percent) (Rosenstiel et al., 2011). Forty-eight percent of Americans "regularly" watch local television news (Jurkowitz et al., 2013, para. 5) and 41 percent say they do on a daily basis (Edmonds, 2013). The cumulative nightly audience for local news easily surpasses the audience for network television news (Potter, Matsa & Mitchell, 2013). For this reason, local news has been called the "biggest game in town" (Graber, 2010, p. 276).

Audiences attract political advertisers. In 2008, over 50 percent of all political ads were broadcast during local news programs (Ridout, Franz, Goldstein & Feltus, 2012). In the same year, newscasts generated 44 percent of all local station profits (Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2010). The relationship between advertisers and media firms is explicit (Bagdikian, 1983; McManus, 1994; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). Advertisers pay for public attention (McManus, 1995, 1994) that local stations provide at a cost (Pew Research Center, 2010). It is no coincidence that two stations in Washington, D.C. added an extra half-hour of local news programming during last fall's campaign (Stelter, 2013). Local news programs often manipulate story selection, presentation modes, and the choreography of story placement to maximize audience share, and correspondingly increase advertising dollars (Yanich, 2012).

With so many Americans tuned in to evening broadcasts, what are the attributes that characterize political news stories on newscasts? What counts as political news in local places?

Local News Drought

Local television news broadcasts presumably attract large audiences because citizens want to know about news that directly affects them and their communities. Obama campaign manager David Plouffe (2009) recounts, "What really mattered—and our research was clear as a bell on this—was local news. True swing state voters watched their local TV station and read their regional paper" (p. 315). Indeed, Rosentiel et al. (2011) found that political news stories are the third most demanded story type, next to weather and breaking news.

What passes for political news, however, frequently lacks substantive discussion of campaign issues. Political news stories are often framed around entertaining strategic or game frames that "privilege the poll-driven horse race between candidates, the campaign tactics, and the battle to gain the upper hand in made-for-media campaign events, like debates" (Owen, 2013, p. 106). To be sure, this frame is not new. In an analysis of 74 stations in 58 markets just before the 2000 General Election, Kaplan and Hale (2001) uncovered the strategic frame in 55 percent of local news stories. Only 24 percent were issue-based. In a follow-up analysis, Kaplan and Hale (2002) later investigated 122 stations in the top 50 U.S. markets during the 2002 Midterm Elections. Forty-eight percent of stories employed the strategy frame and 27 percent focused on issues. Regardless of election cycle, the strategic frame is predominately used by local television news to cover politics. Pew Research Center's Project

for Excellence in Journalism (2012a) more recently found that 44 percent of political news stories used the strategic frame. Only 22 percent covered policy. “Local television news in most communities is unashamedly show business, not journalism, and devotes only the slightest amount of airtime to local electoral candidates and issues” (Schudson, 1995, p. 215). The simple fact is that strategically framed political news stories attract larger audiences, which in turn increase ratings. Higher ratings boost the profitability of the news division (Allen, Stevens, Marfleet, Sullivan & Alger, 2007; Just, Crigler & Buhr, 1999; Kaniss, 1991).

What benefits the corporate “bottom line” does not necessarily help citizens make informed decisions in a democratic society. Classical democratic theory presumes citizens have access to information that facilitates rational decision-making based on deliberative consideration of voting options (Berelson, 1952; Downs, 1957). “In a republic where the people are sovereign, the ability of the citizenry to make informed choices among candidates for office is essential” (*Buckley v. Valeo*, 1976, pp. 14-15). Berelson (1966) points out that an informed citizenry is first prerequisite to democratic theory: “This is a requirement nearly everyone sets down for a democratic electorate; politicians and statesmen, adult educators, journalists, professors of political science—all of them pay deference to the need for enlightened public opinion” (p. 493).

Some authors state that it is not that journalists simply disregard the importance of an informed citizenry when constructing news stories. Rather, journalists are participants in a broader system that manufactures news within the confines of economic influences (Bagdikian, 1999, 1997, 1983; Bennett, 2001; Hamilton, 2004; McChesney & Nichols, 2010; McManus, 1995, 1994). This market-driven structure is pervasive in the sense that it subtly affects every aspect of news production in local places; content is simply its byproduct.

Selecting Stories/Limited Resources

Newscasts are a construction of a representation of social phenomena, primarily influenced by the profit motives of media firms who try to ascertain viewer interest. Stories are frequently selected according to an economic logic of what content attracts each additional viewer (the “marginal consumer”). In political journalism, Hamilton (2004) writes: “[T]he interests of marginal consumers are similar to those of marginal voters, so that programmers trying to give marginal viewers what they want will also provide marginal voters with stories they like” (Hamilton, 2004, p. 117). In each case, the interests of marginal consumers are analogous to the interests of marginal voters: neither is likely to be entertained by hard-hitting political news stories. Because

newsrooms are motivated to attract each additional consumer, content is selected and reported in a manner that appeals to them. Accordingly, Underwood and Stamm (1992) examined newsroom policies in 12 West Coast newspapers and found that selection protocols often depended on reader interest. Thus, the media firm's understanding of what will "sell" dictates coverage (Hamilton, 2004; Yanich, 2012).

Logically, the types of stories that are presented on local television news programs are expected to be congruous with this reality. Crime stories are prevalent because they offer pre-packaged and compelling narratives that easily pique audience attention (Bennett, 2001; Hamilton, 2004; Kaplan & Hale, 2010; Yanich, 2012, 2004, 2001). Viewers also demand crime stories (Rosenstiel et al., 2011) and many consumers actively seek them out (Hamilton, 2004). Jurkowitz et al. (2013) found that crime accounted for 17 percent of local television news coverage in 2012, while political news accounted for three percent. Both were down from 29 percent and seven percent, respectively, in 2006. This disparity occurs in spite of the fact that the public demands local politics and crime stories equally (67 percent and 66 percent, respectively) (Rosenstiel et al., 2011). Crime stories dominate local news coverage because the public can engage with them as narrative events. Some evidence even suggests that viewers create their own narrative scripts when viewing local television news (Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000).

Political news, alternatively, does not immediately lend itself to easily compelling narratives. To be sure, the news media focus on the personal and dramatic elements of campaigns, but in the absence of entertaining conflict, mentions of political news are far less frequent than crime. Kimball (1999) describes the implications behind ratings-driven political journalism: the U.S. Supreme Court is no longer a regular beat for any of the major networks; the watchdog responsibilities of the media in reporting Congressional activities have been relegated to conflict stories; and more investigative reporting of the executive branch has been eclipsed by sexier political beats, such as the White House and the State Department. In Washington, the focus on personality, drama and the reporting of information in fragmented bites (Bennett, 2001) garners disillusionment for the political process (Kimball, 1999). This may be partly responsible for the partisan gridlock and dysfunction experienced in American politics today.

Coverage of the Washington "horse race" and the latest campaign event get the most attention because they are cheaper to produce and most likely to attract marginal customers. The corollary is that there are fewer resources

devoted to less “entertaining” stories. Today, much of what was international news has been relegated to wire services, so much so that none of the three major network television news programs retain foreign bureaus (Fleeson, 2003; Enda, 2011) and only the top four U.S. newspapers do (Enda, 2011). This depreciation in network resources manifests in news content. From 1989 to 2000, the total minutes devoted to international stories fell by more than half (Enda, 2011).

The situation is exacerbated at the local level. Local television stations historically have access to fewer resources than network television news stations (Kaniss, 1991; Waldman, 2011). Reporters often function on demanding schedules and rely on few resources in pursuit of stories. Local reporters refer to press releases, follow police scanners, and use syndicated material to construct stories. Local news directors often air stories without the presence of an on-scene reporter (Waldman, 2011) and when a reporter is on scene, they are more likely to both report and shoot the story (Papper, 2010). The more recent growth of video news releases (VNRs) offers stations raw footage and script that is prepared to go on the air instantaneously. Bennett warns: “[VNRs] deliver strategic political or economic messages wrapped in news packages produced in public relations, advertising, political consulting or corporate communications offices” (Bennett, 2001, p. 9). These releases often appear seamlessly as real news items, and are frequently offered by third parties who are eager to contribute material. In the competition for time and space, it is easy for journalists to rely on these available resources. The reliance on prepackaged stories and scripts transfers much of reported content to third parties, or to information that is readily available. These practices present information that is interesting or entertaining, but not necessarily investigative or informative. It also vacates the news media of its traditional gatekeeping responsibility (Kimball, 1999).

Political Ads

Political advertisements explicitly serve an agenda-setting function (Dalton, Beck, Huckfeldt & Koetzle, 1998; Fowler & Ridout, 2009; West, 2005, 1994). The purpose of political ads is to affect the issue dialogues on the public and policy agendas. Johnston and Kaid (2002) note that ads “hel[p] the candidate defend his or her image and provid[e] a forum where campaign issues can be explained or developed” (p. 281). Many scholars of political science contend that candidates use the public and policy agendas to rank issue priorities, afford attention to some issues and not others, and describe policy stances on those topics (Cobb & Elder, 1971; Kingdon, 1984; Klingemann, Hofferbert, & Budge, 1994). A wide array of literature illustrates the efficacy of political advertisements in doing just that: ads increase candidate recognition (Kaid, 1982; West, 1994); awareness of the candidates issues and priorities (Atkin & Heald, 1976; Freedman, Franz & Goldstein, 2004; Hofstetter & Strand, 1983; Martinelli & Chaffee, 1995; Pfau, Holbert, Szabo & Kaminski, 2002; Ridout, Shaw, Goldstein & Franz, 2004; Valentino, Hutchings & Williams, 2004); facilitate issue learning (Craig, Kane & Gainous, 2005); and increase short and long term information seeking (Cho, 2008; Crigler, Just & Belt, 2006). These behaviors clearly enable the marketplace of ideas to deliver important information to enhance democratic decision-making. Several aspects of political ads affect these processes. Within the contours of this analysis, these include the ads’ construction (including the tone, focus, and attacks implemented), issue content, and whether or not a non-candidate committee group sponsored the ad.

Tone, Focus & Attacks

The efficacy of negative advertising on democratic participation is a contentious issue in political communication literature. Some scholars argue that negative ads affect democratic participation (Ansolabehere, Behr & Iyengar, 1993; Ansolabehere, Iyengar & Simon, 1999; Ansolabehere, Iyengar, Valentino & Simon, 1994; Lemert, Wanta & Lee, 1999) while others argue that negative ads do not (Franz, Freedman, Goldstein, & Ridout, 2007; Johnson-Cartee & Copeland, 1991). Ansolabehere et al. (1994) investigated negative ad exposure and intention to vote in a controlled experiment. They found that exposure to negative advertising decreased intent to vote by five percent and by four percent when aggregated for the 1992 U.S. Senate elections. Lemert, Wanta and Lee (1999) corroborate these findings and add that candidates who air positive ads increase voter turnout. Watterberg and Brians (1999) refute that

Ansolahehere et al.'s claims (1995, 1994) cannot be replicated outside of an experimental setting. More recently, Lau, Sigelman and Rovner's (2007) meta-analytic research found little support for the voter suppression hypothesis. However, these scholars also uncovered lower feelings of political efficacy, reduced trust in government and lowered attitudes in overall public mood. Several studies validate the success of attack ads in generating negative evaluations of opponents (Jasperson & Fan, 2004, 2002; Kaid & Boydston, 1987; O'Cass, 2002; Tinkham & Weaver-Lariscy, 1993). However, Sigelman and Kugler (2003) caution that the social science concepts are inconsistent across the literature.

Content analyses illustrate how political advertisement construction affects voting decisions (Johnston & Kaid, 2002). Elucidating a Functional Theory of Campaign Discourse, Benoit (2001, 2000) argues that ads acclaim (make positive claims about the ad sponsor), attack (make negative claims of the opposing candidate), or defend (offer a defense of an attack). Tinkham and Weaver-Lariscy (1995) found that challengers are more likely to go negative than incumbents. This is particularly true in state and local races (Hale, Fox & Farmer, 1996; Tinkham & Weaver-Lariscy, 1990). Content analyses show that winners are more likely to acclaim in ad messages than attack (Benoit, Pier & Blaney, 1997).

Issue & Image Emphasis

The manner in which ads facilitate issue learning is complex. "[N]o topic has been more dominant across the five decades of research on political advertising than the discussion of whether or not campaign commercials are dominated by image information or issue information" (Kaid & Johnston, 2001, p. 16). Johnston and Kaid (2002) note that issue ads buttress the democratic ideal by informing citizens of campaign issue dialogues. The authors also note that political ads have been criticized for focusing on the non-issue construction of political advertisements, such as candidate image content. Issue ads typically invoke appeals to the policy concerns of citizens, such as candidate or issue preferences that address public affairs (Kaid & Sanders, 1978; Patterson & McClure, 1976), while image ads typically appeal to candidate qualities or characteristics (Kaid & Johnston, 1991). These ads may be positive, negative or neutral in tone.

Many content analyses have found that most political ads do contain some issue content. Joslyn's (1980) early study found that 60 to 80 percent of ads focused on issues rather than images, but this study relied on a convenience sample. Freedman, Franz and Goldstein (2004) more vigorously investigated

political advertising in the lead up to the 2000 General Election and found that 95 percent of presidential ad spots and 90 percent of general election ad spots contained at least some issue-related content in the top 75 U.S. markets. The authors also found that 73 percent of presidential ads and 70 percent of general election ads included at least one claim that was backed by a cited source (Freedman, Franz & Goldstein, 2004). Spiliotes and Vavreck (2002) looked at 153 races in 37 states during the 1998 Midterm Elections. They found that the types of issues emphasized by candidates varied according to party affiliation. Even when controlling for constituency characteristics, candidates drew attention to different policies (Spiliotes and Vavreck, 2002). Voters are able to distinguish between parties by the issue information presented in advertisements (Pomper, 1988). However, the extent to which candidates offer specific policy proposals is limited (Spiliotes & Vavreck, 2002).

Image ads provide less substantive details about issues (Patterson & McClure, 1976), and instead emphasize positive messages about sponsoring candidates (Johnston & Kaid, 2002). Some scholars note that the image-related nature of advertising evokes some controversy because the term is shrouded in ambiguity (Shyles, 1984; Thorson, Christ & Caywood, 1991). Does image refer to the candidate's likeness alone, or does it include broader appeals to the candidate's character and ethos? In political communication, the later definition is generally accepted (Shyles, 1984). Communication researchers scrutinize image appeals to dissect how presentation mode affects and directs messaging strategy (Kaid, 2006; Kaid & Davidson, 1986).

A candidate's videostyle refers to the verbal, non-verbal and video production elements that underlie the candidate's self-portrayal (Kaid & Davison, 1986). Videostyle uncovers many differences in candidates' image presentation, including: the structure of ads, such as scripts, music and video content (Thorson, Christ & Caywood, 1991; Brader, 2005); verbal communication styles, such as optimism, realism, certainty, or activity (Ballotti & Kaid, 2000; Hart, 1977); overtly emotional content, such as appeals to pride, reassurance, trust and hope (Kern, 1989); and differences among male and female videostyles (Bystrom, 1996; Johnston & White, 1994; Trent & Sobourin, 1993; Wadsworth et al., 1987). It is important to highlight image-related characteristics because of the conceptual and methodological challenges of parsing out image and issue-related content. Johnston and Kaid (2002), in fact, describe issue style and image style constructs. They found that one fourth of image messaging featured some issue content. In fact, images frequently strengthen issues.

Agenda-setting research in the political science discipline enthusiastically reveals how candidate image appeals affect constituent evaluations of issues (Fenno, 1978; Kingdon, 1984). Candidates incorporate policy preferences into presentation styles, or home styles, to win reelection (Fenno, 1978). This often involves the use of character traits to underscore commitment to policy proposals (Joslyn, 1980; Johnston & Kaid, 2002). Political ads associate candidate images with issue concepts, and often evoke code words (West, 2005). Ninety percent of candidate ads mentioned traits in the Spiliotes and Vavreck (2002) study, yet only 30 percent of ads were predominately trait-based. Payne, Marlier and Baukus' (1989) content analysis found that candidates used political advertising to introduce themselves and "define their ethos or credibility in terms of a particular issue" (p. 380).

Effect studies reveal the strategic function of issue and image ads. Issue ads generate more positive candidate evaluations (Kaid, Chanslor & Hovind, 1992; Kaid & Sanders, 1978; Thorson, Christ & Caywood, 1991), but image ads increase information recall (Kaid & Sanders, 1978; Thorson, Christ & Caywood, 1991). From a content-standpoint, there is an incentive for campaigns to create political advertisements that link issue content to the candidate's image or appeal.

Non-candidate Committees Sponsors

In response to the increasing number of negative attack ads (Geer, 2006) Congress attempted to mitigate the effects of negative campaign advertising with the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) of 2002. The "Stand by Your Ad" (SBYA) provision of the BCRA mandated that candidates and groups identify themselves as ad sponsors (e.g., "I'm Jane Doe and I approve this message"). The provision was intended to hold campaigns and political action groups accountable for civility and truth in ad content (Franz et al., 2007). In a press release regarding the SBYA provision, Senator Maria Cantwell (2002) affirmed, "This bill is about slowing the ad war. It is about calling sham issue ads what they really are. It is about slowing political advertising and making sure the flow of negative ads by outside interest groups does not continue to permeate the airwaves" (para. 3). From a good governance perspective, there was much concern that unknown interest groups were suppressing voter turnout by using negative ads.

Studies evaluating the content of advertising before and after the BCRA found no difference in the construction of ads or propensity to attack (Gale et al., 2005; Magleby, Monson & Patterson, 2007) and even found a decrease in the number of positive ads in the 2004 General Election cycle (Franz, Rivlin &

Goldstein, 2006). Fowler and Ridout (2011) later found that the number of negative ads increased after the BCRA, in part due to the proliferation of non-candidate committee groups. Twenty percent of ads sponsored by candidates were negative in 2004, compared to 38 percent in 2010. Not coincidentally, 73 percent of ads sponsored by independent groups were negative in 2004, compared to 87 percent by 2010 (Fowler & Ridout, 2011). When compared with party and campaign advertisement sponsorship, the proportion of non-candidate committee ad sponsors has increased over the last decade—largely reflecting changes in campaign finance laws. Between 2002 and 2010 alone, this proportion grew from ten percent in 2002, to 25 percent in 2006 to 50 percent in 2010 (Goldstein, Schweidel & Wittenwyler, 2012).

This may mean that independent groups act as “attack dogs” for the campaigns to avoid the negative backlash effects of decreased sponsor evaluation. Garramone and Smith’s (1984) early study found that one-third of party sponsors were trustworthy, and Shen and Wu (2002) later revealed that soft money political organizations might assuage backlash effects on the favored candidate. Roddy and Garramone’s (1988) content analysis found that candidates exhibited a heightened proclivity to use issue ads instead of image ads when attacking an opponent. This is because issue attacks are more socially acceptable than image attacks. It could be hypothesized that the rapid increase in Super PACs following *Citizens United* caused the proportion of negative advertisements to increase; there may be more issue-based attacks as a result. In the first post-*Citizens United* study, Brooks and Murov (2012) found attack ads, sponsored by independent expenditure groups to be more effective than ads sponsored by candidate committees. Fowler and Ridout (2011) further found that 87 percent of independent group ads were attack ads in the 2010 Midterm Elections.

The Honolulu TV Market

As of the 2012-2013 television season, the Honolulu television market consisted of 437,790 television households and it was ranked number 71 out of the 210 television markets (DMAs) in the United States as determined by Nielsen Media Research. There are five stations in the market that deliver daily locally produced news broadcasts: KFVE (MyNetworkTV), KHNL (NBC), KGMB (CBS), KHON (Fox) and KITV (ABC). The Honolulu television market has a very important characteristic that has had a significant effect on local broadcast news. A Shared Services Agreement (SSA) among three of the five stations is in effect. On August 18, 2009, Raycom Media, the owner of KHNL and KFVE and MCG Capital Corporation, the owner of KGMB announced the establishment of a Shared Service Agreement under which the two companies would combine the three stations (KFVE, KHNL & KGMB) to “creatively and successfully address the impact of the negative economy and to secure the future of all three television stations in Hawai’i” (tvnewscheck.com, 2009). Paul McTear, president-CEO of Raycom Media further articulated the economic reasons for the action:

The purpose of the shared services agreement is to not only secure the future of KHNL, KFIVE and KGMB, but to operate them more efficiently and effectively without diminishing the quality of news and other programming provided to our customers in Hawai’i. We realize there may be other financial and business options available, and while we are certainly open to discussing these with any interested party, the economic reality is that this market cannot support five traditionally separated television stations, all with duplicated costs. Rather than experiencing the loss of one, or possibly two stations in Hawai’i, we intend to preserve three stations that provide important and valuable local, national and international programming in Hawai’i (tvnewscheck.com, 2009).

Under the agreement, non-news programming remained in place, but the news operations of two (KGMB & KHNL) of the three SSA stations were combined under one banner, Hawai’i News Now. The news operation began broadcasting on October 26, 2009. KHNL and KGMB jointly produce a simulcast of their newscasts on weekday mornings between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m., and weeknights from 5 to 5:30 p.m. and 10 to 10:30 p.m. Therefore, three hours of the exact same daily news appears on the stations each weekday. KFVE produces a 6:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. newscast. The news operations of all three stations are housed in the same building.

KGMB has consistently achieved significantly higher ratings than its simulcast partner, KHNL. According to Nielsen Media Research, in May 2013, the performance for KGMB's 10 p.m. newscast was an 8 rating with a 22 share. At the same time, the numbers for KHNL were a 3 rating and an 6 share (Engle, 2012).

KHON is the Fox affiliate in the Honolulu DMA and it signed on the air in 1952. The station is owned by New Vision Television with bases in Los Angeles, California and Atlanta, Georgia. The company owns fourteen major network affiliates and it operates three other stations in Birmingham, Alabama, Youngstown, Ohio and Mason City, Iowa under joint sales and shared services agreements. The company filed for bankruptcy on July 13, 2009, underwent a re-structuring of its debt and emerged 80 days later on September 30, 2009 with agreements with all its debt holders (New Vision Television, 2009). According to Nielsen Media Research, its 6 p.m. flagship evening newscast is a consistent ratings leader in the market, achieving a 11 rating and a 27 share in May 2013 (Engle, 2012).

KITV is the ABC affiliate in the Honolulu DMA and it signed on the air in 1954. KITV is owned by the Hearst television, Inc., based in New York City. Hearst owns 29 television stations and across 25 DMAs. It also manages two radio stations in Baltimore, MD. The company holds duopolies in the Orlando, FL and Sacramento, CA television markets and owns one station and manages another in the Kansas City, MO market (Hearst Television, 2013). Its third-place performance in the ratings has been relatively consistent. Nielsen Media Research reports that its 6 p.m. evening newscast achieved a 5 rating and a 11 share in May 2013 (Engle, 2012).

In addition to the implementation of the Shared Services Agreement, in October 2009, the Honolulu market experienced another change in its media system when the Honolulu Advertiser was sold to the Honolulu Star-Bulletin in May 2010 (with the loss of 300 jobs). The sale made Honolulu a one-newspaper city (open.salon.com, 2010). As a result, the market's media landscape has undergone significant changes in a relatively short time.

Media Council Hawai'i

The Shared Services Agreement announced by Raycom and MCG Capital was officially challenged by a local non-profit organization, Media Council Hawai'i (MCH). Founded in 1970, MCH, represented by the Institute for Public Representation at the Georgetown University Law Center, filed a complaint and request for relief with the Federal Communications Commission on October 7,

2009. MCH's filing is the only formal challenge that the FCC has received from a community group in any of the television markets in which Shared Service Agreements are in effect.

In its filing, Media Council Hawai'i contended that the Shared Services Agreement between Raycom and MCG Capital would result in "an unauthorized transfer of control in contravention of the Communications Act and FCC rules" (Campbell, 2009, p. 1). Further, MCH stated that these actions "would harm the members of Media Council Hawai'i and the general public by reducing the number of independent voices providing local news from four to three, and by substantially reducing competition in the provision of local news and the sale of advertising time" (Campbell, 2009, p. 2). On November 25, 2011 the Media Bureau of the FCC ruled against Media Council Hawai'i and rejected its complaint against Raycom (Federal Communications Commission, 2011). However, it made its ruling on the technical question regarding whether Raycom acquired control of a new license and it added the caveat that, "further action on our part is warranted with respect to this and analogous cases... whether the actions taken by the licensees in this case, or analogous actions by other licensees, are consistent with the public interest" (Federal Communications Commission, 2011b, p. 6).

The Hawai'i Election Campaign

The 2012 Presidential election in Hawai'i, as with most other jurisdictions, coincided with statewide and local elections. We focused on those races for which political ads were presented on local television newscasts. Therefore, the contests for U.S. Senator; U.S. House of Representatives and Mayor of Honolulu are described here. There were no political ads for either President Obama or Governor Romney in the broadcasts that we studied. That is understandable in that Hawai'i was not a battleground state. Indeed, President Obama won the state with over 70 percent of the vote.

The race for retiring Senator Dan Akaka's seat was between Democrat Mazie Hirono and Republican Linda Lingle. Hirono won the election with 62 percent of the vote against Lingle's 37 percent.

In the race for District 1 of the U.S. House of Representative, Democrat Colleen Hanabusa defeated Republican Charles Djou, 54 percent to 44 percent. In the race for mayor of the city and county of Honolulu, Kirk Caldwell defeated Ben Cayetano, 53 percent to 45 percent.

Methodology

The methodology for this research was content analysis (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005). It is a method that produces a systematic and objective description of information content. The analytical method used in this research was the Chi-square measure of association. Content analysis has been used extensively over time to examine local television news (Alexander & Brown, 2004; Atwater, 1986; Chermak, 1994; Gilliam & Iyengar, 2000; Graber, 1980; Miller, 1998).

Research questions

The research questions are separated by their focus on two units of observation---political ads and news stories.

1. What was the distribution of political ads on the five television stations in the Honolulu television market during the 2012 general election campaign?
2. What were the characteristics of the political ads by dimensions such as issue emphasis, focus, theme and presentation style?
3. Were there political news stories referring to the campaign presented on the local newscasts? If so, what did they cover?
4. Were the issues presented in the political ads covered as stories by the local newscasts? If so, which issues were covered? How were they presented?
5. What frames were present in local television news political stories in the two months before the 2012 General Election?

Sample of stations

The stations whose broadcasts were included in this research comprised all of the stations in the Honolulu DMA that regularly delivered a daily newscast to the viewers. They were: KFVE, KHNL, KGMB, KHON and KITV.

Sample of broadcasts

The sample of broadcasts for this research covered the period from Monday, September 3 through Monday, November 5, 2012 (the day before the election). This period coincided with the conventional characterization of the campaign season (after the party conventions). That period was nine weeks. We captured the broadcasts for each of the five stations on two randomly

drawn weekdays for each of the nine weeks. That yielded 90 broadcasts (9 weeks X 2 days X 5 stations). Each broadcast was 30 minutes, although, the stations extended the broadcasts to an average of 33.5 minutes, presumably to take advantage of the increased spending on political ads. In addition, we gathered the news broadcasts for all five stations on Monday, November 5. Therefore, the sample consisted of 95 local television news broadcasts. We limited the broadcast week to Monday through Friday to eliminate the possibility of weekend sporting events that might have pre-empted newscasts.

The broadcasts that were included in this period were: week 1, September 5 & 6; week 2, September 9 & 14; week 3, September 19 & 21, week 4, September 25 & 28; week 5, October 2 & 5; week 6, October 8 & 9; week 7, October 14 & 16; week 8, October 23 & 25; week 9, October 30 & November 1 and November 5.

The broadcasts for this research were obtained from the archives of Dateline Media, a media monitoring firm, in Honolulu. Given the schedule of the stations, the 6 p.m. broadcasts of KHON and KITV, the 10 p.m. broadcasts of KGMB and KHNL and the 9 p.m. broadcast of KFVE were included in the sample. Dateline Media provided DVDs with the sample broadcasts to the Local Television News Media Project at the University of Delaware for coding.

Units of observation

There were three separate units of observation in the research and, as a result, the coding of the content was done in a necessary sequence. The first unit of observation was the individual broadcast units that comprised the broadcasts. This process was used to initially identify the elements of the broadcasts and to specify the political ads and political stories that were the subjects of later coding. The second unit of observation was the individual political ads and the third unit of observation was the individual political stories that were presented on the newscasts on which the political ads appeared.

The coding revealed that there were 3,311 broadcast units that comprised the newscasts consisting of: stories (1,303), political ads (585); promos for the station or network (488); sports and weather segments (297); and commercials (638). The category of stories was comprised of: crime (242); public issues (364); government (66); human interest (264); other (228) and political news (139). The distribution of these units across the five stations was: KHNL=745; KGMB=737; KFVE=699; KITV=574; KHON=556.

The overall content of the broadcasts in the sample was coded by four students (two graduate students in the media & public policy concentration) and two undergraduate students (one in public policy and one in communications). The students were trained to use the coding protocol over the course of one week. At the end of that time a test for inter-coder reliability was applied. All of the broadcasts on one randomly chosen day provided the data for the test for inter-coder reliability for the variables of type, in/out DMA and mode. Each story in all of the broadcasts was coded by all of the coders. We assessed the agreement among the coders across the variables that were essential to the research question--- type of story, presentation mode, whether it was a local story and the number of stations on which the story appeared in the market. We did not assess agreement on simple identification variables such as the date of the broadcast, the station's network affiliation, etc. The results of the tests for inter-coder reliability revealed that agreement among the major content variables had a range from 68 percent (in/out of the DMA) to 92 percent for the initial specification of the type of political ad (candidate-based-based) with an average of 81 percent. As expected, given the assumptions inherent in these indices, the Cohen's kappa scores for the same variables were generally lower than the agreement scores, ranging between 0.42 and 0.76, averaging 0.71 (Table 1).

The second unit of observation was the individual political ads that appeared on the broadcasts. For technical reasons, one of the ads was not usable, therefore 584 political ads were examined. A supplemental coding instrument was developed to further analyze the political advertisements and answer more in-depth research questions regarding specific ad content. This instrument was modified from Kaid and Johnston (2001) to include categories that evaluate the issue-emphasis, tone, focus, and attack types employed in political ads. Kaid and Johnston's instrument has been replicated in the literature and assures measures of better reliability, internal validity, and construct validity than an instrument designed uniquely for this study. These instrument items will be used to answer RQs 2, 3, and 4. In order to answer RQ 1, the supplemental recording instrument also included a matrix of possible political issues that were presented in the political ads and political news stories. Some adjustments were made to the matrix of issue categories from Kaid and Johnston's original coding scheme to fit the unique circumstances of this particular case. For instance, categories for "energy," "local issue," and "not applicable" were added.

The coding instrument was applied to the political ads by one trained coder. Subsequently, 100 ads were randomly selected for blind recoding by a second

experienced coder. The ads were coded by the two graduate students who were part of the initial large coding team. The results for the tests of inter-coder reliability revealed that agreement among the major content variables ranged from 100 percent (focus & tone) to 96 percent (issues). The Cohen's kappa scores were generally lower for the variables with an average of 0.93.

As seen in the table below, kappa scores for each of the variables met the generally accepted criteria of, at least, "fair to good agreement beyond chance" (.40-.75) and several of the kappa statistics above .75 reveal "excellent agreement" (Banerjee, Capozzoli, McSweeney & Sinha, 1999, p. 6).

Table 1: Reliability Results for Key Variables

<i>Stories</i>						<i>Political Ads</i>						
	<i>Type</i>	<i>In/Out DMA*</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>Pol Ad type</i>	<i>Avg. Stories</i>	<i>Emphasis</i>	<i>Focus</i>	<i>Tone</i>	<i>Attack1</i>	<i>Appeals1</i>	<i>Issues</i>	<i>Avg. Pol ads</i>
Kappa for multiple coders	0.74	0.42	0.50	0.76	0.71	0.97	1.0	1.0	0.93	0.85	0.82	0.93
% agree	0.77	0.68	0.60	0.92	0.81	0.98	100	100	0.99	0.98	0.96	0.98

*DMA is a registered service mark of The Nielsen Company. Used under license.

The third unit of observation was the individual political stories (n=139) that were part of the broadcasts. These stories underwent a second coding regime to determine which, if any, of the public issues raised in the political ads was covered by the stations in these political stories. The stories were coded by one researcher, therefore no test for inter-coder reliability was appropriate.

Operational definitions

The operational definitions of the variables for the analysis of the political ads were derived from previous research and they are presented here to clarify the approach we took.

Issues and Images

Issue ads contain content that appeal to policy concerns (Kaid & Sanders, 1978; Patterson & McClure, 1976). Kaid and Johnston (2001) further operationalize these policy appeals as being vague or specific in nature. Image ads relate to candidate qualities or characteristics (Kaid & Johnston, 1991). These include

appeals to personal characteristics such as honesty or integrity, toughness or strength, or competency, to name only a few (Kaid & Johnston, 2001, p. 130).

Issue Emphasis

A simple dichotomous variable was constructed from Kaid and Johnston's (1991) instrument that assessed whether the ads emphasized issue content or image content. In order to ensure exclusivity and exhaustiveness in the coding instrument, fields for "both" and "neither" were added to Kaid and Johnston's coding scheme. The variable "emphasis" considers the simple preponderance of the ad content that features issue or image content in more than 50 percent of the ad, issue or image content that is exactly equal, or featuring no issue or image content at all.

Tone, Focus, and Attack Categories

Research question 3 asks if political ads were negative, and if so, whether or not they attacked opposing candidates' issues or images. Three metrics were constructed to answer this question. First, the coding instrument investigated whether or not the holistic tone of the ad was positive or negative. Second, the focus of the ad was determined to account for the direction of the positive, negative, or combined (contrast) association. This item required coders to identify whether or not the ad was candidate-positive focused, opponent-negative focused, or a contrast ad featuring both.

Finally, several variables examined the types of attacks used in negative ads. Attack ads generally present information that is designed to undermine an opponent's character or issue perception (Pinkleton, 1997). As such, attack categories included issue-related attacks, such as attacks on the opposing candidates' issue stands or consistency, and past performance in office, or more image-related attacks, such as personal characteristics, group affiliations, and/or the opposing candidates' background and qualifications. These helped determine the substance of negative attacks as attacking opponent issues, images, both, or none.

There are important qualitative distinctions between the variables for ad tone and focus. Since contrast ads feature both positive and negative content, they were almost universally coded as "negative" when required by a simple dichotomous variable. However, some ads may be coded "opponent-negative focused," but not coded as "negative" in tone. This is because the opponent-negative classification meets the necessary, but not sufficient condition of ad negativity. Although an ad may be critical of an opponent, or an opponent's campaign, criticism alone does not necessarily make the ad negative in tone.

For an opponent-focused negative ad to be coded “negative,” it must be so critical of some attribute of an opponent, or opponent’s campaign to be sufficiently negative.

Ad Sponsor Types

RQ 4 investigates how non-candidate committee ads are distinguished by tone, focus, and attacks when compared with candidate committees. “Independent expenditure committees” (often referred to as “Super PACs”) are groups that do not coordinate with an official candidate committee and expressly advocate for the election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate. These groups are distinct from “candidate committees,” which officially represent the candidate (Federal Election Commission, 2013). Independent expenditure committees and candidate committees are narrow and specific legal classifications in campaign finance law. Where applicable, “non-candidate committee” is used to more generally refer to any entity that is not an official candidate committee ad sponsor. This definition encompasses independent expenditure committees, party organizations, and other entities, such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that engaged in electioneering communications, most broadly (State of Hawai‘i, 2013).

Early and Late Campaign Periods

The “early campaign period” is defined as the five weeks between Monday, September 3 and Thursday, October 4, 2012. The “late campaign period” is defined as the four weeks (one month) between Friday, October 5 and Tuesday, November 5, 2012.

Issue-focus

The focus of political news stories were coded along a simple dichotomous variable to indicate whether or not the preponderance of the story described an issue (1), or not (0).

Strategic Frame

The strategic frame refers to campaign as competition. These qualities are operationalized to include: winning and losing; the language of wars, games, and competitions; mentions of voters; the emphasis on candidate presentation or style; and/or public opinion polling (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997, p. 33).

Conflict Frame

The conflict frame emphasizes conflict between individuals, groups [or] institutions (Patterson & McClure, 1976; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000).

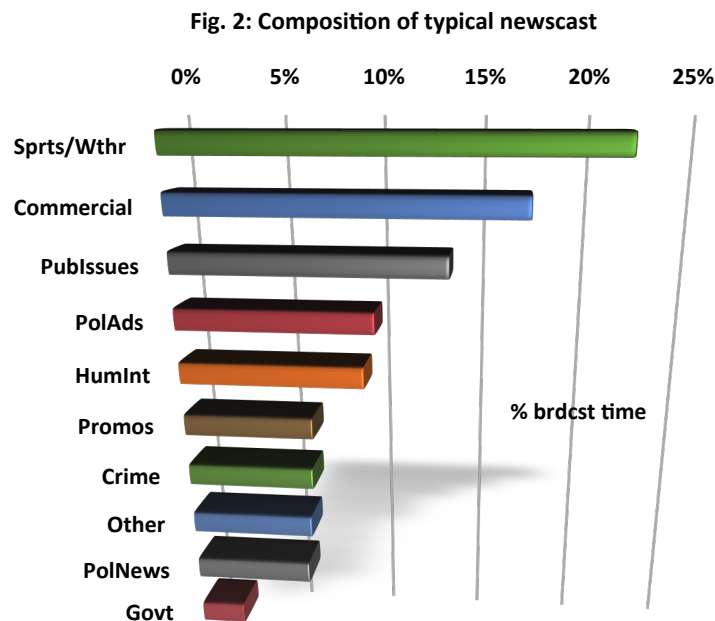
Findings

Length of newscasts

The most scarce resource in broadcast news is time. In most instances, it is finite. A thirty minute broadcast is thirty minutes. However, that changed during the election campaign. On average, the stations added over three and one-half minutes to their broadcasts (33.6 minutes). In that way, they could literally manufacture revenue as the extended period allowed for more political ad time to be sold. But, there was a significant difference between the actions of the SSA and non-SSA stations. The SSA stations added, on average, 4.7 minutes to their broadcasts (34.7); the non-SSA stations extended the broadcasts by less than half of that, 1.9 minutes (31.9).

Composition of newscasts

The broadcasts were comprised of stories, political ads, sports/weather segments, promos and commercials. There was a small, but statistically significant difference, in the distribution of broadcast units across the SSA and non-SSA stations. However, for purposes of this examination, that difference



had no material effect on the appearance of political ads and the treatment of political news on the broadcasts. Therefore, these findings are reported for all five stations in the market.

This research examined all of the parts that comprise a broadcast. We use the term broadcast units (stories, promos, political ads, sports/weather segments and commercials) to describe them. In order to understand the composition of a typical newscast, all of the broadcast units had to be addressed.

The amount of time that the station devoted to a particular broadcast unit revealed its importance in the newscast. Therefore, the composition of the typical newscast is reported here as the proportion of newscast time that was devoted to each broadcast unit.

As we might expect, commercials and the sports/weather segments were prominent features of the typical newscast, accounting for about 22 and 17 percent of broadcast time, respectively (Figure 2).

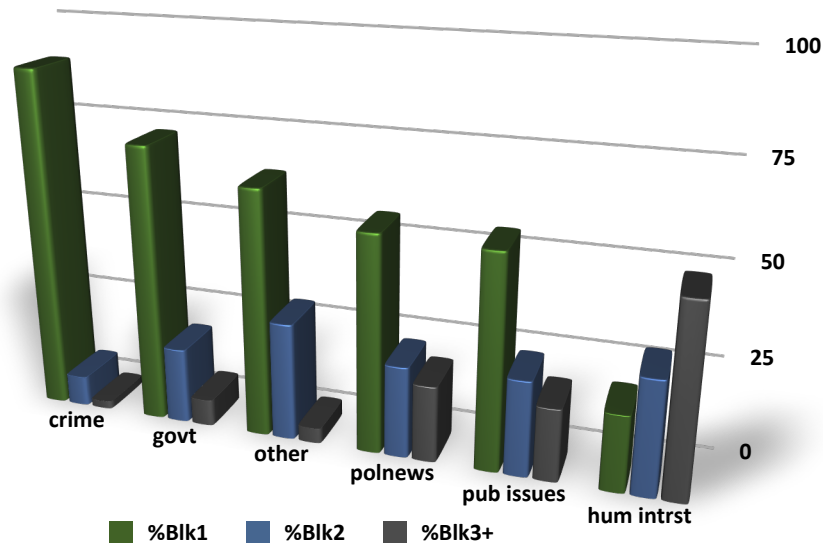
Stories regarding public issues occupied about 14 percent of the newscast. That category included every public issue (housing, health, economy, environment, etc.) except crime. By contrast, crime stories alone accounted for about 7 percent of the broadcasts.

Political ads comprised about 10 percent of the newscasts. However, political news and stories about the activities of government occupied the smallest proportions of the newscasts, about 6 percent and 2 percent, respectively. That was an interesting feature of the broadcasts, particularly during a political campaign season.

A complimentary characteristic of time in a broadcast is story placement. Just like the judgement regarding how much time will be devoted to a story, the decision about where to place it in the newscast is critical because the stories are viewed by the audience in a series. Unlike print media, the audience cannot skip over the first story in order to get to the second or others. Therefore, each story in the broadcast has two purposes: to inform the audience and to hold that audience for the next story. Consequently, the placement of the story is crucial to the cost calculus of the newscast and the station explicitly indicates what information it thinks will achieve and hold an audience. In this research, we specified placement by blocks, the time between commercial breaks.

The categories for block placement are Block1, Block2 and Block3+ (indicating an aggregation of the stories in blocks 3, 4 & 5). In considering the placement of stories, we found a very different emphasis regarding story type beyond the amount of time devoted to the story (Figure 3). For example, although crime

Fig. 3: Distribution of stories by block



stories accounted about 7 percent of broadcast time, 90 percent of those stories were broadcast at the beginning of the newscast in the first block (Figure 3). Almost three-fourths of government stories appeared in the first block. Political news, public issues and human interest stories appeared in each of the five blocks. However, only human interest stories (20%) had a minority of stories in Block 1.

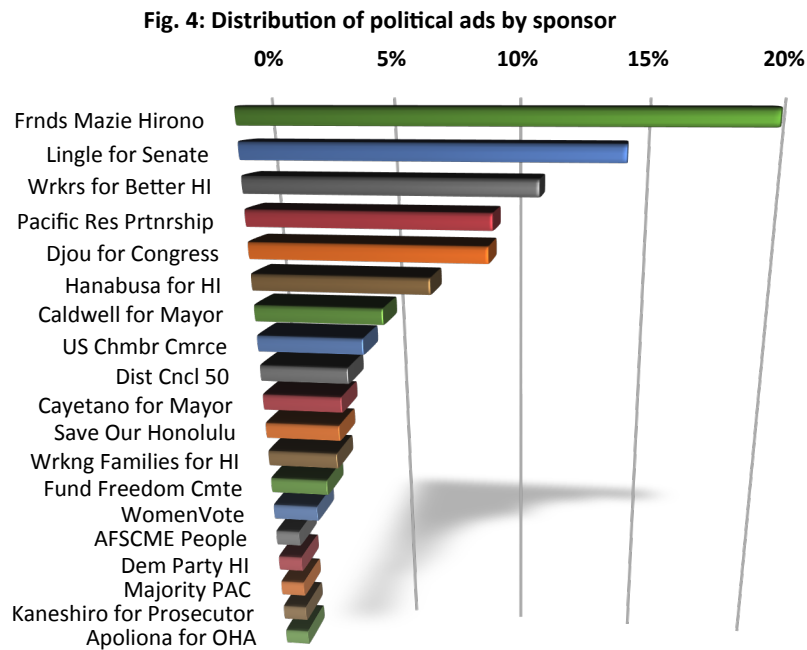
Political Ads

There were 584 political ads that appeared on the sample broadcasts for this research. They were sponsored by nineteen entities. There was a significant variation in the proportion of political ads that were presented by the various sponsors.

Political ads were evenly distributed across Hawai'i's five local television news stations. Overall, 19 percent of ads appeared on KFVE (MyNetworkTV), 22 percent on KGMB (CBS), 23 percent on KHNL (NBC), 17 percent on KHON (FOX), and 20 percent on KITV (ABC). Sixty-three percent of ads appeared at 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. while 37 percent appeared at 6:00 p.m. As expected, there were twice as many ads in the late election period than the early election period.

Ads varied significantly by campaign and ad sponsor (Figure 4). The Senate campaign between Democrat Mazie Hirono and Republican Linda Lingle attracted more than half (51 percent) of all political ads. Remaining ads were presented by Honolulu mayoral candidates Kirk Caldwell and Ben Cayetano (32 percent), Congressional candidates Charles Djou and Colleen Hanabusa (16 percent) and other local candidates (1 percent).

Most of the ads were sponsored by official candidate committees (59 percent), however, independent expenditure-sponsored ads also accounted for a significant proportion of overall ad share (37 percent). Candidate committees presented two thirds of ads in the Senate race while independent groups sponsored three-quarters of ads in the mayor's race. In addition, five percent of ads were sponsored by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which filed its activities under "electioneering communications" with the Federal Election Commission. The Democratic Party of Hawai'i sponsored four ads in our sample.



The candidates for the U.S. Senate Seat, Democrat Mazie Hirono and Republican Linda Lingle accounted for about one-third of the political ads, 19 and 14 percent, respectively (Figure 4). Two PACs, Workers for a Better Hawai'i and Pacific Resource Partnership accounted for another 20 percent of the ads. In the race for the U.S. House of Representatives, Republican Charles Djou

sponsored about 9 percent of the ads compared to Democrat Colleen Hanabusa who sponsored about 7 percent of the ads.

The presentation of the ads across the stations is one metric to examine the issue. However, it is important to understand that the presentation was based on a small number of unique ads that were broadcast numerous times. Candidate committees presented 36 unique ads, while non-candidate committees presented 21 unique ads.

In our sample, Friends of Mazie Hirono presented seven unique ad spots that appeared a total of 114 times. Lingle's candidate committee, the Linda Lingle Senate Committee, presented four unique ad spots that appeared 82 times. The largest non-candidate committee sponsors were pro-Caldwell Workers for a Better Hawaii (12 percent of all ads) and anti-Cayetano/pro-Caldwell Pacific Resource Partnership PAC (10 percent of all ads).

In the Honolulu mayor's race, independent expenditure ad sponsors were integral to the promotion of Kirk Caldwell's candidacy. Pro-Caldwell non-candidate committee Workers for a Better Hawaii and pro-Caldwell/anti-Cayetano Pacific Resource Partnership PAC presented a total of ten unique ads 123 times. More than one fifth of ads on television were disseminated by these groups (21 percent). Caldwell's official groups, Caldwell for Mayor and Friends of Kirk Caldwell, presented five unique ads 25 times that accounted for five percent of all ads. For the purpose of further analyses, these groups have been consolidated into the "Caldwell for Mayor" ad sponsor group. In the Senate race, this trend was not observed; the number of non-candidate committee groups advertising on television was much higher than the mayor's race, but they did not broadcast nearly as many ads. There were eight non-candidate committee Senate groups that broadcast 13 percent of all ads. In comparison, the mayor's race featured three non-candidate committee advertisers that presented a quarter (25 percent) of the advertisements on television.

Political Ads Tone

The proportion of political ads that were sponsored by the candidates and organizations is one measure of their activity. However, another metric is the tone that they adopted in conveying the message. We classified the tone as either positive, negative or neutral. However, we found that the ads fell only into the first two categories. The striking feature about the tone of the political ads was that some candidates and organizations presented positive and negative ads, some organizations sponsored only negative ads and some candidates and organizations offered only positive ads.

In the main, ads were more negative (56 percent) than positive (45 percent). The difference in the tone of the ads by type of race was statistically significant ($p = <.05$). Congressional and local ads were entirely positive. Ads in the Senate race were 77 percent negative. Ads in the mayor's race were 51 percent negative and ads in the other races were entirely positive.

In the Senate campaign, Hirono's candidate committee, Friends of Mazie Hirono, presented a disproportionately large number of negative ads compared to positive ads (Figure 5). Pro-Hirono political action groups and the Democratic Party of Hawai'i also presented a large number of negative ads and zero positive ads. Lingle's Senate committee presented a more even distribution of negative and positive ads with 42 negative ads and 40 positive ads. Hirono and pro-Hirono ads were 44 percent more numerous than Lingle or pro-Lingle group ads on television.

Fig. 5: Distribution of Ad Tone by Sponsor

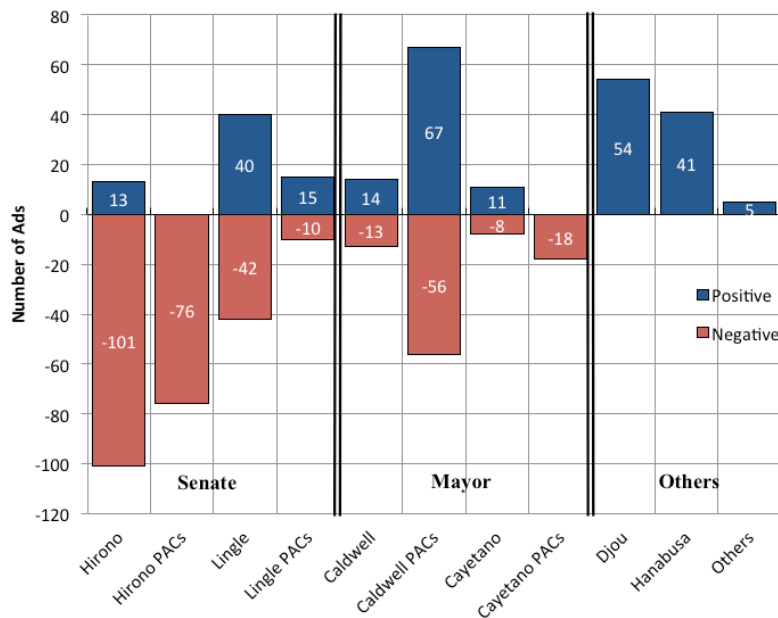


Figure 5 also shows the distribution of ad tone by ad sponsor in the mayor's race. Candidate committees for Caldwell and Cayetano each presented a roughly even distribution of positive and negative ads. Pro-Caldwell and anti-Cayetano political action committees, however, presented a significantly larger number of ads over Cayetano's candidate committee or the pro-Cayetano PAC,

SaveOurHonolulu.com. Caldwell and pro-Caldwell groups were 75 percent more numerous than Cayetano's candidate committee or SaveOurHonolulu.com's ads. In the mayor's race, pro-Caldwell or anti-Cayetano groups presented a disproportionately large number of ads that far eclipsed Caldwell and Cayetano candidate committee ads. There was a significant difference in the ads that featured Lingle and Hirono, the candidates for U.S. Senate. Lingle sponsored more positive ads about her candidacy (52) than negative ads about Hirono, her opponent (31). However, Hirono's ads were divided differently with 66 negative ads about Lingle versus 42 positive ads about her candidacy. Further, organizations like District Council 50, Workers for a Better Hawai'i, WomenVote and AFSCME (the most prominent sponsor in

Table 2: Sponsor, Ad Tone & Focus

Ad Sponsor		Overall Neg (%)	Cand-pos (%)	Contrast (%)	Opont-neg (%)
Hirono	Friends of Mazie Hirono	89	11*	32*	57*
	District 50	100	--	--	100
	Working Families for Hawaii	100	--	--	100
	Fund for Freedom Committee	100	--	--	100
	Women Vote!	100	--	--	100
	AFSCME People	100	--	--	100
	Democratic Party of Hawaii	100	--	--	100
	Majority PAC	100	--	--	100
Lingle	Linda Lingle Senate Committee	51	49*	51*	0.0
	U.S. Chamber of Commerce	40	60*	--	40*
Senate total		77	23	32	45
Caldwell	Workers for a Better Hawaii	--	85*	--	15*
	Pacific Resource Partnership PAC	100	--	--	100
	Caldwell for Mayor	52	48*	--	52*
	Friends of Kirk Caldwell	--	100	--	--
Cayetano	Cayetano for Mayor	42	58*	37*	5*
	SaveOurHonolulu.com	100	--	--	100
Mayor total		51	44	17	39
Overall		67	31	26	43

*p = <.05

the various category) directed all of their ads negatively against Lingle (a total of 55 ads). That means that, of the 584 ads that were presented in our sample, a significant proportion (111 or about 19%) were directed against Lingle. No other candidate received that degree of negative ad attention. U.S. House of Representative candidates Hanabusa and Djou sponsored only positive ads among those that we captured in our sample of broadcasts.

Political Ads Tone & Sponsor Focus

Tone was an important feature of the political ads. However, a finer examination revealed how that tone was presented. We looked at three attributes of tone-- positive candidate, contrast or negative candidate (Table 2). Forty-three percent of the ads were candidate-positive focused, more than one third were opponent-negative focused (35 percent), and over one fifth (21 percent) were contrast ads that featured positive and negative content. The overall focus of ads in the Senate race was 23 percent candidate-positive, 45 percent opponent-negative, and nearly one third (32 percent) contrast ($p < .05$). The overall focus of ads in the mayor's race was 44 percent candidate-positive, 35 percent opponent-negative, and a quarter (25 percent) contrast. The entrance of non-candidate committees late into the General Election campaign propelled an increase in opponent-negative ads closer to Election Day.

Table 2 presents the summary of findings by ad negativity and focus. We omitted Congressional and local campaigns that did not feature negative ad content since these contests featured exclusively positive ad content. Following this omission, the proportion of candidate-positive focused ads and opponent-negative focused ads decreases to 31 percent and 26 percent, respectively, while the proportion of contrast ads increases to 43 percent. The overall proportion of negative ads increases to 67 percent. There were no significant differences in the proportions of negative campaign ads in either the Senate or mayoral campaigns by campaign period.

Political Ad Emphasis

In research question 3, we examined whether political ads emphasized issues or images. There was a statistically significant difference in that distribution as 59 percent of ads emphasized issues, 28 percent of ads emphasized images and 12 percent treated both concepts equally (Table 3) ($p = < .05$). Seventy-two percent of all ads emphasized issues greater than or equal to image emphasis. Issue emphasis increased in the month before Election Day by 16 percent while the proportion of image ads dropped 7 percent ($p = < .05$).

Issue emphasized ads were more negative than positive (Table 3). Fifty-eight percent of ads that emphasize candidate issues were negative in tone compared to 46 percent of ads that emphasized candidate images, and 64 percent of ads that emphasized both issues and images ($p = <.05$). This means that when issues were raised, they were often presented negatively. Although 39 percent of issue emphasized ads were candidate-positive focused, 37

Table 3: Ad Sponsors & Emphasis

Ad Sponsor	CampgnShare (%)	Issues (%)	Images (%)	Both (%)
Friends of Mazie Hirono	39	30*	53*	18*
Linda Lingle Senate Committee	28	66*	34*	--
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	8	--	60*	40*
District 50	7	100	--	--
Working Families for Hawaii	6	100	--	--
Fund for Freedom Committee	5	100	--	--
Women Vote!	4	100	--	--
AFSCME People	2	100	--	--
Democratic Party of Hawaii	1	--	--	100
Majority PAC	--	100	--	--
<i>Senate Ad Subtotal</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>54*</i>	<i>35*</i>	<i>11*</i>
Workers for a Better Hawaii	36	61*	2*	37*
Pacific Resource Partnership PAC	30	55	27	16
Caldwell for Mayor	14	80	20	--
Cayetano for Mayor	10	84*	--	16*
SaveOurHonolulu.com	10	100	--	--
Friends of Kirk Caldwell	--	100	--	--
<i>Mayoral Ad Sponsors' Subtotal</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>67*</i>	<i>13*</i>	<i>20*</i>
Djou for Hawaii	57	50*	50*	--
Hanabusa for Hawaii	43	71*	29*	--
<i>Congressional Ad Subtotal</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>59*</i>	<i>41*</i>	<i>--</i>
Kaneshiro for Prosecutor	80	100	--	--
Apoliona for OHA 2012	20	--	--	100
<i>Local Ad Sponsors' Subtotal</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>--</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>*p = <.05 All Ad Sponsors' Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>59*</i>	<i>28*</i>	<i>12*</i>

percent were opponent negative and 24 percent were contrast ads, which means that issues were emphasized with negative ad content in 61 percent of ads (opponent-focused and contrast ad combined). In comparison, image

emphasized ads were 54 percent candidate-positive focused, 27 percent opponent negative focused, and 18 percent contrast ads, ($p = <.05$).

Senate race issue emphasis. More than half of Senate ads (53 percent) emphasized issues, more than one-third (35 percent) emphasized images, and 11 percent emphasized both ($p = <.05$). The proportion of issue-emphasized ads did not increase as the election approached: 54 percent of all ads in the Senate race emphasized issues early and 54 percent of all Senate ads emphasized issues late in the campaign. The proportion of image emphasized ads, meanwhile, fell from 40 percent to 31 percent. In its place, the proportion of ads emphasizing both issues and images was nine percent.

Mayor's race issue emphasis. More than two thirds of Honolulu mayor ads emphasized issues (67%) compared with lower proportions of ads that emphasized images (13%) or both issues and images (20%). There was significant variance in issue emphasis between the early and the late campaign periods. Early in the campaign, 14.7 percent of mayoral ads emphasized issues while 77 percent of ads emphasized both issues and images ($p = <.05$). Late in the mayoral campaign, ad emphasis shifted from both issues and images to strictly issue ad emphasis. The proportion of issue ads soared to 79 percent while the proportion of issue and image ads fell precipitously to 7 percent ($p = <.05$). Issues were emphasized across each period.

Congressional race and emphasis. The race for Hawai'i's 1st Congressional District did not feature non-candidate committee ad sponsors. Congressional candidate committees collectively emphasized more issues (59 percent) than images (41 percent). Djou for Hawaii emphasized issues and images equally, accounting for 50 percent of ads emphasizing each type. Early in the campaign, Djou emphasized issues (60 percent) more than images (40 percent), but shifted emphasis late from issues (33 percent) to images. Hanabusa for Hawaii emphasized more issues (70 percent) than images. Early in the campaign, her candidate committee presented ads that emphasized issues (100 percent), but late in the campaign traded some issue ads for image ads (32 percent). All of these relationships were statistically significant ($p = <.05$).

Attacks. We also investigated whether issues or images were attacked in campaign ads. Overall, half of the ads (51 percent) featured at least one attack, including more than two thirds of all Senate ads (68%) and half of all mayoral ads (51%). Table 4 displays the distribution of the type of attacks employed by Senate and mayoral campaign ads. Issue-related attacks were more frequent than image-related attacks. Forty-four percent of all Senate and mayoral ads

attacked an opposing candidate's issue stands or issue consistency and 37 percent attacked an opposing candidates' past performance. Conversely, only

Table 4: Type of Attack Ads by Sponsor

Ad Sponsor	Issue Stands/Consistency (%)	Past Perf (%)	Group Assoc (%)	Backgrd Qual(%)	Personal Char(%)
Friends of Mazie Hirono	--	3*	61*	--	--
District 50	100	100	--	--	--
Working Families for Hawaii	100	100	--	100	--
Fund for Freedom Cmte	100	100	--	--	--
Women Vote!	100	100	--	--	--
AFSCME People	100	100	--	--	--
Democratic Party of Hawaii	100	100	--	--	--
Majority PAC	100	--	100	--	--
Linda Lingle Senate Cmte	51*	33*	--	--	--
U.S. Chamber of Commerce	40	100	--	--	--
Senate Subtotal	54*	35*	25*	6*	--
Workers for a Better Hawaii	--	--	--	--	--
Pacific Resrce Part PAC	29*	100	--	--	63*
Caldwell for Mayor	52	--	--	--	--
Friends of Kirk Caldwell	--	--	--	--	--
Cayetano for Mayor	26	21	--	21*	16*
SaveOurHonolulu	100	--	--	--	--
Mayor Subtotal	28*	42*	--	2	20*
p = <.05 Total	44	37*	15*	4*	8*

15 percent of attacks targeted group associations, eight percent targeted personal characteristics and four percent targeted background or qualifications. The differences were statistically significant ($p = <.05$).

Senate race attacks. Over half of ads in the Senate campaign (54 percent) attacked opponents' issue stands or consistency. Several ads also attacked past

performance (35%), group associations (25%), and background or qualifications (6%). Table 5 shows the overall rise in issue attacks late in the Senate campaign. The proportion of issue stand and consistency attacks increased 12 percent from 47 percent early in the campaign to 59 percent late in the campaign. Over the same period, attacks on past performance fell 10 percent from 41 percent early in the campaign to 30 percent late in the campaign. Attacks on group associations also fell nine percent from 30 percent early in the campaign to 21 percent late in the campaign. All of the differences were statistically significant ($p = <.05$).

Most of Hirono's ads (62%) were laden with attacks on Lingle's group associations, namely her status as a Republican and affiliation with Mitt

Table 5: Attack Ads by Campaign Period

	Issue Stands/ Consistency (%)	Past Perf (%)	Group Assoc (%)	Backgrd Qual (%)	Personal Char (%)	Negative (%)
Senate early	47*	41*	30*	8*	--	78*
Senate late	59*	30*	21*	4	--	76*
Difference	+ 12	-10	-9	-4	--	-2
Senate Average	54*	35	25*	6	--	77*
Mayor early	--	13.3	--	--	23.5*	23.5*
Mayor late	34.4	57.9*	--	2.6	19.6*	56.9
Difference	+34.4	+44.6	--	+2.6	-3.9	+33.4
Mayor Average	27.8	41.7*	--	2.1	20.3	50.8*

* $p = <.05$

Romney's presidential campaign. Over half of Lingle's ads (51%) attacked Hirono's issue stands and consistency. Many Lingle ads also attacked Hirono's past performance as a Congresswoman (33%).

Mayor's race attacks. The mayor's race featured more of an eclectic mix of issue and image-based attacks. Forty-two percent of the ads attacked an opponent's group associations, 28 percent attacked an opponent's issue stands/consistency and 20 percent attacked an opponent's personal characteristics. In contrast to the Senate campaign, the number of negative ads increased dramatically (+ 33 percent) in the four weeks prior to Election Day.

Attacks on candidate past performance increased by 44 percent over this period, statistically significantly, $p = <.05$ (Table 5). Attacks on candidate issue stands or consistency also increased, but the difference was not statistically significant.

Many anti-Cayetano ads tied the former Hawai'i Governor's image to issue-based appeals, such as his alleged corruption as Governor (past performance) and lack of trustworthiness. Friends of Kirk Caldwell attacked on Cayetano's issue stands and consistency, but these were not significant. Cayetano, alternatively, attacked Caldwell's background and qualifications in just over one fifth (21%) of ads. Several of Cayetano's attacks were also not statistically significant. These included attacks on Caldwell's proposed Honolulu rail project (issue stands and consistency in 26%), past performance (21%) and personal characteristics (16%).

Candidate & Non-Candidate Committees

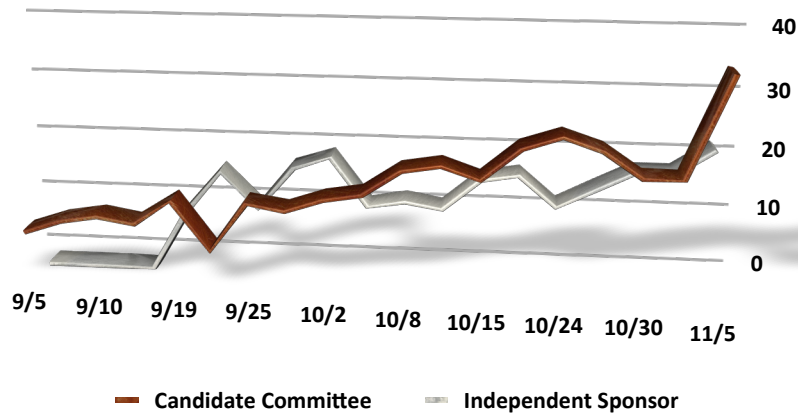
We examined the frequency, tone, focus, issue emphasis, attacks, and issues presented in candidate and non-candidate committee ads. political ads were sponsored by candidate committees that represented 59 percent of our sample. The remaining 242 ads (41 percent) were sponsored by independent expenditure groups (37 percent), the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (4 percent), and the Democratic Party of Hawaii (1 percent). In this analysis, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is included in the non-candidate committee category because the organization operated as a political action committee called the "U.S. Chamber PAC" (Center for Responsive Politics, 2013b).

The frequency of non-candidate committee ads and candidate committee ads gradually increased over time (Fig. 6). The number of non-candidate committee ad sponsors surpassed candidate committee ads in late September and early October, but candidate committee ads were more numerous on most days. As the election approached, the total number of candidate committee ads increased precipitously while the number of non-candidate committee ads increased more gradually.

Tone. Non-candidate committee ads were more negative (66 percent) than candidate committee ads (48 percent) and this difference exacerbated with time. The proportion of negative candidate committee ads fell by 23 percent (from 64% to 41 percent) in the final month of the campaign. Meanwhile, the proportion of negative non-candidate committee ads increased by 23 percent (from 50 percent to 73 percent). These differences were

statistically different ($p = <.05$) from candidate committees in the Senate race, but not in the mayoral race.

Fig 6: Distribution of candidate/non-candidate committee ads during election period (#ads)



Non-candidate committee ad sponsors in the Senate race were more negative (85 percent) than candidate committees (73 percent). As Election Day approached, the proportion of negative ads grew from 67 percent. Senate candidate committee ads were disproportionately negative early, but became slightly less negative late in the campaign. Hirono's candidate committee averaged 89 percent ad negativity overall, but fell to 80 percent ad negativity in the month before Election Day. In comparison, all six pro-Hirono non-candidate committees, accounting for 12 percent of all political ads, were totally and unequivocally negative. The Linda Lingle Senate Committee was more negative (51 percent) than positive, but was still more negative than the pro-Lingle U.S. Chamber of Commerce (40 percent ad negativity).

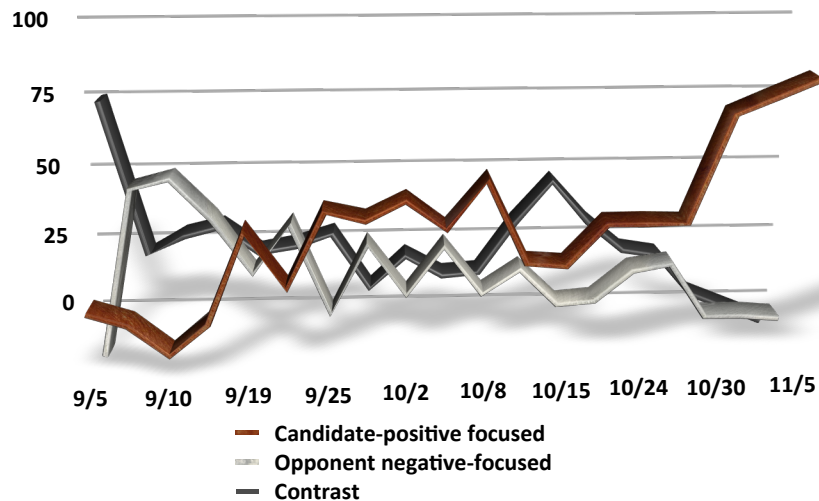
The ad negativity of non-candidate committee and candidate committee ad sponsors in the mayor's race was not statistically different. Fifty-three percent of non-candidate committee ads were negative compared with 46 percent of candidate committee ads. There was also no statistical difference in the proportion of negative ads by non-candidate committees over time. All of pro-Caldwell Pacific Resource Partnership PAC's ads were negative and all anti-Caldwell SaveOurHonolulu.com ads were also negative.

Focus, Candidate Committees. Candidate committees presented more positive ads (52 percent) and contrast ads (25 percent) and fewer opponent-negative ads (23 percent) than non-candidate committees. Non-candidate committees

presented fewer contrast ads (18 percent) and candidate-positive focused ads (30 percent), and more opponent-focused ads (52 percent). Except for early in the campaign, candidate committees proportionally presented more candidate-positive focused ads and fewer opponent-negative focused ads (Fig. 7). The proportion of contrast ads peaked in early September and again in mid-October. Candidate committee sponsored contrast ads steadily decreased to zero by Election Day while the proportion of positive-focused ads sharply increased.

Focus, Non-Candidate Committees. The proportion of opponent-negative focused ads generally increased through mid-October, but then fell sharply in late-October. Non-candidate committee-sponsored positive ads were

Fig 7: Focus of candidate committee ads during election period (% ads)

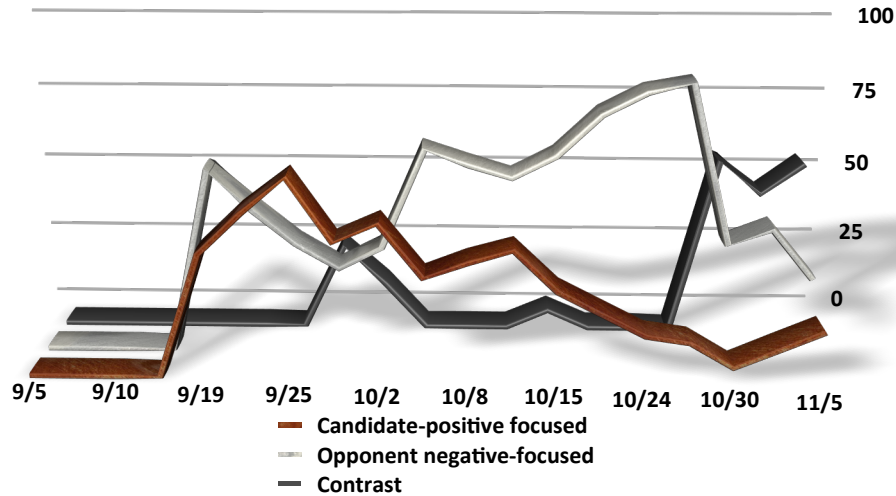


predominately used in early September, gradually fell through late October, and then increased slightly through Election Day (Fig. 8). In place of negative ads, non-candidate committee sponsors presented contrast ads at the end of the campaign. Note that the first non-candidate committee-sponsored ad does not appear until mid-September. Non-candidate committee contrast ads were largely absent from the campaign except for a slight peak in late September and early October, and a significant increase in late October. In the weeks leading up to Election Day, non-candidate committee sponsored contrast ads were used more frequently than opponent-negative or candidate-positive ads.

More than two thirds of the non-candidate committee sponsored ads in the Senate race were opponent-negative focused (67 percent) compared with 17 percent that were contrast ads and 16 percent that were candidate-positive

focused. Lingle and Hirono’s candidate committees presented a more equal distribution of ads by focus. Forty percent of ads were contrast ads, one third (33.2 percent) were opponent-negative focused, and more than a quarter (27 percent) were candidate-positive focused. The proportion of non-candidate committee sponsored opponent-negative focused ads remained nearly

Fig 8: Focus of non-candidate committee ads during election period (% ads)

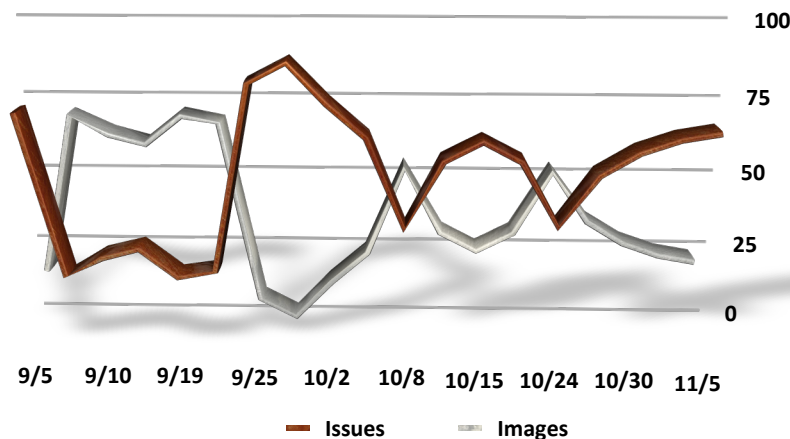


unchanged between election periods, accounting for nearly two-thirds of non-candidate committee sponsored ads during each time frame ($p = <.05$). In the mayor’s race, there was no statistical difference between non-candidate committee ad sponsors and candidate committees by focus. There was also no statistical difference between non-candidate committee sponsors and candidate committees over the election period.

Issue emphasis. Non-candidate committee ad sponsors were more likely to emphasize issues than candidate committees. Sixty-eight percent of all non-candidate committee sponsored ads emphasized issues compared to 54 percent of all candidate committee-sponsored ads. Non-candidate committee ad sponsors presented less image emphasized ads (13%) and slightly more ads presenting images with issues (19%). Candidate committees emphasized images in 39 percent of ads, and both issues and images in just seven percent of ads.

Figures 9 and 10 show the issue emphasis of candidate committee ad sponsors and non-candidate committees over time. Since RQ 4 asks whether or not non-candidate committee sponsors present issues, ads that emphasize both issues and images have been included with issue ads. This means that the

Fig 9: Issue emphasis of candidate committee ads during election period (% ads)



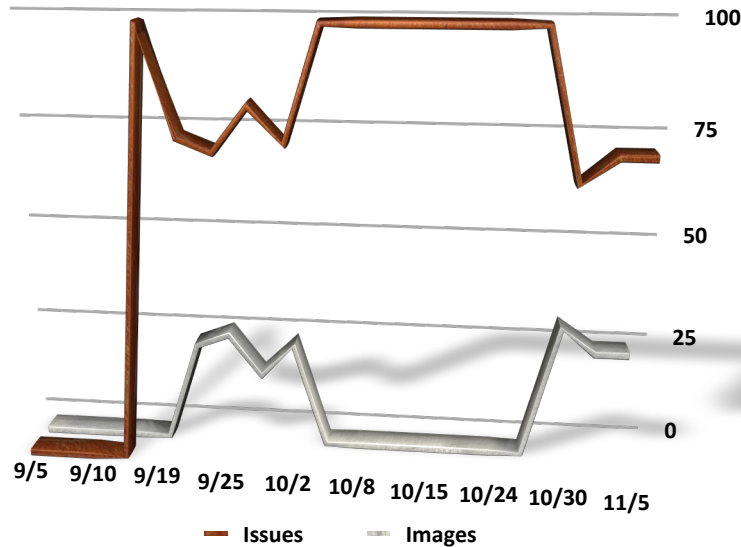
preponderance of the issue emphasis in these ads is greater than or equal to the emphasis on images ($\geq 50\%$ issue emphasis). Figure 9 presents the issue and image emphasis of candidate committees over the election period. The emphasis on images oscillates with some variation from images in early September to two peaks of slightly proportionate image emphasis in early and late October. Besides these periods, ads primarily emphasize issues throughout the campaign and increase closer to Election Day.

Figure 10 presents the issue emphasis of non-candidate committee sponsors during the election period. Non-candidate committee ad sponsors disproportionately emphasized issues in 70 to 100 percent of ads. The proportion of issue emphasized ads is consistently strong throughout the campaign, but slightly decreases just prior to Election Day. Note how the increase in non-candidate committee sponsored image ads at the end of the campaign is contemporaneous with a decline in candidate committee image ads over the same period.

Senate ad sponsor issue emphasis. In the Senate race, non-candidate committee ad sponsors emphasized issues in a disproportionate number of ads. About than three-quarters of independent-sponsored ads emphasized issues compared with 16 percent that emphasized images, and 10 percent that emphasized both issues and images. Comparatively, 45 percent of Senate candidate committee ads emphasized issues, 45 percent emphasized images, and 10 percent emphasized both issues and images. The differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Hirono’s candidate committee bucked the overall trend in issue emphasis. Her group emphasized images in the largest proportion of ads (53%) instead of

Fig 10: Issue emphasis non-candidate committee ads during election period (% ads)



issues (30%). As Election Day approached, however, the proportion of Hirono ads emphasizing issues jumped by over half (from 21% to 36%). The proportion of Hirono ads emphasizing images dropped from 63 percent to 46 percent while issue and image emphasis increased only slightly over the same period (17% and 18%, respectively). The differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$).

There were six pro-Hirono or anti-Lingle non-candidate committee groups. All of them broadcast ads that emphasized issues. The Democratic Party of Hawaii, which presented four anti-Lingle ads in our sample, was the only non-candidate committee group to emphasize Hirono’s image.

Lingle’s campaign used a different approach. Overall, the Linda Lingle Senate Committee emphasized issues in about two-thirds of ads and images in slightly more than one-third of ads. However, Lingle’s emphasis on issues and images varied by campaign period. Early in the general election campaign, 83 percent of her ads emphasized issues compared with 17 percent that emphasized images. Late in the campaign, Lingle’s issue emphasis fell to 53 percent. The loss of issue emphasis was picked up by emphasis on Lingle’s image. These ads increased from 17 percent early to 47 percent late in the period. During the last two weeks, the Linda Lingle Senate Committee drastically pivoted ad emphasis

from 100 percent issues to images in 75 to 100 percent of ads. The differences were statistically significant ($p = <.05$).

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce was the only pro-Lingle non-candidate political action committee ad sponsor present in our sample. It aired 14 percent of all ads. The group emphasized Lingle issues in 60 percent of ads and both issues and images in 40 percent of ads ($p = <.05$). The U.S. Chamber of Commerce emphasized only Lingle images early in the campaign, but shifted to exclusive issue and image emphasis late in the campaign.

Mayoral race ad sponsors issue emphasis. Candidate committees were more likely than non-candidate committee sponsors to emphasize issues in the race for Honolulu mayor. More than three-quarters of candidate committee ads (78%) emphasized issues compared to 15 percent of ads that emphasized images and seven percent of ads that emphasized both issues and images. Non-candidate committee sponsors emphasized issues in 63 percent of ads, images in 12 percent of ads, and both issues and images in 24 percent of ads. The differences were statistically significant ($p = <.05$).

The mayor's race featured three non-candidate committee ad sponsors in our sample. More than one fifth (22%) of all political ads were purchased by non-candidate committee groups friendly to Caldwell. Pro-Caldwell Workers for a Better Hawaii broadcast 12 percent of all ads and pro-Caldwell/anti-Cayetano Pacific Resource Partnership PAC (PRP) put on 10 percent of ads. Workers for a Better Hawaii broadcast ads throughout the general election period, while PRP did not advertise until early October. Anti-Caldwell SaveOurHonolulu.com, which presented five percent of ads in the late election period, waited until mid-October to show its first advertisement. The delayed participation of these entities precipitated an increase in mayoral issue emphasis from 15 percent early in the campaign to 79 percent late in the period.

The race for Honolulu mayor became a referendum on the city's proposed rail project. Anti-Caldwell SaveOurHonolulu.com bombarded the airwaves with two issue ads related to rail. PRP responded by diverting attention from issue and image ads early (100 percent) to a six-fold increase in the number of strictly issue ads late in the campaign. Each pro-Caldwell non-candidate committee groups implemented a different issue emphasis response tactic: while PRP presented some ads that emphasized images (27%), Workers for a Better Hawaii showed virtually almost none (2%). Alternatively, SaveOurHonolulu.com presented exclusively issue ads that supplemented Cayetano's candidate

committee issue messages. In the month before Election Day, 64 percent of anti-Cayetano/pro-Caldwell PRP ads were focused on issues.

Cayetano’s official candidate committee did not present a single political ad until the final weeks of the general election campaign. Once Cayetano’s ads were broadcast, 84 percent emphasized issues—mostly related to rail, while the remaining ads emphasized both issues and images. The late entrance of non-candidate committee ad sponsors coupled with the late entrance of Cayetano’s own candidate committee elevated the overall number of ads on the air and amplified the Honolulu rail issue.

Attacks. Non-candidate committee ad sponsors attacked both issues and images in every attack category except for candidate group associations. Issue-based attacks were more frequent than image-based attacks (Table 6). Sixty percent of non-candidate committee sponsored ads attacked a candidate’s past performance in office compared with just 10 percent of candidate committee ads. Non-candidate committee sponsors also attacked candidate issue stands and consistency more frequently (49%) than

Table 6: Attack Ads by Sponsor Type

	Issue Stands/ Consistency (%)	Past Perf (%)	Group Assoc (%)	Backgrd Qual (%)	Personal Char (%)
Non-cand cmte	49*	60*	1*	7*	15*
Cand cmte	27*	10*	21*	1*	8*
Average	36*	31*	13*	4*	7*

*p = <.05

c a n d i d a t e
committee ads
(27%). Only
seven percent
of all ads
a t t a c k e d
p e r s o n a l
characteristics,
however, non-
c a n d i d a t e
c o m m i t t e e

sponsors presented seven percent more personal attacks. Interestingly, 21 percent of the attacks on group associations came from candidate committees when only one percent of non-candidate committee sponsors made similar attacks. The differences were statistically significant (p = <.05).

Political News Stories

Political news stories were about evenly distributed across Hawai'i's five local television news stations. Twenty-two percent of the 139 political news stories appeared on KFVE (MyNetworkTV), 22 percent on KGMB (CBS), 22 percent on KHNL (NBC), 15 percent on KHON (FOX), and 19 percent on KITV (ABC). Thirty-five percent of the stories were shown at 6:00 p.m., 22 percent at 9:00 p.m., and 43 percent at 10:00 p.m. Sixty-four percent of the stories were shown one month before Election Day of which more than one third (37%) appeared in the final two weeks of the campaign.

Issues presented (RQ₁). Before we can present the types of issues that we found in political ads and political news stories, it is important to understand the prevalence of issues in both contexts. The most revealing finding regarding political ads and political news stories was the obvious disconnect between the two vehicles for political communication. Of the 584 political ads that were

Almost 2/3 of political news stories never mentioned issues raised in political ads.

part of our sample, 473 (81%) made reference to an issue in the campaign. Conversely, only 53 of the 139 political news stories (38%) addressed an issue in the campaign. In short, almost two-thirds of political news stories presented on the stations

in Honolulu never mentioned an issue that was raised in the political ads that they presented on their air during their newscasts. As a result, we focus our attention on the political ads and political news stories that *did* mention, at least, one issue.

In Table 7 we present the distribution of the issues found in political news stories and advertisements when stories and ads presented at least one issue. The findings underscore the perception of issue importance by political advertisers and news producers in 2012 election in Hawai'i. While coding issue mentions, qualitative distinctions were not made between in-depth and passing mentions of issue topics. Since each ad and story may present multiple issues, the total proportion in each column does not equal 100 percent.

Economic and local issue concerns topped issue presentation in ads and local news coverage. Medicare and Social Security spending were roughly proportionate. International affairs stories, however, were not presented in campaign advertisements, but dominated news coverage. Stories about abortion, health care, and environmental issues were entirely absent from campaign advertisements. Ads promoting crime and education, comparatively, were not met with news coverage. Education was an issue in 23 percent of ads

that mention issues, but only four percent of stories. Crime was shown in 11 percent of stories that presented issues, but only two percent of stories.

Table 7: Issues Presented on Political Ads & Political News Stories

Issue presentation	Stories (%)	Ads (%)
Economic concerns	34	37
Local issues	32	31
International	21	5
Elderly (Medicare/Social Security)	17	16
Other	17	14
Energy	13	2
Deficit	9	19
Taxes	9	14
Environment	8	0
Defense	4	9
Education	4	23
Crime	2	11
Abortion	2	0
Health care	2	0
Children's issues	0	10
percentages = proportion of all ads (n/473) or stories (n/53) that present at least one issue		

Frames. Although it is clear that political news stories present issues less frequently than political advertisements, quantifiability alone does not describe the presentation of issues in local television news stories. Framing analyses further elucidate the 38 percent of stories that show campaign issues. Three qualities were particularly important to this study: the use of a conflict frame; the use of a strategic frame; and the overt issue focus of the news story. Table 8 presents the distribution of these findings.

Many of the stories that were issue-focused were, in fact, prompted by some campaign event. The two issue-focused stories that referenced military or defense spending issues were brought about by a Congressional forum where

the military spending was discussed. Three out of five (60 percent) stories about the budget deficit focused on issues, but this was because four stories covered a debate or candidate forum that highlighted the issue. Fifty-six percent of the stories about Medicare and Social Security were issue-focused, but these stories were prompted by campaign events. Two of those stories involved Hirono's promise to protect Social Security, four stories covered debates where Social Security and Medicare were discussed, and one covered President Obama's brief discussion of the issue in a presidential debate. Although one third of stories (33%) focused on some "other" issue, five of the nine "other" stories were covered by candidate forums, and four reported on a ceremony honoring a former Congresswoman. In fact, the issue-focused category is quite illusory because although the stories focus on issues, they often do so when prompted by the candidates or campaigns themselves.

Table 8: Issues and News Story Frames

Issue presentation	Conflict(%)	Strategic(%)	Issue (%)
Military spending	100	--	100
Crime	100	100	--
Abortion	100	100	--
Health care	100	100	--
Deficit	80*	20*	60*
Taxes	80*	80	--
International	64*	55	27*
Energy	57*	86	--
Elderly (Medicare/Social Security	56*	33	56*
Other	56*	22*	33*
Economic concerns	44*	57	22*
No issue	14*	57	--
Environment	25	100	--
Local issues	24	65	24*
*= $p < .05$			

Fifty-seven percent of all stories that featured no issue content framed the strategic narrative of the campaign. These topics included Romney's campaign finances, mayoral debate negotiations, Hawai'i's representatives at the Democratic National Convention, Democratic rallies, Election Day tips, and a

candidate death threat. Only 14 percent of these stories covered conflict. Essentially, these stories were so lacking in issue substance that there were minimal conflict narratives to be construed.

Just over a quarter of stories (26%) described conflicts between candidates. Such stories included former Hawai'i Senator Daniel Inouye calling on Lingle to stop airing a misleading ads, and coverage of the Hawai'i Republican Party Chair's reaction to President Obama's Democratic National Convention (DNC) speech. Coverage of health care was only presented in the context of the Hawai'i Republican Party chair reacting to President Obama's DNC speech. Coverage of abortion was prompted by Indiana Senate candidate Richard Mourdock's comments regarding rape. One crime story was covered, but it was only shown as part of a segment describing the negative tenor of Hawai'i's political ads. Four out of the five stories about taxes were about the presidential debates; only one of those stories covered taxes in a local context, and that story, too, was prompted by debate coverage.

Some political news stories reported on events that were extraneous to Hawai'i's market. These included presidential debate performances, the impact of the falling national unemployment rate on the presidential contest, and the party conventions, to name a few. Presidential candidates also appeared more frequently in political news stories (Figure 7). Although Hawai'i was on track to solidly vote Democratic, President Obama, Governor Romney, Vice President Joe Biden and Republican vice presidential nominee Paul Ryan appeared a total of 69 times that encompassed one third (33 percent) of all candidate appearances on local television news political stories. Senate candidates Hirono and Lingle appeared 62 times or in 30 percent of all stories. In contrast, local candidates appeared 21 times, or in just ten percent of all stories.

Although it appears that issue coverage of political news stories was approximately proportionate to the political ads when issues were covered, in reality, issue coverage was nearly non-existent on local television news. Stories were often prompted by campaign events, presented candidates and campaigns for office were less local (presidential and senatorial races), and were frequently framed by strategic or conflict narratives that increased the entertaining qualities of the campaign. Absent from political coverage were informed treatments of candidate issues, critical evaluations of past performance, or substantive commentary on the issues presented in political advertisements.

Analysis

There were five crucial findings in this study. First, issues were critical to campaign communication. Second, political advertisements were often negative. Third, candidates often used images to reinforce issues and issue to reinforce images. Fourth, candidates attacked opponents' issues, and generally not images. Finally, local television news did not critically examine the issue dialogues that were apparent in the political advertisements. We examine them below.

Issues: critical to political communication

Our analysis revealed that issue-related content was present in political ads and ad sponsors emphasized that content. Political advertisements reflected the issues that ad sponsors wanted to pursue. Intuitively, the more often ads were presented, the more often advertisers wanted to reach voters with a particular message. We found areas of convergence and divergence in candidates' issue agendas. Kirk Caldwell and Ben Cayetano sparred over Honolulu rail in the mayoral campaign. Caldwell became the pro-rail candidate while Cayetano ran against it. Caldwell also presented crime while Cayetano did not.

Ad sponsors in the Senate race predominantly presented economic concerns, but they did not agree on other issue priorities such as education, the budget deficit, international affairs, and taxes. In the Congressional race, candidates converged on the importance of elderly issues, but diverged on the budget deficit, economic concerns, and education.

The mere quantification of issue mentions alone does not describe if political ads emphasized the issues that were mentioned. Every advertisement in our sample presented at least one issue, but seven out of ten ads emphasized issues greater than or equal to the emphasis on candidate images. Fourteen out of 20 ad sponsors presented issue messages in more than two-thirds of ads. Combined with the findings regarding issue presentation, these data reveal that campaigns used political ads to emphasize issue messages and that those messages mentioned issues that candidates or candidate committees wanted to talk about. A significant outlier in this study was Mazie Hirono's campaign committee. Friends of Mazie Hirono presented image-emphasized messages in over half of its ads. Pro-Hirono groups, alternatively, showed mostly issue ads: six out of the seven pro-Hirono or anti-Lingle non-candidate committees displayed issue emphasized ads 100 percent of the time. These accounted for

one-third of all ads shown in the Senate race. The existence of divergent ad sponsor issue or image emphasis and issue presentations are consistent with previous findings. Indeed, scholars have uncovered issue-related content in up to 90 percent of ads in the top 75 U.S. markets (Freedman, Franz & Goldstein, 2004).

Political ads: frequently negative

Voters watched a campaign that was negative in tone and highly opponent-focused. More than three-quarters of Senate ads, and one-half of mayoral race ads were negative. Of those, 45 percent of Senate and 39 percent of mayoral ads were entirely opponent-negative focused. Further, over one-half of all ads featured at least one attack, and most attacks were levied against opposing candidates' issues and not images. When present, negative attacks targeted opposing candidates' issue stands or consistency, or past performance in office.

Similar to issue presentation and issue emphasis, issue-based attacks serve an important agenda-setting function. In the mayoral campaign, attacks on Cayetano's supposed corruption in office heightened the salience of ethics in the race for Honolulu mayor. In the Senate race, opponent-focused ads frequently attacked Lingle's association with Mitt Romney's campaign and status as a Republican. The decision to go negative is a strategic one. Negative ads and ads that launch an attack do so to affect the agenda of what is perceived to be relevant in a campaign (West, 2005).

Candidate issues/images: reinforce each other

The proportion of issue and image-related content varied by campaign and ad sponsor. Forty-one percent of ads in the Congressional race emphasized images compared to only 13 percent of mayoral ads. When images were emphasized, they tended to reinforce positive issue messages about a sponsoring candidate, or negative messages about an opposing candidate.

Although the Honolulu rail project was an important issue in the mayoral campaign, rail was not the only issue. Pro-Caldwell ad sponsors used image-related messages to attack Cayetano's record (issues). These sponsors presented images that described Caldwell as "honest" and "hardworking" that were often juxtaposed against negative ads indicting Cayetano with pay-to-play schemes and ethical misconduct. As the issue salience of ethics increased late in the mayoral campaign, Cayetano's ethical image became an issue, even while he defended attacks against his record as governor. In mid-to-late October, Cayetano fired back, calling into question Caldwell's accounting for how much the rail project would cost the City of Honolulu. Cayetano defended

himself against the issue and image attacks with testimonials from his wife, Vicki Cayetano, and Hawai'i's Campaign Spending Commission Executive Director Bob Watada (Hawaii Reporter, 2012). Watada criticized attacks against Cayetano's image, and affirmed his honesty and integrity in office.

Although issue attacks grew by over a third late in the mayoral campaign, pro-Caldwell groups were on the air emphasizing positive messages about Caldwell's image early, and attacking Cayetano's issues and images late. In this sense, Caldwell's advertising strategy was successful, because it impugned Cayetano's issues with a negative, issue-based narrative of Cayetano's image.

In the Senate race, approximately one-third of Lingle's ads and one-half of Hirono's ads half of the ads featured image-emphasized content. Strong image emphasis, however, did not translate into positive candidate portrayals. Nearly three-out-of-five Hirono ads (57 percent) were opponent-negative focused and just over one-half of Lingle ads (51 percent) moved between positive and negative content. Lingle's image ads were mostly positive. They focused on Washington gridlock and Lingle's commitment to be a bipartisan leader who would work across party lines in the U.S. Senate. Hirono's image ads were generally opponent-negative focused. They claimed that Lingle was running a "negative campaign" that was "misleading" voters. Late in the campaign, a U.S. Chamber of Commerce ad characterized Hirono's vote against a free trade bill as "crazy." The essence of the U.S. Chamber's attack was that Hirono voted against a bill that Senators Inouye and Akaka voted for—suggesting that Hirono was not voting in the interests of Hawai'i. In response, the Hirono campaign attacked Lingle for acquiescing to outside negative and "misleading" ads: "What they've brought to our islands is shameful" (mazieforhawaii, 2012). Friends of Mazie Hirono attacked Lingle for relying on mainland contributions.

On Hirono's campaign website, an in-depth account of Hirono's work on South Korean visa waivers was provided in response to the U.S. Chamber's ad claims (Mazie for Hawaii, 2012). This attack tied Hirono's vote in Congress (an issue) to the implication that she was not working for Hawaiians (image). The response provoked Hirono's campaign to call Lingle's reliance on outside "misleading" negative advertising.

Lingle launched an issue ad attacking Hirono's Congressional voting record with image-related undertones. According to her candidate committee's ad: "Mazie Hirono sponsored 49 bills. Zero became law: zero for working families, zero for seniors, zero for small businesses" (Lingle2012, 2012). The ad then claimed that "Linda Lingle worked with both parties" to create jobs, balance the budget, and

create quality education. The issue-related suggestion that Hirono is an ineffectual Congresswoman was contrasted with a positive image-related appeal to Lingle's record of bipartisanship.

In response, Hirono's campaign attacked Lingle's image and provided a defense for Hirono's work in Congress: "Republican Linda Lingle, misleading us again. Mazie Hirono has cast 4,794 votes, and Linda Lingle knows it" (mazieforhawaii, 2012). The problem with this ad was that it refuted Hirono's votes in Congress on legislation. There was no defense of Hirono's ability to pass legislation—only a veiled defense of Hirono's voting record that paradoxically describes Lingle's ad as "misleading." The response defends Hirono's past performance in office (issue), and characterizes Lingle's ads as misleading while attacking her association with the national Republicans (images).

Unlike the mayoral and Senatorial campaigns, the Congressional race featured exclusively candidate-positive messages that were never presented by non-candidate committee sponsors. Although Charles Djou's ads were exactly 50 percent issue-emphasized and 50 percent image-emphasized, the appeals made in each often reflected some combined reference to both issues and images together. Djou is an Army veteran, and frequently linked the honor, dignity, and valor of his military service to bipartisanship as a U.S. Congressman: "In Afghanistan, there weren't any Democrat or Republican soldiers: only American soldiers" (advertisinghi, 2012). In Djou issue-ads, independent and bipartisan qualities were stressed in reference to Medicare, Social Security, and job creation: "I see my kids' faces in every decision I make" (advertisinghi, 2012).

Djou's opponent in the race, Colleen Hanabusa, emphasized issues in seven out of ten ads. In the three out of ten ads that emphasized images, however, she indirectly defended her record on veterans' issues. Hanabusa spokesman Arturo Caleda, the president of the World War II Filipino-American Veterans (Hawai'i Chapter), affirms on screen: "We recognize Congresswoman Hanabusa for her leadership. She never failed the veterans" (Colleen Hanabusa, 2012). Another of Hanabusa's issue-emphasized ads offered a similar defense. In short, Djou's appeal to military service and implication of bipartisanship was mirrored by Hanabusa's claims to leadership on veterans' issues. Djou's veterans "image" and Hanabusa's image of leadership underscored the significance of military and veterans issues in the Congressional campaign. These may have powerfully resonated in Hawai'i where military installations are not only large population centers, but also drive the local economy.

The common theme that was consistent across each campaign's advertising strategy was that issues were, at least minimally, somewhat linked to candidate images. This was observed in both negative (mayoral and Senatorial) and positive (Congressional) ads. To be sure, there were qualitative differences between issue ads and image ads (Johnston and Kaid, 2002). Whether voters identify those differences is another question (Hacker, Zakahi, Giles & McQuitty, 2000).

From a content analysis perspective, this study uncovered some of the methodological difficulties of parsing out candidate issues from candidate images and vice versa. Ads suggested that Charles Djou was an Afghanistan war veteran, so his leadership on the battlefield would necessarily affect his bipartisan judgment in Congress. Attack ads relied on issues to critique opponent images, as well. "Linda Lingle is a co-chair of Mitt Romney's presidential campaign, and Mitt Romney's tax plan is unfair to the middle class—so how can Linda Lingle be trusted to vote with the middle class?"—suggested a Hirono ad.

Ultimately, issues and images may not be as dichotomous as the literature suggests. Candidates used images to reinforce issues and issues to reinforce images. West (2005) points out that candidates attack opponent issues to avoid the backlash effects of negative ads. This may be true, but because the line between issues and images is often elusive, what counts as an image attack? Ben Cayetano's pay-to-play schemes as governor and record on criminal pardons brought in to question his judgment and trustworthiness—"how can voters trust him with Honolulu rail?"—anti-Cayetano ads implied. In truth, campaigns frequently marry issues with images, and this occurred irrespective of ad tone.

Candidate/non-Candidate committees: different tactics

One emergent question in the post-*Citizens United* era is what differences, if any, exist between non-candidate committee and candidate committee ad content. This study found that non-candidate committees presented different issues than candidate committee sponsors, and emphasized those issues more frequently.

Mazie Hirono rarely presented education as an issue in her candidate committee's political advertisements, but four pro-Hirono non-candidate committee ad sponsors presented education as an issue in 100 percent of ads. In the mayor's race, 30 and 46 percent of non-candidate committee ads for Workers for a Better Hawaii and Pacific Resource Partnership, respectively,

showed “other” issues compared to 11 percent of Caldwell ads. As a group, non-candidate committees emphasized issues in greater proportion than candidate committees with varying synchronicity on specific issue mentions from the candidate committee sponsors. This means that there were more voices contributing to campaign issue dialogues, but those voices sometimes emphasized different issues than the candidate committees.

Non-candidate committee ad sponsors were more negative and more opponent-focused throughout the course of the campaign. As Election Day approached, non-candidate committee ad negativity increased while the proportion of negative candidate committee ads fell. This may be because candidate committee ad sponsors wanted to avoid potential backlash effects of negative ads at a time when voters make democratic decisions. In place of entirely opponent-focused negative ads, candidate committees strategically aired more contrast ads.

Early in the Senate race, there were three non-candidate committee ads that were entirely opponent-negative focused (all of them against Lingle). District 50 International Union of Painters and Allied Trades aired an ad that featured a Southern man thanking Lingle for exporting jobs to the mainland. WomenVote! and AFSCME People presented ads criticizing Lingle for “slash[ing] classroom funding instead of finding real solutions” (WomenVOTEProject, 2012). Late in the campaign, however, the tenor of advertising changed. Each campaign was bolstered by mainland Super PAC attention that contrasted the two candidates’ positions. Fund for Freedom Committee purchased 1,000 contrast ad spots (Wong, 2012) to criticize Hirono for not passing one sponsored bill in the U.S. Congress. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce also repositioned its strategy from entirely-Lingle positive ads to contrast ads. Pro-Hirono MajorityPAC presented an ad that led with “Special interests from the mainland are spending over \$1 million dollars to help Linda Lingle.” However, no one pointed out that MajorityPAC was itself a special interest from the mainland. The only non-candidate committee that did not air a contrast ad was the Democratic Party of Hawaii, which hit Lingle with an entirely opponent-focused attack ad late in the campaign.

Early in the mayor’s race, only one-quarter of non-candidate committee ads were negative, but late in the campaign, negative ads increased to 60 percent. Candidate committee mayoral ad sponsors were not activated until late in the campaign, so comparisons between candidate and non-candidate committee ad sponsors were difficult to make. Workers for a Better Hawaii and Pacific Resource Partnership aired three spots early that presented mostly

biographical and image-related information about Caldwell. These ads established Caldwell as a trustworthy and honest politician. Late in the campaign, pro-Cayetano SaveOurHonolulu.com entered the fray, presenting two ads that were critical of Caldwell's leadership of the Honolulu rail project. All of these ads were strictly opponent-negative focused.

Late in the campaign, Pacific Resource Partnership and Workers for a Better Hawaii diverged from entirely positive-focused pro-Caldwell messages, and pivoted toward a sort of a good cop/bad cop routine. Pacific Resource Partnership blasted Cayetano over the number of gubernatorial pardons he signed as governor, and attacked him over alleged pay-to-play schemes. The group also presented some contrast ads that affirmed Caldwell's trust and honesty, and attacked Cayetano's supposed no-bid contracts. Workers for a Better Hawaii, alternatively, presented completely positive ads late in the election that underscored Caldwell's public safety commitments, integrity, commitment to ethical reform, and presented more image-related biographical information that was positive in tone.

Once candidate committees entered the mayoral race late in the campaign, Cayetano's group hit back with mostly positive messages. Testimonials reaffirmed Cayetano's character. Cayetano for Mayor also aired ads attacking Pacific Resource Partnership for spending over \$1.5 million in ads, and attacked Caldwell on the Honolulu rail project. Fifty-four percent of Caldwell's candidate committee ads late in the campaign were negative, and mostly attacked Cayetano's proposal to defund the Honolulu rail project. The other 45 percent presented positive messages about Caldwell. None of the candidate committee ads were proportionate to non-candidate committee ads in the Honolulu mayor's race. Overwhelmingly, voters in Hawai'i were inundated with non-candidate committee ads, a significant proportion of which were anti-Cayetano or pro-Caldwell.

Non-candidate committee ad sponsors were nearly twice as likely to attack opposing candidates' issue stands and consistency, and they were five times more likely to attack an opposing candidates' past performance in office than candidate committee ads. Non-candidate committees were also more likely to attack image-related characteristics, such as background/qualifications or personal characteristics; but they did so only six and seven percent more than candidate committees, respectively. Perhaps because candidates are required to endorse ads—"I am Jane Doe and I approve this message," campaign committees were more likely to emphasize images and were less likely to attack compared to non-candidate committees.

Issue-related attacks were much more frequent among nameless non-candidate committee ad sponsors. These sponsors often made claims about Lingle and Cayetano's record as governor, Hirono's record in Congress, and Cayetano's proposals on rail. The only exception was in the area of group associations, where candidate committees attacked opposing candidates' affiliations in one-quarter more ads. This was partly because Hirono's negative ads often linked Linda Lingle's name with the national Republicans and to Mitt Romney's campaign. Nearly every reference to Lingle in Hirono's ads was prefaced with "Republican Linda Lingle," which is a powerful indictment in a state that votes consistently Democratic.

Just over a week before the 2012 General Election, Honolulu *Civil Beat* commented that Hirono's ads claimed Lingle was, "[N]ot really bipartisan. She doesn't tell the truth. She's had an extreme makeover. She's pals with Sarah Palin. She and Mitt Romney share the same platform — in fact, she's co-chair of his presidential campaign. She thinks George W. Bush was our greatest president. Furlough Fridays were all her fault" (Blair, 2012, para 2). On Hirono, Lingle's ads claimed, "She's not a leader. She doesn't tell the truth. She has no record and no ideas. She's pals with Barney Frank. She skips a lot of votes in the U.S. Congress — except for the ones where she voted for military cuts and against free trade with South Korea. She doesn't understand things like the Compact of Free Association" (Blair, 2012, para 4). These were the messages consumed by citizens in the days leading up to Election Day 2012.

Local TV news: no examination of political ad issues

The most striking feature of local television news coverage of the issues raised in the political ads was that 62 percent of the political news stories did not mention one issue in the campaign. They did not cover any issue. They covered the campaign, but did so in a cursory fashion. Stories included a ceremony that honored a former congresswoman, the time and place of mayoral and senatorial debate forums, and coverage of the U.S. Senate candidates casting their ballots. There was no treatment of the issues that were raised in the political ads.

Of the 38 percent of stories that did mention an issue, such as the economy, political news story coverage included a Congressional forum, President Obama's acceptance of the Democratic nomination, an Office of Hawaiian Affairs Candidate Forum, and the start of early voting. Three stories that pertained to unemployment were aired across three stations; however, the focus of two out of those three stories was the candidates' discussion of the falling unemployment rate. There was no separate presentation of the issue.

In a state where a significant proportion of the population is enlisted, employed, or dependent upon the U.S. military, dialogues about international or foreign affairs, and military or defense spending were also not substantive. International issues were presented in a story of a foreign policy speech delivered by Mitt Romney, three stories covering a presidential debate (that also mentioned several other issues), and a Congressional forum between Hanabusa and Djou. In the entire sample, only two stories were directly related to military or defense spending—and each of those were simulcast portions from a Congressional forum.

Local television news in Hawai'i missed opportunities to critically examine the political ads. In the Senate exchange where Lingle accused Hirono of being an ineffectual Congresswoman, the ad sponsors provide no political context. That was not their intention. Only *Civil Beat* conducted an analysis of Congressional voting data on GovTrack.us to reveal that, in fact, it is difficult “for any representatives in Hirono’s class to get legislation through a very divided and unproductive Congress” (Levine, 2012, para. 12). Local television news reporters had access to the same information—and these issue dialogues occurred on their networks in front of their audiences. However, there was no attempt by the television stations to pursue the story beyond the claims of the political ad. *Civil Beat* fact checked the issue, but it did not reach the same audience that consumed the misinformation in the first place.

Similarly, in the mayor’s race, Ben Cayetano filed a defamation suit against Pacific Resource Partnership to oppose the group’s political ads alleging Cayetano’s corruption in office. Attorney Jim Bickerton contended: “It’s bigger than Ben [Cayetano] vs. Kirk [Caldwell], and it’s bigger than rail vs. bus. It’s about whether we’re going to let secret, shadowy groups with unlimited funds pump lies into the public discourse” (Star Advertiser, 2012, para. 5). In a news media environment that critically evaluates issue information, lies that are spread in the public sphere are appropriately repudiated by facts. If Pacific Resource Partnership put out a press release—or something less visible—charging Cayetano with corruption, a libel suit may have been less necessary. It may be because the political ads reach such a large audience that Cayetano felt that he was never going to correct the misinformation disseminated by PRP. Newscasts reach the same audience as the PRP ads, but news stories did not examine whether or not Cayetano was actually invested in pay-to-play schemes as governor. A news story could have rectified the defamation charge, but instead the defamation suit became part of the horse race narrative of the campaign.

To their credit, local television news did provide citizens with some important election-related information. Newscasts informed citizens about absentee ballots, voter registration deadlines, and upcoming televised debates (on their networks). But the news producers have a public interest obligation in return for the spectrum that they use. As such, we would argue that citizens are entitled to more than a just-the-facts recounting of televised debates, or play-by-play narratives of campaign events. The following discussion chapter concludes with implications for a democratic society, the limitations of this research, and avenues in future studies.

Discussion

Our findings regarding the lack of issue substance on local television news is consistent with previous research in the literature. In the U.S., a market-driven business model of news determines news content (Bagdikian, 1983; McManus, 1995, 1994). This model trades informative content for that which entertains. Case in point: in the two weeks before the 2012 Wisconsin gubernatorial recall election, one local station in Milwaukee aired 53 news segments that mentioned pop singer Justin Bieber, but not one story on political advertisements. In that recall election, ad buys from outside groups soared to \$80 million—more than double the record set two years earlier (Karr, 2012a). However, there was no coverage of the implications of that fact. The market-driven model would explain that as the stations' incapacity/unwillingness to bite the hand that feeds them (McManus, 1995, 1994).

There is little evidence that local news programs fact check any of their political ad sponsors. A study by media reform group Free Press found that local stations in Denver devoted a total of ten minutes and 45 seconds to local reporting of Super PAC ads. Local stations there accepted \$25 million in ad revenues. This means that for every one minute of local television news coverage of political ads, stations devoted 162 minutes to political ads (Karr, 2012b). In Honolulu, four political news stories devoted eight minutes and 18 seconds of coverage to political advertisements. All four of these stories were framed around a competitive narrative. Two stories that were simulcast on KHNL and KGMB described Hawai'i U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye's call for Lingle to stop airing misleading ads. One story on KITV described the negative tone of the campaign. KFVE put together a story describing how Hirono countered Lingle's negative ads with negative ads of her own.

When local newscasts do cover political advertisements, they often present them as entertaining narratives. Fowler and Ridout (2009) point out that the presence of advertising coverage increases in larger markets. This is because "[...] the competitive pressures faced by news outlets in larger markets drive them to the type of sensational stories typified by ad coverage" (Fowler & Ridout, 2009, p. 131). Looking at a medium-sized market, such as Honolulu, there was neither substantive political commentary nor fact checking coverage in general. This dearth of issue substance examination enabled political advertisers to present issue information to citizens with near impunity for the claims they made on television.

Nichols and McChesney (2013) describe a media system that abdicates its public interest responsibilities to third party political ad sponsors as a “dollarocracy.” Following the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010), a few wealthy donors can shield private contributions from the public eye by donating to an independent expenditure group. These independent groups then blitz the airwaves with political ads—many of which are negative—at the close of the campaign. In the current state of “dollarocracy”, political advertisements are met with little credible journalism to rebut the claims they make. In short, the public is left in an information environment that does little to aid in the separation of fact from fiction.

Research Limitations

There were two important research limitations. First, content analyses frequently employ tests of inter-coder reliability to determine the precision of coding instruments. As noted, there were four coders for the analysis of the overall story content and the political ads. Tests for inter-coder reliability were conducted and the results were reported previously in this monograph. However, the content analysis of the 139 political news stories was conducted by one coder, co-author Ruiz. Therefore, no such test for inter-coder reliability could be carried out. Future research should test the precision of Kaid and Johnston’s (2001) modified political advertising coding instrument in identifying issues and frames in local news political stories.

Second, we examined the political ad and news content in one market. Although the selection of the case was integral to the development of the method, the findings are not generalizable beyond the Honolulu market. However, we have provided a clear model for future research

Implications

Forces that are internal and external to the media landscape will shape U.S. broadcast policy. In this section we examine public policy, social and technological issues that will affect the media system.

Public Policy

Local broadcast media have public interest obligations that accompany the use of public transmission signals. In Hawai'i, however, a shared services agreement (SSA) among three of the five stations produces similar, if not entirely duplicative, content that deprives citizens of several voices in the marketplace of ideas. The interests of Raycom Media (the operator of the SSA), and the information that it "sells" are fundamentally different than the information needs of citizens (Hamilton, 2004; Yanich, 2013).

The current media ownership debate served as the impetus for this investigation. Proponents of multiple ownership arrangements contend that stations would not exist independently if not for a SSA (Campbell, 2009). Critics respond that the market may not support some stations, but there would be better quality journalism without SSAs. In theory, stations should compete with one another to attract large audiences and generate advertising revenues. That is, competitive journalism increases the quality of available content. More voices in the marketplace offer more opportunities to critically evaluate candidates for office. This notion is consistent with the democratic ideal, which affirms that a private and competitive media will enrich democracy.

The American broadcast structure is one that blends democratic traditions with a reliance on private media. It is a unique media structure among developed nations. The problem is not that capitalism and democracy are incompatible; the problem is that the current U.S. market structure benefits shareholders and corporate owners and not citizens (Nichols and McChesney, 2013). They go on to suggest free airtime for candidates and subsidies for public media as policy alternatives. Subsidized media have proven highly successful in the United Kingdom where British citizens pay a flat annual fee of £146 to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC Press Office, 2010). Britons are also highly satisfied with the quality of British broadcast journalism (BBC Trust, 2008).

On Capitol Hill, media reform advocates face an uphill battle against powerful interests in an already gridlocked climate. In 2012, the National Association of

Broadcasters (NAB) spent \$14 million in lobbying expenditures. According to the Center for Responsive Politics (2013c), the NAB is considered a “heavy hitter” in Congress. This group of station owners controls the very news programs and TV channels that provide political information to Congressional constituents. It is no coincidence that last year the NAB reported more lobbying activity in advertising than any other lobby in Washington (Center for Responsive Politics, 2013c). With significant political advertising revenues to come, broadcasters want to prohibit anything that comes close to “interfere[ing] with the golden spigot of TV political advertising” (Nichols & McChesney, 2013, p. 190).

The NAB also opposes more modest reforms that call for open disclosure requirements (Steiner, 2012). This option was favored by a majority of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. Justice Kennedy argued, “Prompt disclosures of expenditures can provide shareholders and citizens with the information needed to hold corporations and elected officials accountable [...] This transparency enables the electorate to make informed decisions and give proper weight to different speakers and messages” (p. 55). Accordingly, in April of 2012, the FCC ordered that stations in the 50 most populous U.S. media markets post political advertising records online (the requirement for the remainder of the markets goes into effect in

Do broadcasters believe that they even have public interest obligations anymore?

Waldman, FCC, 2011.

2014). Commenting on the open hostility of the broadcast industry to more transparency, Waldman (2012, para. 2) asks, “Do broadcasters believe that they even have “public interest

obligations” anymore?” Media reform and government transparency groups, such as Free Press, the Sunlight Foundation, and the New America Foundation point out that the FCC’s limitation to the most populous U.S. markets excludes the less populated and more politically competitive media markets in swing states (Karr, 2012a). While true, at least this is a start.

For the 2012 election cycle, access to these public records remained difficult in medium-sized markets that were not affected by the April 2012 ruling. Digitized access often depended on the noble efforts of a few dedicated civic volunteers who scan and upload local station documents online. Gaps in the record make it difficult to analyze political advertising buys in these markets. Such was the challenge in this study. Last year, Honolulu *Civil Beat* launched a concerted effort to upload political files to an online document cloud. Incomplete records rendered it prohibitive to analyze these data. Other efforts have come up

against similar challenges nationwide. In their study of Milwaukee stations, Free Press volunteers encountered difficulties accessing files from resistant station staff (Karr, 2012a). Continued cooperation between local good government groups and academics is necessary for information to be studied and disseminated.

Tighter disclosure requirements are one of many policy options available to the FCC. Other options range from enhanced programming requirements to more free market principles (Waldman, 2012, 2011). However, it should be noted that new FCC Chairman Thomas Wheeler's nomination was blocked until late October 2013 by Texas Senator Ted Cruz precisely because Senator Cruz was unhappy then then-nominee Wheeler's position on disclosure. The Senator does not want the FCC to implement the provisions of the DISCLOSE Act that would require more information regarding funding for political ads. After a private meeting between the two, the Senator removed his hold saying that Mr. Wheeler had given assurances that the FCC would not immediately pursue changes for political advertising on television (Wyatt, 2013).

The FCC could impel stations to air a set minimum of public affairs programming. Waldman (2012) argues that this alternative would require the FCC to determine what programs count as public affairs. However, the Commission has a poor track record when it comes to enforcing this type of regulation. Over its 75-year history, more than 100,000 station licenses have been renewed. In only four cases has a license renewal been rejected because it failed to meet its public interest programming obligation (Waldman, 2011).

Another option involves the FCC invoking a spectrum fee. Under this plan, broadcasters would endow public affairs programs by directly paying taxpayers for the right not to air public affairs content. That is, stations could buy-out of their public interest obligations. Waldman (2012) fears that the money appropriated by Congress to fund this endeavor would be absorbed into the general treasury fund. The Commission could also allow station licenses to expire after every eight-year term and pay taxpayers for long-term use of the broadcast spectrum. This option requires a significant up-front cost and broadcasters are opposed.

In comparison to all of the other alternatives, disclosure and transparency appear to be the most politically tenable, yet still not agreeable. In an age when political ads flood markets in election years, FCC rulemaking should be citizen-centered. Enhanced political advertising disclosure requirements open up new

frontiers in academic scholarly inquiry into this topic, but disclosure requirements are not a one-size-fits-all solution.

Future study should investigate the relationships between political ads and local news programs by conducting content analyses of both ads and local news broadcasts. This research offers a model for that endeavor. These studies should be conducted over time and over several markets to make generalizable conclusions about the content that citizens actually see. In light of that content, the policy solutions delineated above should be carefully vetted against what optimally delivers the maximum information benefit to the citizen consumer. Short of acting on that research, American broadcast policy will rely on a divided legislature and a slow-moving regulatory body.

Social Issues

Perhaps the Millennial Generation, and its reliance on the Internet, will fundamentally transform demand for political communication in local television news. In the last six years, local television news viewership fell 14 percent among 18-29 year olds, and dropped six percent overall (Potter et al., 2013). In its place, the Internet became an important source of political information. Pew Research Center for the People and the Press (2012) found that 15 percent of 18-29 year olds “regularly” learn about candidates and campaigns on local television news, compared with 29 percent who said the same about the Internet. Indeed, more research is needed to examine the information consumption behaviors of young people, and specifically, their interest in local news.

It is nevertheless telling that in an age where the Internet is so readily accessible, local television news is on par with the Internet as a source for political communication. Pew’s Project for Excellence in Journalism (2012b) finds local news to be a source of campaign information for 38 percent of adults. Following a period of rapid growth over the past ten years, 36 percent say the same for the Internet. One-fourth of adults have a local news application downloaded to their smartphone. Forty-seven percent of adults say they watch broadcasts as a primary source for local news, 17 percent look for news on the smartphone application, and 12 percent go to a local television news website (eMarketer, 2013). There may always be a demand for information about local communities, and so far, Americans prefer to get that information from television.

Technology

Citizens are increasingly going online for information about the campaign (Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2012b). Sixty-four percent of swing state voters rely on the Internet to fact check candidates (Hootkin, 2012). With greater consolidation among content providers, however, fewer sources provide serious journalistic information. Many online stories are written by untrained bloggers, citizen journalists and “iReporters” who are frequently not professionally vetted. These individuals sometimes lack access to credible information. Some do not have the training to ask those in power critical questions. Those who do are infrequently responsible to editors and managers for the claims they make (Nichols & McChesney, 2013). In a future media landscape, vibrant citizen journalism should complement—not replace—a robust media. Such a substitution would weaken the potency of information on the Internet. Quality content is the most critical.

Uncontrolled, the power of data also presents many challenges to reliable and quality information online. Internet reform activist Eli Pariser (2011) argues that covert Internet personalization practices create online “filter bubbles” from histories of Web surfing. These bubbles reveal content that is desirable to the user. In the filter bubble, two distinct individuals could Google the same search terms, but derive entirely different results. Unlike television, the Internet creates the perception of a “nice world,” where two citizens can be shown different content that they each want to see, but altogether avoid content that is difficult, challenging or unpleasant.

Nichols and McChesney (2013) elaborate on a more recent consequence of Pariser’s (2011) argument. If the Internet experience is shaped by histories of web surfing—naturally campaigns can use metadata to transform the digital advertising experience. The Obama campaign in 2012 masterfully micro-targeted digital political appeals in the same way in which commercial advertisers market products. Similar to Pepsi or Coke, political advertisers study online behaviors to determine users’ interests from search patterns. These behaviors then predict voting outcomes. There may come a time when the digital experience becomes so elaborate that our interaction with campaigns becomes a perpetual and highly individualized experience. Absent a professional media to provide original and incisive content, there may come a day when there will only be campaigns and political advertisers to discuss public issues.

Conclusion

Local television news is a prominent source of information. Presumably, this is because citizens want to know about the news that directly affects their local communities. Quality content frequently depends on journalistic competition that attracts and builds local audiences. In theory, news should enliven civic life by holding leaders accountable and repudiating misinformation. In practice, local news is often shaped by a market-driven structure that is supported by broadcasting regulations. At the present time, there may not be a local broadcast infrastructure that will meet the critical information demands of citizens in the 21st Century.

In the first place, multiple ownership arrangements reduce the number of independent voices serving local communities. In recent years, local station reporters have been cut and replaced with outsourced content that is often duplicated across stations and sometimes across markets. In a not-too-distant future, major metropolitan communities may be serviced by one local station that will present news on many channels under different logos and brand names.

Given the current pace of media consolidation, it is less likely that such news content will even be “local.” Station super groups would achieve enormous economies of scale through covert consolidation practices. It only makes economic sense for the major media conglomerates to widen profit margins and continue to cut duplication costs. From the citizen’s perspective, the result is a decline in both the amount of coverage (the number of stations serving local communities) and the quality of that information (content that is local and diverse in viewpoints).

Changes in American campaign finance law have also affected the broadcast landscape. Campaigns are inherently issue dialogues—and candidates call attention to certain issues and attempt to deflect others. Much research reveals how a significant amount of information is presented to citizen consumers during an election. Following *Citizens United*, there are more independent groups that disseminate more issue information than at any point in American history. Much of that information is presented in a way that is often negative in tone, frequently assails opposing candidates’ issues, and likely diminishes support for campaigns or causes within the electorate.

Tremendous issue saturation requires that citizens have accurate and credible journalism to rebut false characterizations and misleading negative attack ads. Most of these ads appear during the very local news programs that citizens rely on for information about the campaign. Stations welcome political advertising revenues and the major media conglomerates depend on them to fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities to shareholders. But that is a double-edge sword. Political ads are lucrative and the intense pace of local consolidation is a direct result of that fact. The owners say so. Given that condition, to what extent would we expect local stations to question the information on political ads whose revenue they use to pay their bills? If the experience in Hawai'i is any indication, political ad claims are simply not questioned by the stations that air them. The sword is only sharp on one edge.

Enhanced disclosure requirements are only part of the solution. In *Citizens United*, Justice Kennedy argued that political ad buy disclosures would provide citizens with the information that they need to make informed choices. It is a straightforward proposition. Citizens should know who is paying for the information that they are encountering. Even in the polarized body politic in the U.S., this information would be crucial. However, this approach is controversial as we saw with Senator Cruz and Chairman Wheeler. Local television news stations sometimes resist disclosing political ad buys, and in Washington, the NAB actively lobbies against it. Failing some policy intervention, the status quo will be sustained.

The FCC's upcoming quadrennial review of multiple ownership rules presents a real opportunity in the current broadcast age. If the Commission issues a broad ruling upholding the permissibility of multiple station ownership arrangements, the present trend of local news media consolidation may go unabated. The enshrinement of multiple ownership arrangements into current broadcasting regulations will allow further consolidation in local media. This is not to say that a ruling against multiple ownership arrangements is a panacea to all local consolidation issues; but it would be significant.

It seems to us that this research revealed the natural consequences for political communication that our media and political systems would produce. That approach worked as long as the business model could sustain entertainment paying for news. We set it up that way. However, over the last quarter century the ownership of media firms has undergone a significant change. The present owners are large institutions who regard the broadcast network as another profit or loss node in the overall scheme of the corporate entity. Therefore, the fundamental calculus of the newsworthiness of a story is whether it will

“sell”. That is, whether it can deliver an audience whom the station can sell to advertisers. In this reality, a market-driven media firm has private obligations that outweigh public concerns.

The stations in Hawai’i had neither the resources nor the inclination to question the political reality that the political ads constructed. Ultimately, when the number of local media reporters is diminished, so too is the capacity of the local news media to examine campaign claims. If there will be fewer local broadcast news media, intuitively there will be fewer reporters and platforms to repudiate campaign misinformation. Political advertisers will be able to present ads with near impunity for the claims made in them. The information that citizens regard as true may come from political advertisements themselves, often a function of the ads’ frequency on the air. The danger is that few citizens will notice the difference.

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