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Social Control in an American Pacific Island

Guam’s Local Newspaper Reports on Liberation

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Not much research has examined the social roles of local media in the Pacific Islands. In an attempt to fill this gap, this article critically analyzes news articles, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, and editorials printed in Guam’s local newspaper, the Pacific Daily News (PDN). The items were published between the 50th and 60th anniversaries (1994-2004) of the American liberation of Guam. My analysis revealed that the PDN downplayed a conflict between pro-American and prolocal ideological stances. It rallied behind American interests, and when it reported about the resistances of prolocal actors in news articles, it first reaffirmed the actors’ loyalty to the United States. This article concludes that the PDN served to hegemonically maintain Guam’s society as an unincorporated American territory.

Keywords: social control; ideology; media hegemony; Asian and Pacific Island studies; Guam

Mass communication scholars from the macrosocial perspective have held that the media serve as agents of social control (Paletz & Entman, 1981; Tichenor, Donohue, & Olien, 1980; Viswanath & Demers, 1999). This view holds that the media serve to maintain social systems (Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien, 1995; Hindman, 1996), legitimize elite interests (Domke, 2001; Gans, 1979; Gitlin, 1980), and define what is acceptable and not acceptable within the dominant norms and values of a given society or community (Viswanath & Arora, 2000). Yet, in spite of an extant body of research examining the social control role of the mass media, not much is known about how local media in the Pacific Islands maintain the social systems of the communities they serve.

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This article investigates the ways in which the *Pacific Daily News (PDN)*, a local and mainstream newspaper in the island of Guam, serves a social control role by maintaining Guam as an unincorporated American territory. By definition, an unincorporated American territory is “a United States insular area in which the United States Congress has determined that only selected parts of the United States Constitution apply” (U.S. Department of Insular Affairs, 2008). Because of Guam’s political status, its residents are not accorded various privileges shared by mainland Americans. The island’s people, for example, cannot cast a vote for U.S. president, nor can a local leader represent them in the U.S. Senate. Although some of Guam’s residents have pushed for self-determination and decolonization (e.g., Crisostomo, 2007), others have advocated continued American presence on their island (e.g., Murphy, 1999). In fact, pro-American discourses appear in the *PDN* each year on July 21st, when Guam celebrates the anniversary of its liberation from imperial Japanese occupation by American forces.

The purpose of this article is to extract the discursive strategies that the *PDN* uses to rally support for pro-American ideologies and to explore the ways in which the newspaper presents prolocal demands. I conduct these investigations by analyzing news articles, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, and editorials published in the *PDN* between the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the American liberation of Guam. These items were printed in the *PDN* on July 21 and July 22 (respectively, the anniversary of the liberation and the day after), between the years of 1994 (the 50th anniversary of the liberation) and 2004 (the 60th anniversary). I retrieved the items during the summer of 2006 and conducted my analysis during the fall of the same year. I chose to analyze items published on the anniversary of Liberation Day based upon the assumption that the event pivots Guam’s newspaper with the task of negotiating the island’s collective identity—an identity situated between the intersections of American colonialism and indigenous quests for self-determination.

My study investigates the following research questions:

*Research Question 1:* How has the *PDN* portrayed Guam’s relationship with the United States in news articles, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, and editorials published between the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the American liberation of Guam?

*Research Question 2:* What can be inferred from such portrayals with regard to how the *PDN* maintains Guam as an unincorporated American territory?

**Guam at a Glance**

Guam is an island about 30 miles in length and 12 miles in width. It is nestled roughly 2,000 miles north of the tip of Australia, 1,500 miles east of the Philippines, and 3,700 miles west of Hawaii. Guam’s indigenous residents are known as Chamorros, and evidence indicates that ancient Chamorros may have arrived to the
island from Southeast Asia about 1,500 years prior to the Christian era (Rogers, 1995). Present-day Chamorros, however, possess a mixture of indigenous, Spanish, and Filipino ancestry. The last U.S. Census (2000) revealed that Guam had a population of more than 154,000 residents. The island at that time was racially comprised of 44.6% Pacific Islanders (Chamorros and other Micronesians from islands such as Chuuk and Palau), 32.5% Asians (Filipinos, Koreans, Japanese, Chinese, and other Asians), 6.8% Whites, and 1% African Americans. The aggregate of the peoples of Guam are collectively known as Guamanians.

Guam experienced its first contact with Westerners when Ferdinand Magellan reached the island from Spain on March 6, 1521. The Spanish empire controlled Guam for more than 300 years, until the United States officially annexed it during the end of the Spanish-American War through the Treaty of Paris in 1898. As a result of legal proceedings occurring in 1901, referred to as the Insular Cases, the U.S. Supreme Court granted the U.S. Department of the Navy absolute authority on Guam. American control temporarily ended on December 8, 1941, when the Japanese invaded the island. The Japanese occupied Guam with lethal force, eventually establishing concentration camps in a few parts of the island (Rogers, 1995). On July 21, 1944, the Americans returned to liberate Guam from the Japanese. The island remained under the sole rule of the U.S. Navy during the immediate years after World War II. However, through a hard-fought social and legal struggle by the Chamorros for representative government and American citizenship, the people of Guam were granted the status of an unincorporated American territory when President Harry S. Truman signed the Organic Act of Guam in 1950. Guam has since served as a hub for the U.S. Air Force and Navy, which currently occupy fairly expansive bases and installations in the north and south ends of the island, respectively. Today, Guam’s economy is sustained by funds provided to it by the U.S. federal government and by a tourism industry that brings in more than 1 million visitors to the island annually, arriving mostly from East Asian countries such as Japan. Because of Guam’s political status as an unincorporated American territory, its residents have a limited and often unrecognized voice in U.S. national politics. For this reason, some have held that Guam remains to be one of America’s last-standing colonies (Perez, 2002; Souder, 1991; Underwood, 1984).

The PDN

The PDN is a mainstream newspaper that had its start on Guam in 1947, as a military publication called the Navy News (Gannett, 2008b). From 1950 to 1970, the newspaper was published under the name of the Guam Daily News, and was run by Joseph Flores, a local businessman and governor. In 1970, Flores sold the Guam Daily News to a Hawaii-based investment firm. The newspaper’s name was then changed to the PDN, and in 1971, it was sold to the Gannett Company (Gannett,
Gannett is an American-based corporation that currently publishes 85 daily newspapers (including USA Today) and 900 nondailies in the United States (Gannett, 2008a). Gannett still owns the PDN today, and my investigation acknowledges that by being owned by an American-based corporation, the PDN could have a propensity to favor pro-American interests. Yet, the PDN, with a current local circulation size of approximately 20,000 (PDN administrator, personal communication, December 22, 2008), primarily serves a local readership. This may lead the newspaper to rally around the struggles of local residents. At any rate, both pro-American and prollocal tendencies may be reflected in the PDN’s coverage of, and editorial stances toward, issues concerning U.S. public affairs.

Dominance and Resistance in the Media

Ideology and Hegemony

Gans (1979) defined an ideology as “a deliberately thought-out, consistent, integrated, and inflexible set of explicit political values, which is a determinant of political decisions” (pp. 29-30). Ideologies serve the function of sustaining a group’s interests and indirectly monitoring group-related social practices, such as the discourses of its members (van Dijk, 1995). Gavrilos (2002) summarized the works of several historians and noted that dominant American ideologies include freedom, democracy, equality, liberal-pluralism, and capitalism.

As an unincorporated American territory, Guam may be hegemonically constrained by dominant American ideologies (e.g., Perez, 2002). Gramsci (1971) defined hegemony as follows:

[It is] the “spontaneous” consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group: the consent is “historically” caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production. (p. 12)

Gramsci’s definition of hegemony as dominance by consent is rooted in the writings of Marx and Engels. Marx and Engels conceived of social life as involving a power struggle between two antithetical forces, the bourgeoisie or dominant class and the proletariat or subordinate class (Coser, 1971). According to Marx and Engels, the dominant class’ ideologies serve as the ruling ideas of society, yet subordinate classes could generate counterideologies to combat the dominant class.

Mumby (1997) drew upon these ideas and explained that contemporary critical communication scholars subscribe to one of two conceptual models of the notion of hegemony as dominance by consent: “(a) a dominance model, in which relations of power and resistance are conceptually resolved in favor of the reaffirmation of the
status quo; and (b) a resistance model, where resistance to structures of domination is valorized” (p. 343). When this dichotomy is applied to the critical study of mass communication, it is assumed that the mass media serve as (a) the means through which the dominant political class communicates its ideology to the public (e.g., Gitlin, 1980; Herman & Chomsky, 1988) and as (b) sites through which subordinated groups resist dominant ideologies (e.g., Daley & James, 2004; McFarlane-Alvarez, 2007). The present study builds upon these assumptions and proposes that local, mainstream newspapers in American Pacific Islands (API) could serve the dual roles of reinforcing and resisting dominant American ideologies. This proposition is based upon research conducted in international and U.S.-domestic contexts.

Reinforcing U.S. Dominance Internationally

Case studies conducted in international contexts suggest that the extent to which a foreign country is politically and economically dependent on the United States largely determines the extent to which its mainstream media cover and support American interests (Lee, 2005; Luther, 2002; Maslog, Lee, & Kim, 2006). Tang and Chang (1990) conducted a longitudinal analysis (five sample points between 1954 and 1987) of international news coverage in Taiwan. Through their analysis, Tang and Chang revealed, “in a nutshell, Taiwan was politically, economically, and militarily dependent on the United States” (p. 76), and because of these dependencies, news about the United States dominated the Taiwanese press. In another study, Luther (2002) examined portrayals of United States-Japan relations that appeared between the mid-1970s and 1980s in the Japanese newspaper, Yomiuri. Luther found that as Japan was gradually emerging as an economic power, and becoming less dependent on the United States, the news appearing in the Yomiuri shifted from being submissive to American demands to being less willing to comply.

These case studies suggest that when it comes to understanding why API newspapers would choose to support and disseminate pro-American ideologies, a political economy approach (e.g., Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Mosco, 2006) could be adapted to advance the argument that U.S. political and economic interests serve to mutually influence the newsroom decisions made by newspapers in the Pacific Islands. The bottom line for mainstream media is profit. Mainstream newspapers in APIs may thus find it necessary to rely on mainland American economic institutions to provide the capital necessary to support and expand daily news operations. In this case, API newspapers may directly or indirectly promote the interests of the American corporations and industries that sustain the economies of their islands.

Localism and Resistance

The intrusion of outside entities could disrupt the day-to-day routines within a local community (e.g., Carroll, Higgins, Cohn, & Burchfield, 2006). In a homogenous and
tight-knit island community such as Guam, reactions to the intrusions of mainland American entities may be expressed publicly through grievances. Islanders may rally behind prolocal stances to resist the imposition of mainland American interests on their islands. For example, Wooden (1995) argued, as others also have (e.g., Okamura, 1980; Yamamoto, 1979), that there is a constant struggle among Hawaiians to protect their local culture against the influence of U.S. mainland culture. Wooden (1995) stated,

[U.S.] mainland culture is viewed as imposing a contemporary value system on Hawaii and changing Hawaii in ways that local people feel they have no control over. Such fears and opposition are expressed increasingly in nationalistic terms with the emphasis being on protecting and maintaining local culture. Thus, localism as an ideology (and, perhaps, as a social movement) is viewed as a symbol and process of self-determination. (p. 128)

Wooden’s propositions imply that local media in APIs will not always support U.S. mainland interests. As media sociologists Donohue et al. (1995) heralded, local media serve as guard dogs for those in power at the local level, and “in the consensus atmosphere of a highly homogenous community, the local power establishment is protected at all times, and media, as part of the structure, protect and maintain this establishment” (p. 116). In this vein, local newspapers in APIs could serve as sites through which local, indigenous groups counter American ideologies. This was suggested by a series of case studies conducted by Daley and James (2004), who investigated indigenous communication and cultural politics in Alaska. They found that natives in Alaska appropriated mass communication “as a means to counter the imposition of Western cultural ideas and practices” (p. 191) in an effort to ensure the persistence of their indigenous cultures.

**Social Conflict and the Press**

Both pro-American and prolocal ideologies may drive newspaper coverage of political affairs in APIs. When conflicts arise between local groups driven by these divergent sets of ideologies, API newspapers may be placed in positions of downplaying the conflicts so that the conflicts do not interfere with their island communities’ day-to-day routines. Hindman (1996) explained this potential by stating the following:

Given the maintenance role of local newspapers, little conflict appearing in the paper would be initiated by the paper itself. . . . In smaller, less structurally pluralistic communities, an open public expression of differences may be disruptive to the normal functioning of the community. (p. 2)

One way in which newspapers in APIs might downplay a pro-American versus prolocal conflict is through the process of legitimization. That is, through legitimization,
the newspapers may sympathize with the resistances of prolocal actors but may only do so after first reaffirming the actors’ loyalty to the United States. This proposition builds upon Gavrilos’ (2002) study, which found that although newspapers during the first Gulf War sympathetically reported on the struggles and discrimination faced by Arab Americans, the newspapers simultaneously portrayed Arab Americans as loyal and patriotic Americans who were willing to give up their allegiances to the Arab world.

The media may also marginalize opinions that undermine the power and status of the dominant political class (e.g., Gitlin, 1980). Rankine and McCreanor (2004) found such a phenomenon occurring in the Pacific Island country of New Zealand. Rankine and McCreanor studied the New Zealand mainstream media’s coverage of the Maori. The coverage concerned a 1998 Maori-Pakeha partnership research project on the genetics of inherited stomach cancer. Maori are the native peoples of New Zealand, and Pakeha is a Maori term that refers to New Zealanders of European descent. Through their analysis, Rankine and McCreanor concluded that the New Zealand media obscured the role and contributions of the Maori researchers, and this type of reporting functioned to “reinforce and reproduce the subordinate position of Maori and their position of ‘other’ to the norm of Pakeha society” (p. 23).

Reactions to Americanization of Guam

Some have suggested that the people of Guam simultaneously accept and resent the Americanization of their island (Perez, 2002; Souder, 1991). Rogers (1995) described a time during the early 1900s when naval governor Gilmer imposed a racially motivated statute that forbade the intermarriage between Whites and local Chamorros and Filipinos. This resulted in the angry protests of not only Chamorros but also some White American men who had married local women. Almost a century later, anti-American sentiments raged on the island. During the 1990s, social protest groups such as the Chamoru Nation pushed for the removal of U.S. military personnel from Guam and demanded the return of American-possessed lands to locals (Rogers, 1995).

When the United States liberated Guam from imperial Japanese occupation, Chamorros held pro-American attitudes. However, according to Souder (1991), the American liberation may have resulted in instilling a mentality of reciprocity among the locals, leading them to feel that they had to pay back the United States for its wartime efforts. Perez (2002) stated that “this mentality has not only carried over to contemporary times, but has been further reinforced by contemporary ideological processes of Americanisation and patriotism, whereby US motives have long gone unquestioned” (p. 464). The American liberation of Guam propelled the island into the era of modern capitalism and consumerism (Perez, 2002). This led to the proliferation of the U.S. mass media around the island, resulting in a demand for American-made goods among the locals and leading many Chamorros to pursue an
American way of life (Underwood, 1987). The liberation also established the American education system on Guam, which facilitated the displacement of indigenous values (e.g., interdependence, respect for old age, and family obligation), replacing them with American norms (Underwood, 1984).

In 2006, an announcement was made by the U.S. Department of Defense that Marine Corps units from the 3rd Expeditionary Force, currently stationed in Okinawa, Japan, would be relocated to Guam. This proposed move would bring in more than 8,000 servicemen, along with about 15,000 of their dependents and civilian support units to Guam. Many residents and local politicians on Guam embraced this as good news, with the assumption that the relocation would bring economic growth to the island, which had otherwise experienced stagnation and a high rate of unemployment during recent years. This economic downturn was a result of a major slowdown in Guam’s tourism industry, attributable both to a sharp decline in the number of East Asian tourists visiting the island and the Asian economic crisis of the late 1990s. Guam’s economic downturn led to the exodus of many Guamanians to the U.S. mainland in search for better employment opportunities. After the Marine Corps relocation was announced in 2006, media discourses on Guam pertained to how the island can economically capitalize upon the Marine Corps buildup (e.g., Limtiaco, 2008; Murphy, 2008; Pacific News Center, 2008). This begs several questions, such as how would the large influx of nonnatives into Guam impact intergroup relations on the island, and how would the massive relocation of military-related equipment and materials affect Guam’s natural environment? With these and the other matters reviewed above held in perspective, this study now analyzes how Guam’s local newspaper serves to maintain the island as an unincorporated territory of the United States.

**Using Critical Discourse Analysis to Examine Ideology in Newspapers**

To gather data for this study, I traveled to Guam during the summer of 2006. I retrieved issues from the PDN, published on July 21 and July 22 (respectively, the anniversary of the liberation and the day after), between the years of 1994 (the 50th anniversary of the liberation) and 2004 (the 60th anniversary). Back issues of the PDN are available through the archives of the Micronesian Area Research Center, located at the University of Guam in the village of Mangilao. During the retrieval process, I collected local news articles, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, and editorialials that explicitly mentioned the key words of Liberation, Liberation Day, America, and the United States. The retrieval process yielded a total of 60 news articles, 11 opinion pieces, 12 letters to the editor, and 7 editorialials—all of which I analyzed ($N = 90$).
After retrieving the items, I returned to the U.S. mainland and began the analysis. I used a critical discourse analytical (CDA) technique to examine the data. The CDA technique is an approach that analyzes language “in relation to the social context in which it is being used and the social consequences of its use; and, more specifically, the relationship(s) between discourse and its social conditions, ideologies and power relations” (Richardson, 2007, p. 45). I adopted van Dijk’s (1995) proposition that ideologies—particularly “those [ideologies] underlying relations of social conflict, domination and resistance” (p. 248)—can be structured and organized through discourses that reflect a polarization defining in-group(s) and out-group(s).

van Dijk’s perspective, as well as the literature and research questions that guided my study, served to conceptually frame my analysis. Operationally, my analysis involved four stages. First, I read each of the 90 items once to gain familiarity with their contents. Second, I reread the items, and classified the discourses they contained under the categorical headings of pro-Americanism (if I interpreted them as reinforcing adherence to American ideologies, such as loyalty to the state, patriotism, equality, etc.) and prolocalism (if I interpreted them as reinforcing local ideologies, such as the idea that U.S. mainland culture imposes a value system that threatens local self-determination). My units of analyses were the words, sentences, paragraphs, and/or the whole news story contained in the items I retrieved. For the items that did not reinforce pro-American or prolocal stances, I classified them as neutral and did not analyze them further. Third, after organizing the discourses within the two themes of pro-Americanism and prolocalism, I explored how the discourses could be merged into subthemes. This led to the emergence of three subthemes under the two thematic categories of pro-Americanism and prolocalism (described in detail below). In the fourth and final stage, I reread the discourses that I categorized into each theme and subtheme, with the intention of interrogating them deeper and with the goal of examining how they served to maintain Guam’s social system as an unincorporated American territory.

**Reinforcing Pro-American and Prolocal Ideological Stances**

My analysis revealed that the PDN served to maintain Guam’s social system as an unincorporated American territory by reinforcing dominant American ideologies in the items it published between the 50th and 60th anniversaries of Liberation Day. Reinforcements of dominant American ideologies emerged as subthemes that (a) expressed gratitude to the American Marine liberators, (b) reaffirmed Guam residents’ loyalty to the United States, and (c) portrayed Guam as a pluralistic and multicultural American community. Sixty-eight items were found to reinforce pro-American ideologies (see Table 1). Yet, prolocal opinions held by Guam’s residents were also presented—which emerged as subthemes describing (a) how America was...
an inconsiderate colonial power, (b) how Guam’s residents demanded rights, and (c) how some advocated the movement toward decolonization. Although these prolocal themes were evident of an indigenous and local resistance against American-imposed ideologies, prolocal opinions were presented only after the actors who spoke them were first legitimized as loyal to the United States. Thirteen of the 90 items I analyzed for this study contained discourses that argued for prolocal stances. Of the 13 items containing prolocal discourses, 9 of them contained discourses of loyalty legitimization (see Table 1).

Reinforcement of Pro-American Ideologies

Gratitude to the American liberators. A common sentiment expressed by most of the items was that the U.S. Marine veterans should be praised for liberating the island. This sentiment reflected Souder’s (1991) proposition that the American liberation may have resulted in instilling a mentality of reciprocity among the locals. The following excerpt from an editorial provides a typical portrayal of the veterans: “Liberation Day is an annual memorial to all those courageous Marines, corpsmen, soldiers and sailors who fought, were wounded and died on the beaches and in the jungles of the island to ensure that Guam became and remained free” (“Tribute,” 2002, p. 22). A similar sentiment was expressed in an article that reported on the feelings held by a returning Marine veteran. The veteran was quoted as saying, “I think it’s great, I think the whole island, the whole people are great. There’s nothing like it. . . . People stopping you on the street and saying, ‘Thank you’” (Worth, 2004, p. 3).

One news article reported on how the veterans, who had liberated Guam, remained to be unsung heroes in the eyes of mainland Americans. The article stated,
Unlike the recent commemoration of the invasion of Normandy, no presidents or other heads of state came to thank these men. Flashes flickered from the cameras of veterans, their wives, and few local media people, a few military photographers. No national newscast was broadcast live from the deck. (Williams, 1994, p. 7)

**Loyalty to the United States.** The *PDN* also expressed how the island’s people remained loyal to the United States. The loyalty subtheme was driven by a need to exemplify to the external public that Guamanians were adhering to American ideals. For example, in an editorial, the newspaper denounced proponents of anti-American sentiments. The editorial stated,

There are revisionists who begrudge the war, portraying Guam as a victim caught in the crossfire between two superpowers. This notion, of course, is preposterous. Guam, known as the Great Shrine Island in Japan, was part of the Empire’s plan for a “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere,” every bit as much as China and Korea were. . . . Revisionists also call today the anniversary of the U.S. “reoccupation,” rather than liberation. Yet it was, in every sense, a liberation from the harsh rule by the militarists then controlling the empire of Japan. (“Yesterday’s Battle,” 1995, p. 42)

Other items provided descriptions of the ways in which Chamorro military and civilian war heroes remained loyal to the United States. An opinion piece outlined the loyalty that Chamorros have shown by fighting for the United States in major American conflicts, stating, “in the military, it is often said that Chamorros make excellent soldiers” (Palomo, 1996, p. 22). The same opinion piece described how Japanese and Okinawan civilians, who had immigrated to Guam before the war, remained loyal to America during World War II, in spite of Japan’s occupation of the island. The piece stated,

A very special display of heroism was made by Okinawan civilians and some Japanese nationals who had a chance to be treated special by the Japanese [during the War] but chose to remain loyal to the United States. They were the Takanos, the Tanakas, the Dejimas, the Sayamas, the Okadas, the Fujikawas, the Sudos and many others. (Palomo, 1996, p. 22)

Another opinion piece expressed the loyalty of Chamorro civilians who had sacrificed their lives for the United States during World War II and how this loyalty was left unrecognized by U.S. political leaders. The piece stated,

Whenever I think about World War II and Guam’s participation in that war, I keep coming back to one thing: The people of Guam living in those hectic days all were heroes. They deserve to be honored with a memorial that befits that heroism. It should be built on the exact spot where they suffered the most, at the concentration camp at
Manenggon... In Hagatna [a village], on July 20th, for instance, 11 Chamorro men, women and children were executed—all accused of signalling U.S. forces. They were knifed to death with bayonettes.

I would say that the U.S. government should help build the memorial, in appreciation of the loyalty of the Chamorro people. (Murphy, 2000, p. 31)

Guam as a pluralistic and multicultural community: The PDN also expressed that Guam adhered to the pluralistic and multicultural ideals of the United States. An article titled, “Guam Turns Out: Island’s Ethnic Diversity Adds Color to Parade” (Flynn, 1995a) stated,

Yesterday, Filipino, Micronesian, Chinese, Korean, Irish, German, Vietnamese, African, and of course, Chamorro residents of Guam stood side-by-side to watch the long procession of marching bands and Liberation Day princesses... And many feel welcome. “I love the island,” said Terry Little, an African-American in the U.S. Air Force. “I think it’s beautiful... you have just about every nationality here”. (p. 1)

The subtheme of pluralism and multiculturalism was expressed in other items that outlined how the Chamorro people were willing to forgive the Japanese for occupying Guam during the war. One opinion piece addressed the need to forgive the Japanese, yet the piece expressed that it was important to do so because the Japanese were ironically the largest visitors who supported Guam’s tourism industry. The opinion piece stated,

Today has brought about a time in which we are closely associated with the people that we once fought.

Our island is very dependent on a tourism industry, which is based on a great percentage of visitors from the very nation that we were subjugated by [Japan].

My father made it clear to me that it is not a race or people that creates the horror and hardships of war. It is caused by the leadership and beliefs that a people follow. Those leaders and beliefs can, and do change. (Aflleje, 1998, p. 22)

Reinforcement of Prolocal Ideologies

Thirteen of the 90 items analyzed for this study contained discourses expressing that prolocal opinions should not be overlooked during the celebration of Liberation Day. These discourses served the role of keeping Guamanians—in particular, Chamorros—in check by entitling them to express emancipatory claims, such as their quest for self-determination. Yet, my analysis revealed support for Hindman’s (1996) proposition that the little conflict portrayed in the newspaper would not be initiated by the paper itself, as an outright expression of differences may disrupt the day-to-day functions of the community. Therefore, prolocal views were generally expressed in opinion pieces and letters to the editor.
The news articles that expressed prolocal sentiments found it necessary to legitimize the positions of prolocal actors by first describing them as loyal Americans. This reveals that the PDN was managing dissent in a way that did not threaten the social system of the island as an unincorporated American territory. The strategy of loyalty legitimization emerged in an article that reported on a leader of a social protest group (Guahan Republic) that advocated self-determination and independence from the United States. The article stated that the leader did not want to “belittle the sacrifices the U.S. Marines made for Guam, [but the leader] does not believe the Americans ever liberated Guam” (Gill, 1995, p. 8). Another article (Daily News Staff, 1997) that reported on a social protest group known as the Chamoru Nation adopted a similar strategy of loyalty legitimization. The article reported on the group’s demands that the American federal government return land to a local family. The article quoted a member of Chamoru Nation as stating, “We’ll always be respectful to the United States,’ . . . But (his mother) would like to have her property back. ‘We are coming back. We are coming back to take our land,’ he said” (p. 4).

**America as an inconsiderate colonial power.** A few items contained discourses that regarded America as an inconsiderate colonial power. These discourses contradicted the pro-American discourses that dominated newspaper coverage of Liberation Day. An opinion piece written by a female Chamorro rights activist, for example, questioned the intentions and actions of United States. The woman stated,

> We, ourselves, did not have enemies. However, the United States, our former colonial power, and subsequent liberator was in a fight for the conquest of the Pacific with Japan. . . . A rumor around the Manenggon [concentration] camp was that all the people will be massacred at the camp. However later, the bewildered villagers learned that Manenggon was instead a safe haven from the massive American bombardment which took place.

> Ironically in fact, were it not for the Japanese administrators at the time, the Chamorro people may not have survived the extensive bombings by the American forces. The order to extinguish light at night to conceal the valley from the bombers helped save them. (Cristobal, 1996, p. 23)

**The quest for rights.** A few opinion pieces and letters to the editor contained discourses declaring that the people of Guam were still not accorded the same rights as mainland Americans. These items simultaneously served to hegemonically reinforce the American ideology of equality by giving legitimacy to the locals’ demands that their voices be heard by political leaders in the U.S. mainland. A letter to the editor (Pesch, 1994), for instance, addressed the people of Guam’s quest for rights as Americans, stating,

> [Guamanians] aspire to fall under the complete protections of the U.S. Constitution, to gain a strong voice in both the Senate and House of Representatives, to be free from federal statutory entanglements which hamper our further economic development, and the right to cast a vote for president of the United States. (Pesch, 1994, p. 29)
The quest for rights was presented in an opinion piece written by De Oro (2001), which stated,

[W]e continue to enjoy second-class citizenship and we are one of the few places on Earth that is still under a colonial government.

Over the past 40 years, we have gained ground to the point that we have a delegate to Congress. Congressmen Antonio B. Won Pat, Ben Blaz and Robert Underwood did well to elevate our agenda in the halls of Congress. Yet they too are second-class, in that they cannot exercise the rights and privileges on the floor to vote on laws that affect our people and island. (p. 21)

Prodecolonization efforts. A few items advocated decolonization and independence from U.S. control. For example, a letter to the editor written by Dela Rosa (1994) opened by stating,

We have a situation on Guam where the colonizer (the United States) is able to colonize because the colonized (the Chamorus) enjoy, for the most part, being colonized. Most Chamorus want to be closer to the United States, but when they get shafted from behind by Uncle Sam, they holler like hell. (Dela Rosa, 1994, p. 29)

The piece continued by stating,

Uncle Sam, you should be grateful for the loyalty especially deep-rooted dependency that you have instilled in the Chamorus towards the United States throughout your decades of colonial rule on Guam. Never fear, for the vast majority of Chamorus are so subjugated, dependent and colonized that they are unable to comprehend and visualize the concepts of sovereignty and self-government, and their implications.

As a second-class U.S. citizen and a colonized Chamoru, I was American enough to be drafted for the Vietnam War which I did not protest. But apparently, my second-class citizenship is not now sufficient for me to be granted Commonwealth status and inclusion into the American political family. (Dela Rosa, 1994, p. 29)

Nonlocal voices were also used to advocate decolonization efforts. An article (Flynn, 1995b) described the experiences of a World War II veteran named Tom Dryden, who felt that Guam still needed to be liberated from American control. The article stated,

“I like the Chamorro people very much,” [said Dryden] . . . “They have a tremendous amount of pride in their island, and you can’t help but respect that.” . . . Still, he [Dryden] said his travels throughout the Pacific region have strengthened his belief that Guam is too “Americanized.” The Philippines, he believes, is “much better off without the Americans. We feel we can always do things better,” he said. “But it’s not fair to the people of Guam” (p. 3).
Conclusion

The study investigated how the *PDN* portrayed Guam’s relationship with the United States in news articles, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, and editorials published between the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the American liberation of Guam and how such portrayals served to maintain the island as an unincorporated American territory. This study’s conclusions and contributions in providing new interpretations of the social control role of the mass media are explicated along the following three findings. First, given that the items analyzed for this study were published during the anniversaries of liberation, it is not surprising that the *PDN* served to reinforce pro-American ideological stances. The newspaper (a) expressed gratitude to the American Marines who helped to liberate Guam, (b) reaffirmed Guam residents’ loyalty to the United States, and (c) portrayed the island as a pluralistic and multicultural American community. These discursive themes, together with the ritualized celebration of the liberation anniversary, served to (re)enculturate Guam’s residents with dominant American ideologies. These pro-American discourses also reinforced the mentality of reciprocity among the locals (Perez, 2002; Souder, 1991), reminding them that they were indebted to the United States for liberating Guam and therefore needed to be loyal citizens. This reveals how a local, mainstream newspaper in a U.S. colonial context could serve to influence colonized actors into consenting with their subordinate positions. The idea advanced here is that local, mainstream newspapers in U.S. colonial contexts may legitimize the importance of adhering to the norm of American loyalty by framing this norm under the guise of colonial reciprocity.

Second, 13 of the 90 items analyzed for this study were found to express prolocal resistances. These items expounded upon (a) how America was an inconsiderate colonial power, (b) how Guam’s residents demanded rights, and (c) how some advocated the movement toward decolonization. These findings reveal that a few of Guam’s residents did appropriate the *PDN* as a means to resist dominant American ideologies. In particular, a few residents chose to write letters to the editor to express prolocal resistances. However, when it came to reporting about the resistances of prolocal actors in news articles, the *PDN* found it necessary to reaffirm the actors’ loyalty to the United States. This was a strategy used by the newspaper to legitimize local dissenting opinions that challenged dominant American ideologies. These findings reveal how a local, mainstream newspaper in a U.S. colonial context presents the resistances of colonized actors within a socially controlled manner.

On the other hand, by allowing the expression of prolocal resistances, the *PDN* may have also been attempting to regulate conflict through what Coser (1966) has referred to as a safety-valve mechanism (see also Donohue et al., 1995; Hindman, 1996). That is, the newspaper may have devoted its scant coverage of resistances against American interests in an effort to air out differences and reduce built-up
tensions among individuals and groups driven by prolocal ideologies. If the PDN failed to appropriately deal with such tensions, it ran the risk of fostering an unstable social system, whereby prolocal actors on Guam may have resorted to more overt and deviant means to resist the imposition of American ideologies and interests. Based on this reasoning, one can argue that the discourses of prolocal resistances printed in the PDN also served to maintain Guam’s social system as an unincorporated territory. Specifically, by allowing prolocal resistances to be expressed, the PDN may have helped stabilize the prolocal versus pro-American ideological conflict.

Third, this study found that reinforcements of prolocal ideologies were primarily present in the items published between 1994 through 2000. With the exception of one opinion piece published in 2001 (De Oro, 2001) and a letter to the editor printed in 2004 (Artero, 2004), after the year of 2000, prolocal opinions pushing for decolonization and independence from U.S. control were virtually marginalized. When interpreting these findings, one must take into account that Guam experienced an economic downturn in recent years as a result of its weakened tourism industry. It was plausible that the PDN found it pertinent to rally local support for an increase in American military economic presence. This may have helped set the stage for the announcement made in 2006, that the U.S. Marine Corps’ 3rd Expeditionary Force, currently stationed in Okinawa, would be relocated to Guam. Like other businesses on Guam, the PDN is economically dependent on the U.S. military’s presence on the island. This might have led the newspaper to publish news articles, editorials, and opinion pieces about liberation that favored continued American control of Guam and marginalized prolocal demands for self-determination. These findings help to augment the results of case studies conducted in international contexts (e.g., Lee, 2005; Luther, 2002), which suggest that the extent to which a foreign country is politically and economically dependent on the United States largely determines the extent to which its mainstream media cover and support American interests. Although Guam is not a foreign country, the present study implies that a political economy approach could be adapted to advance the argument that U.S. political and economic interests serve to mutually influence the newsroom decisions made by newspapers in the islands. Thus, the present study suggests that U.S. interests do serve to influence the newsroom decisions made by newspapers in APIs.

To conclude, this article revealed that the PDN served as a site through which dominant American ideologies were reinforced. The newspaper structured and constrained the experiences of Guam’s residents, and it reproduced the residents’ subordinate-colonial positions. Yet, the PDN also served as a site through which the residents were granted a bit of agency. A few residents appropriated the newspaper as a means to express class-conscious resistances against American-imposed ideological structures. Based on the notion of hegemony as dominance by consent (Gramsci, 1971; Mumby, 1997), the results of this study suggest that the relations of power and resistance portrayed in the PDN were resolved in the reaffirmation of the status quo. Although the newspaper presented discourses of resistance against
American interests, these discourses were generally silenced through the processes of legitimization and marginalization. The *PDN* downplayed a conflict between pro-American and prolocal ideological stances for the purpose of maintaining Guam as an unincorporated American territory. Because the *PDN* was part of an American corporation (Gannett) at the time of this study, it may have chosen to do this in order to secure the continued flow of U.S. capital to Guam, which the *PDN* needed to support its daily news operations.

With regard to the implications and contributions of these conclusions in explaining the social control role of mass media in the Pacific Islands, it is suggested that API newspapers see themselves as inextricably linked to the prolocal concerns of their communities. Yet, this link may be tempered by an allegiance to American ideologies and the capitalistic rewards and incentives offered by U.S. political and economic interests. Moreover, the local media of APIs may serve as guard dogs for local power structures. In the presence of the external power of American interests, however, prolocal stances may be presented with the goal of ensuring that dissenting voices are not perceived as anti-American or disloyal to America. It would be of interest to investigate whether similar phenomena emerge in analyses of items printed in the local, mainstream newspapers of Hawaii and American Samoa—two other APIs. Future studies could also consider examining whether newspapers in other colonial contexts around the globe may downplay conflicts between procolonial versus proindigenous ideological stances. On a practical level, this study provides journalism and communication instructors, professors, and practitioners with insights on social and political issues facing American Pacific Islanders.

**Notes**

1. There are currently 13 U.S. unincorporated territories: 3 in the Caribbean (Navassa Island, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) and 10 in the Pacific (American Samoa, Baker Island, Guam, Howland Island, Jarvis Island, Johnston Atoll, Kingman Reef, Midway Atoll, the Northern Marianas Islands, and Wake Atoll; U.S. Department of Insular Affairs, 2008).
2. This operational definition was adapted from Erjavec and Volcic (2006) and Brown and Yule (1983).

**References**


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