

NEWSPAPERS AND URBAN GROWTH:
HOW AN OLD MEDIUM RESPONDS TO A GROWING TREND

By

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To my parents, friends, and professors, for without your unending support and guidance, this thesis would not have been finished.

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NEWSPAPERS AND URBAN GROWTH:
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This grounded theory study combines qualitative interviews and content analysis methods to better understand the impact of urban growth on *The Orlando Sentinel*. Interviews were conducted with 18 *Sentinel* staff members from the newspaper's editorial, advertising, circulation, and marketing departments from December 2007 to March 2008. Respondents were asked to describe the steps the newspapers has taken to reflect the growing community it covers and to outline how urban growth has influenced the day-to-day operations at the newspapers. They were also asked to provide a personal definition for the term "growth." Drawing on Robert Putnam's Social Capital Theory and several media organization and urban planning theories, this thesis shows that urban development has had an effect on *The Orlando Sentinel*. Specifically, growth has impacted the newspaper's definition of growth, content, coverage, staffing, finances, circulation, relevancy, demographics, localized focus, and newsroom organization.

Several participants said that growth "defines the newspaper," and that growth has also influenced content, coverage, and staffing by becoming the focus for news gathering staff. The results also show growth has had an inverse effect on the newspaper's finances. The interviews revealed that despite a rapidly-growing market, *The Sentinel* has faced significant budget cuts

and financial woes. Circulation has been affected too. Participants said that the paper has shifted its focus from being a regional, metropolitan paper, to being one focused on local issues. However, this localized focus has become increasingly difficult to achieve because of the area's changing demographics. The study found that growth was also a contributing factor in *The Sentinel's* two most recent staff reorganizations.

The data gathered from this study suggests that urban growth does have an effect on newspapers; however, it is difficult to determine specific influences of growth because growth can occur in countless ways and newspapers can respond to meet their community's unique demands.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The Orlando Sentinel's downtown office looks out of place among Orlando's modern skyline. In fact, the blue-trimmed stucco décor of the building might find a better fit along Miami's South Beach rather than Orlando's business hub. Either way, the view from Jane Healy's second-story office is breathtaking. In one direction, the editorial page editor can see the towering construction cranes putting together another high-rise condominium on Orlando's famed Church Street. In the opposite direction, she can see Interstate 4 as it slices downtown Orlando in half, bringing thousands of commuters into the area's urban core. For Healy, a decades-long Orlando resident, the area has dramatically evolved right before her eyes.

However, Orlando's metropolitan vibe is a relatively new phenomenon. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the area was known for its orange groves and heavy reliance on agriculture to support the local economy. That all changed when a cartoon mouse took up residence in a storybook castle about 20 miles southwest of downtown Orlando. Since Walt Disney decided to open his East Coast theme park in the 1960s, the area has seen remarkable population growth and development (Foglesong, 2001). Indeed, from 1950 to 2000, the Orlando area grew by 1.4 million people and now has a population of more than 2.1 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000c).

In many ways, Disney's decision to come to Florida transformed the state, making it one of the world's top tourist destinations. Disney's theme park brought with it significant population growth, as well as urban problems, such as traffic congestion, noise, pollution, and crowded schools (Foglesong, 2001). However, such rapid growth does not come without its problems. Crime, traffic congestion, and other urban issues have accompanied the more than 1.5 million

people who have moved into the Orlando area since the Magic Kingdom opened its doors in 1971 (Foglesong, 2001).

While Orlando matured from a quiet, citrus community into one of the nation's leading metropolitan areas, so did its communications outlets. As they watched the area evolve around them, they too saw growth in readership and viewership. The nine-county Orlando television market expanded rapidly during this time, turning it into the nation's 19th-largest television market (Nielsen, 2007). Meanwhile, the area's newspaper, *The Sentinel*, also experienced the benefits of the population boom. Circulation numbers continued to climb, and with the population increase, more news was available to print (BurrellesLuce, 2007). However, *The Sentinel's* success was relatively short lived. Like other newspapers, the paper's circulation began to decline in the earlier parts of this decade (*Sentinel circulation*, 2005). This trend is prevalent at newspapers as a more highly connected readership base began to get its news from online sources rather than relying on the aging print product (Filistrucchi, 2005).

Thomas and Nain (2005) attribute this decline to the globalization of economies and the corporate ownership of the media. For local media, they have had to adapt to new corporate business models, which has led to a shift in content. Newspapers were once the primary source for local news, but chain ownership has led local newspapers to place a stronger emphasis on national and international news, leaving less space for local coverage. Further problems ensued. When urban newspapers did report on local events, they were often negative in nature and focused on the crime and other urban issues facing their coverage area (Artwick & Gordon, 1998). This negative coverage helped promote suburbanization, which contributed to the flight of upper- and middle-class whites to the suburbs (Isenberg, 2005).

In his 2006 book, *Community Journalism: Relentlessly Local*, Jock Lauterer argued, “the history of the newspaper is bound up with the history of cities” (p. 13). Lauterer’s assertion is based on a series of trends that unite urban growth and the newspaper business. His first conclusion is that newspapers rely on cities for funding, news, and resources to stay relevant in an age of Internet and television news (Lauterer, 2006). He also suggests that cities depend on newspapers to keep residents informed about events and other goings on in the area, a suggestion that the Project for Excellence in Journalism confirms with their *State of the News Media Report, 2006*. This report says, “Newspapers remain the most effective way to reach a broad audience and deliver results for advertisers” (Project, 2006). Third, Lauterer argues that the growth of cities and newspapers are closely related – as populations grow, so does newspaper readership – however, this trend may not apply to circulation, as we will discuss later in this study. Finally, Lauterer states that change and development are often covered in the newspaper.

This study focuses on the Orlando area in Central Florida. This region was chosen for this study because of its relatively recent growth and development. In many ways, Orlando is one of the few metropolitan areas in the United States to come of age in the modern era, and is one of the nation’s largest and fastest-growing communities (Census Bureau, 2007). The Orlando-Kissimmee MSA is currently the 27th largest in the country (Census Bureau, 2007). *The Orlando Sentinel* was chosen for this study because of its location in a fast-growing metropolitan area and because of its high circulation numbers. Statistics show that *The Sentinel* is representative of current newspaper trends, including a decline in circulation, lower readership numbers, and flattening ad revenue (*The New York Times*, 2007).

Yet the questions remain: Can a city’s newspaper remain largely unaffected by the growth going on around it? What kinds of effect has this growth had on local media? For decades

newspapers have been charged with the watchdog role of the media. They have critiqued the government and shed light on the impact of urban growth, but have they ever taken the time to consider what impact this growth has had on their day-to-day operations?

This study answers these questions by analyzing staff perceptions of how growth has affected one newspaper in Florida. Participants in this study were asked to discuss their opinions and perceptions of growth effects on their day-to-day duties at the newspaper.

While previous research has focused on media content in relation to urban growth (Artwick & Gordon, 1998), this study examines the impact of urban growth on newspapers, namely *The Orlando Sentinel*, through qualitative, in-depth interviews. For triangulation, an analysis of the articles from *The Sentinel*'s "Local In-Depth" section was conducted to determine if staff perceptions were adequately reflected in the pages of the newspaper. Sixteen staff members from *The Sentinel*'s editorial staff, circulation department, advertising department, and marketing team were interviewed. Two former employees were also interviewed for this study, for a grand total of 18 participants. A qualitative approach was chosen for this study because little previous research has been conducted in this area and qualitative approaches yield personal, in-depth analysis. While this approach will not produce generalizable data, it may indicate large trends occurring at urban newspapers across the country. Participants for this study, including representatives of the editorial, marketing, advertising, and circulation departments, were chosen based on their job title and description as listed on *The Orlando Sentinel*'s website.

The data collected from the interviews revealed that *The Sentinel* has been affected by urban growth in Orlando. Ten themes were chosen for analysis: content, coverage, staffing, growth, finances, circulation, relevancy, demographics, localized focus, and newsroom organization. These themes were common discussion points in most of the interviews. The data

showed that the newspaper's content and coverage have been affected by growth because of the increased amount of news that arises because of a larger, more diverse population. Most of the participants also emphasized a new focus on relevant, localized stories because the changing readership demands it. The newsgathering element of coverage has also been affected because reporters have to travel greater distances due to the growing suburban fringe. Staffing at the newspaper has also been altered because the newspaper is forced to hire new employees from outside the Orlando region because *The Sentinel* is the only dominant newspaper in the area, making local training outside of *The Sentinel* rare. Participants said that growth was a determining factor in the paper's decision to restructure the newsroom. The researcher also asked each participant to define "growth" and explain its impact on the newspaper in their own terms. Overwhelmingly, participants said that growth defines the community and the newspaper. The newspaper's financial and budgetary problems can be partly attributed to growth since the newspaper has to spend more money to gather more information because of the increase in news in the area. The study found that urban growth has had an inverse effect on circulation. While the population of the Orlando area has dramatically increased in the last several decades, *The Sentinel's* circulation flatlined in the 1990s and began declining in the early parts of this decade. Lastly, current and former *Sentinel* staff members highlighted the changing demographics of the area's population as a significant factor affecting the newspaper. Specifically, they said that the growth of the Hispanic community has shifted their content and coverage focus.

One goal of this study was to generate theory. Thus, the researcher proposes that urban growth does, in fact, affect newspapers in a number of ways. Specifically, urban newspapers face unique challenges to the way they address the news and cover urban areas that rural newspapers do not. These challenges include increased news to cover, more people to inform, and more

opportunities for marketing/advertising because of the higher rate of population. Urban newspapers must react to these challenges in ways unique to their own communities since every urban area consists of different demographics and readership habits.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

I will [tell] the story as I go along
Of small cities no less than of great.
Most of those which were great once
Are small today; and those which in my
Own lifetime have grown to greatness,
Were small enough in the old days.

-Herodotus

For more than two centuries, the history of American newspapers has been closely related to the histories of the cities they cover, and as cities have grown, so have their newspapers (Kaniss, 1991). However, as cities began facing urban decay in the second half of the 20th century (i.e. crime, traffic congestion, etc.), newspapers also fell on hard times. Industry statistics have shown that newspaper circulations have been declining and advertising revenue is beginning to level off, no longer bringing in record amounts of money (*State of News Media*, 2007). While several factors may contribute to this decline, including the advent of new media on the Internet, no research has explored a possible link between this decline and urban growth.

While the current body of literature lacks any significant research on the cause and effect relationship that may exist between urban growth and current trends in the media, some studies have examined other related factors, such as media content and perceptions of urban growth (Artwick & Gordon, 1998). This study remedies that lack of research by going beyond the examination of media coverage of urban issues and analyzing the effects of urban growth on newspapers, specifically *The Orlando Sentinel*.

To fully understand the relationship that exists between mass communications studies and urban development theory, a discussion of urban growth and its history is necessary. Also, a statistical review of recent growth trends both nationally and in the Orlando area is important to understand how growth has transformed the United States and this region of Florida. A review of

the effects of this growth and its impact on social capital – the psychological connection felt toward one’s community – and community connectivity will explain how this growth affects residents and, in turn, the media in this city. Finally, this literature review will conclude with a review of the relevant theory.

History of Urban Planning

The need for urban planning comes from the necessity to regulate industry and land use. Mandelker writes that, “the use of land requires the coming together of a complex set of social, economic and physical forces, held together by a vision of the desired outcome” (2005, p.1).

Although planning did not emerge as a profession until after the Columbian Exposition in 1893 (Hall, 2002), employees in cities across the country had been working on water regulation, park building, etc, for decades, starting as early as the 1840s and ‘50s (Fishman, 1987). Planning gained legal backing on the state level with the Standard Planning Enabling Acts of the 1920s, which gave states and other local municipalities the legal right to plan their communities to meet their own needs (Hall, 2002). This was a significant shift from early planning regulation, which called for nationwide plans rather than a local focus. These new laws signaled a dramatic shift in planning history and practice. Previously, no such legislation existed, which meant that little efforts in planning had been made up to that point. Prior to the 1920s, planning was relatively small in scope but was being conducted even before local governments got the power to do so under the Enabling Acts. In cities like New York and Chicago, local planners had been organizing their cities for decades. Regional planning also had an early start in the areas around New York City (Hall, 2002).

Early planning trends relied primarily on economics as their driving force. Following the Industrial Revolution in the late 19th century, millions of people moved from the countryside

into American cities. This created the need for coordinated cities with planned streets and other public services (Hall, 2002). However, such planning was not consistent from city to city, or region to region, and efforts at planning were often unsuccessful. Pollution became a significant problem in urban areas and slums began to encroach on urban areas in cities across the country (Hall, 2002). By the dawn of the 20th century, cities such as New York were implementing regional plans to address the demands of a sprawling metropolis, which often expanded past municipal boundaries and into surrounding areas.

The modern idea of urban planning emerged with the Hoover administration's Standard Enabling Acts (Mandelker, 2005). These two pieces of legislation explicitly gave the power and regulatory planning authority to the states, which often then gave the power to local municipalities. This form of localized planning still exists today in most cities and states. However the powers vested to local governments and authorities have expanded considerably since the early legislation of the 1920s. For example, cities are allowed by the Constitution to regulate land use and development, as well as coordinate aesthetic values for the general welfare and safety of the public (Mandelker, 2005). This expansion of government regulation and planning powers reflects the changing demands of cities as they have grown throughout the last century.

History of Urban Growth

The notion of urban planning is by no means a new one. The ancient Romans applied many similar planning principles that urban planners still utilize today, such as transportation, water conduits (utilities), etc. However, as civilization has developed through time, the demands on planners have changed to meet those changing needs. Modern planning consists of the "process of making land use plans" and can occur at any level within the government, including local,

regional, state, and federal (Mandelker, 2005, p. 2). This planning process is often the result of increases in population and economic development, as well as for meeting the demands of an evolving public.

The history of urban growth, with its heavy emphasis on urban development, began in the United States as early as the 18th century. By the time the American Revolution began in the 1770s, the New England states were already experiencing considerable growth in their cities. At about this time, the nation's economy was shifting from an agrarian base to an industrial one, which resulted in a nationwide emigration into the cities. With the nation's economy growing, and the promise of new opportunity, immigrants from around the world also began moving into American cities in unprecedented numbers.

However, this explosion of city residents did not occur overnight; it was a gradual process that spanned more than two centuries. In 1790, only six cities in the United States had more than 8,000 residents; by 1920, 923 cities held that distinction (Eno, 2006).

If urban populations swelled in the decades following the American Revolution, they exploded following the Civil War. The post-war Industrial Revolution helped bring industry to the nation's cities, and with those new jobs came the potential for growth. Americans began leaving their farms in the country and moving into the cities in search of higher-paying jobs and prosperity. However, this rapid population growth led to a variety of problems, including sanitary issues, cramped housing conditions and pollution. (Hall, 2002). These problems laid the foundation for early urban planning, as discussed in the previous section. Such undesirable conditions did not deter the population from moving into urban areas. The United States Census Bureau (1990) showed that in 1860, less than 20% of the American population lived in cities, and by 1990, more than 75% of the population did.

This trend of urban population growth continued throughout the 20th century and even into the 21st. At the beginning of the 20th century, politicians began to see the need for regulation of growth and development (Hall, 2002). Journalists known as muckrakers led this reform movement by writing about the degrading state of inner-city areas and factories where residents worked. Although limited in scope, these resulting early regulations laid the foundation for later growth trends, including the Standard Enabling Acts (Mandelker, 2005).

This idea of regulated growth continued throughout the rest of the 20th century in a series of phases and trends, which were often the result of development trends and other implications. Among these phases are: Urban Renewal, Urbanism, and New Urbanism (Hall, 2002).

World War II proved to be a turning point for urban growth practices. Following the model of the German Autobahn system, the United States government began construction on the federal highway system, which would forever alter the American landscape (Hall, 2002). The highway system allowed almost uninterrupted travel between cities and led to a mass exodus of the upper and middle classes from urban areas (Putnam, 2000). This process became known as suburbanization. Central cities began to reel from this loss of population. Downtown areas became desolate shells of their former selves as downtown shops closed and highly populated areas became virtual ghost towns (Isenberg, 2005). The idea of owning land and a large, single-family home in the suburbs was more appealing to veterans returning home from war than living in a crime-ridden, urban area. New cities such as Levittown, New York, became the standard for development for most of the latter half of the 20th century.

However, Dolores Hayden, as part of Margaret Marsh's anthology *History of Metropolitan Development* (2007), says the growth of American suburbs began in the 1820s, but took full swing with "streetcar buildouts" beginning at about 1870 (p. 646). These buildouts followed

public transportation systems and encouraged development near rail stops. Hayden states that the buildouts were followed by “mail order and self-built” suburbs, which were constructed around the turn of the century (p. 647). These suburbs were followed by sitcom suburbs starting in the 1940s; these suburbs were popularized by television sitcoms such as “Leave It to Beaver,” “I Love Lucy,” and “The Brady Bunch” a few years later. According to Marsh, “Suburban-like development of rural fringes ‘intensified’ around 1980,” which caused tremendous growth at the edges of urban areas (p. 646). Marsh and Hayden also argue that suburbanization was a middle-class ideal that eventually made its way down to the middle class by the 20th century (p. 648).

The 1960s and ‘70s proved to be a turning point for downtown development and urban growth patterns. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s brought riots and other movement-related activity to downtown areas (Isenburg, 2005). If the rise of the suburbs had not destroyed downtown business, this activity certainly did. The violence that ensued in cities like Detroit, Los Angeles, and other cities across the South led businesses to close and middle class residents to flee to the suburbs (Isenburg, 2005). This exodus to the suburbs left behind an urban population that was less affluent, which, because of social stigmas, kept suburbanites from returning to downtown areas (Isenburg, 2005).

Most recent urban planning trends have been the result of suburbanization. As planners began to realize that unregulated land development would lead to environmental problems and other issues, they began to promote in-fill development. This earliest form of this type of development was known as Urban Renewal (Hall, 2002). Under this program, governments were able to condemn abandoned or derelict buildings and replace them with public housing. However, the Urban Renewal projects often became slums themselves and simply replaced one downtrodden area with another (Hall, 2002). Another recent trend that emerged in the 1990s and

early 21st century has been New Urbanism, which relies on a town-style form of development that emphasizes walkable streets with parking, and a return to the traditional town center form of development (Hall, 2002).

The Economy of Cities

As cities developed throughout the 20th century, critics of urban planning also began voicing their concerns. One of these critics, Jane Jacobs, became a popular supporter for neighborhood preservation and wrote extensively about the economy of cities. As one of urban planning's most renowned authors and scholars, Jacobs is a significant part of planning literature, as it exists today. In *The Economy of Cities* (1969), Jacobs argues against agricultural primacy, which suggests that cities are dependent on farmers and rural areas to sustain their economies. Instead, she suggests, "rural economies, including agricultural work, are directly built upon city economies and city work" (Jacobs, 1969). Jacobs suggests this economic system exists because agricultural advancements are often discovered at colleges and universities that are often located in cities. This indicated a dramatic shift in the American economic landscape and is important for this study because of the effects of growth on urban newspapers compared to rural ones.

The Economy of Cities also provides several important definitions for the purposes of this study. At the end of her book, Jacobs provides several definitions for some crucial urban planning themes, including: "city," "metropolitan area," "town," and "village." Jacobs defines a "city" as "a settlement that consistently generates its economic growth from its own local economy" (1969). She defines a metropolitan area as the same as a city economically, but politically, it is a metropolitan area that has grown beyond the city's formal boundaries and

engulfed other neighboring cities (1969). Jacobs defines a town as a settlement that does not “generate growth from its own local economy,” and a village is a smaller town (1969, p. 262).

Jacobs' economic outlook for cities presents a unique view in the overall history of urban development and marks a clear shift in the dominance of urban life over that of their rural counterpart. This shift occurred as advancements in agriculture yielded more products with less effort, giving more rural residents the opportunity to leave the rural areas and move to the cities. However, this influx of urban residents began to strain inner-city locales, sending higher-class residents to the suburbs.

Understanding the economy of cities is important for this study because of the effects urban economics has on newspapers. A strong local economy can signal strong readership and circulation gains for newspapers (Kaniss, 1991). Kaniss describes this type of economic pressure as the result of consolidated business practices in downtown areas. She said that before the 1870s, cities consisted of multiple, small business pockets; but after the 1870s, those pockets moved into urban areas and consolidated into modern downtowns, with centralized business districts and residential neighborhoods (Kaniss, 1991).

For newspapers, this evolving urban core meant a change in their economic model was necessary. As development trends progressed, and other social movements began forcing middle- and upper-class residents out of downtown, the urban population became a less powerful purchasing block (Kaniss, 1991). So rather than cater to political or other biased interests, newspapers had to begin focusing on suburban residents to maintain their audience (Kaniss, 1991). However, suburbanization created a fragmented news market. Since the population had shifted from a concentrated urban locale to small, more numerous suburban cities, newspapers had to begin reaching out to an ever-expanding news market. Kaniss suggests that this growth

pattern created other economic pressures as well, including advertising, the publisher's ties to the local community, and a bias toward downtown areas in content. Kaniss showed how those businesses that were once located in the downtown areas were moving into the suburbs and taking their advertising dollars with them. With this move to the suburbs, newspapers lost advertising revenue. This decline in revenue is partially attributed to the focus of newspapers' content. Many newspapers often focused their coverage on issues happening in the more urban downtown areas. However, when residents and businesses began moving to the suburbs, coverage did not immediately follow suit. Kaniss also showed that newspaper editors and publishers were often closely socially connected to the communities they covered. This resulted in greater coverage of the immediate community surrounding the paper rather than the forming communities on the fringe of the city (Kaniss, 1991).

Kaniss (1991) argues that newspapers should remain interested in the economic growth of their cities because of the effects this growth has on the publication. Newspaper profits are directly dependent on audience size and *advertising* dollars, which suggests that the larger the population, and the stronger the economy, the more potential audience members and advertisers the newspaper can reach (Kaniss, 1991). Molotch (1976) called metropolitan newspapers an example of a business whose interests are anchored in the growth of its locality. Molotch said that newspapers are dependent on growth.

The history of modern newspapers is wrapped around this economic dependency. Throughout the 20th century, newspaper ownership trends changed dramatically. Independent owners were often bought out by media corporations, which led to media conglomeration and chain ownership (Baldasty, 1992). Today, most newspapers are owned by a small number of chain owners, which concentrates information resources and the creation of news.

National Growth Trends

The U.S. has been experiencing steady population growth since the first settlers founded the early colonies. Throughout the country's three-century-long history, several eras of extreme growth have caused surges in the population. Most of these surges are equated with high amounts of immigration from various parts of the world, including Europe, Asia, and Latin America, as well as times of significant economic change (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). The Census Bureau projects the current population of the U.S. to be approximately 303,300,000. The United States crossed the 300 million mark in October 2006, roughly 40 years after it reached 200 million. Current growth models project the population to reach 400 million by 2040 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). This population growth pattern suggests that the population's growth rate will continue to grow at a fast pace in the next several decades, surpassing previous growth rates.

As previous literature has suggested, the American landscape has changed over the years. Early Americans relied on agriculture for their day-to-day livelihood. However, as the 19th century progressed, new advancements in agricultural technology shifted the country's economy, leading it down a more industrial path. This industrialization brought unprecedented amounts of people into American cities. The U.S. Census Bureau (1990) showed that in 1860, less than 20% of the American population lived in cities, and by 1990, more than 75% of the population did. The Eno (2006) reports that in 2006, approximately 80% of Americans either worked or lived in cities or their expanding suburbs. Eno also reports that 50 metropolitan areas now have more than one million people, up from 39 in 1990, which suggests that this trend of rapid, urban population growth continued throughout the 1990s.

While the nation as a whole has been experiencing population growth for more than three centuries, this growth has not been proportional in all parts of the country. The Fannie Mae

Foundation (2001) showed that the Sunbelt States –the Southern and Southwestern states, including Florida – grew at a rate much faster than the rest of the nation. The foundation’s study showed the U.S. grew by more than 130 million people from 1950 to 2000 (Fannie Mae, 2001).

Understanding national growth trends is important because of their implications on the state of Florida and the Orlando metropolitan area. These changes in population alter development trends, as well as urban planning practices and other cultural interactions.

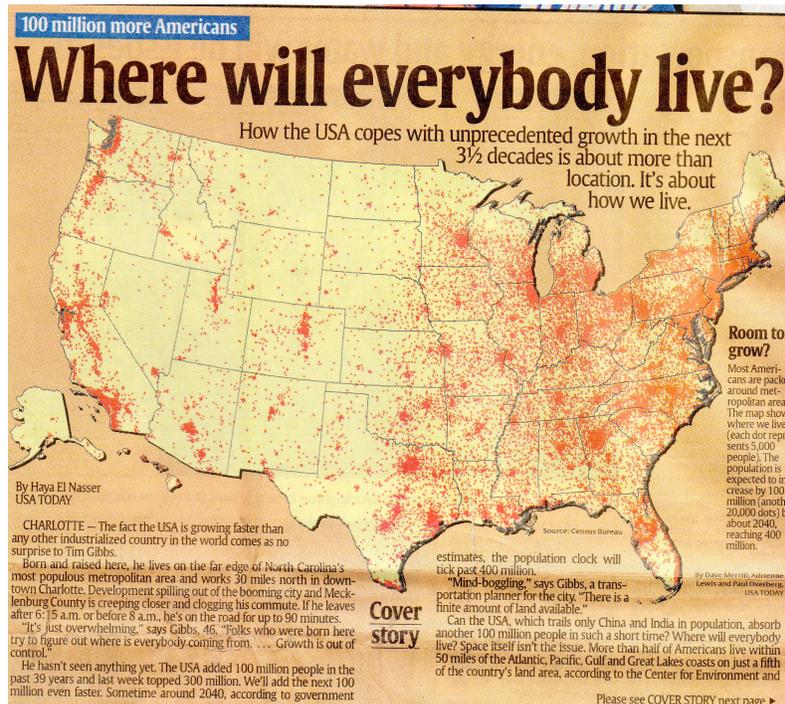


Figure 1: USA Today article examining population in the United States. This figure shows the population distribution of the United States. It is easy to see from the red dots that most of the population of the United States resides in urban areas. The article originally ran in USA Today on October 27, 2006.

Growth in Florida

According to the Fannie Mae report (2001), Florida is considered one of the Sunbelt region’s “big three” states, which means that it had some of the fastest population growth rates from the 1950s, until the report was published in 2001. Florida’s population grew from about 3 million in 1950, to more than 16 million in 2000 (Fannie Mae, 2001). This is a 477% change in

the population during this time. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates Florida's 2006 population at more than 18 million (2006). Most of this growth has been concentrated in the urban areas of South and Central Florida, specifically near Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Orlando.

Florida is currently the fourth-largest state in the nation, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2006), and the Florida Statistical Abstract (2006) counts 19 metropolitan statistical areas throughout the state. The Abstract also reports significant growth in the Orlando area. Orange County had a 32.3% population increase between 1990 and 2000 (Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2006). Lake County had a 38.4% increase; Osceola County grew by 60.1%; and Seminole County grew by 27%. Overall, the Orlando-Kissimmee metro area grew by 18.8% (Bureau of Economic and Business Research, 2006).

Growth in Orlando

Before Disney came to town, Orlando was a wild frontier at the heart of Florida. In many ways, the area resembled a TV Western town more than a Southern city (Dickinson, 2003). Founded in 1875, Orlando quickly became Florida's largest inland city. In the early days, the city relied heavily on the state's citrus industry for economic vitality; however, the area was also a popular winter vacation spot for "snowbirds," Northern tourists who come to Florida to escape the harsh winters of the north.

Orlando was a relatively quiet town before Walt Disney opened the Magic Kingdom in 1971. Back then, the area was home to more orange trees than hotel rooms, and traffic congestion did not plague the area's roads. However, it was the area's well-networked transportation system that influenced Disney's decision to build in the area (Foglesong, 2001). The area's transportation network was advanced throughout the 1960s by the Federal Highway

Act, which built Interstate 4 through the area, and the state of Florida's decision to build the Florida Turnpike through the area. These two roads intersect halfway between downtown Orlando and Walt Disney World. The area's legislative delegates in Tallahassee were influential in bringing these two roads to the area (Foglesong, 2001).

Entertainment wasn't the only driving force behind Orlando's booming economy during the latter half of the 20th century. Prior to Disney's announcement, Orange County had also been awarded a number of military-based programs, including a Naval Training Center under President Johnson, and the Martin Marietta Corp. (now known as Lockheed Martin), a defense contractor, also located its headquarters in the area (Foglesong, 2001). Other significant growth came from the area's citrus industry, even though it would begin to decline as more people moved into the area and agricultural land was replaced with homes and other development.

The area's newspapers, *The Orlando Sentinel Star* and *The Evening Reporter-Star*, played an important role in the area's early growth and in bringing Disney to the area (Fogleson, 2001). The papers' publisher, Martin Anderson, came to Orlando in 1931 when a Texan named Charles Marsh purchased both papers. Anderson put the nearly bankrupt newspapers back in the black, and purchased them from Marsh in 1945 (Foglesong, 2001). As owner of the area's largest media outlet, Anderson never wavered and often used his influence to sway public policy. Interstate 4's path is a result of Anderson's influence; he believed the highway should slice through downtown Orlando, arguing that it would bring suburbanites into the area. However, personal motives also influenced that stance because the highway would make it easier for his carriers to deliver his newspaper (Foglesong, 2001). Under Anderson's leadership, the newspapers' readership soon exceeded the population of the city. He eventually combined the

two newspapers, making *The Sentinel Star* one of the state's four major newspapers. The name was changed to *The Orlando Sentinel* in the early 1980s.

Anderson often used the editorial pages of his newspapers to sway public opinion and to promote the economic development he thought the area needed. According to Foglesong (2001), Anderson used the newspaper's influence to promote local delegates to the State Transportation Board, which was influential in bringing the Florida Turnpike through Orlando. He also led a group of local businessmen that helped lure Disney into the area.

Disney's arrival dramatically transformed the Orlando area. Prior to Disney's opening in the early 1970s, Orlando was a sleepy community with a growing retirement community. Most of Orange County was orange groves. Between Disney's opening in 1971 and 1999, Orange County's population more than doubled from 344,000 to 846,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000a). Now that number is more than 1 million. Orlando has consistently been ranked among the nation's ten fastest-growing urban areas, and in 1994, it was the nation's fastest growing urban region. Orlando has the second most hotel rooms of any city in the country, only behind Las Vegas. Orange County was not the only Central Florida County to experience growth as a result of this boom in the tourism industry. The surrounding counties, Osceola, Seminole, and Lake, have seen significant population increases as well. The four-county Metropolitan Statistical Area, as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau (2000a) had a population of 520,000 in 1970. By 2000, the population approached 2 million. As of 2005, Orlando was the seventh-fastest-growing area in the country (Newman, 2005). Other factors have contributed to the region's growth as well, including an increase in defense contracting, the growth of the University of Central Florida, and the growing service industry.

The area has a high number of temporary residents in its tourists and wintering snow birds that move into the area during the winter. In 1969, 3.5 million people visited Central Florida. In 1971, the year the Magic Kingdom opened, 10 million people visited the area. By 1982, following the grand opening of Epcot, Orlando was the most popular tourist destination in the world (Foglesong, 2001). When MGM Studios opened in 1989, the number of tourists surpassed 30 million, and by 2001, Disney said that 55 million visitors visited Orlando (Foglesong, 2001).

As growth and development transformed the area's culture, environment, and economy, they have also affected the area's crime rate, traffic, and other urban issues such as housing and low-paying jobs resulting from the influx of low-paying service jobs (Foglesong, 2001).

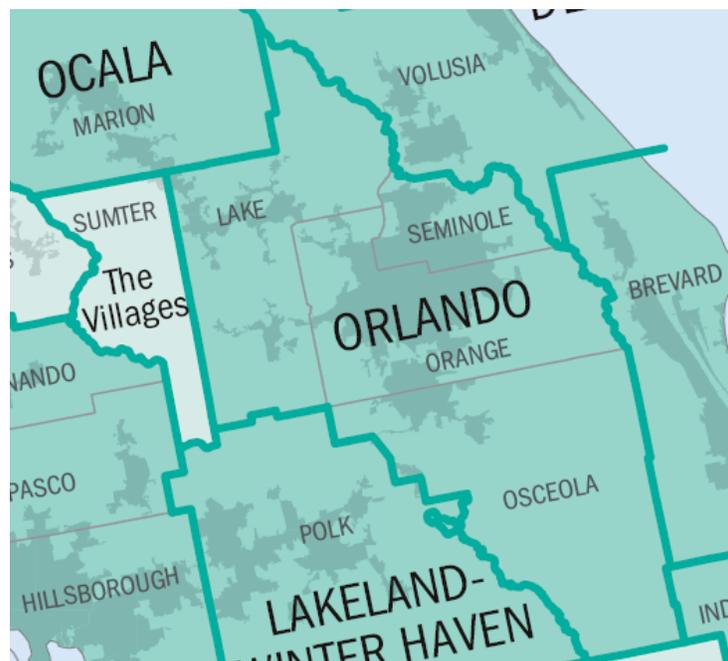


Figure 2: Map of the Orlando Metropolitan Statistical Area.

This map shows the Orlando Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) as defined by a U.S. Census Bureau map. The MSA includes the four-county region of Lake, Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties. In 2007, the Census Bureau estimated the area's population to be about 1,862,790, making it the 27th largest MSA in the country (Census Bureau, 2007).

Table 1: Population and population percentage change, 1950-Present; *Estimates according to U.S. Census.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Orange County</i>	<i>City of Orlando</i>	<i>Four-county Region</i>	<i>State of Florida</i>
1950	114,950	52,367	189,579	2,771,000
1960	263,540 (129%)	88,135 (68%)	394,899 (108%)	4,952,000 (79%)
1970	344,311 (30.6%)	99,066 (12%)	522,575 (32%)	6,791,000 (37%)
1980	470,865 (36.7%)	128,291 (29.5%)	804,774 (54%)	9,747,000 (44%)
1990	677,491 (43.8%)	164,674 (28%)	1,224,844 (52%)	12,938,000 (33%)
2000	896,344 (32.3%)	184,639 (12%)	1,561,715 (28%)	15,982,000 (24%)
*2007	1,070,000 (19.4%)	226,000 (22.4%)	1,862,790 (19%)	18,500,000 (16%)

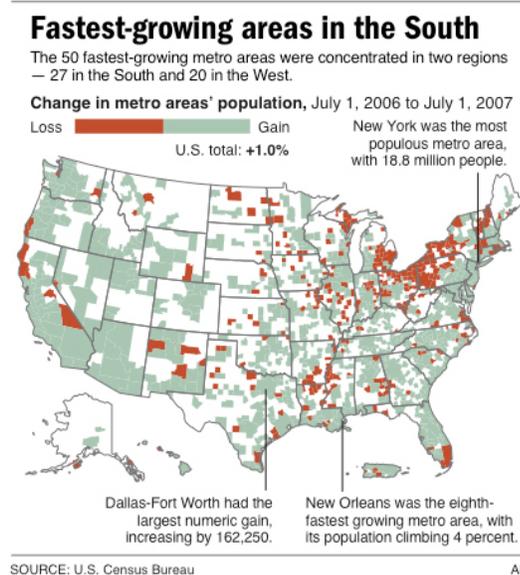


Figure 3: A map showing the growth rates of counties across the U.S. (MSNBC, 2007). This map, from an MSNBC news story about growth rates in the U.S., shows that all of the counties in Central Florida reported population growth between July 2006 and July 2007.

A History of Newspapers

Tebbel writes that the “history of the American newspapers is a record of the Establishment’s effort to control the news and of private individuals to disclose it without

restriction,” (1963, p. 11). The history of newspapers in the United States is closely connected to the history of the nation. As a fledging nation, the country’s newspapers were often biased, localized reports. By the 20th century, with the emergence of the booming American economy, newspapers became commercialized entities. The first attempt to print a domestic news report in America was in Boston in 1689. *The Present State of the New-English Affairs* was, like other broadsheet newspapers that followed, a biased piece meant to spread the religious views of the Puritans that had fled England and settled in the United States.

During the American Revolution in the late 18th century, newspapers were “proliferating” (Tebbel, 1963, p. 33). At this time, cities often had multiple newspapers, with a neighborhood or local focus. Also, ownership patterns were beginning to shift. Instead of being owned by printers, newspapers were being bought by editors (Tebbel, 1963). Tebbel writes that pamphleteering was popular at this time as well. During the war, newspapers and pamphlets served as propaganda tools for the forming republic and were often used to recruit support for the revolution. This ideal of using newspapers as propaganda continued into the 19th century.

By 1820, there were 512 newspapers in the United States. Most were weeklies, and few had circulations above 1,500 (Tebbel, 1963). However, the press during this time was still largely political and helped promote the agendas of the nation’s political parties. Since newspapers were largely read by educated elites, they were the perfect outlet to spread political messages (Tebbel, 1963).

In the years following the Civil War, journalists began to take heed of their perceived public servant role (Tebbel, 1963). This can be attributed to the growth of mass media at this time. Tebbel writes that “everything contributed to growth of the mass media. The constant expansion of education and the consequent rise in literacy created more potential readers every

years” (1963, p. 127). By the turn of the century, media moguls such as William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer began to emerge in New York. This started the early phases of newspaper commercialization, a trend that would continue through the 20th century (Tebbel, 1963). When the 20th century began, newspapers in big cities were already physically larger and had larger circulation and advertising revenue than their rural counterparts.

Big-business newspapers gave way to chain ownership in the latter half of the 20th century. This concept was created by Hearst and E.W. Scripps (Tebbel, 1963).

Growth and the Media

Growth has had a significant effect on rural and weekly newspapers, too. According to Tebbel, weekly newspapers have a “high mortality rate because so many of them were used for special purposes and dropped when that purpose was not satisfied” (1963, p. 250). Rural journalism reached its peak in 1914 and had become a necessary part of rural life because it recorded life in these areas, including births, deaths, marriages, social events, etc. (Tebbel, 1963). According to Tebbel, crime is rarely covered in rural weeklies and editors are focused primarily on local news.

The decline of rural newspapers began in the 1920s when economic and ownership trends favored mergers and suspended production of these newspapers. This trend was accelerated during the Great Depression (Tebbel, 1963).

Throughout the 19th century, industrialization and urbanization altered the country. They also created an environment that created a new kind of commercial newspaper. While industrialization created advertising, urbanization created the need “for a newspaper that went from being a political advocate and to attempting to make sense of a dispersed community” (Baldasty, 1992, p. 139).

Readers also changed their use patterns during this time. Urban residents began using the media for a specific set of uses. According to Leo Jeffries, et al. (1999) the basic purposes media serve for society include: information, correlation, continuity, entertainment, and mobilization. However, Jeffries, et al, noted that urban and community newspapers began functioning in very different ways. They suggested that about 35 years ago, community papers began filling the local void that large, urban papers were ignoring. In Jeffries' study, Morris Janowitz noted, "The big mass media are less relevant for guiding community-based activities" (1999, p. 89) and suggested the urban press should strengthen its decentralized roots and maintain its community focus. This emphasis on national news may be the result of commercial factors affecting larger newspapers (Kaniss, 1991).

However, as media use in cities began to peak in the 1960s, the media's portrayal of urban life also began to change. Crime became a problem in many urban centers and urban decay began to take hold in certain neighborhoods. As a result of news judgment and newsworthiness, such stories began to occur more frequently than locally based feature stories, thus newspapers began to paint a generally negative picture of urban life (Dreier, 2005). As a result, readers began to associate fear and other, similar emotions to urban areas. When Claudette Artwick and Margaret Gordon (1998) set out to explain how newspapers portray U.S. cities, their study showed this trend of frequent, negative coverage and concluded that such coverage built an "unfavorable image of cities."

In 2005, Peter Dreier confirmed Artwick and Gordon's study. His study revealed that major news media reinforce an "overwhelmingly negative and misleading view of urban America" (2005, p. 193). As all three researchers showed in their studies, this negative coverage creates a negative view of urban life. What contributes to this problem is that readers rarely experience

crime themselves and rely on what they read in the newspaper to tell them about a specific area. Thus, if an area is portrayed as crime-ridden, outsiders will view it as such. Part of the reason this cycle persists, Dreier writes, is because newspapers rarely have paid beat reporters assigned to poor neighborhoods and rely on breaking news in these areas.

Zelnik (2006) argued that a focus on community, or local, news is what supports newspaper growth. He suggests that newspaper readers are most interested in the news that most directly affects them, which is often on the local level. Zelnik's (2006) argument suggests that newspapers should focus on local coverage, yet still include some national and international news.

Robert Park and the Chicago School

At the dawn of the 20th century, Robert Park and his disciples launched a new study into urban reporting. For their study, Park and the School analyzed how urban coverage is structured and discussed a number of changes taking place in urban media. Rolf Lindner chronicled Park and his colleague's work in *The Reportage of Urban Culture: Robert Park and the Chicago School* (1996). One of Park's assertions that Lindner (1996) discusses in his book is Park's claim that the press is an invention meant to put people in the place of others. What Park is arguing here, at least in an urban sense, is that the media portray life in the city for those in the suburbs, giving them a sense of life in an area that they do not live in.

Park's most significant contribution to the sociology of culture is his notion of the "marginal man." This notion places a man on the cusp of two cultures without really belonging to either (Lindner, 1996). Like the marginal man, urban residents live in cities, but are less connected to the city center. On the other hand, they also feel disconnected from their neighbors in the suburbs.

Social Capital

Putnam's *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000) examines urban impact on social life. In this book, Putnam launches one of the pivotal theories that transcends both urban planning and mass communications studies. "The core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value," and that "Social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups" (2000, p. 19).

Putnam's notion of social capital becomes an important theory when considered within the context of urban development history. According to Putnam (2000), social capital began to decline following the 1960s. At about this time, the American suburbs reached the peak of their isolationism and people began to feel increasingly less connected to the surrounding city. Suburbanites had grown weary of city life because of the negative picture of urban life painted by newspapers (Dreier, 2005). What makes this '60s-era peak of social capital so significant is that it coincides with the peak of overall newspaper readership. Putnam contributes both of these declines to changes in lifestyle habits, such as television viewing, longer commutes to and from work, and less interaction with one's community. However, no research has been conducted directly relating this decline in social capital and its link to the decline in newspaper readership.

Putnam's social capital argument is based on a declining trend of civic participation and organizational membership. Putnam notes that since the 1960s, Americans have become increasingly less involved in their communities and less engaged in civic duties (such as attending government meetings, etc). Putnam's research revealed a peak in involvement at about 1960, which he attributes to a number of social changes that took place around this time, including: business and time pressures, residential mobility (people were moving at more frequent rates), the civil rights movement, suburbanization and sprawl, and the television.

Putnam believes that these events and social limitations contributed to the decline of social capital because of their isolationist effects. He shows that because people have to spend more time driving from the suburbs to work in urban areas, and because TV is a private activity, people are spending less time interacting and more time on their own. Suburbanization created the need for more automobiles because workers began to have to commute into the central city for work. The time spent driving also hampered community involvement because people were spending the time in the car alone.

The impact on social capital as a result of urban growth was not limited to involvement within people's communities. Other issues such as interpersonal trust and sense of community also felt the negative impact of growth. Lee, Cappella, and Southwell (2003) showed a reported decline in trust Americans have for each other. Lee et al. also showed that the people with the lowest levels of civic engagement and interpersonal trust are young people and the less educated (Lee, et al. 2003). Previous research has shown that young people and those with lower education levels do not read newspapers as much as the elderly and better educated (Rattner, 2007). However, "newspaper reading is consistently and positively related to trust, talking to neighbors and talking about politics," (Lee, et al., 2003, p. 431). The connectivity provided by newspapers may be explained by the shared information that newspapers provide. Since newspaper readers often live in or near the same metropolitan area, they share the common knowledge found in the newspaper, thus giving them the information necessary to participate in society and increase their social trust (Lee, et al., 2003).

However, despite this connectivity related to newspaper reading, there is a disparity between urban and rural trust. According to a study by Christopher Beaudoin and Esther Thorson (2004), rural communities have higher levels of social integration and attachment than urban

communities do. Being socially connected, according to Beaudoin and Thorson, is “expected to spur pro-social behaviors such as voting and volunteering.” This expectation can be partly associated with media usage. According to Beaudoin and Thorson’s study, television hard news (broadcast stories on breaking news that is non-feature in nature) is positively associated with civic engagement, while newspaper hard news is associated with civic engagement and interpersonal trust.

Jane Jacobs suggests that suburbanization and a decline of sidewalk usage have had a profound impact on community trust. In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), Jacobs argues that as the suburbs continued to expand, residents began using sidewalks less and less, and as a result, they became less familiar with their neighbors and stopped participating in community-related activities such as stopping by the bar for a drink and talking with other passers by.

Cultural Geography

Jordan et al (1994) define cultural geography as the study of cultural products and their variation across space and place. Cultural geography focuses on describing and analyzing the ways government, the economy, religion, language, and other issues remain constant from one place to another. It also emphasized how humans act spatially. Cultural geography is important in determining the effects of growth on newspapers because it may account for some of the changes in media habits among urban residents. This is possible because cultural geography studies the theories of cultural assimilation and reviews the ways various groups of people interact within a given society.

Cultural geography can be paired with Putnam’s Social Capital Theory to better explain how newspapers define their coverage area. While Putnam’s (2000) theory says that people feel a

psychological connection to their immediate community, Jordan says that as cities grow, the cultural identity of the city grows with it, but physically and mentally. For example, during the high-growth period of the 1990s, newspapers began opening bureaus in suburban areas on the fringe of the urban core in an attempt to better cover the news in those areas and to assimilate those growing areas into the larger metropolitan area. By doing this, newspapers hoped to increase circulation and readership.

The Middletown Studies

Urban growth and the suburbanization of American cities did not come without its effects. As more people first began to move into urban centers, several sociological changes began to take place among city residents, as Robert and Helen Lynd revealed in *Middletown: a Study in Modern American Culture* (1929). The *Middletown* studies were an attempt by social anthropologists to determine why average Americans do what they do. Although it is not exactly known which city the Lynds decided to examine, it is often understood to be Muncie, Indiana. For the study, the Lynds examined existing documents and statistics, conducted interviews, and surveyed citizens about their day-to-day activities. At the most basic level, the Lynds realized that almost nothing changes, no matter how much time passes (1929). However, the Lynds did reveal several other conclusions that are crucial to this study of newspaper readership and urban development.

Through the *Middletown Studies*, the Lynds learned that by 1929, almost one-third of the children planned to go to college (1929). This was a dramatic increase from the previous century, when students rarely expected to graduate high school, much less attend college. This is crucial for this study of newspaper readership. As Robert Putnam revealed in his 2000 book *Bowling*

Alone, people with higher education levels are more likely to be newspaper readers and be more involved in their communities.

Other observations that the Lynd study (1929) revealed include a rise in radio and automobile use. For Putnam, 70 years later, these increases have significant impact on what Putnam calls “social capital,” which addresses the benefits of social networking and community involvement. Since listening to the radio is often done alone or in small groups, it does not allow for listeners to engage with others within their communities. Meanwhile, automobile use keeps drivers separated from their communities because of long commute times as a result of suburbanization. The Lynds noted that this rise in radio and automobile use caused a decline in other, more social activities, such as book clubs, public lectures, and the fine arts, which the Lynds attribute to a breakdown of family ties and neighborhood socialization (1929).

However, the most important observation from the *Middletown Studies* reveals that newspapers serve as the primary medium for communication in towns and cities. This early reliance found in the *Middletown Studies* shows a continued dependency on newspapers for information. As recently as 2006, city residents relied on newspapers to find out what was going on in their communities, and according to the Project for Excellence in Journalism’s online 2006 State of the News Media Report, “newspapers remain the most effective way to reach a broad audience and deliver results for advertisers” (2006).

Community Identity and the Media

These studies on social capital and community trust all relate back to the ideas of “sense of community” and “community identity.” The term “sense of community” refers to a personal quality that involves a feeling of involvement between people and their communities (Davidson & Cotter, 1991). Communities, according to Davidson and Cotter, can mean geographic

locations (such as neighborhoods), functional entities (groups), and the workplace. Ellen Shearer (1999) agrees and states that “identity and sense of belonging are often defined geographically, particularly by newspapers.” However, she also argues that identity and sense of community can also deal with race, language, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, stage in life (age), and other commonalities.

Tuchman (1978) recognized the role newspapers play in creating this sense of community among the populous. She said that newspapers allow geographically dispersed peoples to be able to relate to one another through reporting about common experiences. In doing so, newspapers allow city residents to understand one another’s ethnic and neighbor cultures.

While community and one’s identity with it may vary by region, and other characteristics, local media often serve as a uniting factor. Shearer argued, “The daily newspaper plays a vital role in reflecting a community’s identity – and, in fact, reinforcing readers’ sense of membership in the community” (1999). Ivan Emke, in a presentation to the Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association (2001) agreed, saying that newspapers continue to be a major source for local and regional news. Stempel’s study (1991) said that 81.5% of editors say that community newspapers are the primary source for local information. Newspapers also are important to fostering ties to the community, Emke argues. He also says that newspapers create ties to place, process, and structure. Newspapers, then, become a unifying force for a community. They create broader links to the world, and can strengthen links between community members and integrate new people into the community.

Jeffries, et al. (2007) supported Putnam’s notion that newspaper reading promotes community involvement. They showed that reading the newspaper “is not merely a reflection of demographics and the values people hold. Reading the newspaper and talking about things seen

in the media and the interpersonal communication patterns add additional explanatory power....” (Jeffries, et al., 2007, p. 17). Their study suggests that for readers, being involved in the community is a value set. Jeffries, et al. (2007) also showed that those who have strong values toward social order and social networks are more open to creating new relationships with strangers and are more likely to talk about current events and other issues discussed in the media.

Reader (2006) found that reporters and other newspaper staff members follow the theory of connectivity in their jobs. Reader’s research showed that journalists in small markets are more likely to be more in touch with, and more concerned with, the communities they cover. This raises several questions about the role of newspapers and their relationships with the communities they cover. “Connectivity” deals with the level of intimacy journalists have with their communities, which Reader suggests can affect how journalists do their jobs, specifically when dealing with ethical considerations (2006).

Kaniss (1991) admits that finding news that is appealing to all suburbanites has been difficult for newspapers. While 19th-century newspapers could turn to the city and local government for news, modern newspapers must reach out to a larger number of local governments for news. This increase in municipalities has led some newspapers to focus on governments with a regional focus (Kaniss, 1991). This regional sourcing has helped newspapers created an area-wide identity. However, Kaniss also notes that reporters and editors believe that the city is still important to suburbanites because, journalists say, cities control the fate of metropolitan areas and the suburbs “could not survive without the cities” (1991, p. 66).

Newspaper Coverage of Growth

Crime, pollution, and other urban issues were not the only cultural implications of growth. Local media have also had to deal with this change in population and the resulting development

patterns. While newspaper ownership patterns shifted during the 20th century to reflect the evolving American economy, other effects were influencing newspapers. When newspapers became the products of chain ownership, their coverage also shifted to focus more on national and international news (Thomas & Nain, 2005). This left a tremendous gap in local news coverage. Other studies have shown that local coverage began to focus primarily on crime and other negative elements of city life (Artwick & Gordon, 1998). Artwick and Gordon reported that when newspapers did cover city life, it was usually negative. This promoted suburban growth because this coverage made affluent suburbanites weary of the city, which led to population declines in urban areas (Isenberg, 2005).

Reader (2006) reported that journalists in rural areas face different challenges than their urban counter parts. He suggested that many of these issues are related to the journalists' connectivity to the communities they report on. These issues can range from ethical concerns, to conflict of interest issues because of the reporter's ties with sources and other community members (Reader, 2006).

However, this trend of downtown decline seems to be waning. Isenberg (2005) suggests a shift in ideology has created a sense of nostalgia about these inner city, downtown areas. She said Americans are now experiencing sentimental feelings toward the traditional downtown area – often typified as the downtown of the 1940s and '50s – and are coming back downtown to live, work, and play (Isenberg, 2005). This change in perception has led people to move back into the once-abandoned inner-city areas. New developments, the New Urbanism movement, and other revitalization efforts have helped contribute to this trend, which promotes walkable streets and a return to street-level business (Isenberg, 2005). Isenberg also cited suburban build out as one

reason for this return to the city. Simply put, people do not want to live and commute long distances from work.

Growth Effects and Newspaper Readership

Urban growth impacts many areas of life in cities. From regulations to transportation, urban planners have significant influence over the lives of local residents. During this process of regulation growth, local media may also be affected.

The Project for Excellence in Journalism (2007) said that for the third consecutive year, daily and Sunday newspaper circulation fell sharply in 2006, but noted that losses may level off in 2007. The 2008 State of the News Media 2008 report did not show any leveling off and that the declines continued in 2007. Overall, the Project noted that circulation was down 2.8% daily and 3.4% on Sunday compared to the year before. The declines in Sunday circulation have been significantly higher than daily circulation, dating back to at least 1990 (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2007). Part of this decline can be attributed to the closing of evening newspapers. The Project said that morning circulation is as high as it has ever been.

The report said that the biggest losers were newspapers in large metro markets like Los Angeles, Boston, San Francisco, and Philadelphia. The top 50 newspapers in circulation lost, on average, 3.6% daily.

With these declines in circulation, newspapers have begun looking for a more positive way to market their product to advertisers (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2007). One way they have done this is by emphasizing online readership and asserting that they are losing subscribers to their own websites and that readers are simply changing platforms. Another way newspapers have kept an upbeat tone is by emphasizing readership over circulation. Readership represents the total number of adults that read the paper, which averages 2.3 times the number of

newspapers printed (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2007). The Project reported that readership is on the decline too, but it is not declining as fast as circulation. According to *The Orlando Sentinel*, the paper's circulation is only about 230,000, but the overall readership is well above 700,000.

Readership and subscription varies by age and education levels as well. In 2006, only 35% of people between 18 and 24 read a newspaper in a given week, while older readers, those over 65, were also reading the newspapers less (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2007). Sixty-four percent of those people with a postgraduate degree read a newspaper during the week, while only 47% of high school graduates do.

The State of the News Media Report (2007) cites several reasons why people have stopped reading newspapers. In line with Putnam's (2000) Social Capital Theory, the report suggests that people do not have time to read the newspaper. According to the report, this trend has been growing since the 1960s – the same time that Putnam calls the peak of social capital in the United States. The second most common reason for this decline in readership is convenience (Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2007). This may be attributed to increased commutes from the suburbs, as well as traffic congestion and television use.

Jock Lauterer (2006) concluded that newspapers rely on cities for funding, news, and resources to stay relevant in the age of Internet and television news. However, he suggests that this dependency is mutual and that city residents rely on newspapers to stay informed. The Project for Excellence in Journalism confirms this by arguing, "Newspapers remain the most effective way to reach a broad audience and deliver results for advertisers" (Project, 2006).

Lauterer provides two other relations between newspapers and their cities. First, he says that as

populations grow, so does newspaper readership (although this might not be the case with circulation), and second, he says that newspapers report on growth and development.

Based on the studies discussed thus far, it is clear that urban media face a unique set of challenges that their rural counterparts do not. These challenges include economic issues, coverage, content, and connectivity. Newspapers not only contribute to the overall image of a city, but also encourage a sense of community togetherness and stimulate belonging with communities. However, newspaper readership can also be a measurement of urbanization.

Robert Park, of the Chicago school, wrote in 1929:

Newspaper circulation may be represented schematically in a succession of concentric circles, defining a series of zones – zones of declining circulation, since newspaper circulation, like land values, tends to decline in regular gradients from the center of the city to its circumference; and from the city itself to the limits of the metropolitan area. These gradients of declining newspaper circulation measure the area or urban influence; they measure, in short, the extent and degree of urbanization.

These concentric circles of declining circulation show how social capital and community belonging fade deeper into the suburbs. They are also the focus of this study. However, what Park's study fails to address is why these people on the fringe of the metropolitan area do not read the newspaper.

To reach out to these residents on the fringe of coverage areas, newspapers have responded with zoned editions to cater to the needs of these fringe areas. Zoned editions are specialized sections of the newspapers that cater to the needs of specific parts of the community, often focusing coverage on a more narrow area. Bogart (1989) said that zoned editions were used to reach out to those areas on the periphery of coverage areas and to increase circulation and revenue. However, some newspapers have begun to eliminate zoned editions because of budget and staff cuts.

This decline in readership may be attributed to a number of factors. Previously reviewed studies have suggested that media bias against city life may be an influence. Others implicate a lack of social connection to a community or city. Others still blame a decline in social capital. According to Rattner (2007), circulation has been on the decline for more than 20 years, and the pace of decline is accelerating. He also attributes a loss of young readers to this decline in circulation. Putnam (2000) would argue that young people do not read newspapers because they do not feel socially connected to their communities. Chan and Goldthrope (2007), showed that newspaper readership is related to social status, stating that educational and income levels often indicate higher levels of newspaper readership. Meanwhile, Rattner also writes that the amount of time spent reading newspapers is also on the decline as more readers get their news on the Internet.

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) argue that the kind of community affects media content. They said the media are affected by the defining characteristics of the community they cover. For example, a more culturally diverse community should have a newspaper with more culturally diverse content. This happens because various media must operate within the bounds of their community's local economy and culture. This includes the physical and social layout of the area. Geographic patterns also have an effect on news coverage and content. Dominick (1997), showed that there is an uneven distribution of news coverage, focusing primarily on the two coasts of the United States. As a result of these two trends, Shoemaker and Reese (1996) showed that larger newspapers and television stations, in more densely populated areas, are forced into a sporadic news-coverage pattern, where they only cover specific events rather than everything that happens within a community.

The Orlando Sentinel's recent growth patterns highlight this nationwide trend of circulation decline. *The Orlando Business Journal* reported in 2005 that *The Sentinel* had experienced an 11% drop in circulation during the previous twelve months – one of the steepest rates of decline in the country. In 2007, *The Sentinel's* editor in chief sent a memo to the staff outlining staff cuts and staffing issues being faced by the newspaper (Romenesko, 2007). The full memo can be read in Appendix H.

Theoretical Approach

While little research has been conducted that simultaneously examines both mass communications and urban planning theories, there has been research that suggests these two distinct areas are more related than the current body of literature suggests. Existing research has a high concentration of study on media representation of urban areas and urban media content. No studies were found that examine growth effects on newspapers. However, several theoretical approaches from both areas of study are crucial to this study of growth effects. To better understand these effects, this study will consider several of these dual-purpose theories, including: Robert Putnam's Social Capital Theory (2000), Shoemaker and Reese's hypothesis of media organization (1991), and Lucy's (1988) theory about public participation within planning. It will also rely on the Grounded Theory research method to develop further theoretical understanding on this topic. While this study draws on a wide-ranging group of theory, it's this multiplicity of theoretical approaches that will bridge the gap between communications studies and urban planning theory.

Social Capital Theory

The underlying theoretical foundation for this research rests on Robert Putnam's (2000) Social Capital Theory. Putnam's theory is one of the few in the current body of literature that

examines both urban planning and mass communications in relation to social capital. This study does not rely on Putnam's specific findings but rather on the broad implications of his theory.

In his book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000), Putnam suggests that Americans have been experiencing a decline in civic participation and social connectivity (social capital) since the 1960s. By using data from the Roper Social and Political Trends and the DDB Needham Life Style reports, Putnam (2000) argues that Americans have become more socially disconnected than ever before. Putnam's research shows that public participation peaked in the 1950s and '60s, and has steadily declined ever since (2000). *Bowling Alone* argues that this decline in social capital is the result of several factors, including pressures of time and money, mobility, sprawl, technology, the mass media, and generational differences.

Putnam (2000) argues that the federal highway system broke up the traditional city core by allowing residents to move into the suburbs, distorting their sense of place and community. According to Putnam, a strong sense of community is necessary to promote activities that emphasize social capital, such as reading the newspaper. This dismantling of community values made the population more socially mobile. *Bowling Alone* showed that one in five Americans move each year and are likely to do so again (Putnam, 2000). Also, longer commutes and more time in traffic has contributed to a decline in social capital and newspaper readership – the public does not have time to participate (Putnam, 2000).

Putnam's analysis of the mass media showed a steady decline in newspaper readership, which is considered a strong form of social participation and a "mark of substantial civic engagements. Only a newspaper can put the same thought at the same time before a thousand readers...so hardly any democratic association can carry on without a newspaper" (Putnam,

2000, p. 218). Putnam's findings suggest that newspaper readership began to decline at the time social capital reached its peak in the 1960s, despite significant growth in urban population.

Putnam's implications of mobility, sprawl, and the mass media are important for this study considering that Interstate 4 was constructed through downtown Orlando at about the time Putnam suggests social capital began to decline. This led to similar trends in suburbanization experienced in other cities around the country; it also made the Orlando area heavily reliant on commuting. Also, *The Orlando Sentinel's* circulation numbers reflect the decline in readership [circulation] that Putnam describes in his study.

Cultivation Theory

Gerbner and Gross's (1976) Cultivation Theory argues that the media can have significant effects on the attitudes and behavior of the public based on their representation of certain issues in the press. Exposure to media, over time, cultivates the audience's perceptions of reality. Other studies have suggested that newspapers portray cities in a negative light, cultivating an often negative stereotype of inner-city areas (Dreier, 2005). This helped contribute to the decline of these inner city areas and the rise of suburban areas by presenting urban areas as crime ridden and in other negative lights (Isenberg, 2005). To meet this changing populace, newspapers and other media began catering to the suburban audience, but this population shift does not necessarily affect circulation numbers.

These findings are significant for this study because of the growth effects the Orlando area has experienced during the last several decades and *The Sentinel's* portrayal of those effects. Although this study is not a content analysis of *The Sentinel's* coverage, the effects of Cultivation Theory may influence the audience's perceptions of the newspaper's coverage of growth and its implications.

Media Organization

Media Organization Theory suggests that newspaper development and content is the direct reflection of society. Newspapers' content reflects the community they cover (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). Shoemaker and Reese (1996) hypothesize that five factors influence media content: society, socialization and attitudes, media-organizational routines, social institutions outside the media, and ideological positions.

Findings from Westley and Maclean (1957) suggest that the media are merely information brokers. Gerbner (1969) showed how mass media are operating under pressure from external powers, including clients, advertisers, competitors, and other authorities. McQuail (2005) states that those working within a media organization must be decision makers, despite the varying constraints placed on the media. Many of these decisions are based on relationships with the audience (readers). Research by Weaver and Wilhoit (1986) showed that individual members of the audience were the most active respondents to the media.

Other pressures related to media organization are far reaching, and can include: news and entertainment, diversity, etc. Engwall (1978) calls newspapers a "hybrid organization" because of the dual nature of newspapers as manufacturer-server to the public. Breed (1955) showed that newspaper publishers often set "policy" that affects newspaper coverage and organization; his study focused on how such "policy" came to be followed, and showed that such policies could circumvent journalistic norms, could be disputed, and not followed by staff members. However, Breed (1955) stated that publishers' policy is often followed.

Shoemaker and Reese state that "the kind of community from which a medium operates also affects content. The community is the environment in which the medium must operate, and

therefore the community's economy and culture as well as its physical and social layout will affect the media" (1996, p. 211). They report that the size of the market also affects the medium.

Communicative Planning Theory

While mass communications theories are important to this study, several urban planning approaches must also be considered to better understand the relationship between growth and newspaper operation. According to Habermas (1984), Communicative Planning Theory examines the communications processes for problem structuring and policy development at the local level. At the most basic level, this theory suggests that urban planners must communicate with the public about growth-related problems and development.

In Florida, state law requires that planners give public notice of any hearings to land-use code changes or other government action. Often, newspapers are the most common medium for spreading these types of messages aside from direct mail. Though this does not necessarily mean public agreement with planners' action is guaranteed, it does suggest that public input is important for the planning process.

Although this study does not include interviews with urban planners, it may prove useful for analysis because of the types of coverage contained within the pages of the newspaper. Reporters and editors may have difficulty covering the day-to-day operations of planning and may be forced to limit coverage of such operations. Another aspect worth noting regarding urban planning is newspapers are often the primary media used by planners to relay information about upcoming meetings and regulatory changes. If growth has affected newspapers in a negative way (i.e. declining circulation/readership), planners are not notifying as many people as possible about these changes.

Principles of Broad-based Urban Planning

In a 1988 response to the American Planning Association's thirteen principles, William H. Lucy argued that the APA had too narrowly defined the role of urban planners. Lucy (1988) argued that the planning profession was too broad to be characterized in one-sentence terminology. He suggested that planners should serve a public interest and support public participation. However, the broad nature of planning is what makes the impacts of growth so unique. Urban planners must address a wide range of issues in urban settings, ranging from transportation and environmental concerns to land use regulations and zoning.

Lucy's (1988) criticism raised the alarm of public participation. His argument that the public should take an active role is reflected in recent trends of reader participation in online newspaper forums and reader responses (Schultz, 2000). This idea of public participation is a digression from Putnam's Social Capital Theory (2000), which suggests that public participation is on the decline. Putnam would argue that the more involved citizens are in civic organizations, the more socially connected they are to a community and the more likely they are to subscribe to the local newspaper (2000).

Summary

The review of the literature shows significant gaps in the literature and theory regarding urban journalism. While some studies have shown that the media portray urban areas in a negative light and this portrayal has contributed to the middle-class flight to the suburbs, other research has shown that newspapers serve as a source of community identity by giving a diverse public a way to be united under a common banner/name. The research shows that this notion of community identity is important in promoting Social Capital among urban residents. However, Social Capital, according to Putnam, has been declining since the 1960s; this decline is attributed

to the increased commute time from the suburbs to the commercial areas downtown and because of a decline in newspaper readership. The literature suggests that there is a direct connection between this decline in readership and the expansion of urban areas into the suburbs.

The literature also provided a significant amount of data on the growth and development patterns of the Orlando area. Census Bureau data showed that the Orlando area has tripled in population since Walt Disney World opened in the early 1970s. This rapid-growth pattern is expected to slow during the current economic downturn. However, the literature suggests that the region will continue to grow, just at a slower rate.

The theoretical approach for this study was fairly broad. Since no theory exists that directly addresses the concept of urban communication, the researcher felt that it was necessary to discuss theories that may contribute to the grounded theory approach of this study.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

- H1: Urban growth has had an effect on *The Orlando Sentinel*.
 - R1: How has urban growth affected *The Orlando Sentinel*?
- H2: Urban growth has influenced content by being a significant topic within coverage.
 - R2: Is urban growth a major topic in *The Sentinel*'s pages?
- H3: Urban growth has caused *The Sentinel* to change its coverage tactics and patterns for gathering news in the Orlando area.
 - R3: How has *The Sentinel* altered its coverage to meet the demands of growth?
- H4: Urban growth in Orlando has influenced the newspaper's circulation patterns, resulting in targeted subscription offers.
 - R4: How has *The Sentinel*'s circulation been affected by urban growth?

- H5: Urban growth has affected the newspaper's marketing campaign by requiring varied approaches to marketing the newspaper.
 - R5: What marketing approaches has *The Sentinel* adopted as a result of growth?
- H6: Urban growth has affected staff development.
 - R6: Where does *The Sentinel* hire most new staff members from?

CHAPTER 3 METHOD

This study used qualitative methods to determine the effects of urban growth on *The Orlando Sentinel*, a large, local paper in Central Florida with a circulation of roughly 230,000 daily and 335,000 on Sunday. The researcher conducted 18 in-depth interviews with various current and former staff members to determine their perceptions of growth and its effects on the newspaper, and then analyzed articles from the newspaper to triangulate the data.

The researcher chose a qualitative approach to this study because of the in-depth, personalized analysis that results from such methods and because qualitative research studies can be used to uncover meaning associated with a trend or personal experience (Hoshman, 1989). This study analyzes personal responses to growth and staff perceptions of the effects of growth on the newspaper. To gather the data, the following methods were used: developing codes, categories, and themes; generating a working hypothesis; and analyzing data collected from in-depth interviews with newspaper staff members.

This study explores the effects of urban growth on *The Orlando Sentinel*, specifically analyzing the effects on content, coverage, advertising, marketing, and staff development of the newspaper. This method follows the basic approach as defined by Creswell (1998). Creswell defines qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem” (1998, p. 15).

For this study, the researcher contacted 30 potential participants via e-mail to ask for voluntary participation. Eighteen people responded. Those who agreed to participate were then interviewed over a four-month period regarding their opinions and personal feelings about the effects of growth on *The Orlando Sentinel*. Each participant was also asked to define “growth” in their own way. The interviews were recorded using an audio recorder attachment for an iPod and

later transcribed. The transcribed interviews were then coded and categorized based on prominent themes from the data. These themes were content, coverage, staffing, growth, finances, circulation, relevancy, demographics, local, and newsroom organization. These themes are defined below.

After coding and theming the data, the researcher triangulated it by comparing data shared during the interviews to articles published in *The Sentinel*. This triangulation method was chosen to see if the staffs' perceptions accurately reflected what has been happening within the newspaper itself.

The researcher used this data to generate new theory under the Grounded Theory method of qualitative research.

Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory is a research methodology that emphasizes the generation of theory from data during research. This study relies on this approach because of the lack of existing theory regarding urban growth effects and the media. Creswell defines Grounded Theory as the attempt to generate or discover theory that relates to a particular situation (1998). This study does this by focusing on growth's effects on *The Orlando Sentinel* and the implications for other newspapers across the country.

The process of data analysis in a Grounded Theory study is systematic and follows a standard format, which includes:

- Open coding, in which the research forms initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied,
- Axial coding, in which the investigator assembles data in new ways following open coding.

- Selective coding, in which the reading identifies a story line and integrates the categories from axial coding.
- Finally, the researcher may create a conditional matrix (Cresswell, 1998, p. 57).

This research method was chosen because of the lack of existing theory in the current body of literature. It was also chosen because current trends in the newspaper industry show that many urban areas are developing into one-newspaper markets. This study will lay the foundation for later studies.

Long and Active Interviews

McCracken (1988) calls the long interview one of the most powerful qualitative methods and states that no other method is more revealing. This method was used to better understand the effects of urban growth on *The Orlando Sentinel* in hopes that the trends revealed by this study could lay the foundation for future research on other newspapers. By interviewing individuals about their reflections and perceptions of growth effects, this study provides in-depth, personal observations about such trends happening in Orlando.

Why Orlando?

In a sense, Orlando and its newspaper both came of age in the modern era. The Orlando area was chosen for this study because of its high rate of growth since the 1960s, specifically since the opening of Walt Disney World in South Orange County. Since the park's opening in 1971, the area's population has more than tripled, and the growth rate has consistently ranked as one of the top in the country for the last several decades, often ranking in the top ten nationwide (See Table 1). This growth characteristic is important for this study because some cities around the country are experiencing stagnant or negative growth; and since this study focuses on the

effects of growth, a community experiencing positive growth was essential. This region was also selected because it is home to a large newspaper (*The Orlando Sentinel*).

Why *The Orlando Sentinel*

The Orlando Sentinel was chosen as the sample newspaper for this study because of its location in a fast-growing metropolitan area (see above). Statistics show that *The Sentinel* has shown signs that signify modern trends in the newspapers business: i.e. rising ad revenue but declining circulation numbers (*The New York Times*, 2007). As a result of these shifts in media consumerism, *The Sentinel* may have changed its approach to delivering the news, content, and staff development, making it a primary candidate for analysis.

Defining *The Sentinel's* Coverage Area

For the purposes on this study, the researcher used *The Orlando Sentinel's* definition of its coverage area for analysis. *The Sentinel's* coverage area includes the four-county Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), as defined by the United States Census Bureau, as its core coverage area. The MSA comprises Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Lake Counties. However, *The Sentinel's* coverage area extends beyond the four-county region to include areas of Brevard County, West Volusia County, and Northeast Polk County, as is shown by the *Orlando Sentinel's* coverage area map shown in Appendix A. *The Sentinel's* coverage area includes the cities of Orlando, Winter Park, Apopka, Altamonte Springs, Sanford, Deland, Deltona, Kissimmee, Haines City, Clermont, and Leesburg, among others (Census, 2000a).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000b), the four-county MSA has an estimated population of 2 million people, with Orange County as the center of the region with a population of more than 1 million. Altogether, *The Sentinel's* complete, seven-county coverage area has a population of roughly 3 million.

Participants

For this study, the researcher used *The Orlando Sentinel's* online staff directory to contact staff members for participation in this study. Potential participants were sent an e-mail (See Appendix C) that introduced the researcher and explained the premise of the study. The participants were asked to take part in a short interview to discuss their views and opinions of growth in Orlando and its effects on *The Sentinel*. The e-mail explained the basis of this study as an attempt to better understand the effects of urban growth on the newspaper and the staffs' perceptions of the resulting changes.

While 30 current and former staff members from *The Sentinel* were contacted for participation in this study, only 18 agreed to participate. Two of the participants were former employees of the newspaper who had left *The Sentinel* within the last 12 months. One of these former employees was a former intern and eventual staff member at *The Sentinel's* Volusia and Lake County bureaus. They worked for the newspaper for approximately 15 months. The other former employee was a 20-year veteran of the newspaper who most recently served as the paper's associate managing editor for metropolitan news. All other participants are current employees of the newspaper and included two reporters (one business reporter and one city of Orlando reporter), eight editors (including the editor in chief, the Lake County bureau editor, a deputy online editor, the national/state editor, two government editors, the managing editor, the associate managing editor for content development, and the editorial page editor), one advertising representative/marketing services director, the product marketing manager, an online editor/reporter, the circulation director, the staff development editor, and the reader representative (ombudsman).

Participants were chosen based on willingness to participate and not based on professional experience, length of residency in the Orlando area, gender, or age. Some participants had been working in the newspaper industry for more than 40 years, while others were relative newcomers to the business. Many participants began their careers at other newspapers and came to *The Sentinel* for various reasons.

At the beginning of each interview, participants were asked to read and sign the Informed Consent Form (See Appendix D), showing their voluntary participation in the study.

Procedure

Selecting Participants. The researcher began searching for potential participants by searching *The Orlando Sentinel's* online staff directory. After browsing through the entire staff directory, the researcher sent an e-mail to 28 current staff members that outlined the purpose of the study and asked the recipients if they would be willing to participate in the study. The initial e-mail was sent to *Sentinel* staff members at all levels, including the publisher, editor in chief, managing editor, several beat editors and reporters, as well as members of the production, advertising, circulation and marketing departments. A follow-up e-mail was sent when a potential participant would respond. Several participants were asked to identify any former employees they felt would be willing to participate in the study. Three former employees were contacted by e-mail, and two responded and participated in the study.

Data Collection: Qualitative, in-depth interviews were conducted in person with each participant. The researcher conducted and transcribed all of the interview data. The interviews took place at a location designated by the participant to ensure a comfortable environment for the participants. Of the 18 interviews, 15 took place at *The Sentinel's* downtown Orlando office. Twelve of those 15 interviews took place in the newsroom or in the participant's personal office.

Two were conducted in the newspaper's cafeteria, and one was conducted in the lobby of the newspaper at a private cubicle. One interview was conducted at *The Sentinel's* Lake County Bureau where the participant worked. Another was conducted at a restaurant near the University of Central Florida because the participant was no longer an employee at *The Sentinel*. One interview was conducted over the phone. The interviews were conducted between December 2007 and March 2008.

Prior to each interview, the researcher prepared an interview guide to ensure certain research questions were addressed in each interview. See Appendix E for an example of an interview guide. Individual guides were prepared for each interview so that questions could be targeted based on the participant's role at the newspaper. Participants were not asked any questions unrelated to their duties at the newspaper. For example, the online editor was not asked any questions related to print advertising.

The researcher recorded each interview with an audio-recording iPod attachment, and the researcher took notes during the interviews to highlight the primary points made by each participant. Following each interview, the researcher and the participant debriefed about the interview to clarify any unclear statements or information and to ask any final, follow-up questions. The researcher then debriefed alone and wrote down any thoughts or comments about the interview. No in-person, follow-up interviews were necessary; however, some follow-up e-mails were sent to several participants to clarify phrasing or other wording. No extra information was gathered from these follow-up e-mails. They were strictly used for clarification purposes.

The researcher chose to analyze the articles from *The Sentinel's* "Local In-Depth" section because it was a commonly referred to during the interviews. "Local In-Depth" is a Monday

section that was created in January 2006. It has covered a wide variety of growth-related issues from a regional perspective.

Data Analysis and Writing: A potential problem for qualitative researchers is evidentiary adequacy. For this study, each interview lasted between 30 minutes and one hour. Once all of the interviews were completed and transcribed, the researcher coded the data for common themes and phrases. The themes and categories were then sorted, compared, and analyzed until they were fully saturated.

Saturation: After conducting and analyzing 18 interviews, the researcher began to notice common themes emerging from the data. These themes are defined below.

Themes

The analysis of the data presented in the interviews is divided into ten categories/themes: content, coverage, staffing, growth, finances, circulation, relevancy, demographics, localized focus, and newsroom organization.

Growth: For the purposes of this study, growth will encompass a number of definitions, including the population growth of *The Orlando Sentinel's* coverage area and the land development in that region

Content: Content refers to the actual information printed in *The Orlando Sentinel* or published on the newspaper's website, orlandosentinel.com.

Coverage: Coverage refers to the newspaper's reporting and news-gathering techniques. It also refers to the emphasis reporters and editors place on certain topics when generating story ideas or drafting content.

Staffing: The term "staffing" refers to the development of and hiring of staff members for *The Orlando Sentinel*.

Finances: Finances refers to the newspaper's financial and budget outlook. This also encompasses any financial resources at the newspaper.

Circulation: Circulation includes the number of newspapers printed each day, as well as the number of home-delivery subscriptions, penetration rate of the paper, and readership, which is the number of people who read the paper each day and is often calculated at 2.5 times the number of papers sold.

Relevancy: Relevancy refers to the audiences' perceptions of the newspaper's content.

Demographics: Demographics refer to the changing population of *The Sentinel's* coverage area.

Localized Focus: Localized focus refers to the content of the newspaper and its focus on covering local issues over national and international news.

Newsroom Organization: Newsroom organization refers to the structure of *The Sentinel's* newsroom. *The Sentinel* reorganized its newsroom staff structure in May 2007.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

After conducting and transcribing 18 in-depth interviews with various *Sentinel* employees from December 2007 to March 2008, the researcher found that urban growth does have an effect on newspapers, at least *The Orlando Sentinel*. While qualitative data is not generalizable to broad samples, it can be indicative of a larger trend across the country. Ten overall themes emerged from the data, including content, coverage, staffing, and circulation, and four of the six hypotheses were fully supported, two were not. An analysis of *The Sentinel*'s "Local In-Depth" section also showed how growth has affected content at the newspaper.

Of the 18 participants, six were women and 12 were men. Sixteen were Caucasian. One was African American. One was Hispanic. The age demographics skewed largely toward the older, with only one participant being under 25. For a biography of each participant, please see Appendix F.

H1: Growth

H1 said urban growth has affected *The Orlando Sentinel*. H1 was supported based on the data collected through the interviews. All of the participants in the study cited at least one way that growth has affected the day-to-day operations of the newspaper and their job within the company. While participants may not have mentioned the same types of effects, all of them reached the conclusion that growth had affected their day-to-day job at Orlando Sentinel Communications and the newspaper in general.

In total, 17 of the participants discussed their personal definitions and opinions of growth; all of them talked about the effect of growth on the newspaper. The participants overwhelmingly said that growth was a defining characteristic of the Orlando area and the newspaper.

Editor in Chief Charlotte Hall called growth a “major topic” and “the most important issue that the newspaper covers” because of the resources the paper devotes to it and because it “affects every, single aspect of life [in Central Florida].” She said the area’s population growth had helped *The Sentinel* reach more people than ever before and that this increased reach is “partly a growth issue because the place has grown, and it’s also growth in the way people use media.” Editorial Page Editor Jane Healy agreed. “Growth drives everything here, not just the local economy, but the state’s as well,” said Healy, who observed that growth is a “definitive characteristic” of the community, “definitive of this newspaper,” and that readers are “interested in it too,” which makes it a frequent topic of conversation in the newspaper.

If Orlando had never grown, it would have been a sleepy, kind of orange grove town. So almost everything about it, whether it’s the tourism growth, or just the subdivision growth, it’s totally defined Orlando. It’s a different type of growth now. It’s getting much more diverse than it ever was before.

Hall’s and Healy’s views reflect the positive and pragmatic view of urban growth found in the data. Other than a few observations about the increase in problems such as crime and traffic, most of the participants cited positive effects of growth on the newspaper. Like Hall and Healy, Product Marketing Manager Lisa Bridges called growth a “good thing,” but, she noted the paper has not benefited from the growth as might be expected because as the area’s population has surged in recent years, the newspaper’s circulation has declined. The participants cited several reasons for this, including changes in reader habit and the shift to the Internet, a lack of reinvestment back into the newspaper for marketing purposes, and content relevancy. John Cutter, a deputy online editor, disagreed with Healy’s assessment that readers are interested in growth more than any other topic. He said, “I think they [readers] would talk about the effects of growth, but I’m not sure that the word ‘growth’ would come out of their mouths.”

All 15 of the participants working as editors and reporters said growth had affected the newsgathering process at the newspaper. These responses answered R1, which asked how urban growth had affected *The Orlando Sentinel*. Associate Managing Editor for Content Development Steve Doyle and Government Editor Mark Skoneki said growth has become integrated into the newsroom and the newsgathering process by driving decisions about what stories to cover and how to frame them. “Growth seems to be a component in just about everything that we’re interested in,” said Skoneki, who called growth one of the biggest topics in the newspaper in the last year because of the city of Orlando and Orange County’s new venues project. But, Doyle noted in addition to changing its focus on what it covers as news, the paper has also expanded the areas that it covers. He pointed to the fact that because *The Sentinel*’s core coverage area (Orange, Seminole, and Osceola counties) has built out. He said most of the available land in those counties is nearly gone and new development is occurring in the suburban fringe. The paper has expanded the areas where it covers and gathers news in the suburban fringe as part of an effort to increase its circulation, Doyle said.

Another government editor, Debbie Salamone, echoed Skoneki’s and Doyle’s sentiment about growth, noting that it had “molded” *The Sentinel*. In other words, Salamone asserted, growth was “the number one story” at *The Sentinel* because it affects every aspect of life and has become “the engine that drives the paper.” Indeed, Orlando government reporter Mark Schlueb called growth “the quintessential Florida story.”

Lake County Bureau Editor Jerry Fallstrom said growth had made Lake County a “bedroom community” for Orlando because the city’s sphere of influence has extended as the area has developed.

Former Assistant Managing Editor for Metropolitan News Sean Holton said growth had caused him to worry about the work habits of reporters. He said when he arrived at *The Sentinel* in 1987, fears of traffic and commuting to cover stories was a greater concern because the area lacked an integrated highway system. However, as Scott Powers (2006) showed in his “Local In-Depth” article, “Building the Beltway,” the Orlando area has worked for more than a decade to build a beltway around the Orlando area to meet increasing traffic demands.

Other interviews revealed that growth had affected *The Sentinel*'s hiring practices, newsroom organization, marketing efforts, and circulation trends. Staff Development Editor Dana Eagles said that growth had affected staff recruitment because as the area has grown, the way the paper covers the region has changed, which has led to different newsroom operations models and two newsroom reorganization efforts in the last two years alone. Circulation Director Norbert Ortiz said the area's population growth is a “huge benefit” for the newspaper because “Florida has a tendency to attract Baby Boomers, who are often newspaper readers and more likely to subscribe to the newspaper.” Other participants disagreed with Ortiz's conclusion about the region's population and readership habit.

The business side of the newspaper also sees the effects of growth. Marketing Services Director Gary Winters and Product Marketing Director Lisa Bridges both said that growth has made their individual jobs easier. Winters said that being in a high-growth community makes marketing the newspaper to national advertisers easy because it means there are more customers for advertisers to reach. He said:

I've told people that if you can't market Orlando, you've got to get out of the marketing business. We've got a great market here. It's always growing; usually one of the fastest in the nation and often one of the fastest in the state. Just the population growth, along with the employment growth and all the new industry we've had, it is something we can boast about to practically anybody.

Bridges agreed. From her perspective, the growth has brought more people into the region for her team to market the paper to.

H2: Effects on Content

H2 posited that urban growth has influenced content by being a significant topic within coverage. This hypothesis was supported by all of those interviewed from the editorial staff, including all 11 current and former editors, the reader representative, and three current and former reporters/columnists. Participants discussed a range of topics related to content that included the scaling back of some of the newspaper's sections as well as targeting and focusing news stories around the issue of growth and its effects. Six of the participants cited changes in the nature of crime stories as one of the biggest effects of growth on the newspaper's content.

The interviews also support R2, which asked if urban growth is a major topic in *The Sentinel's* pages. Both Debbie Salamone, government editor, and Mark Russell, managing editor, discussed, in detail, the paper's "Local In-Depth" section. Salamone and Russell both said the section was created as a direct response to the region's growth and as a means to educate the readership about growth-related issues. Salamone said the section covers a wide variety of subjects related to growth and may analyze a trend or educate the public. She cited Christopher Sherman's October 22, 2007, story titled "Governments turn to CRAs to pay for a better future," as an example of a story where the paper explained a growth-related topic – community redevelopment agencies. Russell said:

We've done a couple of things to try and meet that challenge [growth in the community]. We started this new section, now I guess it's not so new now, it's more than a year old now, called "Local In-Depth." It's a Monday section; it once was part of our 'Local and State' section. So we tried to turn most of the page over to a weekly feature on the growing region. So literally a page that looks at growth in the region, and we look at things ranging from

school population and the prevalence of portables on high school campuses to the exotic animals that populate our region, to impact fees and how they inhibit growth in communities.

Russell also said that even writers and columnists at the paper's bureaus are encouraged to place an emphasis on growth, because "it affects their regions more than it does other areas in a pronounced way." He said the paper tries to place bureaus in high-growth areas so that the paper can adequately cover those areas. Salamone said that she believes the newspaper should reflect the defining characteristics of the community; in this case, growth.

Editor in Chief Charlotte Hall said, "Growth is a subject we cover intensively." However, she observed, when she arrived at the newspaper in 2004, the coverage of the "human side" of growth was not there. Government Editor Mark Skoneki agreed. "It seems like every time we tackle an issue there is always some sort of, at the very least, an underpinning about growth if that's not the focus of the story," he said. He described how government stories are also often growth related, such as Tamara Lytle's February 4, 2008, "Local In-Depth" story titled "5 things you have at stake in Congress," which discussed legislation regarding the economy, and Rick McKay's March 12, 2007, story "Downtown's dirty dozen," which reported on traffic engineers in downtown Orlando. Lake County Editor Jerry Fallstrom said, "Almost everything in Lake County is a growth story, or has been, but because of pressure on our reporters to contribute to the main newspaper, as well as the Lake Edition, our bureau has had to broaden our focus." Fallstrom said one way they have done this is through their crime coverage. He said, for example, if a small crime happens in Lake County, it will probably be covered in a news brief. However, large crimes must be covered so that they appeal to a broader Orlando audience.

Nation/State Editor Bob Shaw said that urban areas, like Orlando and Miami, “are arguably the craziest areas of the state and make for terrific stories that people enjoy reading.” He said urban growth creates a bevy of strange happenings that make for good news to read.

Both of the current reporters interviewed, Beth Kassab and Mark Schlueb, said editors encourage them to incorporate growth into their stories. “[Because of growth], there really is no shortage of topics to write about,” said Beth Kassab, a business reporter and columnist. “That’s one really good thing, because there seems to be a lot happening here right now.” She said that despite the recent economic downturn, “Even if growth is booming or if growth is slowing down, both are extremely important stories.”

Manning Pynn, a 23-year veteran of *The Sentinel* and the reader representative, said during his tenure at the paper the types of stories *The Sentinel* pursues has changed. He said that throughout the 1990s, *The Sentinel* perceived itself as a metropolitan newspaper, much like *The New York Times*, because “it concerned itself with cosmopolitan issues, international issues, national issues, as well as local issues.” Pynn used the newspaper’s September 11 coverage as an example. “Following the attacks, we devoted the entire A1 section to New York and Washington coverage. However, we did not have a Central Florida focus.” He said that readers grew accustomed to this approach to news, but the paper could not sustain this expensive coverage because of changes in readership habits. People were not subscribing to the newspaper as much and were reading online, which does not generate as much ad revenue as the print edition of the paper. He said the newspaper began to switch its focus to local news earlier this decade.

While all of the editorial employees that participated in the study said that growth was a major topic for the newspaper, eight of the participants said the content must remain relevant to readers and other consumers in order for the newspaper to hold onto its readers and remain

viable. One way several of the participants said the paper can do this is by reflecting the area's changing demographics in the newspaper by writing about race issues. "I feel as if our content is relevant to people, and we're finding new ways to make it more relevant online," Editor in Chief Charlotte Hall said. Mark Russell agreed with Hall's assessment about relevancy and local content.

Debbie Salamone said readers are looking for local and useful news that is relevant to them. "In Orlando, everyone wants a newspaper that caters to them, but that's hard to do."

Product Marketing Director Lisa Bridges said that the newspaper's content must remain relevant in order for her to market it to the community. "What we need to do as a product is stay relevant with consumers, and that's the main thing. We need to have stories in there; you can do all the marketing you want, but you need to stay relevant with consumers, and then we can market that," she said. Circulation Director Norbert Ortiz agreed.

Nearly all of the respondents who discussed the content of the newspaper and its website mentioned an increased demand for more local content. However, two distinct schools of thought emerged: reader demands and an altered focus for the newspaper. Editor in Chief Charlotte Hall said part of the problem *The Sentinel* has faced as a result of their expanding coverage area is that people "have an identity with their area in terms of their schools and traffic issues and infrastructure things." She said readers want "local-local" coverage, which she defined as coverage with a specifically Central Florida focus rather than national or international. She added that providing such "local-local" coverage is difficult and costly for the newspaper.

Steve Doyle, associate managing editor for content development, agreed with the other participants. He said, "Readers in those new communities, and old communities, want a newspaper that, really, is tailored for them." Even *The Sentinel's* bureaus have placed an

emphasis on local coverage. “We’re definitely local,” Lake County Editor Jerry Fallstrom said. “You know, Orlando has got the bigger picture of what they’re trying to cover, but in Lake we have a definite local focus.”

Government Editor Debbie Salamone said this localized focus is a new trend at the paper. John Cutter, deputy online editor, said the website has incorporated new tools for “hyperlocal” coverage as a result of the demands from users. He said,

We are probably going to tighten the focus because we’ve built out too many neighborhood places and didn’t really have enough ways to get people involved in it. So we’re probably going to start, a bit more systematically, to try to build up interest and content on different parts of it to see if we can show the sort of the full richness of [the site].

Manning Pynn said the newspaper should be known as the source for “all information locally.” However, he said that the current online business model has made this mantra difficult to accomplish since readers have come to expect information for free on the web. He also mentioned the shift in focus from local to regional and back to local. Holton called this localization of the news the future for newspapers.

H3: Effects on Coverage

H3 suggests that growth has caused *The Sentinel* to change its coverage tactics and patterns for gathering news in the Orlando area, and R3 asked how *The Sentinel* has altered its coverage to meet the demands of growth. The analysis of the interviews confirmed H3, because all 15 of the participants from the editorial side of the newspaper cited specific changes to the news-gathering process at *The Sentinel* because of the effects of growth, such as traffic, congestion, reporter lifestyle changes, and the changing nature of the types of stories covered by the newspaper.

Editor in Chief Charlotte Hall said the newspaper “devotes a lot of resources to covering all of the issues surrounding growth.” She said,

When I first arrived here four years ago, I thought that we weren’t covering growth adequately. I mean, the element we were missing was coverage of the human side of growth and what that meant for the community. We were covering the infrastructure growth okay, you know, the sort of land use issues, environment, what roads do you build, transportation messes. We were covering schools well, too. I really felt like we had a changing community here because growth here was really about influx of people here from other places, not, you know, all of a sudden everyone having 20 babies.

Managing Editor Mark Russell said every reporter, regardless of their beat, is encouraged to examine the issue of growth and how people are reacting to it. He also noted a change in the type of story he encourages when reporters are covering national news. He said, “I would give them [reporters] specific instructions to ‘come back with a Central Florida angle.’” David Damron’s (2007) July 9, 2007, story about local ratification of the Kyoto Protocol highlights this localizing of national/international stories. Russell said the “Local In-Depth” section one of the ways the newspaper has “addressed the conundrum” of covering a growing region.

We decided that the land-use function should be a part of every team, almost every team, to have that [growth] really as a focus, especially for this region. But there are some regions of our coverage area that are, the development issues are more prominent and more prevalent. One of them is Lake County, which is probably seeing some of the fastest growth rates around here in the last 10 years.

Assistant Managing Editor Steve Doyle said growth has “forced us to continually redefine how we cover news, how we circulate the paper, how we understand different communities that spring up.” He added:

What growth does is create new communities that you have to cover, and you have to go out and learn what they are and how best to reach them. It’s hard for newspapers to cover those communities effectively because there are so many of them, and everybody in

new communities and old communities wants a newspaper that is tailored for them.

Government Editor Mark Skoneki said growth has caused his reporting staff to have to be more careful when selecting stories because there is more news to cover.

Well, we cover less. We have to cherry pick more. We, I think if you go back and look at the paper 15 years ago, we covered much more routine things much more intensively. We were at more city council meetings in the smaller towns. We were involved in many more very local disputes. We do less of that now because we have fewer people to do it.

Nation/state Editor Bob Shaw called growth the impetus for everything he and his reporting staff do. He said growth has affected coverage because it creates more news that needs to be covered and “we could use more people [reporters] because there are more suburbs to cover, more accidents, more murders, more of everything.” He said that since the newspaper is not keeping pace with the number of reporters and editors it employs, its coverage is declining. Lake County Editor Jerry Fallstrom said the bureau is starting to try to cover news in different ways because there is too much news to cover. “We might try to cover things with a brief, or something with a photo, or get something on the web. We started a blog in Lake County.”

Government Editor Debbie Salamone and former Assistant Managing Editor for Metropolitan News Sean Holton both observed that changes to the local demographics and lifestyle changes had affected the newspaper’s coverage. Salamone said one of the biggest changes in coverage has been that of the Hispanic community. She also noted that the newspaper had gotten rid of its growth reporter.

Orlando Government Reporter Mark Schlueb said he has “had to become much more attuned and adept at covering growth issues” because of the region’s growth and staff cuts. He said he has to use a different layer of sources for coverage because of the role developers and

planning boards play in the area's growth. Now that he is the sole Orlando government reporter, he said he often cannot cover Municipal Planning Board Meetings and other minor committees because of time. "I do monitor them, but they're not closely covered," he said. "Certainly there's more stuff now that we're not covering that people are noticing, especially in suburban cities like Winter Park and Maitland, where we had spent a lot of time in the past, so they kind of have a sense of entitlement to coverage," he said.

Former *Sentinel* reporter Christine Dellert said, "In a growing community like this one, it's very important to have reporters that know the community and are familiar with the people, the officials and the area."

Sean Holton emphasized the evolving focus of the newspaper's coverage during his 20-year tenure at the newspaper. He said the newspaper has retreated from the suburban areas and concentrated its staff at the newspaper's downtown newsroom.

We had a bureau in Winter Park and Pine Hills; we had a bureau in Apopka; and at one point we had one in South Orange in Edgewood or Belle Isle. But the demands of growth on the region make it a more difficult proposition to cover local news on the micro level because you have too many communities. And you can't grow your reporting staff. So the traditional coverage kind of got lost because the little cities weren't really in that, they became less important than the giant developments in unincorporated areas. It just turned the old fashioned model on its head.

Holton did say coverage is "more of a pick and choose effort." He said reporters must choose stories that are of interest to the entire region, not just on the local level "Twenty years ago you wouldn't have had stories about growth issues in Lake County and how they connect to other areas in the region." However, he said, "readers want to know what's going on in their city, but the extent of that coverage really started to go away and has diminished."

Manning Pynn said: “We cover the things that have come to Orlando and made the area grow. We cover tourism. Of course that was hardly an issue in the 1960s and into the 1970s, but it certainly became an issue when Disney arrived.” He also said, “Well, the obvious thing is that there are new things to be covered here: the growth of the theme parks and all the various attendant industries that have sprung up around it.”

H4: Circulation

H4 said that urban growth in Orlando has influenced the newspaper’s circulation patterns and resulted in targeted subscription offers. This hypothesis was only partially supported by the interviews. The participants revealed that urban growth has affected the newspaper’s circulation patterns, however not in the way an outside observer might guess. The interviews showed an inverse effect on advertising. H4 was only partially supported, because the interviews revealed there have not been any targeted subscription efforts as a result of growth. Circulation Director Norbert Ortiz said he may raise subscription rates rather than decrease them.

Thirteen of the 18 participants discussed the effects of growth on circulation and readership during their interviews. “The problem is that growth and the number of people in Central Florida has not been matched by similar growth in advertising and circulation,” Bob Shaw said.

Former Assistant Managing Editor Sean Holton agreed.

The Sentinel was in this really booming area where the newspaper was growing along with it, or trying to grow along with it, and if you look at the numbers at how they have grown, and go back to 1970, and look at the cumulative growth of those counties, and look at the circulation, you can see that the population growth has outstripped the circulation growth, and in recent years the circulation growth has actually slipped a little.

He said that another element contributing to this decline in circulation is the changing news habits of readers. However, he noted, despite the decline in circulation, the newspaper's readership has actually increased.

Editor in Chief Charlotte Hall supported Shaw and Holton's conclusions. "Just because a community grows in population does not mean that the newspaper grows in circulation. Our growth sort of peaked out, and then trends began to happen to sort of caused newspaper circulation to go down nationwide. We've declined some, just as all papers have." She also supported Holton's assertion that *The Sentinel's* readership has actually increased despite the circulation decline. She said the newspaper's readers are primarily white, long-time residents, with higher income and education. Norbert Ortiz, circulation director, said a large percentage of homeowners in the area read the paper.

Managing Editor Mark Russell said that circulation has been in a "tailspin" in recent years. "If you look at our region, because it's growing, we haven't kept pace with the growth," he said. He added that even though the newspaper's circulation has flatlined recently, the paper's penetration rate in the market has actually decreased because there are more people in the Orlando area.

Steven Doyle, associate managing editor for content development, and Norbert Ortiz both said circulation was up in 2007, although it increased by only 0.5-1%. Doyle did not attribute this minor circulation growth to urban growth in the region. He said the circulation declines *The Sentinel* has experienced in recent years were actually "self-inflicted wounds" because the newspaper cancelled its Third Party Circulation and hotel programs. For a Third Party Circulation programs the newspaper sends copies to vendors in other parts of the country, who then sell single copies of the newspaper on behalf of *The Sentinel*. Hotel programs involve

providing free copies of the newspaper to hotels throughout the region, which then leave them, free of charge, outside of each hotel room. Despite the minor gains in circulation, Doyle agreed with Russell that the paper's penetration rate has decreased. "We used to have a 60% penetration on Sundays, but now it's down to about 42%, but that is because the market [population] is up. So while our penetration is down, the number of people reading is actually higher because there are more people in the market," he said. He said the paper reaches about 80 to 90% of adults in the area through the newspaper, website, and ads.

John Cutter, deputy online editor, said that the newspaper's website has had a 20-40% increase in traffic during the last year. Other participants supported this assertion and noted that there has been a big shift in readers to the website because nationwide reading habits support online news.

Circulation Director Norbert Ortiz confirmed that the circulation had experienced moderate growth in 2007. "We've actually been growing our base of home delivery customers," and that circulation growth has been the result of "continuing to improve our service and continuing to develop different features for people." He projected that the newspaper would continue to see small growth in the early parts of 2008 and would flatline in the second half of the year. However, he believes that the circulation will eventually continue to decline at about 1% a year.

However, Manning Pynn, the reader representative, said the newspaper "has not grown commensurately with the population." He said this trend is the result of growth because the people moving to Orlando are not part of the traditional newspaper reading demographic. "Newspaper readers tend to be a little older, a little more highly educated, and wealthier than the average individual. And the growth of Orlando has been a product of the service industry and

tourism interests.” He also said that the circulation declines really started in the last decade and up until that point, the paper had actually been keeping pace with the growth.

Product Marketing Director Lisa Bridges said: “The fact that our circulation is down versus the trend for the population is huge. We should at least try to be at least within the same trending line, we might be way below, but trending the same and what not.” Marketing Services Director Gary Winters called circulation “critical” to the paper’s advertising success. He said the recent declines in circulation have forced his office to “press readership numbers” over circulation, which means the number of people who actually read the paper, not just those that subscribe to it. He said the national average for calculating readership is two to two-and-a-half times circulation.

H5: Marketing of Products

H5 posited that urban growth has affected the newspaper’s marketing campaign by requiring varied approaches to marketing the newspaper. Based on the interviews with Product Marketing Manager Lisa Bridges and Marketing Services Director Gary Winters, H5 is supported.

Lisa Bridges said the greatest effect of growth on the marketing of the newspaper has been the increase in the number of people to market the product to. She also said her department has tried multiple methods to promote the company’s products. “We do everything from mass media campaigns, using outdoor billboards, print ads in specific magazines and within our newspaper product. We do radio; we do online ads; we really just kind of do a variety of different things; and then we also do, more specifically, website marketing,” she said. Bridges said that they have been able to increase the circulation, partly because they’ve dramatically increased the amount of outdoor billboards that we have in the market. She said that growth has also created “a whole

other group of people who focus on.” The newspaper has also tried varied approaches to online marketing as well, including e-mail advertising and creating applications on social networking sites such as Facebook and Myspace for people to download.

Gary Winters, the marketing services director, said the region’s growth has made marketing the Orlando market to potential advertisers easier because advertisers appreciate growing markets because of more potential customers. He said that with more people moving into the region, advertisers see the potential of reaching more customers.

However, both participants said financial problems at the newspaper have also affected the marketing and advertising departments. Both Bridges and Winters said decreases in staff have limited the types of marketing and recruitment of advertisers their departments have been able to do. Bridges specifically said her team has not been able to participate in many local events because there “aren’t enough workers to cover them.” While budgets have been cut, Winters said, “We’ve had really pretty steady growth in advertising revenue, which has been great. Recently it’s gotten a little tougher and we’re looking at spreading out and finding new categories of business to go after.”

All of the participants cited financial changes at the newspaper as a result of growth. The responses varied, however, and the focus of each conversation varied from advertising revenue to circulation dollars to budget cuts. Some participants were hesitant to talk about the financial state of the newspaper and spoke in relatively vague terms.

Because of the budget cuts to marketing and the subsequent decline/stagnation of advertising revenue, other parts of the budget have been cut. Steve Doyle, associate managing editor of content development, said, “One of the things we try not to do whenever we have to cut

the budget is affect the news gathering group, unless for some reason we're not going to do something anymore, but we want to have as many feet on the street as possible.”

Editor in Chief Charlotte Hall said newspapers have two primary expenses: people and paper. “If you get into a situation where you need to make cutbacks, those are the two places you go,” she said.

R5 asked what marketing approaches has *The Sentinel* adopted as a result of growth. Based on the interviews, it was found that *The Sentinel* uses several marketing approaches to promote its products. These include billboard advertisements in the targeted parts of the core market, smaller signs at targeted locations, television and radio ads, print ads, and online efforts including e-mail marketing, ads on orlandosentinel.com, and applications on social networking sites. The participants cited financial problems as having an effect on the types of marketing their staffs have been able to do, but they have noticed an upswing in circulation in recent months.

Business Columnist and Reporter Beth Kassab said growth “affects advertising, which affects circulation, and eventually you get to a point where it does affect your newsroom resources.”

H6: Staff Development and Hiring

H6 said urban growth has affected staff development at *The Orlando Sentinel*. All of the participants, regardless of their position with the newspaper, said growth had affected hiring and staff development. Several of the participants said growth was a contributing factor in the newspaper's most recent newsroom reorganization efforts. Other topics related to staffing discussed by the participants included editorial staffing, budgetary constraints, hiring, and staff development. A flow chart explaining the staff structure at *The Sentinel* can be found in Appendix J.

Editor in Chief Charlotte Hall said: “[Growth] obviously affects us in the terms of the way we staff, of the way we create beats.” She noted that the newsroom had 260 staff members in January 2008. Managing Editor Mark Russell also discussed the size of the newsroom.

There’s an old adage that a newspaper should have one staffer for every 1,000 in circulation, if I remember this correctly. So when I got here in 2004, we had a newsroom of 310 staffers, maybe [3]20. So 310 staffers, so by that reckoning, we should’ve had 310,000 daily circulation, but we didn’t. We didn’t have that, we don’t have that now. Our circulation now is down to about 230 or 235,000, and our staff size is still about 270 or 272, so we’re still higher in terms of staff than the measurement would suggest if you’re looking at a strict measurement of one staffer for every 1,000 in circulation.

He attributed the high staff size to the paper’s “ambition” and the rise in revenue in the 1990s.

He said:

With that growth of the revenue came more ambition to do serious journalism, to have great packages, greater sports, greater business. So it was a professionalizing of a reporting staff and a newspaper that [had] greater ambition to do investigative reporting, food reporting, you know, become a complete package of topics as a metropolitan paper. We’re higher than that and with good reason because we have great ambition as a paper of covering the whole state.

Debbie Salamone mentioned the organization of the newspaper’s beats. “We don’t have a reporter who is a growth reporter anymore. We had that over many years and that person was supposed to be covering a lot of the growth management issues in terms of growth plans and big developments and all this sort of stuff, but that’s a very hard beat for a reporter.” She said one reason the paper no longer has a growth reporter is that editors did not see it as a successfully-done beat. “It’s like it’s a bit of a financial decision to not have that position anymore,” she said.

Mark Schlueb said budget cuts forced the company (Tribune) to leave some positions unfilled, which has created additional stress on him as a reporter because he is now the sole reporter covering city government in Orlando. Previously, the newspaper had two reporters covering Orlando government. He said that many smaller government boards do not get covered now because of this reduction in staff. “There’s a total of 84 cities in our coverage area,” he said. “If you think we have a reporter in 84 cities, you’re crazy.”

Staff changes were also found at *The Sentinel*’s bureaus as well as its primary newsroom in downtown Orlando. Jerry Fallstrom, Lake County bureau editor, said, “We’ve got a limited staff; a staff that has been shrunk because of the realities of the newspaper business. So we have fewer reporters covering more; it’s a bigger county. It’s a lot bigger county.” He said that there are more demands for his reporters to write for the main paper. He said this decline in reporting staff is mostly financial. “I mean we’ve had positions that we haven’t been able to fill, this has happened in the last few years, when somebody will leave, they might not fill the position. That has happened a couple of times in the last few years.”

Christine Dellert, who also worked at the Lake County Bureau, said, “It’s funny, the bureau in Lake shrunk while the population out there grew, so we the editors had to prioritize their resources.” She also noted:

We had two reporters leave while I was there. Actually, we shrunk, and then we grew. We had seven reporters and two editors. We lost two reporters, which was tough for a while. We had to work extra hours and weekends sometimes to make up for what those two reporters did. Then we grew again and added maybe two or three reporters.

While staff changes have been minor at the Lake County Bureau, other bureaus at the paper have been shut down. Sean Holton said, “The staffing and bureau structure changed [because of

growth], and so did the actual physical design of the newspaper where there are fewer of those zoned editions.”

Closing suburban bureaus has been a cost-cutting effort at *The Sentinel*. However, several of the participants discussed how the closings have influenced their day-to-day duties and workload. Most of Orlando’s growth has taken place in the suburban areas, which creates more news to be covered in those areas. By closing these bureaus, *The Sentinel* risks missing out on potential news stories and reporters face longer commutes to cover the news.

John Cutter noted that *The Sentinel* has used “citizen journalists” to create “hyper local” content instead of paying for a reporter to do it. “So the other way that it [growth] has influenced us is that as this area has gotten bigger, so have these sort of smaller units [communities] within it, and we can do a better job online of covering them [small communities] than print can do.” Reliance on citizen journalists may pose dangerous risks for the newspaper. These citizen journalists are not contracted employees and are not required to follow *The Sentinel*’s code of ethics, (See Appendix G).

Several current and former staff members also discussed the changing staff demographics.

Sean Holton said:

The biggest story of Orlando’s growth as far as demographics has been the growth of the Hispanic population. The paper has done great strides to keep up with that. The newsroom has done pretty well in terms of Hispanic reporters. The African American portion of the staff has been more challenging to maintain as a reflection of the community and the African American segment of the population in Orlando.

Debbie Salamone agreed. She said she can remember the newsroom having “hardly any Hispanic people on our staff. Now, it’s younger, more Hispanic.”

R6 asked if most of *The Sentinel*'s new hires were from the Orlando area. Dana Eagles, the staff development editor in charge of recruitment, said growth has had "direct implications on staffing." He said that being in a growth market like Orlando, it is easier to recruit potential staff because "there is a lot of news, which is an important factor and an attractive thing for journalists." However, Eagles said that growth has had some negative effects on staffing as well. "One negative thing about growth for staffing has been the changes in lifestyle factors that come with being bigger." He said, "The interesting thing about attracting journalists in a growth market is that the very things that make it more interesting to cover might make it not quite as good of a place to live. Because the big city issues also mean that they affect you personally." Eagles said he recruits most new hires from outside of the Orlando area because *The Sentinel* is the only large newspaper in the region, which means there are limited opportunities in Orlando for journalists to receive training and build a career other than *The Sentinel*.

Another effect growth has had on *The Sentinel* is that it has partially contributed to the newspaper's two recent newsroom reorganizations. Eight of the participants discussed newsroom reorganization during their interviews.

Editor in Chief Charlotte Hall said the newsroom should reflect what is going on in the community and that it must be restructured every few years to match changes in the market. "Since Orlando is defined by growth, the newsroom and the paper's organization should be, too. If we just say here and said what we thought was news, we would be disconnected from the community; we wouldn't do a very good job at all." She said one response to the region's growth that came about during a recent reorganization was the creation of a demographics team whose goal is to cover race and other issues, specifically Hispanic affairs as part of the Hispanic beat. Hall said that the newspaper has been able to do a better job covering demographic issues

because of its recent reorganization. “It’s interesting because we have cut staff. I’m not going to give you the numbers because those are pretty confidential, and we have a smaller newsroom today, and we’ve also cut newshole out of the paper,” she said.

Mark Russell also mentioned the creation of new beats as a response to growth. “Another answer is about a year and a half ago, we created a new beat on the Metro Desk that would now be housed under our Public Service team. It was a growth beat and planning beat.” However, that beat was short lived. “We had her for about a year and a half and decided we could better deploy that reporter on a data team doing computer-assisted reporting,” he said.

When asked about reorganizing the newsroom, Russell said that the newspaper tries to preserve staff coverage that the newspaper and readers care about the most and that the first areas to be cut are often those who cover non-essential issues for the paper. “I think that it has made us more responsive and more nimble,” he said.

Regarding recent staff changes at the newspaper, Beth Kassab, a business reporter and columnist, said: “It is never good to see a reduction of the reporting staff, or the editing staff. Last year we did see a reduction in the editing staff that didn’t really affect the reporters. Our editor has said she wants to keep, she calls it, ‘feet on the street,’ people like me and other people sitting out there in those desks.” She said that staff reductions create more work for fewer people. She said this reduction in staff has led the paper to cut some of the “luxuries” it used to have, such as targeted sections, zoned editions, etc.

Sean Holton said that the reorganization of the staff was one reason why he decided to retire in the summer of 2007. “The newsroom was scaled back because it was smaller, and I just didn’t see where my place in the new structure just wasn’t going to be as challenging as some of the other jobs that I’d had,” he said.

Few details were revealed during the interviews about the specific changes made to the staff during the reorganization in 2007. Charlotte Hall said those numbers were “confidential.” To read a memo sent by Hall to *The Sentinel*’s staff about the 2007 reorganization, see Appendix H. However, Manning Pynn said, “The entire newsroom had to reapply for their jobs again, and many people changed supervisors and the divisions of the newsroom changed.”

Dana Eagles presented a more positive outlook of the reorganization. He said, “We also realigned the way the newsroom was organized in order to be able to meet the needs of both the web and the newspaper going forward.” He said the area’s growth contributed to this reorganization because growth creates more news and different types of news, and the newspaper had to respond to those changing news trends. He affirmed Pynn’s statement that staff members had to reapply for their jobs when he said:

Once the new table of organization was set, a number of newly created jobs were open, and current staff members were invited to apply and we have several rounds of interviews and that sort of thing. So staff members were able to compete for those newly-created jobs that represented not just new management positions, but in some cases new beats that were created to meet the needs of readers and web users.

Eagles said: “The organizational changes were very much related to how we see the content needs of the newspaper and the website changing. I don’t feel that’s from content priorities.”

R6 asked if most of *The Sentinel*’s new hires are from the Orlando area. According to Staff Development Editor Dana Eagles, most new hires are not from the Orlando area because there are little opportunities for professional journalists to gain experience in Orlando because *The Sentinel* is the only large newspaper in the region. He also mentioned the changing skill set needed in today’s journalism market, but did not specify any particular skills that he looks for when hiring new employees for the newsroom.

Analysis of Local In-Depth

It can be argued that this section is a distillation of *The Sentinel's* response to growth in terms of coverage and growth. It was chosen for analysis because all of the participants that discussed "Local In-Depth" said it was created in direct response to growth in the Orlando area. The researcher analyzed the 71 articles from *The Sentinel's* online "Local In-Depth" section. The first article included in the study ran in the newspaper and online on January 30, 2006, and the most recent article included in the study was the April 7, 2008 story on Florida's budget. These articles are the same as those that appeared in the print edition of the newspaper. This section was chosen for analysis because, according to several participants, it was created in response to growth and as a means to educate the region about the area's growth-related problems and concerns. The articles were approximately 1,000 words each and began running in the newspaper on Mondays starting in January 2006. The articles were coded for the topic being presented and for their sentiment toward growth.

For a sample coding sheet, please see Appendix I.

Debbie Salamone said the section was created as a response to growth and that the stories are "all growth related." After coding the stories for their topic, word count, and focus, the researcher found this to be true. Of the 71 articles found on *The Sentinel's* online "Local In-Depth" section, all of them were somehow related to growth or an effect of growth. One story, which focused on highways in the area, called "Building the Beltway," began by recounting Orlando's growth since the opening of Walt Disney World. It reads:

In the beginning, there was Interstate 4. And it was not good. Back when Walt Disney World was a single park, SeaWorld was its lone competition, and International Drive was a modest collection of hotels, restaurants and gas stations, Orlando's future as a congested metropolis was being written (Powers, 2006).

Salamone described the section as "all stories that have to do with how our region is affected by growth and includes topics such as the environment, transportation, urban planning, and any kind of issues." She also called it one of the "most popular things" *The Sentinel* has done in recent years. Story ideas for the section, she said are generated by the reporters. She works with each reporter to narrow the focus before they begin reporting.

Mark Russell said that the "Local In-Depth" section was "one of a couple of things we have done to try and meet the challenge of growth." He described it as "a page that looks at growth in the region." He said that the section is more "visually appealing" than the normal "Local and State" section and is "something that you can really sell to readers in a very eye-catching way."

After analysis, the researcher found that all of the articles in the "Local In-Depth" section did, in fact, focus on growth or other growth-related issue. The researcher found that the articles focused on 12 primary topics: budget/taxes, education, demographics/race, environment, roads/transportation, history of the community, development, technology, cultural trends, the local economy, crime, and housing.

Five of the 71 articles were written about budget and other tax issues that have come about because of growth. This represents 7.1% of the "Local In-Depth" section. However, while Debbie Salamone and Mark Russell said that the section tries to have a local focus, the analysis showed that three of the five budget/tax-related stories were written for a statewide or national perspective.

Nine of the stories written were about education, representing 12.7% of the coverage. While the topics of these stories revolved around education, the focus of each story was pointedly different. For example, one story discussed the declining number of students in public

schools in Central Florida, while another had to do with the increasing female-male gender gap at the college level. However, all of these education stories did mention growth as a cause for the topic being discussed.

Approximately 11% of the articles studied focused on the demographics of the region, or eight of the stories. Five of them discussed the growth and impact of the changing minority population.

Twenty-two of the articles analyzed had to do with the environment and the effects of growth on the local landscape. This represented the largest single topic in the study and was equal to 21.3% of the overall story total. During her interview, Debbie Salamone mentioned that growth was a personal topic of interest for her. As editor of the section, she has control over the types of stories discussed in the section.

Roads and transportation issues were the topic of eight of the stories, or 11% of the sample. However, the focus of these stories was fairly wide in scope. Two of the articles dealt with the construction of new roads in the region, while other analyzed the region's growing traffic problem and congestions. Again, growth was cited as the primary cause of the topic under review in every story.

One article, or 1.3% of the sample, discussed preserving the regional's historical landmarks by placing "historical markers" throughout the region. The reporter suggests that these historical markers are crucial for remembering the past that shaped the region into what it is today.

Development was another topic that was covered in eight (11%) of the sample. These articles also covered a wide focus in their reporting. One story focused on the city of Orlando's

haphazard annexation policies, while two reported on the attempts by two of the region's smaller communities to control growth.

The effects of new technology that resulted from growth were discussed in four of the articles, or 5.7% of the sample.

The effect of growth on the region's cultural trends was discussed in two of the articles. This represents the second-smallest group of any found in the study.

Finally, the local economy, crime, and housing were each discussed in one article.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

H1: Growth affects *The Sentinel*

After analyzing the interviews, it is clear that growth has had an effect on *The Orlando Sentinel*. Although the participants each cited their own observations about the effects of growth, it is clear that urban development does have an effect on newspapers in general. However, this case study of *The Orlando Sentinel* cannot be generalized to newspapers across the country because growth trends vary from region to region and city to city. For example, newspapers in the Rust Belt cities of the Northeast and Midwest may be facing the effects of negative, or inverse, growth because of economic conditions in their coverage areas. Even newspapers in other high-growth areas may be experiencing different effects that are more reflective of their communities. However, based on the data gathered here, it is clear that growth in the Orlando area has had an effect on *The Sentinel* and the results may be indicative of trends in some other cities in the United States.

The researcher tried to leave the meaning of the term “growth” open to analysis and relied on personal definitions from the participants. Most of the participants included in this study defined growth broadly rather than speaking in specific terms. In fact, most of them referred to growth in terms of population increases and the effects the influx of people in the Orlando region has had on the newspaper. For *Sentinel* employees, more people living in Central Florida means more news to cover, more crime, more potential readers, more marketing capabilities, and more advertising revenue. Though this increased population has not yielded the expected results of increased circulation, increased ad revenue, and increased circulation, it is clear that growth has had an effect on the newspaper. Some participants also discussed economy growth in terms of

diversifying the local economy, and physical growth because of development and new construction.

For planners, the influence of growth on the local newspaper is important to monitor. If growth continues to have negative affects on circulation and readership habits, planners will soon have to rely on another medium to inform the public of upcoming meetings, changes to regulations, and other growth management issues.

H2: Growth and Content

H2 said that growth has had an influence on content by becoming a central topic in the newspaper. This proved true in this study. Growth should continue to be a primary topic in the pages of *The Sentinel* because growth has become a characteristic that defines the Central Florida region. As Editor in Chief Charlotte Hall said, “Growth defines this region, therefore it defines this newspaper.”

As noted, in response to R2, which asked if urban growth was a major topic in *The Sentinel*'s pages, the interviews suggest that growth is, in fact, a major topic in the newspaper and is encouraged by editors. All of the participants from the editorial side of the newspaper said, in different ways, that growth was the most important issue in Central Florida.

This result suggests that *The Sentinel* should continue having a growth focus in its stories so long as growth is a major issue in Central Florida. However, the editors and reporters must be wary that growth patterns might change, so the newspaper's coverage of growth should reflect that potential change. And the lesson for other newspapers is that they should also be conscious of growth, even if their community is experiencing a different type of growth.

Robert Park's 1929 findings that circulation represents growth by a series of concentric circles is not representative of the Orlando area. Several of the participants said the newspaper's

core readership is spread out through several counties in Central Florida. Some of those counties are not contiguous. For example, Norbert Ortiz, the vice president of circulation, called the Villages a high-growth area for the newspaper, yet the Villages is located more than an hour away from *The Sentinel's* core market area of Orange and Seminole Counties.

H3: Coverage

The decrease in staffing and changing coverage tactics highlights one way that growth has affected *The Orlando Sentinel*. Lauterer (2006) said the growth of cities and newspapers are closely related and as populations grow, so does newspaper readership. At *The Orlando Sentinel*, this trend has proved true, despite circulation declines. The area's population has swelled in the last several decades, and readership has followed suit. However, during the last five years, the newspaper's circulation has declined while readership has increased. This increase is due to increased traffic to the newspaper's website. Thus, it appears that growth has an inverse effect on newspaper circulation and readership. Staffing has also been affected because financial problems at the newspaper have forced the managerial staff to cut some staff members. This creates more work for the remaining editors and reporters.

Based on the interviews, H3 is supported. Growth has affected the coverage and news-gathering tactics at *The Orlando Sentinel*. In response to R3, the participants cited several different effects on the newspaper's coverage, including: a new, targeted focus on growth when selecting stories to cover; new criteria when determining which reporter to send to cover an event; and lifestyle changes as a result of growth (such as traffic congestions, commute times, etc). Longtime staff members of *The Sentinel* also noted a shift in the coverage of the newspaper, particularly since the 1980s. Both Pynn and Holton said the newspaper now focuses much more on local news with a growth angle than national or international news. Jeffries (1999) argues that

community newspapers fill the void that urban newspapers can not fill because of their sheer size and focus. This study shows that *The Sentinel* is attempting to redefine itself by having a more localized focus rather than the national or international focus the paper had throughout the 1990s.

The results suggest that *The Sentinel* must keep an open mind to its news-gathering techniques if it wishes to remain relevant to its readers, especially since its coverage area is constantly adding new residents and new communities. The top-tier editors must continue to encourage lower-level editors and reporters to cover new communities and other trends that may arise as a result of growth. This type of flexibility from management is important when covering an evolving community. Newspapers in other regions should follow this advice. Charlotte Hall said that newspapers should be reflective of the communities they cover.

H4: Circulation

The interviews revealed that growth has had an inverse effect on circulation at *The Sentinel*. Several of the participants said despite the region's growth, the paper's circulation has declined; some participants blamed this decline on the type of people moving to the Central Florida region, characterizing them as non-traditional newspaper readers. So while H4 was partially supported because there have clearly been effects on circulation that resulted from growth, there have been no targeted subscription offers as a result of the decline. R4 asked how *The Sentinel's* circulation has been affected by growth. The interviews suggest that there has been an inverse effect because of growth and that the circulation has declined because of the type of people moving to the Orlando area. Instead of offering discounted rates, Ortiz said that he and his team try to target their circulation improvement efforts at core sections of the coverage area, including Orange and Seminole counties, as well as high-growth areas such as Lake County, the Four Corners area, and Northeast Polk County. Ortiz said residents in those areas are more

typical newspaper readers. Based on the interviews, if *The Sentinel* can continue this trend of positive circulation growth, it should not have to implement any type of discount subscription program to encourage more readers to subscribe to the newspaper. However, further attempts to reach out to the changing demographic base of *The Sentinel*'s market area are encouraged.

Several pieces of literature report that newspapers grow along with their communities. However, this is not the case in Orlando, where the newspaper has been outstripped by population growth. While several factors were cited as reason behind this, including budget and staff cuts, this study shows that the earlier literature is not necessarily valid in every instance.

H5: Effects on Marketing

The results suggest that to maintain the limited circulation growth *The Sentinel* experienced last year, the newspaper must devote more budgetary resources to marketing and advertising recruitment. With such large numbers of new residents moving into the Orlando area, it is important for the newspaper to market itself as the primary source of information for the region. This is a universal conclusion based on the interviews gathered in this study. Other newspapers in different parts of the country should consider investing money in their operations to promote their products as well. Circulation Director Norbert Ortiz said *The Sentinel* had decreased its investment in itself in recent years because of financial trouble, but he also noted that when *The Sentinel* devoted more money to marketing and customer service improvements, the newspaper saw marginal gains. Thus, this investment should be encouraged.

H6: Effects on Hiring/Staffing

Based on the interviews, growth has had an effect on the newspaper's staffing and hiring processes as well as been a contributing factor in the newspaper's recent newsroom reorganization efforts. Other newspapers may have faced similar changes, depending on their

market and current financial status. Like much of the data found in this study, generalizable results for all newspapers are difficult to determine.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

From the interviews, it is evident that urban growth has had an effect on *The Orlando Sentinel*. The results showed varying degrees of influence on each of the ten themes analyzed. All of the participants cited growth as a major influence on the newspaper; they all said that growth has also affected the types of stories covered in the newspaper as well as the way the newspaper goes about covering the news. The three non-editorial participants also cited growth as a factor influencing their day-to-day jobs as promoters of the newspapers and other products at Orlando Sentinel Communications.

Growth

Growth was cited as a significant influence on the newspaper in multiple ways. Several editorial staff members said growth was a defining characteristic of the newspaper and the community. They also said growth has an effect on virtually every part of the newspaper's operation. Since all of the participants cited growth as a significant factor influencing *The Sentinel's* content, coverage, newsroom structure, etc., the newspaper's editorial staff should place a greater emphasis on growth in their day-to-day jobs at the newspaper. Particularly, the effects of growth on the community should play a larger role on the decision making process at every level of the newspaper. For example, editors should remain conscious of the commute time reporters face when covering stories in the suburbs or other fringe areas. Reporters must also be considerate of their target/core readership when developing story ideas.

Many of the participants said that growth was influential in nearly all aspects of life in Orlando, and most of the participants said that growth had affected their daily functions at the newspaper. The editors said because of growth, there is simply more news to be covered in the area. The two reporters said that growth creates a bevy of news topics to write about. The non-

editorial staff said that growth has made the paper easier to promote because there are more people to market the product to. Thus, growth should be a consideration at all levels of the newspaper.

Content

The interviews also revealed that growth has had an effect on the newspaper's content. Many of the participants said growth creates more news and also causes more crime, traffic problems, and other growth-related issues. The two reporters who participated in this study said that this creates more work and stress for them because of the increased amount of work resulting from the growth and due to the declining number of reporters working in the newsroom because of the newspaper's financial situation/newsroom reorganizations as a response to growth. *The Sentinel's* reporters should be aware that growth may be a contributing factor to a news story, even if the story does not seem directly growth-related, such as a crime or education story. Susan Jacobson's story titled "Where have all the students gone?" discussed why the area's public schools were suffering enrollment declines, while the area's population was growing. This is a strong example of an education story that considers the effects of growth. Other participants said that it is the role of the newspaper to create understanding and explain growth to the various segments of the population. This informative role makes including growth as a possible cause for all news stories crucial. One story that exemplifies the newspaper's role as explainer is Denise-Marie Balona's February 5, 2007, story titled "How growth drives taxes," which explains how growth affects property taxes in the area. As stated before, reporters and editors should consider growth a topic of great import when assigning and drafting stories.

Coverage

Coverage refers to the practice of gathering news and story ideas. Some, but not all, of the respondents said that growth played a role in determining what types of stories *The Sentinel*

includes in its pages. Specifically, several of the editors said that growth has impacted crime stories the most. Former Assistant Managing Editor Sean Holton said growth also affected how he assigned stories to reporters when he worked at the newspaper. He cited that area's growing traffic problems as one consideration when he assigned stories since reporters do not necessarily live in the communities that they cover. Government Editor Mark Skoneki said growth was a major topic for his five-reporter team. He said that it is a factor in just about every topic his reporters cover. While *The Sentinel* should not make growth the primary focus of every news story, it should consider growth as a cause for the action or event being reported. As a result, editors and reporters should be conscious of growth when assigning and covering stories.

Finances

All of the participants said the newspaper industry is facing hard times under the current business model. They said *The Sentinel* is no different and recent budget cuts have forced staff cuts, changes in coverage, and a reduction in the newshole. While cost-cutting efforts are encouraged to promote profitability, the newspapers content should never suffer as a result. Charlotte Hall said that she wants as many "feet on the street as possible" and that the paper would try to avoid cutting reporting positions. This assertion proved true in the paper's most recent newsroom reorganization. Most of the staff cuts that occurred were editor positions. However, based on the interviews, the newspaper must work diligently to develop a new business model that incorporates more revenue from the web to ease fears about job stability and the future of the news industry. Nearly all of the editorial participants in the study seemed fearful that future budget cuts may cost them their jobs if their beat or section is not deemed crucial by the executive editors.

Financial problems at the newspaper were also shown to have an effect on the marketing, circulation, and advertising departments as well. All three participants from these sections said

that budget cuts had led to staff reductions in their departments and that fewer resources were available for them to promote the product. Norbert Ortiz, the circulation director, said that in order to be successful, and increase circulation, the paper must invest money in itself. Based on the interviews, the newspaper should avoid making any further cost-cutting efforts in any of these areas. Otherwise, they face further circulation declines. This relates to urban growth because population increases mean that there are more potential customers coming into the region. However, if the paper does not invest in a campaign to reach those new residents, the potential readers will not utilize the newspaper as a source for local information.

Circulation

The interviews revealed that growth has had an inverse effect on *The Sentinel's* circulation during the last few years. The literature shows that while the area's population dramatically increased throughout the 1990s and early 21st century, the paper's circulation numbers have not kept pace. Several reasons were provided by the participants for this trend. One common one was that those people moving into the Orlando area are not typical newspaper readers. Several participants said that traditional newspaper readers are older people with families who own homes. They cited the area's rising youth population and large number of apartment renters as the cause of this circulation trend. To counter this trend, *The Sentinel* should develop new marketing and promotional techniques aimed at increasing readership among the non-traditional demographics that are moving into Orlando. Also, a greater emphasis should be placed on the newspaper's online content to encourage younger area residents to get into the habit of reading the newspapers content. Circulation Director Norbert Ortiz said that the paper needs to develop a way to encourage readers to use both products. Gary Winters, the marketing services director, said that circulation plays a crucial role in recruiting national advertisers into the paper because

advertisers are interested in knowing how large the paper's "reach" is. Thus, the higher the circulation, the more ad revenue that can be generated.

Relevancy

Eight of the participants cited relevant content as an important factor in a growing region's content. Most of the participants who mentioned relevant content said that *The Sentinel* must continue to write stories that are relevant to the changing demographics. While this attempt at relevancy may require expanding the depth and breadth of coverage, it is encouraged because readers will find greater value in the product and continue to subscribe to the paper or read its online content.

Demographics

Nearly all of the participants said the area's demographics have changed as a result of growth. Most of the long-time *Sentinel* employees said the growth of the Hispanic community has most dramatically altered the community and the newspaper's staff and coverage. Debbie Salamone, a government editor, said a few years ago it was difficult to find a Spanish-speaking staff member. Now, Dana Eagles, the staff development editor, said, minority candidates are preferred because of their ability to communicate with a larger percentage of the population. The newspaper should continue to hire minority staff members to better reflect the committee it covers. Editor in Chief Charlotte Hall said that the newsroom should be a reflection of the community. The interviews suggest that *The Sentinel* is working to achieve this, but still has a ways to go before it becomes truly representative of the Orlando community.

Localized Focus

Both reporters and several of the editors who participated in the study said that they have seen an increased demand for local coverage. Reader Representative Manning Pynn said that this demand represents a paradigm shift for the newspaper. He said that as the area continued to grow

in population and diversity, the newspaper began to see itself as a metropolitan newspaper and, as such, it required the newspaper to expand its content offerings. However, Pynn said the paper has begun to retarget its focus on local issues in recent years. While he said that this has been a nationwide trend, he also said that local readers want more local coverage of their communities. Deputy Online Editor John Cutter emphasized the website's ability for local content because of community journalists and bloggers. Several participants said that the newspaper should be the information source for local news because readers can find national and international news on television and online. This local focus should be continued. Since the reporters and editors are most familiar with the Orlando area, their frame of reference for coverage certainly has a local bias.

Newsroom Organization

The interviews revealed that *The Sentinel* has experienced two major newsroom reorganizations during the last two years. While neither one of the reorganizations resulted in a mass layoff of reporters, the editing staff was cut by almost one-third. These reorganizations were the result of growing economic and financial pressures on the newspaper. Charlotte Hall, *The Sentinel's* editor in chief, said that the reorganizations were done to make the newsroom more reflective of the changing community and to place greater emphasis on certain beats, such as growth. They can also be attributed to the inverse effect on the newspaper's circulation and advertising revenue that occurred as a result of growth and the changing demographics of the community. However, the interviews suggest that the lower-level staff members are wary of such reorganization effort. The paper should space out large reorganization efforts over longer periods of time to avoid staff fatigue.

Staffing

Dana Eagles, the staff development editor, went into great detail about how growth has affected the newspaper's hiring, recruitment, and staff development programs. He said that because *The Sentinel* is the only large newspaper in the market, and when a position becomes available he often has to look outside of Orlando to find qualified candidates to fill open positions at the newspaper. To attract top candidates to the newspaper, *The Sentinel* should target its recruitment efforts at areas facing similar growth as Orlando because he wants to bring people familiar with growth issues to Orlando. This type of recruitment of new staff members would ensure that the new hire was familiar with growth-related issues and prepared to cover stories with a growth-related emphasis. Other participants in this study cited growth as a contributing factor to the newspaper's budget cuts, which has directly led to the reduction of the number of newsroom employees, such as editors. Charlotte Hall, editor in chief, said the newspaper has tried to preserve the number of reporters on staff by reshuffling them within the new newsroom structure rather than directly laying them off. *The Sentinel* may wish to consider another staff reorganization effort to guarantee that important growth-related issues are being adequately covered by the staff. Another reorganization could also encourage reporters and editors to continue their emphasis on growth.

Another key issue raised regarding staffing at *The Sentinel* was the decline of the paper's bureau system. Several participants said *The Sentinel* had closed a number of its bureaus in various counties throughout the coverage area. These include the suburban bureaus in Orange County, the bureau in Daytona Beach, and the Haines City Bureau in Polk County. While the cost-saving efforts of these closings are understandable, the paper must be sure to continue to cover these areas to encourage more circulation and readership.

Analysis of “Local In-Depth”

The content analysis of *The Sentinel*'s “Local In-Depth” section supported what many of the participants talked about during their interviews. For example, several of the participants cited an emphasis on local stories in the newspaper. All of the stories in “Local In-Depth” have a local or regional focus toward Central Florida. Other participants said that growth has become a significant topic and focus of news coverage in *The Sentinel*. All of the stories in “Local In-Depth” address a growth-related issue and cover a wide range of topics, including environmental concerns, property taxes, recycling, technological advancements, and other demographic concerns such as race, gender, and age. This type of content should be encouraged in the newspaper. Not only are the stories written in a clear, explanatory way, but they break down complex issues in an easy-to-understand fashion. Debbie Salamone said the paper cut its growth beat reporter because it is a difficult beat to cover and is often viewed as “boring and complicated.” If *The Sentinel* decides to bring back the growth beat, the reporter should be encouraged to cover growth issues in a similar fashion.

Implications for Planning

Though this study did not involve any urban planners, its results do present some alarming findings for the planning profession. Based on the data collected, it is clear that urban growth does affect newspapers. However, many planning professionals rely on newspapers as a means of communicating with the public. Often, public services announcements and other announced changes to local regulations and growth management plans are announced in the newspaper. This presents two potential problems. First, if more and more people are relying on the Internet for information, they are not seeing the printed government ads announcing meetings, proposed changes, etc. Second, if fewer people are reading the newspaper, are planners successful in making sure that the public is well informed about local issues? If newspapers continue to see a

decline in circulation, planners should consider alternative ways to communicate with the public. Habermas' Communicative Planning Theory should be adjusted to meet this cultural shift.

These geographic and cultural changes resulting from growth are important for planners to understand. Planners rely on an informed and active citizenry as part of their day-to-day jobs. If the public is not engaging in the primary type of media consumption that planners use to relay information, there becomes an efficiency issue. Having an informed public is crucial for democracy on any level to succeed.

Another planning-related topic that comes out of this data is the notion of cultural geography and newspaper readership. Just because cities grow physically and geographically, the culture does not necessarily follow suit. Jerry Fallstrom, *The Sentinel's* Lake County Bureau editor, said Orlando's sphere of influence has grown to incorporate Lake County, but Lake County still considers itself a separate entity. This cultural identification pattern is crucial for newspapers and planners to understand. Planners must work on a regional level in order to achieve cohesiveness. Newspapers must understand this cultural shifts within their coverage region in order to market their product and plan news coverage.

Development of Theory

This study examines the effects of urban growth on newspapers through the use of several mass communications and urban planning theories, including Putnam's (2000) Social Capital Theory, Gerbner and Gross's Cultivation Theory (1976), Shoemaker and Reese's Media Organization Theory (1996), Habermas' Communicative Planning Theory (1984), and Lucy's Broad Based Planning Theory (1988).

Based on the interviews, several of the participants discussed the newspaper's role in developing a sense of community in the Orlando area. Particularly, Editor in Chief Charlotte Hall said that the newspaper should try to cover "all of the community," even though she also said the

newspaper focuses its coverage toward the interests of its core readership – educated, wealthy, whites. This role of community builder plays well into Putnam’s Social Capital Theory (2000), which suggests that members of the public feel more socially connected to their communities when they read the local newspaper. Other editors agreed with Hall that it is the newspaper’s role to help create a sense of community, particularly in a “community in formation” such as Orlando. However, none of the participants were able to adequately describe how the newspaper actually does this. So while Putnam’s theory states that newspaper readers have more social capital, newspaper staff members are unable to describe how their work actually encourages this.

Gerbner and Gross’ Cultivation Theory (1976) deals with television viewership but can be applicable to newspaper readers as well. It suggests that exposure to media coverage, over time, changes the audience’s perceptions of reality. All of the reporters and editors that participated in this study said growth has become a central focus at *The Sentinel* and several said that it is the area’s defining characteristic. Although this study did not examine audience response to the newspaper’s growth coverage, there is a possibility that *The Sentinel*’s coverage of growth promotes a certain view of growth. Further research is needed to draw any conclusions.

Based on the interviews, Shoemaker and Reese’s newsroom organization theory (1996) proves true at *The Orlando Sentinel*. The theory suggests that newsrooms are organized to reflect society. All of the top-tier editors that participated in the study, including the editor in chief, staff development editor, and managing editor, said that the newspaper’s two recent staff reorganizations were attempts at making the newsroom more reflective of the area’s changing populace and as a result of growth. Charlotte Hall said because growth has been such an impetus in the Orlando region, the newsroom needed to be restructured to make growth a more widespread topic at the newspaper.

Habermas' Communicative Planning Theory (1984) states that urban planners should communicate with the public about issues in planning policy and practice. However, none of the participants in the study directly mentioned using the paper as a means of helping urban planners. However, Government Editor Debbie Salamone said the "Local In-Depth" section has been used as a means of explaining growth topics, such as community redevelopment agencies, to the readers. An October 22, 2007, story titled "Governments turn to CRAs to pay for a better future" did just that (Sherman, 2007). Since none of the participants directly mentioned *The Sentinel* as a medium for government planners to address the public, there was no direct contribution to Habermas' theory.

Lucy's Broad-based Planning Theory (1988) also emphasized public involvement in the planning process. Again, since none of the participants directly cited *The Sentinel* as a means of promoting public involvement in the planning process, it is difficult to draw any conclusions about the newspaper's contribution to this theory. But, since some of the participants said that part of their job is to educate the public on growth issues, it can be assumed that this could potentially influence public participants. Again, further analysis of audience response to growth coverage is needed to make any further conclusions in those areas.

Development of Grounded Theory

The purpose of this study was to develop theory regarding the effects of urban growth on newspapers by specifically focusing on the Orlando area and *The Orlando Sentinel*. While this study presents a relatively limited view of the effects of growth on newspapers, it did provide significant data about how a newspaper in a high-growth area has been affected. While the theory posited below is indicative of a high-growth area, other newspapers in different parts of the county may be experiencing similar results. For example, *The Detroit Free-Press*, in Detroit, MI, may have been affected by the decline of the American auto industry and the resulting

decline in the city's economy. Though it may not be affected by growth in the same way as *The Sentinel* has, it probably has been affected in some way. Las Vegas, another American urban area that has seen significant urban growth in recent years, may have led to similar effects as Orlando on the newspaper there.

Based on the interviews, the following theory can be posited: urban growth will have an effect on newspapers located in urban areas. However, each newspaper will be affected by growth in different ways and will respond to that growth in a way that the newspaper believes best reflects their individual community. Thus, there is not a definitive answer on how newspapers should respond to growth. As shown with the examples of Detroit and Las Vegas, different urban areas experience growth at different rates. Cities could be experiencing positive growth (population increases, new construction, etc.) or they could experience negative growth (decreases in population, recessive economy, etc.). Thus, it is difficult to make specific conclusions about the effects of growth on newspapers based on this analysis of *The Orlando Sentinel*. A broad approach to this theory to encompass newspapers in all types of urban areas is needed to address the varying growth trends across the country.

The interviews gathered in this study suggest that a newspaper located in a fast-growing area may have to alter its hiring process and newsroom organization more frequently to address the changing demographics in the community. For example, Orlando has seen significant growth in the Hispanic community. As a result, Debbie Salamone mentioned how *The Sentinel* has worked to hire more minority candidates to better cover this demographic shift. This is evident by the number of "Local In-Depth" stories dedicated to the Hispanic community. Of the 71 articles, five of the stories dealt with the Hispanic community, including Victor Manuel Ramos' April 9, 2007, story called "Immigrants see Florida as a path to American dream" (2007). It also

suggests that growth is a major issue in high-growth areas and should thus be a major focus in almost any type of story, including crime, education, the economy, etc. The “Local In-Depth” section as a whole is one response to growth. Mark Skoneki also cited *The Sentinel*’s coverage of the venues project in downtown Orlando as one way of growth fueling a government story. These stories have been written by multiple authors and can be found under the “Downtown Makover” section of orlandosentinel.com.

Limitations to the Study

One limitation of this study was that the interviews were conducted over several months rather than in a short, consecutive period of time. During the four-month span in which the interviews took place, several events occurred nationally and in the Orlando area that dominated local news coverage and were constant examples used during the interviews. For example, those participants whose interviews took place in December 2007 and January 2008 highlighted Florida’s upcoming primary elections as an example of the newspaper’s coverage. The primary also led to an increase in government-related examples from staff members. Participants whose interviews occurred in February and March often focused on the area’s slowing economy and the decline in the housing market as their primary examples. This may have skewed the data since elections and the economy may have different growth-related implications. Had the interviews been conducted closer together, the examples used by participants may have been more cohesive rather than disjointed.

Also, since most of the participants in the study were white, a greater emphasis on recruiting minority participants would have been helpful. The researcher could have also contacted more former employees. Other demographic challenges faced in this study include a skewed number of staff members on the editorial side of the newspaper. Of the 18 participants,

15 of them were current or former editorial staff members. Only three were from the business/advertising/marketing side of the paper's operations.

Further Research

Any subject related to urban development and media studies is strongly encouraged since the current body of literature is relatively sparse in this area. There are a number of different types of studies that could arise based on these topics. These include: content analyses to determine the representation of growth by the media; content analyses of urban planning-related stories to see if the media portrays growth in a positive or negative light; other qualitative studies could be conducted with urban planners to better understand their view of the media's coverage of growth and other growth-related issues/effects.

In terms of growth effects on newspapers, a comparative study focusing on a newspaper in a different region of the country would be beneficial to see if the trends found at *The Sentinel* are replicated in other areas of the county. Other comparative studies that examine newspapers in slow-growth or no-growth areas could also be conducted to see how negative growth affects newspapers in those areas.

A content analysis of *The Sentinel's*, or any other newspaper, coverage of growth could be conducted to determine if newspapers take a pro- or anti-growth stance in their pages. Also, a survey of newspaper readers could reveal changes made in reader perceptions about growth. This could contribute to the Cultivation Theory that suggests that with more exposure, the audience's perception of reality will change.

APPENDIX A
ORLANDO SENTINEL COVERAGE AREA

Orlando Sentinel coverage area

In addition to its main office downtown, the Orlando Sentinel has bureaus throughout a six-county coverage area in east Central Florida (with city names in blue). The newspaper also has bureaus in Tallahassee, Miami, Kennedy Space Center, Washington, D.C. and San Juan, Puerto Rico.



APPENDIX B
IRB FORMS

UFIRB 02 – Social & Behavioral Research Protocol Submission	
Title of Protocol: Newspapers and Urban Growth: How an Old Medium Responds to a Growing Trend	
Principal Investigator: Gordon Van Owen	UFID #: 4978-9190
Degree / Title: MAMC Department: Journalism	Mailing Address: 2338 N.W. 38 th Ave. #305 Gainesville, FL 32605 Email Address & Telephone Number: Editor02@ufl.edu, (407) 375-7106
Co-Investigator(s):	UFID#:
Supervisor: Johanna Cleary	UFID#:
Degree / Title: PhD, Assistant Professor Department: Telecommunications	Mailing Address: 3062 Weimer Hall Gainesville, FL 32611 Email Address & Telephone Number: jcleary@jou.ufl.edu, (352) 846-0226
Date of Proposed Research: March/April 2008	
Source of Funding <i>(A copy of the grant proposal must be submitted with this protocol if funding is involved):</i> N/A	
Scientific Purpose of the Study: To analyze the impacts of urban growth on modern mass media, specifically newspapers.	

Describe the Research Methodology in Non-Technical Language: *(Explain what will be done with or to the research participant.)*

Qualitative, in-depth interviews will be conducted with staff members of The Orlando Sentinel. Each participant will be asked a series of questions about how the area's growth has influenced the newspaper's business and staffing decisions as well as influences its print and online content. Participants will include reporters, editors, and other newspaper staff members.

Describe Potential Benefits and Anticipated Risks: *(If risk of physical, psychological or economic harm may be involved, describe the steps taken to protect participant.)*

There are no benefits for participating in this study other than to further promote social science research. There is no harm to participants for associating with this study.

Describe How Participant(s) Will Be Recruited, the Number and AGE of the Participants, and Proposed Compensation:

The researcher will start with the staff directory on The Orlando Sentinel's website. The researcher will call the Sentinel's office to arrange interview times with the participants. Each participant will be asked to sign an informed consent form. Approximately 20 interviews will be conducted, but that number may change depending on developing research questions and unexpected discoveries throughout the interview process. No more than 30 interviews will be conducted. The participants are working professionals and may range in age from their mid-20s to their 60s.

Describe the Informed Consent Process. Include a Copy of the Informed Consent Document:

Prior to each interview date, the researcher will e-mail a copy of the informed consent forms to each participant so that they may read over it. Then, on the interview date, the researcher will present each participant with a copy of the informed consent forms and ask them to sign it before the interview begins.

Principal Investigator(s) Signature:

Supervisor Signature:

Department Chair/Center Director Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX C
SAMPLE E-MAIL SENT TO PARTICIPANTS

Date:

Dear (recipient),

My name is Gordon Van Owen, and I am master's student at the University of Florida. I am currently working on my thesis, which focuses on how Orlando's urban growth has impacted *The Orlando Sentinel*. I am writing to see if you would be willing to participate in a brief, in-person interview to talk about your role at *The Sentinel* in covering Orlando's growth and what the newspaper has done as a result of that growth.

The information shared during the interview may be kept anonymous if you so choose, and no identifying information will be used in the data. I would like to audio record the interview to insure accuracy. There is no compensation for participating in this study, and your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

As (recipient's job title) for Orlando Sentinel Communications, your role at the paper and your perspective on growth impacts is crucial. I believe that the insight you can provide because of your position at the paper would be invaluable for my study. I will be home, in Orlando, for the holidays and my schedule is wide open. I realize that as an editor, time is of the essence for you, thus I am making myself available to fit your busy schedule.

I appreciate your consideration on this matter and understand that your schedule may not permit an in-person interview. If you are not available, is there anyone else at the paper you would recommend for me to speak with?

Again, I appreciate your time on this matter. I read *The Sentinel's* online newspaper every day from Gainesville and always look forward to reading the newspaper's growth-related stories and the neighborhood blogs. As a nearly life-long Orlando resident, I've seen firsthand how the city has changed over the years, and now, as a future journalist myself, I appreciate how much work journalists such as your self put in on a daily basis.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, please contact UF's IRB02 office at P.O. Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250 or by phone at (352) 392-0433.

Sincerely,

Gordon Van Owen
Master's Student
University of Florida
College of Journalism and Communications

APPENDIX D
SAMPLE INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Please read this document carefully before you decide to participate in this study.

Protocol Title: Newspapers and Urban Growth: How an Old Medium Responds to a New Trend

Purpose of the research study:

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of urban growth on *The Orlando Sentinel*.

What you will be asked to do in the study:

You will be engaged in an in-depth interview with the researcher. The interviews should last roughly one hour to two hours, and will be conducted in a place of your choice to guarantee comfort and familiarity. You will be asked a series of warm-up and clarification questions. Following those basic questions, the researcher will then ask you a series of questions to gauge your feelings on urban growth in the Orlando area and how that growth has impacted The Orlando Sentinel. At times, you may be asked to clarify your answer so that the researcher can guarantee accuracy in his report. Following the interview, you may be asked to clarify any points the researchers may be unclear or unsure about. This step is to assure accuracy.

Time required:

1 to 2 hours

Risks and Benefits:

The researcher does not intend for there to be any risks in association with this study. The researcher does not anticipate that you will benefit directly by participating in this study.

Compensation:

There is no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

Your identity will be kept confidential if you wish it to be so. Since this study is grounded in qualitative research methods, knowing your name and title will provide validation to the information you provide based on your level of expertise and years in the field. Your name may be used in the final report.

Voluntary participation:

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating in this study.

Right to withdraw from the study:

You have the right to withdraw from the study at anytime without consequence.

Whom to contact if you have questions about the study:

Gordon Van Owen, Master's Student, Department of Journalism, College of Journalism and Communications, the University of Florida, G035 Weimer Hall, Gainesville; E-mail: editor02@ufl.edu; Phone: 407-375-7106.

You may also contact Dr. Johanna Cleary, Assistant Professor, College of Journalism and Communications, the University of Florida, 3062 Weimer Hall, Gainesville; E-mail: jcleary@jou.ufl.edu; Phone: 352-846-0226.

Whom to contact about your rights as a research participant in the study:

IRB02 Office, Box 112250, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-2250; Phone 392-0433.

Agreement:

I have read the procedure described above. I voluntarily agree to participate in the study, and I have received a copy of this description.

Participant: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E
SAMPLE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Participant: Dana Eagles, recruitment and staff development editor, *The Orlando Sentinel*

Date of Interview: Dec. 18, 2007

Location of Interview: Eagles' office at *The Orlando Sentinel* newsroom in downtown Orlando.

Setting: Private office with door closed. Shades open on window overlooking the newsroom.

Guide/Questions:

- Begin by explaining the study to the participant and asking them to sign the informed consent form. Explain that by signing the form, they agree to participate in the study.
- Ask summary questions as needed. For example, ask about their tenure at *The Sentinel*, professional background, duties, etc. These questions can be used as an ice breaker.
- In your own words, explain your day-to-day duties at *The Sentinel*.
- How do you define "urban growth"?
- In your opinion, how has Orlando's urban growth impacted *The Sentinel*?
- What role do you believe *The Sentinel* plays in building social capital in Orlando?
- Has *The Sentinel* made any changes to hiring process in response to urban growth?
- Could you please explain those changes?
- Do you perceive these changes as positive or negative for the newspaper? Explain.
- What types of changes have been made among the editorial staff/staff structure?
- What is your role within *The Sentinel's* current business model and how does that position correlate to these growth-related issues?
- How has urban growth effected the types of staff development and training programs you implement here at *The Sentinel*?

APPENDIX F THE PARTICIPANTS

Charlotte Hall is the editor in chief of *The Orlando Sentinel*. She has been with the newspaper since 2004. Prior to working at *The Sentinel*, Hall was the vice president of planning for *Newsday* in Long Island, NY. She is in charge of all of the news gathering at the newspaper, which includes all of the reporters, copy editors, editors, photographers, and graphic artists.

Jane Healy is the editorial page editor at *The Orlando Sentinel*. She has been with *The Sentinel* since 1973 and has worked as a metro reporter, editorial writer, managing editor, and editorial page editor. She won the Pulitzer Prize in 1988 for her series “Florida’s Shame,” which focused on Central Florida’s growth and environment.

Mark Russell is the managing editor of *The Orlando Sentinel* and is in charge of the day-to-day operations of the newsroom and the newspaper’s content. He has been with *The Sentinel* since 2004.

Steve Doyle is a 27-year employee at *The Sentinel* and is currently the associate managing editor for content development. He is in charge of the editorial data and information desk, as well as the coordinator for editorial technology. He has also worked as the sports, business, and features section editor.

Bob Shaw is the national/state editor at *The Sentinel* and is in charge of the newspaper’s bureaus in Washington, D.C., Tallahassee, and Miami. He also oversees the reporters in charge of covering NASA, hurricanes, and two state rovers. He has been with *The Sentinel* for seven years.

Jerry Fallstrom is an editor at *The Sentinel*’s Lake County Bureau. He is responsible for coordinating the bureau’s coverage of county government as well as coverage of nearby Marion and Sumter counties and he has been with the newspaper for 15 years.

Mark Skoneki is a government editor at *The Orlando Sentinel* and has been with the newspaper for 19 years. He works with the team of reporters that covers Orlando and Orange County politics, as well as the environment, transportation, and military affairs.

Debbie Salamone is a government editor with *The Orlando Sentinel* and is in charge of the “Local and State” section of the paper and is the coordinator of the weekly “Local In-Depth” section. She has been with *The Sentinel* for 20 years.

John Cutter is the deputy online editor for onlandsentinel.com and has been with the newspaper for three years. He is in charge of updating the website throughout the day. He is the first editor in the newsroom each morning. Cutter also helps coordinate *The Sentinel*'s multimedia packages.

Mark Schlueb is the Orlando government reporter for *The Orlando Sentinel*. His coverage focuses specifically on government in the city of Orlando. He has been a reporter at *The Sentinel* since 2001.

Beth Kassab is a business reporter and columnist for *The Orlando Sentinel*. Her columns focus on the business community in Orlando, as well as growth and development. She has been with the newspaper for about seven years.

Manning Pynn was the reader representative for *The Orlando Sentinel* and began his career at the newspaper in the 1960s, when he worked as an assistant to the then owner/publisher Martin Andersen. He left the paper for a few years, and returned for good in 1983. He became reader representative in 2001 and retired in March 2008.

Dana Eagles is the staff development editor and is in charge of recruiting new staff and coordinating the paper's internship and staff-development programs. He also plans all of the

paper's staff recognition programs. Part of his duties includes attending job fairs to recruit. He has been in this position for about seven years.

Norbert Ortiz is the circulation director at *The Orlando Sentinel* and is in charge of growing and managing the newspaper's circulation. His office also oversees customer service, billing, and delivery of the newspaper. He has been with *The Sentinel* for 10 months.

Lisa Bridges is the product marketing manager. She and her team market the newspaper through billboards, signs, print advertisements, e-mail marketing, etc. She has been with the newspaper for 10 years.

Gary Winters oversees the Marketing Services team at *The Orlando Sentinel* and is in charge of marketing the newspaper to national advertisers, including department stores, auto dealerships, etc. He has worked for *The Sentinel* for 26 years.

Sean Holton retired from *The Orlando Sentinel* in June 2007 after 20 years at the paper. When he retired, he was the associated managing editor for metropolitan news. He had also worked as an investigative reporter and national correspondent.

Christine Dellert is a former reporter at *The Sentinel's* Lake and Volusia County Bureaus. She began her career with *The Sentinel* as a student intern while at the University of Central Florida. She was the lead reporter of the Trenton Duckett case in 2006. She left *The Sentinel* after 15 months as an employee in 2007.

APPENDIX G
THE SENTINEL'S CODE OF ETHICS

The Orlando Sentinel's Editorial Code of Ethics (Revised 2006)

Journalists' obligation to serve the public by pursuing and reporting the truth independently is more than a lofty principle – it is the very foundation of our daily work. Our success as a news organization depends absolutely on our credibility, which we maintain by gathering and presenting the news vigorously; by making decisions that are as free as possible of influence from self-interest or special interests; and by conducting ourselves in ways that earn the trust of our community.

This Editorial Code of Ethics for the *Orlando Sentinel*, incorporating Tribune Publishing's Code of Editorial Principles, can help to safeguard our credibility. It applies to all Editorial staff members, including those in administrative or clerical roles. By following its guidelines and openly discussing ethical issues as they emerge, each of us can take responsibility for protecting the *Sentinel's* reputation as a reliable and trustworthy source of information.

1. Conflicts of Interest

Memberships. Editorial staffers should not have membership in, any financial relationship with, or other ties to a business or institution if they have regular and continuing influence over any aspect of coverage of the organization. They should avoid situations in which their activities in connection with any group or cause could be perceived as influencing what the *Sentinel* publishes or broadcasts.

Political activities. Political organizations present particular challenges. Donor lists are public information, so there are no "private" donations to a party or cause. For that reason – and because it would be impractical to police exceptions – no Editorial staffer, whether involved in political coverage or not, may donate to or be active in such groups.

Family and personal relationships. Editorial staffers should avoid involvement in stories dealing with family members and close friends and the businesses or causes in which friends and relatives take part.

Investments. Reporters, columnists and editorial writers should not write about companies or industries in which they or their family members have an investment, nor should they invest in companies or industries about which they report or write regularly. Similarly, editors should not make news decisions about companies or industries in which they or their family members have an investment. When recusing themselves is impractical, they should ask another editor to review their decisions. Editorial staffers may invest in mutual funds if the funds are not limited to the industries about which they make news decisions. In no case should financial information being gathered for publication be used for personal gain.

Gifts and meals. No Editorial staffer should accept any gift or discount of material value offered because of the employee's journalistic responsibilities. This includes promotional items, meals, and tickets to theme parks and shows. Gifts arriving by mail should be returned with a note of explanation. Staffers may accept a cup of coffee or an inexpensive lunch from a source, however, provided that the staffer can return the favor. A reporter covering a banquet or similar event may accept a free soft drink or an hors d'oeuvre but should arrange to pay for a meal. Reporters covering a news conference where food is served should use their best judgment. If there is no way to pay for the meal at the time, the reporter should attempt to pay for it later.

Admission to events. Staffers may accept free admission to events they are assigned to cover but should never insist on free entry; the company will reimburse them for ticket charges. Working journalists also may accept passes to special facilities, such as press boxes or press tables, for which tickets are not sold. Staffers who are not covering an event should not accept tickets from publicists even if they pay for them because doing so can create the appearance of special treatment.

Review copies. Books, CDs, DVDs, video games, software and similar products sent to the *Sentinel* for review are considered news handouts. They may be used by beat writers for review or for office reference. Those not kept for these purposes should be donated to libraries or to charitable organizations, not added to staffers' personal collections.

Personal gain. Editorial staffers must not use their job Terms, professional connections, business cards or letterhead for personal advantage, whether to obtain tickets to a show, settle a dispute or obtain a price break. Discounts made available by the company to all employees may be accepted, however, because they are widely available to employees of large companies.

Confidential information. Staff members have access to information that must be held in confidence to prevent other news organizations from beating the *Sentinel* on a story or to otherwise protect the company's interests. Confidential information may include such things as notes and other research material; unpublished stories, editorials and images; the names of anonymous sources; preprinted advertising; and personnel or financial information. In general, company business should not be discussed with outsiders unless it is necessary for the performance of the job, and discretion should be used in sharing information within the company. Reporters may, of course, discuss information gathered for a story in order to verify it or to get reaction from other sources.

Contests and awards. Staffers should not enter contests sponsored by trade or advocacy groups – even if those contests are administered by a journalism organization or school – because they may exist primarily to promote those groups' agendas. The Editorial Department maintains a list of approved national, regional and state contests whose central purpose is to recognize journalistic excellence. Staffers who want to enter contests not on the list must first obtain the permission of the Managing Editor or Editorial Page Editor. Staff members also should refrain from accepting unsolicited awards from trade or advocacy organizations.

Disclosure of conflicts. When conflicts of interest are unavoidable but not obvious to readers, they should be disclosed in the story. The *Sentinel* should cover its own businesses and its parent

company as it would any other business, but in stories about the finances of Tribune Co., for example, a sentence explaining that Tribune owns the *Sentinel* should be included.

Collaboration with Advertising. It is appropriate for the Editorial and Advertising departments to work together to build audiences and, by extension, the company's financial strength, but never in a way that would give advertisers an opportunity to influence news coverage. Editors also may work with marketing, circulation or other departments to improve the newspaper's business, but they should never do anything that could jeopardize the integrity of the news report.

Legal troubles of staff members. The *Sentinel* should report on the legal troubles of its own employees promptly and fairly, using the same standards of newsworthiness applied to others. There should never be the suggestion of a cover-up to keep the spotlight off a *Sentinel* staff member who is charged with a crime when it would have been focused on others in similar circumstances.

2. Outside Activities

Ownership of work. All ideas, research, notes and other work that staffers produce on company time, whether text or images, belong to the company. This material may not be sold to another publication or news service without permission of the Editor or the Editorial Page Editor. Syndication of work or the publication of books based on information gathered on *Sentinel* time also must be approved in advance by the Editor or Editorial Page Editor.

Freelancing. Staffers may perform freelance work on their own time, provided that the *Sentinel* receives their first and best efforts. Staffers should consider only media that exhibit high journalistic standards. Freelance assignments must be individually approved in advance by the Managing Editor or Editorial Page Editor, and several basic criteria must be met before approval will be considered. The proposed freelance assignment must not:

- Appear in any medium that competes directly with any Orlando Sentinel Communications or Tribune Co. business.
- Allow another news outlet to "scoop" the *Sentinel*.
- Be published or broadcast by any organization that the journalist covers or one that has the *Sentinel* as its client for that particular project.
- Interfere with the staffer's *Sentinel* duties, create the appearance of a conflict of interest or compromise the staffer's professional reputation.

Staffers who pursue approved freelance assignments should keep their freelancing separate from their *Sentinel* work, and sources should be clearly told for whom the work is being done.

Television and radio appearances. Because the *Sentinel* produces broadcast programming in partnership with television and radio stations, appearances in all non-*Sentinel* programs must be approved in advance by the Managing Editor or Editorial Page Editor. Broadcast appearances must meet the freelancing criteria found above. In addition, editors will consider the promotional value that the appearance may have for the *Sentinel*.

Personal Web publishing. Staffers who operate their own Web sites or publish personal blogs must not post information on topics they cover for the *Sentinel*. They also should be mindful that their personal postings can affect their credibility as journalists and, by extension, the *Sentinel's* credibility as a news organization. Thus, they should avoid postings that reveal personal biases or that otherwise compromise their professionalism.

3. Accuracy and Integrity

Breaking the law. Editorial staffers will not engage in illegal activities in pursuit of news, and editors will not encourage or tolerate illegal behavior.

Fabrication. Fabrication has no place in journalism and will not be tolerated. To guard against confusion, fictional and satirical writing should be clearly labeled if there could be any doubt in readers' minds about whether such writing deals with real events and persons.

Plagiarism. Plagiarism – the taking of wording or ideas from another person or organization without attribution – is a cardinal sin of journalism and will not be tolerated. When original information, quotes, ideas and distinctive language from other sources are used in our reports, they should clearly be attributed. Sentences or paragraphs taken from wire stories should be attributed either within the text or by a shirttail explaining that wire services were used in compiling the report.

Deception in reporting. Misrepresenting one's identity to get information is generally unacceptable, although there may be occasional exceptions. A restaurant critic, for example, may need to make reservations under an alias. Reporters who contact news sources with the intention of gathering material for a story should be candid about who they are and what they are doing.

Fictitious names. The use of a fictitious name to protect a subject's privacy should be used only as a last resort. In these rare cases, the use of the pseudonym must be explained to readers and approved by the Managing Editor.

Posing and alteration of photographs. Photographers must not stage or direct the content of news photographs or alter the elements of a news scene. This does not preclude a reasonable degree of posing in non-news situations or the art direction of studio photographs. Once taken, a photo must not be altered in any way that turns it into something the photographer did not see in the viewfinder. Changes must be limited to standard quality adjustments applied by imaging technicians.

Photo illustrations. The combination of photography and illustration to create a "photo illustration" is acceptable in cases in which the subject matter is complex, abstract or difficult to convey through documentary photography. However, all photo illustrations must contain an element of the absurd so exaggerated that the image could not be confused with a documentary photo. These pieces must be labeled as photo illustrations, and their use must be approved by a supervising design or photo editor.

Datelines. A dateline should be used only when the bylined reporter has gathered information at that location. It must never be used in a way that misleads the reader about where the reporter has traveled for the story.

Excerpts. With proper attribution, we may excerpt brief passages of books, articles and other published works in reviews and in news stories about the work being excerpted. But when using excerpts of more than a few lines from copyrighted works, we must first obtain permission from the publisher.

Opinion. Expressing opinion is the privilege of columnists, critics and editorial writers. Other *Orlando Sentinel* journalists must strive to avoid injecting opinion into their news reports. The same principle applies to community speeches, blogs and broadcast appearances. A practical guideline: If you wouldn't write it in your news story, don't say it in these other venues.

Correction of errors. When we publish information that is inaccurate or misleading, we will make every effort to publish the correct information as quickly as possible and to prevent the publication of similarly erroneous information in the future. The procedures and format for correcting errors are detailed in the Corrections and Clarifications Policy.

4. Anonymous Sources

"On the record" is the rule. We attribute information we publish in the *Sentinel* so that readers can judge for themselves the worth of what they read. We avoid attributing information to people we cannot identify in print because doing so can undermine our credibility. Sometimes, however, vital information cannot be attributed to identified sources. When we withhold a source's identity, responsibility for the reliability of that information falls to the *Sentinel* rather than to the person providing it.

To limit the use of anonymous sources, we should begin all interviews with the presumption that they are on the record. No statements made on the record can be taken off the record retroactively. We should not grant anonymity merely because someone asks for it, nor should we offer anonymity unless it is a condition of receiving information we regard as vital.

Reporters and sources do not always agree on the definitions of terms used in source negotiations, so we should use this common vocabulary and strive to ensure that sources understand it:

On the record: Information can be published and attributed to identified individuals.

Background/not for attribution: Information can be published but not attributed to identified individuals.

Deep background: Information can be published but not attributed to anyone. It also can be used as the basis for further reporting if the source is not identified.

Off the record: Information cannot be published and cannot be used as the basis for further reporting other than to guide the reporter.

Five considerations. Before publishing anonymous information, we should consider these questions:

- Does the importance of the article outweigh any potential damage to the newspaper's credibility?
- Is the information to be attributed to an anonymous source necessary?
- Have all efforts to obtain the information from someone we can identify been exhausted?
- Does the person providing the information have a legitimate reason for remaining anonymous, and can we explain that reason in the story?
- Are we certain that the person providing the information does not have an ulterior motive?

Even when we can answer "yes" to all of these questions, we should follow these additional guidelines in using anonymous sources:

We should resort to the use of anonymous sources only for vital – never innocuous – information, and only to provide information of which they have firsthand knowledge. We should help the reader to evaluate the worth of the information by providing as much description of the source as possible without revealing his or her identity; ensure that by shielding the identity of one person we are not putting anyone else in jeopardy; make every effort to find additional sources who are independent of one another to corroborate the information; and avoid making an anonymous source the sole basis of a story.

Conversely, we should not allow someone whose identity we are protecting to level a personal attack; allow the description of an anonymous source to be altered without consulting the reporter who gathered the information and agreed to the anonymity; or refer anonymously to other journalists unless they are the subjects of a news report.

Approval of editors. Reporters should obtain the approval of supervising editors before granting anonymity. In cases where that is impractical, reporters should discuss the agreement with their editors before writing the story. In any case, they must disclose the source's identity to their editors, and sources who are granted anonymity must be informed of that requirement. Associate Managing Editors are responsible for knowing the identity of anyone referred to anonymously in a section for which they are responsible or in the reporting of anyone they oversee. The approving editor's initials should appear in the copy in notes next to any reference to an anonymous source, but the name of the source should not be entered into the computer system. The Editor, Managing Editor or Editorial Page Editor must also approve the use of any anonymous source.

Protection of anonymous sources. Any journalist promising a source anonymity should be aware that he or she may face contempt-of-court penalties imposed by a judge if the journalist refuses to comply with a court order to identify the source. It is the reporter's responsibility to

ensure that all parties involved in an agreement to protect someone's identity understand the level of anonymity being granted and the conditions under which that agreement will not be honored.

Wire reports. We have less control over the use of anonymous sources in wire stories, but these pieces should meet the same basic standards as staff-written stories. Any wire story relying on anonymous sources must be of overriding importance to our readers. Information attributed to anonymous sources must be necessary to the article, must not be available on the record and must not contain personal attacks. Reports from other news organizations that rely on anonymous sources should be limited to information that is plausible and to subjects on which those organizations have access and expertise.

"Phantom" attribution. We should avoid attributing information to vague groups such as "experts," "informed sources," "key officials," "knowledgeable sources," "observers" or "onlookers." We should not refer to anonymous "sources" when, in fact, there is just one. We should not refer anonymously to someone identified elsewhere in an article as if he or she is more than one person. And we should avoid seeming to attribute information through use of nebulous phrases such as "it is believed that" or "it is expected that."

5. Decency, Fairness and Privacy

Gruesome images. The newspaper, Web site and television segments we produce should be sensitive in the depiction of uncovered dead bodies, particularly faces. Caution always is required before publicizing vivid images of dying and death.

Children. Reporting on children poses special challenges. Children often are eager to talk and be photographed, but they may have no idea of the potential consequences of having their names, pictures and words in the newspaper, on the Web or on television. Whenever possible, we should seek the approval of parents before interviewing, photographing or filming a child – especially when dealing with sensitive topics. Whether we have permission or not, we must always be mindful that children are not responsible for their words or actions in the same way adults are.

Ambushing. "Ambushing" news sources should generally be avoided. Photographs or video from such encounters often appear accusatory merely because the subject was caught off guard.

Surreptitious recording. Under some circumstances, Florida law prohibits the use of tape recorders unless all parties consent to the recording of the conversation. Although there are times that such consent is not necessary, legal advice should be sought before using hidden tape recorders and cameras in gathering news, and such surreptitious use must be approved in advance by the Editor.

Lack of response. Efforts to reach news sources should allow them reasonable time to respond, even if it means delaying a report to include their comment.

"No comment." A "no comment" response from an individual in the news should be phrased neutrally. The most neutral way to explain a person's desire not to be quoted in a news story is to say the person "would not comment." The phrase "refused to comment" should be reserved for

situations in which the person questioned would be expected to respond to a serious allegation – because of his or her office or role in the news event – but purposely avoids doing so.

Quotations. Quotes may be shortened through the use of ellipses and other generally understood and accepted editing devices, but editing should not distort the meaning of the person who is quoted. If a quote includes a slur or a profanity, it should be used only when the value of the story depends on it.

Names of sexual assault victims. With rare exceptions, we do not publish or broadcast the names of sexual assault victims without their consent. Exceptions require the approval of the Managing Editor or Editorial Page Editor.

Names of suspects. Generally, adult criminal suspects may be identified only when charges have been filed and juveniles only if they have been charged as adults. Exceptions must be approved by the Managing Editor or Editorial Page Editor.

Uncorroborated reports. We should not violate our own standards by publishing or broadcasting uncorroborated reports about a person just because other organizations have done so. The same applies to identifying people who have said they were sexually assaulted and have been identified elsewhere.

Identification of race. Generally, a person's race belongs in a story only if reporters and editors can articulate its relevance. The same principle applies to religion, ethnic origin and sexual orientation.

Political candidates. Individuals running for public office open themselves to particularly close media scrutiny. Reporters and their editors should consult regularly about which pieces of information about the candidate are of sufficient importance to warrant publication.

APPENDIX H

MEMO FROM CHARLOTTE HALL

May 1, 2007

To: All

From: Charlotte Hall

This morning I announced a new organization for our newsroom and a reduction in staff positions.

The new structure is a major step in transforming our newsroom for the digital and print worlds. It will alter the way we do our work and enable us to move more rapidly. It will not change our commitment to excellent journalism or our mission to serve readers with the most relevant and credible news and information in Central Florida.

We also will have to eliminate about two dozen positions in the newsroom over the next month to six weeks. We will offer a voluntary separation program in some areas. I hope that the voluntary program, along with a handful of open positions, will allow us to keep involuntary terminations to a minimum.

The new structure reflects the way we would build our newsroom if we were starting from scratch today with our dual goals of increasing Web audience rapidly and maintaining newspaper readership.

Our winning edge in the battle for audience will be our superiority in gathering local news for different platforms. This means our priority will be keeping "feet on the street" reporters and photographers. It also means we will flatten the management structure.

We would restructure our newsroom even if did not have to reduce our staff. Why? Because we need to change the way we think and act so we can succeed in the new world, both in print and online. We need to be quicker, less hierarchical, more entrepreneurial and more flexible. We need to lead change, not resist it.

We are facing a watershed in the way readers and advertisers use media, certainly the most difficult period in the history of American newspapers. This requires bold and sometimes painful action to survive and prosper.

THE NEW NEWSROOM

We will divide the newsroom into teams that gather news and production desks that edit and package the news. As the importance of digital media grows, we need to think of ourselves as a continuous news and information engine, not as a "newspaper" organized along the lines of traditional newspaper sections.

From the current Metro, Features, Business and National divisions, we will create five newsgathering teams: the Public Service Team, the Breaking News Team, the Communities Team, the How We Live Team and the Business and Consumer Team.

At the same time, we will consolidate news and features production to provide more flexibility and efficiency. The Production Desk will be headed by Ann Hellmuth working with the merged copy desk and three news editors – one each for the A-section, the feature sections, and the local and weekend news sections. The news editors will coordinate and choose stories for their sections. We will also merge news and features design.

Kim Marcum will head the How We Live reporting team. Lisa Cianci will head the Business and Consumer Team, which also will include health writers. Bonita Burton will lead Visuals, including the merged design team. Lynn Hoppes will lead Sports, and Anthony Moor will lead Online. We also will create a Data Team to help us build databases for the Web, and that team will report to Steve Doyle and Anthony.

Associate Managing Editor/Metro Sean Holton has decided to leave the Sentinel after 20 years of distinguished service. Sean is one of the great class acts in journalism, and we will sorely miss his leadership, intelligence, honesty and creativity. I also want to thank him personally for his support and guidance since I became editor in 2004. Sean's last day will be June 1. Please see the Newsroom Briefing page for a message from Russ and me about Sean. CONTINUED BELOW

Orlando Sentinel cuts jobs, reorganizes newsroom *5/1/2007 1:49:35 PM*

Today we will post jobs and begin seeking applicants to head the Public Service, Breaking News and Communities teams.

After the team leaders are named next week, we will post other editing jobs. There will be fewer editing jobs in the new structure, and all editors in areas affected by the reorganization will need to apply for positions. The process will be open, without any preferred candidates. I encourage people to think about trying something new. Some reporting beats also will be eliminated and some new ones will be created, and we will post all available reporting jobs as well. The new newsroom organization will take effect June 4, after the voluntary separation program ends.

WHAT ARE OUR GOALS?

As we have thought about the reorganization and the need to operate with a smaller newsroom, three imperatives have guided us:

We must grow audience rapidly on the Web. That means changing the way we work. It means gaining new skills and creating new beats. It means becoming a multimedia, 24/7 news operation. It means creating new databases and managing user-generated content.

We must keep the newspaper strong. That means a sharper emphasis on watchdog journalism, consumer journalism, unique local coverage, personally useful news, innovative storytelling and provocative commentary. We must focus relentlessly on what readers perceive as valuable – not on our preconceptions or traditions.

We must each take ownership of our work. Every staff member needs to take personal

responsibility for making the newspaper and web site a success. Individual creativity, commitment and energetic action will be rewarded. The flatter management structure will require more self-discipline, initiative and self-management.

This will be a tumultuous time for each of us. Russ, I and the newsroom leadership team will communicate frequently and candidly with you. The meetings today are the first step. We are also creating a special area on Newsroom Briefing to share information about the new newsroom and the voluntary separation program.

Russ and I need your help, your creativity and your energy in shaping the new newsroom. We have a huge opportunity to succeed and prosper in the new media world. It is not too late. We still own the local franchise for news and information. Our success is up to us.

I know you will ask if this reorganization is the end of change for the foreseeable future. No, it is the beginning of change. We are living through a media revolution in which change will be continuous. Change is scary for all of us □ there is risk, there is fear. But not changing is far more risky and a far greater threat to the survival of our company and our craft.

Yes, we face tough and challenging days ahead. We will make mistakes, and we will pick ourselves up and fix them. Some days will be terrifying; some will be exciting.

One thing I know for certain: We will pass through this storm with courage, hope and heart, and we will build a newsroom for the future.

Thank you.

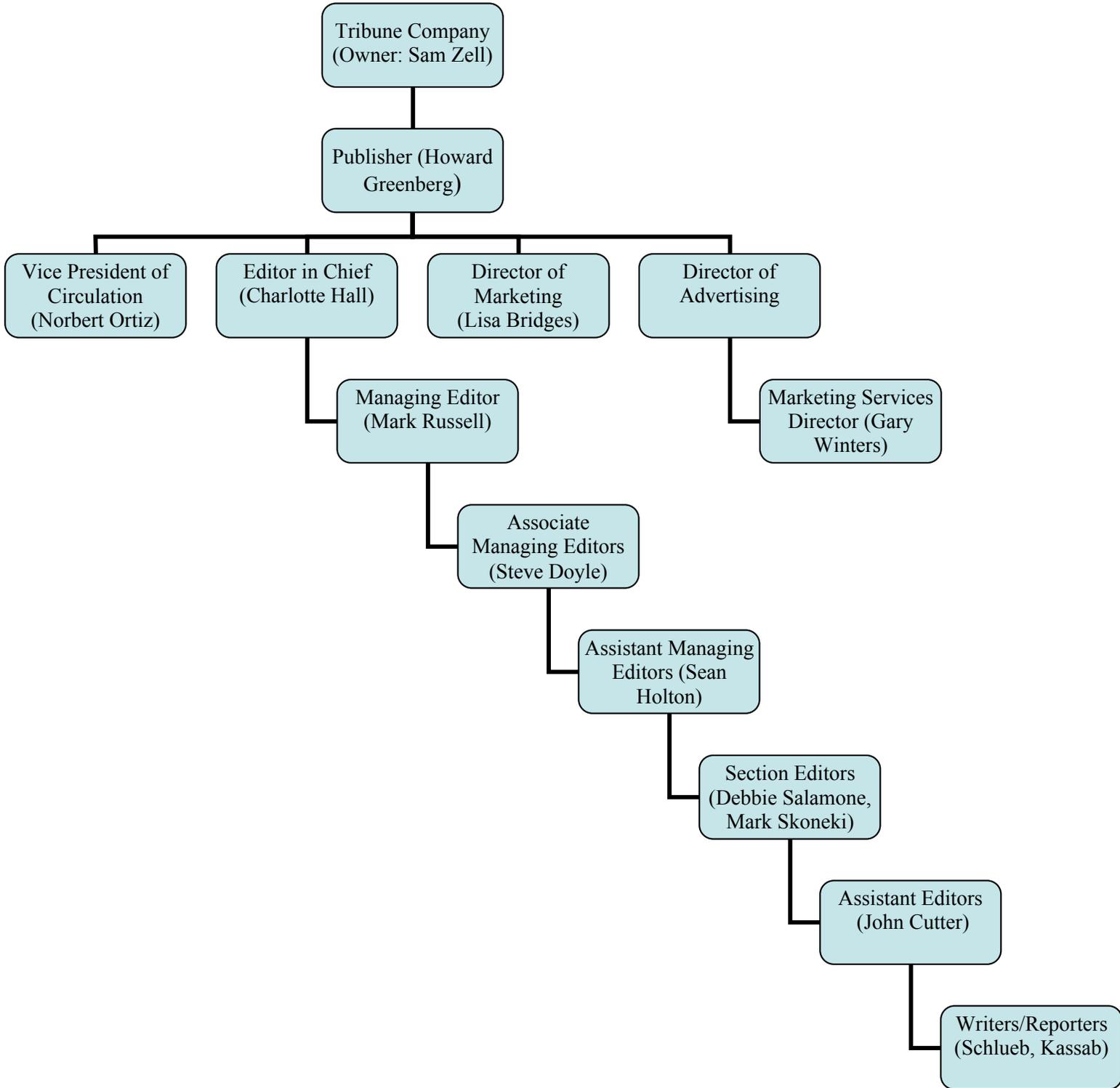
APPENDIX I
SAMPLE CODING SHEET

Title of Article:

Date Ran in Paper:

Focus (This article is about...):

APPENDIX J
STAFF STRUCTURE AT *THE SENTINEL*



This flow chart was designed by the researcher based on data collected during the interviews. *The Sentinel* does not have a public document outlining their staff structure.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Gordon Van Owen was born February 5, 1984, in Bad Hersfeld, Germany. His family moved to Orlando, FL, in 1985. He graduated from Pine Castle Christian Academy, near Orlando, in 2002. He earned his B.A. in English and his B.S. in journalism from the University of Florida in 2006. He also spent a semester studying 20th century British history and literature at the University of Cambridge, in England, and wrote an analysis of the recent urban development trends of the City of Cambridge, which earned highest marks from his professors. He is currently a master's degree candidate in the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications and is working toward a minor in urban and regional planning from UF's College of Design, Construction, and Planning.

As an undergraduate, Gordon worked as a news intern for several newspapers in the Gainesville area, putting the skills he learned at the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications to the test. These newspapers include *The Independent Florida Alligator*, *The High Springs Herald*, and *The Gainesville Sun*. He was also a contributing writer for several on-campus publications, including the College of Journalism and Communications' alumni magazine *The Communicator*. His editorials from *The Independent Florida Alligator* and his stories from *The Washington Times* have been syndicated in a number of other publications across the country, both online and in print. Since enrolling in graduate school in 2006, Gordon has continued to develop his professional skills by continuing to intern at several different newspapers, including *The Gainesville Sun*, *The Alligator*, and *The Washington Times* in Washington, DC. While working for *The Alligator*, Gordon served as the freelance editor and a columnist.

Throughout his career at the University of Florida, Gordon has also worked for the university's Office of Admissions, first in the processing office, and later as an Admissions

Ambassador at the Welcome Center, where he greeted more than 30,000 visitors a year. Gordon was also an active member in the Greek community and served as a student senator in UF's Student Government. Within the College of Journalism and Communications, he served as vice-president of the Journalism and Communications Ambassadors and president of the College of Journalism and Communications College Council.

Gordon's research interests include urban growth effects on mass media, as well as journalists' perceptions of growth and the representation of growth in the media. His other interests include literary journalism, magazine writing, and Social Capital Theory.

After completing his degree, Gordon plans to move to New York City and join Teach for America in their efforts to end educational inequality by working at a disadvantaged school in the city. While there, he hopes to continue freelance writing for a newspaper or magazine. After working in the professional world for a few years, Gordon hopes to return to graduate school and earn a Ph.D.