

A STUDY ON THE ADVISABILITY OF SEPARATING  
JOB SHOPS FROM WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS IN OKLAHOMA,  
ACCORDING TO CONDITIONS EXISTING IN 1950

By

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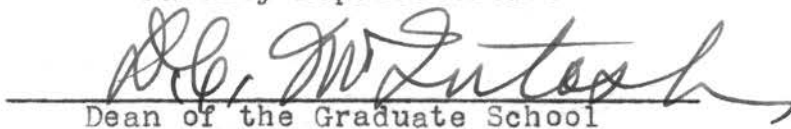
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## PREFACE

The weekly, or grassroots, newspaper has one of the greatest responsibilities of any private business in America today.

Its duties are to disseminate the news and to help keep the people informed as to what is going on in the community, state, country and the world in general. The editor has the job of wisely interpreting this news and expressing honest opinions and feasible solutions to problems which arise.

With the idea of community service in mind, an effort was made to determine whether or not the time devoted by the staffs of weekly newspapers to the printing of job work was hampering the effectiveness with which they were performing this service to their readers.

On the one hand, the newspaper is faced with the need to render the most complete service possible to the citizens of the community, and on the other hand, it is concerned with getting out rush jobs at a time when all hands are needed to meet the newspaper deadline.

The problem which thus arose in the writer's mind was whether or not it would be practical, financially, and from the standpoint of efficiency of operations, for the weekly to divorce its job shop from the regular newspaper plant and to delegate separate staffs to the work of each department.

To answer this question, personal experiences and opinions were solicited from the state's weekly editors and

publishers, together with their reasons favoring or disfavoring separation of the job shop from the regular news plant.

The results contained herein represent material gleaned from questionnaires received from and interviews held with 109 Oklahoma weekly newspaper publishers operating plants in communities showing a 1940 census population of 1,000 or more.<sup>1</sup> The actual survey was conducted during June, July, and August, 1950.

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<sup>1</sup>Plants in communities of less than 1,000 population were not included in this study due to the fact that they usually have very small staffs and would be financially unable to do anything about altering the situation even though problems and conflicts should exist.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer wishes to express his appreciation to the many weekly newspaper editors and publishers in Oklahoma and other authorities whose cooperation and contributions made this study possible.

Thanks is expressed also to Professor Clement E. Trout, head of the Oklahoma A. & M. College department of technical journalism, and to Miss Elsie Shoemaker and Claron Burnett, staff members, for their guidance and assistance during the study.

With the completion of six years of college in sight, the author wishes to take this means of expressing his deep appreciation to his parents for their many sacrifices which have helped so greatly in the culmination of this achievement, and to the close friends and associates for their moral support when it was needed most.

It is the hope of the author that this study may cast further light upon the weekly newspaper situation in Oklahoma and that it may in some way help enlighten those who are concerned with this problem.

## INTRODUCTION

This problem is one with which the writer's father has been concerned for many years as a printer on a weekly newspaper; consequently, the writer has been aware of the existence of the problem since childhood. Therefore, this problem was chosen as the object of a study to determine the practicability of separating the job shop from the regular news plant, using the weekly newspapers of Oklahoma as a basis for the study.

Factors which were considered pertinent to the problem concerning the advisability of separating the job shop were: (a) size of circulation, (b) number of employees, (c) percentage of time devoted to job and newspaper work, (d) percentages of gross income derived from the four main sources of revenue, (e) whether or not job work was hampering the coverage of news in the community, (f) number of typesetting machines in the plant, and (g) the opinions either favoring or opposing separation of the job shop, complete with reasons why.

Miscellaneous comments solicited by the questionnaire and the opinions of nationally known authorities in the weekly newspaper field proved very helpful, too, in arriving at the final conclusions of this survey and in gaining a better understanding of some of the "whys" for and against separation.

## CHAPTER I

## COMMUNITY OBLIGATIONS VERSUS FINANCIAL WELL BEING

Weekly Editor--A Leader

Probably no individual in private business today is obliged to perform a greater service to the citizens of his community than is the weekly newspaper editor.

His constituency look to him for complete and truthful reporting of all community affairs, the interpretation of news and legislation which affect all of them, and the offering of wise and well-founded solutions to problems which arise, whether local or otherwise.

In his position he can stimulate civic pride. He can point the way in agriculture and industry, foster education and entertainment, take the lead in developing parks and playgrounds and crusade for better housing conditions, health and sanitation.

The newspaper should be a leader in its community, and not a follower of the multitude. It should be the most potent force in community life and welfare, and an instructor and entertainer.<sup>1</sup>

The newspaper, a private business, is a public institution, but, of necessity, is operated on a profitable basis lest it fail to survive. The newspaper's chief duty is to the public it serves. The more successful the newspaper financially, the better is the public served. To the newspaper that is directed in honorable, legitimate channels, with its duty to the public ever foremost, patronage will come in increasing volume. But success is not, in the

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<sup>1</sup>James Clifford Safley, "The Country Newspaper and Its Operation," p. 4.



long run, to be measured in dollars and cents, but in the value of the newspaper to the community in which it is published, its worth to the public, and its usefulness as a servant to the commonweal.

The newspaper that is financially successful is the best newspaper, but the newspaper that will dominate its field, command the respect of its readers and yield ample returns is not the one that, through intrigue and subsidy, has rung up a large profit on the cash register, but on the other hand, is the publication that, through honesty of purpose has not broken faith with the public.<sup>2</sup>

Now, in time of great international strife, the community newspaper is an even more important tool in the balance of information for and against. The vital service rendered by the grassroots press was recently cited by President Harry S. Truman in a letter to George H. Bechtel, editor of the Publishers' Auxiliary in the December 22, 1950, issue of that paper. In it he declared that the country looks to them for vital service in the present critical period in giving the American people the whole and uncolored truth on every major happening and issue of the day.

"The weekly and smaller daily newspapers are in the best possible position to perform this service to the American people. They reach a broad cross-section of the American public. They are close to their readers with whom they share a wide community spirit. The writers and editors are frequently in close personal contact with their readers. All these factors tend to give what they print a high degree of credibility--and therefore to increase the degree of responsibility of the papers to their audience."

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<sup>2</sup>Safley, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

### Weeklies' Popularity Increasing

As further indication of the increasing prominence of weekly newspapers, the April 29, 1950, issue of the Publishers' Auxiliary revealed that "Weekly newspapers have increased 46.1 per cent in circulation from 1940 to 1949 as compared with 28.5 per cent for dailies, and 19.9 per cent for family population." It further stated that weeklies cover a market representing 42 per cent of the U. S. population.

These weekly newspapers are typical of the smaller towns and cities and engage in a number of jobs both as a service to their community and as a means of producing revenue. Besides their regular newspaper work and solicitation of advertising, they do a wide range of miscellaneous printing, or job work.

### Job Printing Defined

Job printing, as handled by a country newspaper, consists of almost all the printing requirements of the business firms of the town. Practically every item of printing used in the commercial activities of the community can and should be produced in the job printing shop of the newspaper. The job printing customers will virtually be identical with advertising patrons. The range of job printing is wide, extending from a small card to a broadside or a book. The average country printer is prepared to execute any of these needs. The ordinary run of job printing will include letterheads, noteheads, billheads, statements, envelopes, cards, dodgers, posters, programs, fillers, ledger sheets, sheets for bookkeeping machines and loose-leaf devices, checks and other bank supplies, circular letters, circulars, folders, legal blanks, cafe checks, time cards, post cards, blotters, pamphlets, booklets, election ballots, signs, farm sale bills, shipping tags, announcements, invitations and a great variety of special forms for business firms,

schools, city, county and state offices.<sup>3</sup>

The average weekly plant is also equipped to do a number of related printing and bindery operations. These include imprinting, numbering, perforating, scoring, padding, stapling, bronzing, punching, and folding, three or four of which may be necessary to the production of a single order.<sup>4</sup>

In most weekly newspaper plants, Fridays, Saturdays, and Mondays are "job printing days." These days are devoted to finishing printing orders already started and to getting "in process" those which have accumulated since work was started on the last issue of the newspaper.

In effect, everything points to two essential requirements of the weekly newspaper. First, it must be a servant of the people; and, secondly, to render this service to the best advantage, it must be financially successful. In the words of Russell Dyche, editor of the London, Kentucky, Sentinel-Echo, "An unprofitable newspaper cannot serve its community any more than an unprofitable bank or grocery."

In order to be financially sound it is necessary for most weekly newspapers to look to additional sources of revenue other than the newspaper for their sustenance. In turning over a part of their time to the raising of additional income from various types of job printing they risk possible jeopardy of their efforts to maintain their high level of service to their community.

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<sup>3</sup>Safley, op. cit., p. 370.

<sup>4</sup>Thomas F. Barnhart, "Weekly Newspaper Management," p. 358.

No doubt conditions within the individual communities vary considerably concerning the extent to which the newspaper can, and is able to, render the most efficient service and at the same time emerge as a profitable enterprise for the publisher.

The purpose of this study then, was to determine whether or not separation of the job shop from the news plant is advisable and, if so, the circumstances and conditions which make it practical.

## CHAPTER II

## METHODS OF APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM

Determination of Factors to be Considered

At the beginning of this study the author interviewed three of the state's weekly newspaper editors who were believed to have separated their job shops from their news plants, or who were known to be considering separation. Of this number, only one had actually made the separation, one was seriously contemplating separation and the other was considering leasing his job shop out to another person.

From the ideas gained from these interviews, from general reference material and current journalistic periodicals in the Oklahoma A. & M. College library, and from personal background, principal factors to be considered in the study were determined. A questionnaire was then formulated as the method of securing the necessary information.

The Letter and Questionnaire

In composing the questionnaire, an attempt was made to devise questions which would be brief, easily understood, and which would require a minimum of the respondent's time to answer. The author requested percentages rather than actual figures in several instances in the belief that, by so doing, more responses would be forthcoming.

Also, attention was called to the fact that information contained in the questionnaire would be held strictly confidential. The writer has refrained from identifying any

particular plant with the information given herein because this study is concerned with a general analysis of the whole situation rather than a study of individual plants or isolated cases.

A mailing list of all the state's weekly newspapers was obtained from the Oklahoma Press Association. Then, this questionnaire, together with a letter of explanation and a stamped, self-addressed envelope was mailed to 158 newspaper editors and publishers whose plants were located in towns and cities showing a 1940 census population of 1,000 or more. Interviews were held with three more, bringing the total number of plants contacted to 164.

Of this number, information was received from 123, giving a 75 per cent return on the entire survey.

Of the 123 respondents, 109 contributed material which was used in this study. Of this 109, some failed to give an answer here and there on the questionnaire, therefore the number of plants contributing information concerning each question varies throughout the discussion, but these numbers are indicated with the discussion of each question.

The other 14 respondents either reported that they did not do job work or that their weekly paper was published in connection with a daily and thus could not, in the strict sense, come under the classification of a weekly for the purpose of this study.

Some of the questions had from two to five choices for answers. These were so arranged as to enable prompt checking

by the recipients. The first nine questions were arranged so that they could simply fill in the blanks, circle or check the answer, or answers, which applied in their particular case.

Question number 10 called for remarks concerning the problem, and these opinions expressed by a number of the respondents contributed much sound information to the study. Members of the Oklahoma A. & M. College journalism faculty assisted in the revision and simplification of the questionnaire before it was sent out.

The questionnaire, in its final form, was mimeographed on  $8\frac{1}{2}$  by 14 inch paper and read as follows:

## JOB PRINTING SURVEY OF WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS

1. Our present circulation is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. There is a total of \_\_\_\_\_ employees in our plant. Of this number \_\_\_\_\_ work in the news department; \_\_\_\_\_ work in the mechanical department; and \_\_\_\_\_ work in both departments.
3. Our staff devotes approximately \_\_\_\_\_ of its time to job work and the other \_\_\_\_\_ to work on the newspaper. (Example -  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ , etc.)
4. I believe the news coverage in our community IS--IS NOT hampered by the time spent by our staff on job work. (Circle one)
5. Approximate percentages of our gross income derived from advertising is \_\_\_\_\_%; circulation \_\_\_\_\_%; job work \_\_\_\_\_%; and office supplies and miscellaneous \_\_\_\_\_%.
6. We have \_\_\_\_\_ typesetting machines.
  - A. ( ) These machines are used for both job printing and newspaper work. )
  - B. ( ) Each department has its own machines. )

)---(Check one)
7. Our job shop is: (Check one)
  - A. ( ) Combined with the regular plant.
  - B. ( ) Maintained separately but under the same roof.
  - C. ( ) Separate; (each in a different building.)
  - D. ( ) Leased to another person.
8. If you checked 7-B or 7-C above, please check these:  
Factors which influenced the separation of our job shop were:
  - A. ( ) Interference with newspaper deadline.



- B. ( ) Time spent on job work hampered our news coverage.
- C. ( ) Too many interruptions with work on newspaper.
- D. ( ) Desire to increase job output.
- E. ( ) Other (Please list) \_\_\_\_\_.

9. If you answered 7-A above, then check these:

I believe separation in our case would be impractical because:

- A. ( ) Not enough work in each department to maintain two staffs.
- B. ( ) Too expensive to be profitable in the long run.
- C. ( ) Space too limited for such a division of departments.
- D. ( ) Would result in too many man hours lost on slack days.
- E. ( ) Other \_\_\_\_\_.

I believe separation in our case would be practical in that it:

- A. ( ) Would allow more complete coverage of our local news.
- B. ( ) Would eliminate confusion between job and news staffs.
- C. ( ) Would increase profits through more concentrated effort in each department.
- D. ( ) Other \_\_\_\_\_.

10. If you know of any out-of-state weeklies that have separated their job shops from their news plants please list them here: \_\_\_\_\_

Will you make any remarks or comments you have regarding this study on the reverse of this sheet. All of this information will be kept confidential if you so specify.

## (THE LETTER)

Stillwater, Oklahoma  
July 20, 1950

(Name)  
(Newspaper)  
(Address)

Dear Sir:

I am currently working on my master's thesis in journalism at Oklahoma A. & M. College. The field I have chosen to investigate concerns the problem of job printing in connection with weekly newspapers.

My purpose is to determine the advisability of separating the job shop from the regular news plant; to find out in which cases and under what conditions such a change is practical, if at all.

I have tried to arrange questions on the enclosed survey sheet to require a minimum of your time in answering.

Your personal experiences or opinions will be most helpful to me in summarizing my findings. By merely checking the answers on this questionnaire and returning it to me in the enclosed envelope you will be contributing not only to my cause but possibly to the printing and newspaper business in general.

Sincerely yours,

Charles R. Stiver

Enc. 2

## CHAPTER III

## FINDINGS WITH RESPECT TO THE "AVERAGE" OKLAHOMA WEEKLY

Circulations

The average circulation, of the 107 Oklahoma weekly newspapers furnishing information on this question, was found to be 1,772. The scatter ranged from 350 to 13,000. The range in which more newspapers fell than any other was from 1,251 to 1,500.

The range between 1,001 and 2,000 contained 57 newspapers, or over half the number reporting. Table I shows the ranges of the 107 circulations and their distributions.

Employees

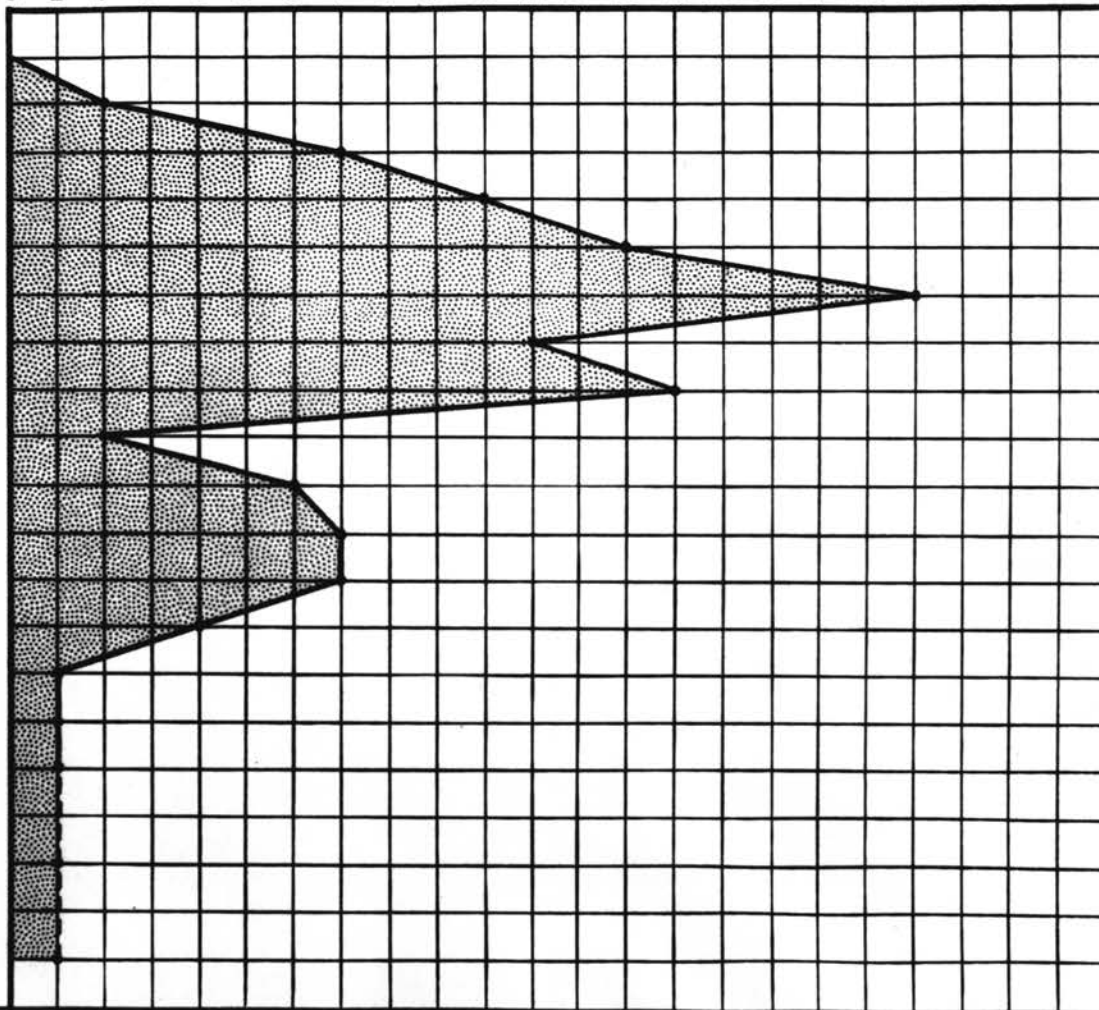
The average total number of persons employed in each plant was found to be 5.14. A breakdown reveals that, on the average, 2.26 employees work in the news department, 3.39 in the mechanical department, and 1.31 work in both departments. It is interesting to note that four of the newspapers, with circulations of from 3,000 to 4,000 employ a total of 14, 15, 16, and 16 persons, respectively; whereas the newspaper with the highest circulation (13,000) has a total of 11 employees. Ten of the 108 newspapers giving employment figures have only two people working in the plants. Table II graphically shows this distribution of manpower.

TABLE I  
CIRCULATIONS OF PAPERS SURVEYED

Number of Papers Falling Within Circulation Range Shown Below

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23

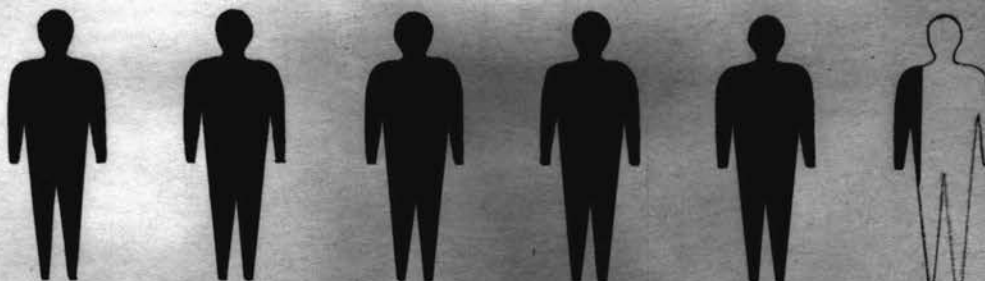
0-	250
251-	500
501-	750
751-	1,000
1,001-	1,250
1,251-	1,500
1,501-	1,750
1,751-	2,000
2,001-	2,250
2,251-	2,500
2,501-	2,750
2,751-	3,000
3,001-	3,250
3,251-	3,500
3,501-	3,750
3,751-	4,000
5,001-	5,250
12,751-	13,000



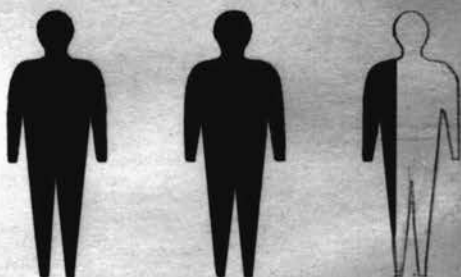
Circulation ranges of papers surveyed are shown at base of graph. Figures along the left hand side indicate the number of papers falling within each circulation range.

TABLE II

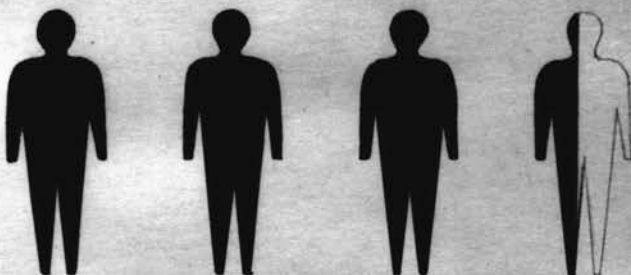
## AVERAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MANPOWER



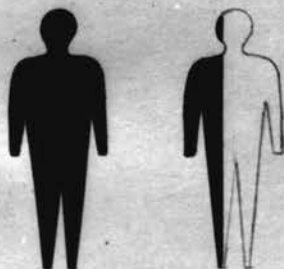
5.14 Total Number of Employees in Plant



2.26 Employees Work in News Department



3.39 Employees Work in Mechanical Department



1.31 Employees Work in Both Departments

### Time Spent

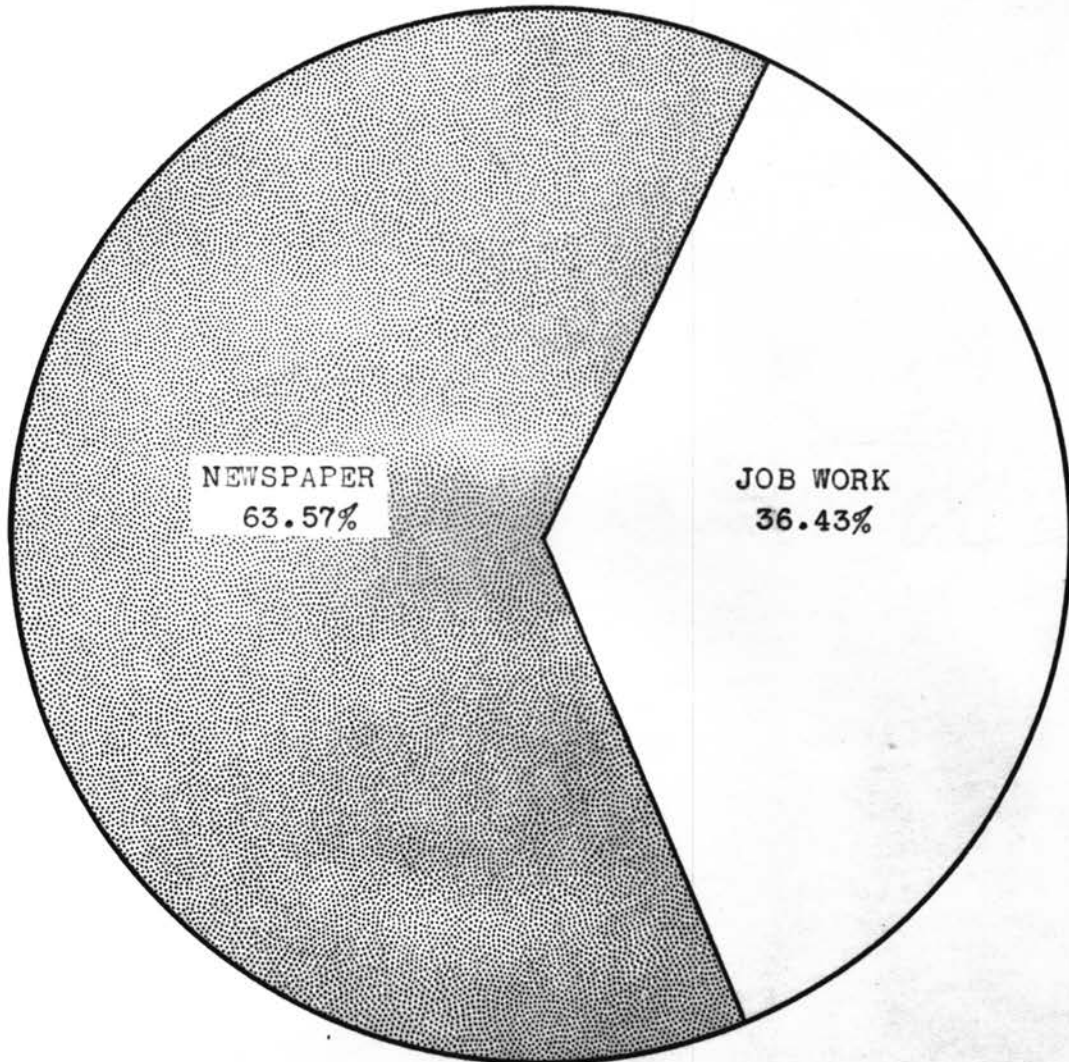
The amount of time devoted to work in the two departments was considered to be one of the more important factors in this study. Averages taken of the returns show that 36.43 per cent of the time in weekly plants is devoted to doing job work, whereas 63.57 per cent of the time goes into putting out the newspaper, as is shown in Table III.

Thirty-six newspapers reported that 50 per cent or more of their time was spent on job work, and, of this number, eight were found to be spending two-thirds or more of their time on it. One plant claimed that as high as 80 per cent of its time was devoted to doing job work.

### Gross Income

Some interesting variations with respect to the proportion of gross income as compared to the proportion of time spent are revealed. For instance, the plant in which the staff devotes 80 per cent of its time to job work and which has two people working in the entire plant, derives only 40 per cent of its gross income from that source, whereas, two others that devote 75 per cent of their time to job printing and employ four and six people, respectively, receive a corresponding 75 per cent of their gross income from that source. Another plant devoting 17 per cent of its time to job work, and which employs six people, attributes 50 per cent of its gross income to job printing. The plant spending the least amount of time on job work (6 per cent) receives a comparable 8 per cent gross income from it.

TABLE III  
DISTRIBUTION OF TIME



Average percentages of time devoted by the staffs of 105 weeklies on newspaper and job work.

The general observation, however, is that the ratio of time devoted to, and income derived from, job work, closely correspond--the averages being 36.43 per cent time devoted to it as compared to 30.1 per cent gross income received from it.

Distribution, by ranges, of the percentages of time devoted to work on the newspaper and job work are shown in Tables IV and V. The range distributions of the percentages of gross income derived from job work and advertising are shown in Tables VI and VII. Since these two sources account for 86.71 per cent of the total gross income, they are the only two sources the author has displayed graphically by ranges.

The average percentages of gross income derived from the four main sources are: advertising, 56.61 per cent; job work, 30.1 per cent; circulation, 9.46 per cent; and office supplies and miscellaneous, 3.83 per cent. These four percentages are combined and shown on the pie chart in Table VIII.

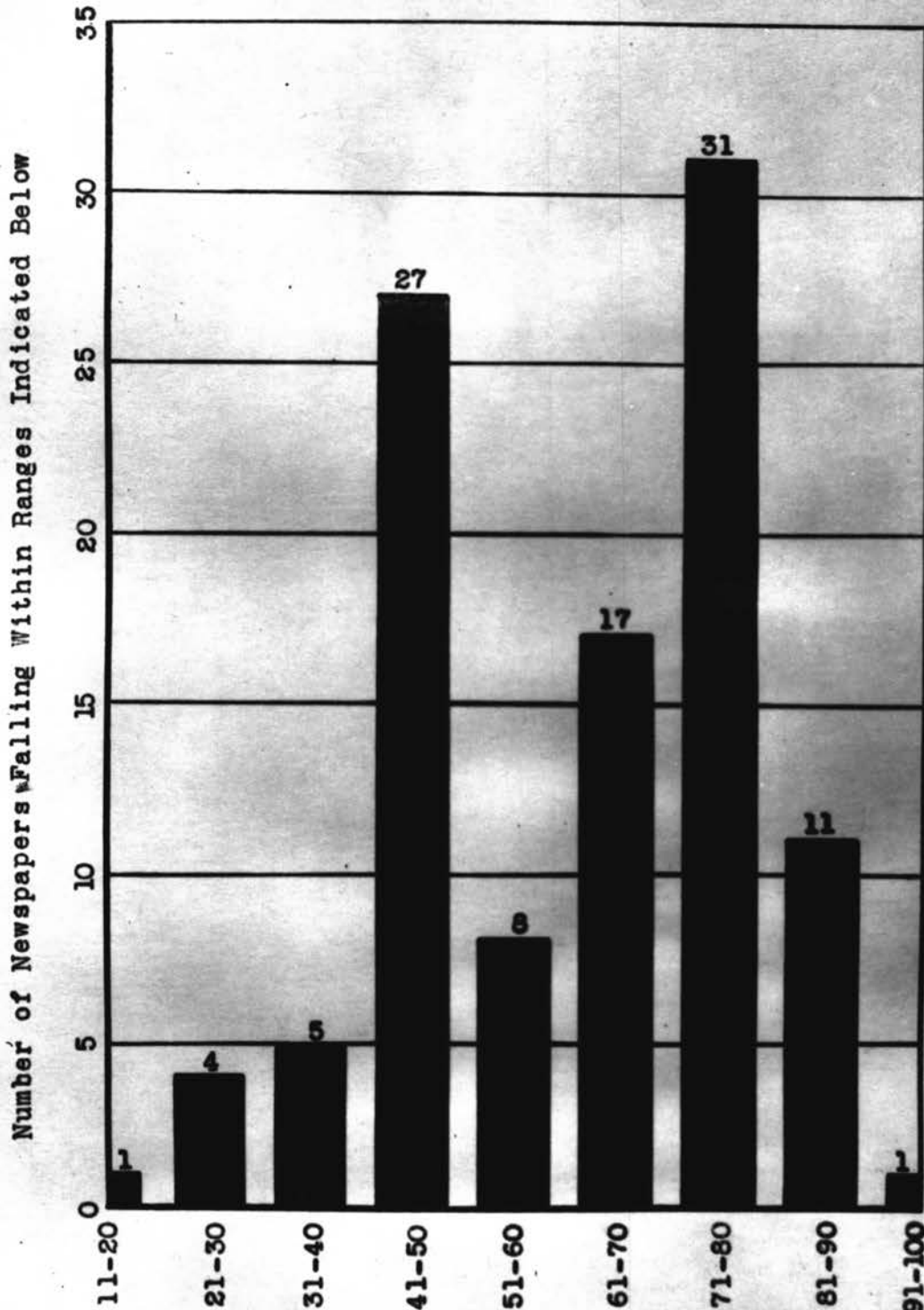
#### Comparison to PNPA Survey

One of the more interesting observations in connection with this study was the way these averages so closely parallel the findings of the 1948 cost study of 36 weeklies made by the Pennsylvania Newspaper Publishers' Association, the New Jersey Press Association, Ohio Newspaper Association, and the New York Press Association. Their findings revealed that weekly newspapers with circulations of under 3,000 ran 55.1 per



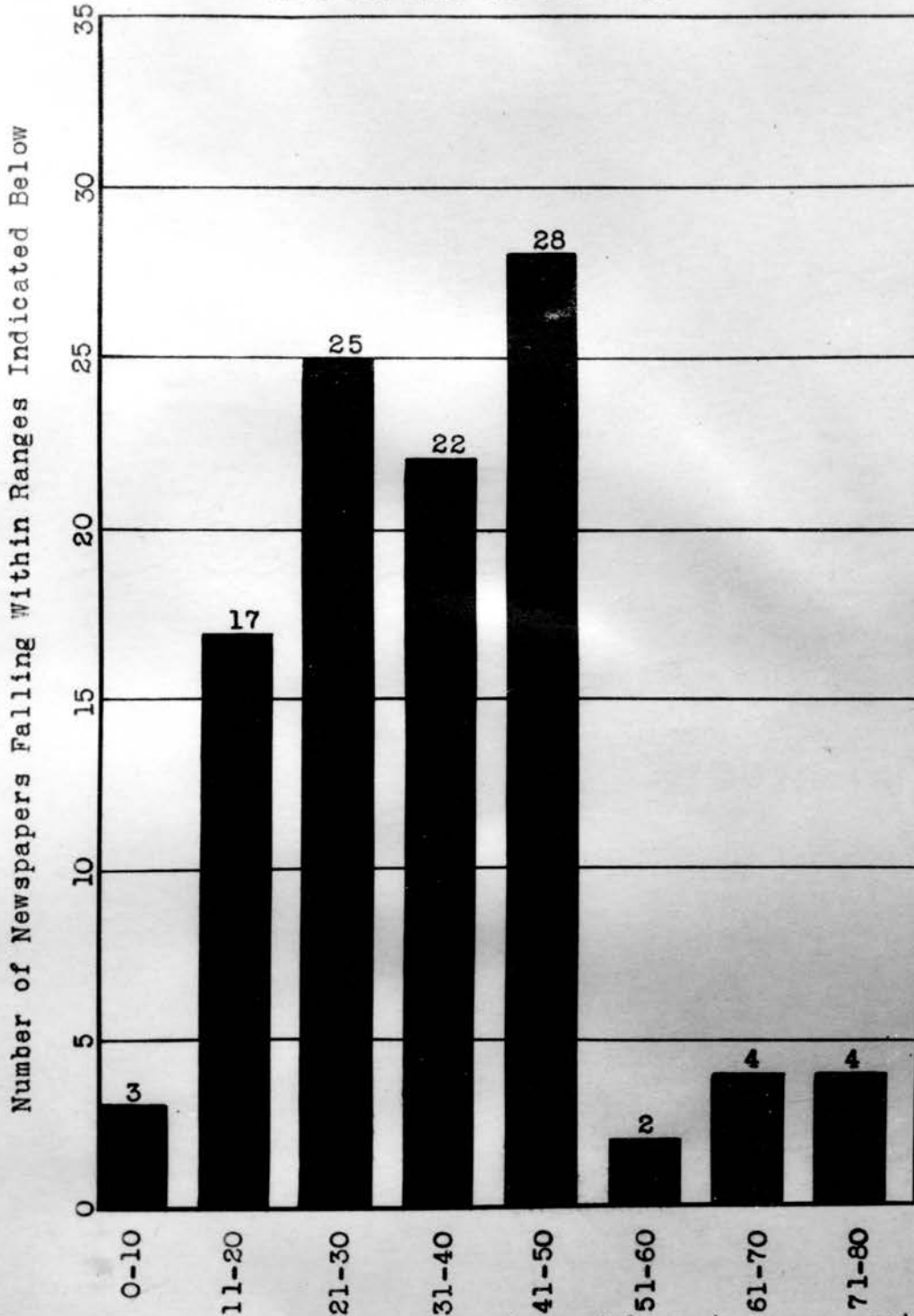
TABLE IV

DISTRIBUTION, BY RANGES, OF PERCENTAGES OF  
TIME SPENT ON THE NEWSPAPER



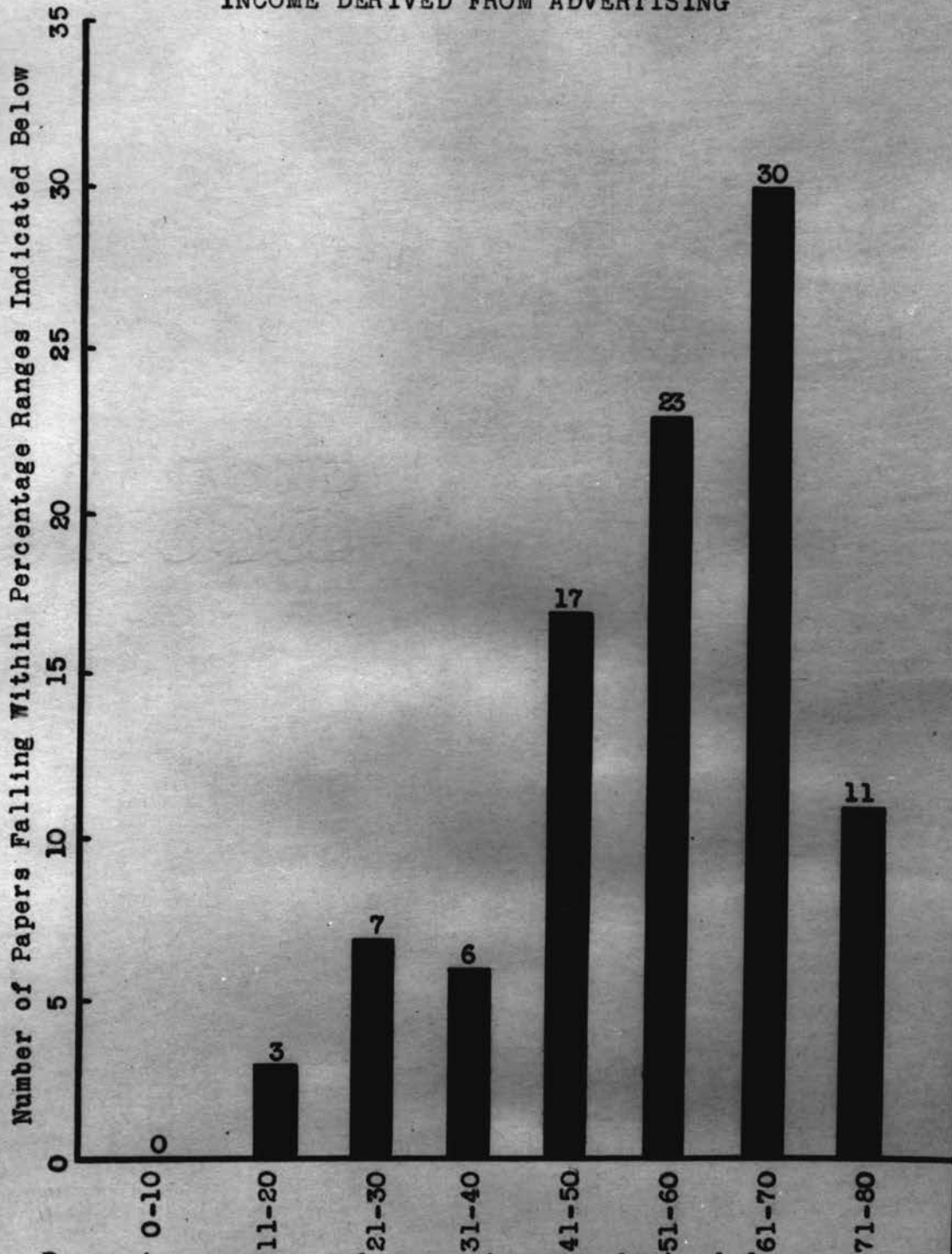
Percentage ranges of time spent on the newspaper, as reported by 105 weeklies.

TABLE V  
 DISTRIBUTION, BY RANGES, OF PERCENTAGES OF  
 TIME DEVOTED TO JOB WORK



Percentage ranges of time spent on job work, as reported by 105 weeklies.

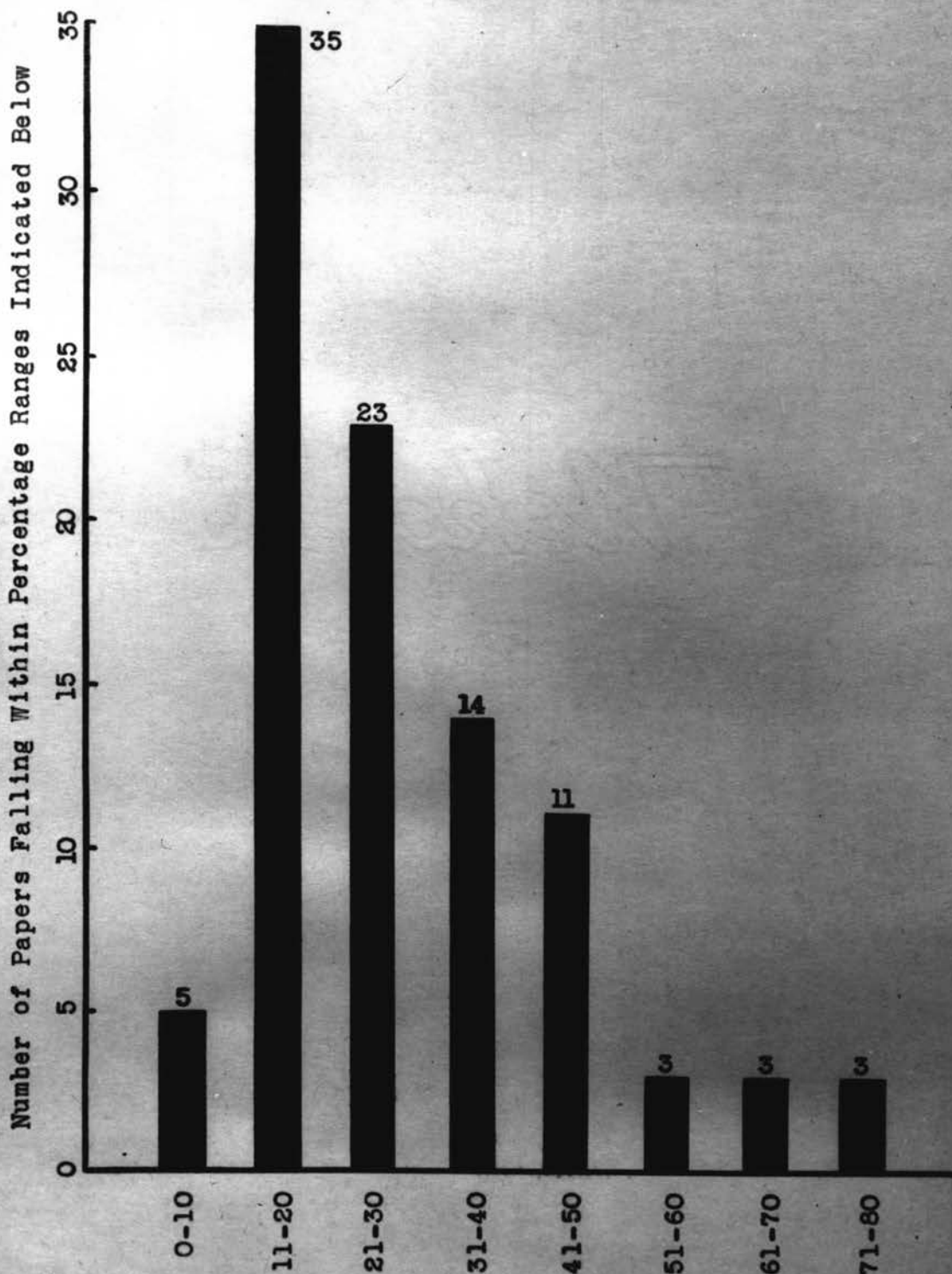
TABLE VI  
 DISTRIBUTION, BY RANGES, OF PERCENTAGES OF  
 INCOME DERIVED FROM ADVERTISING



Percentage ranges of gross incomes derived from advertising, as reported by 97 weeklies.

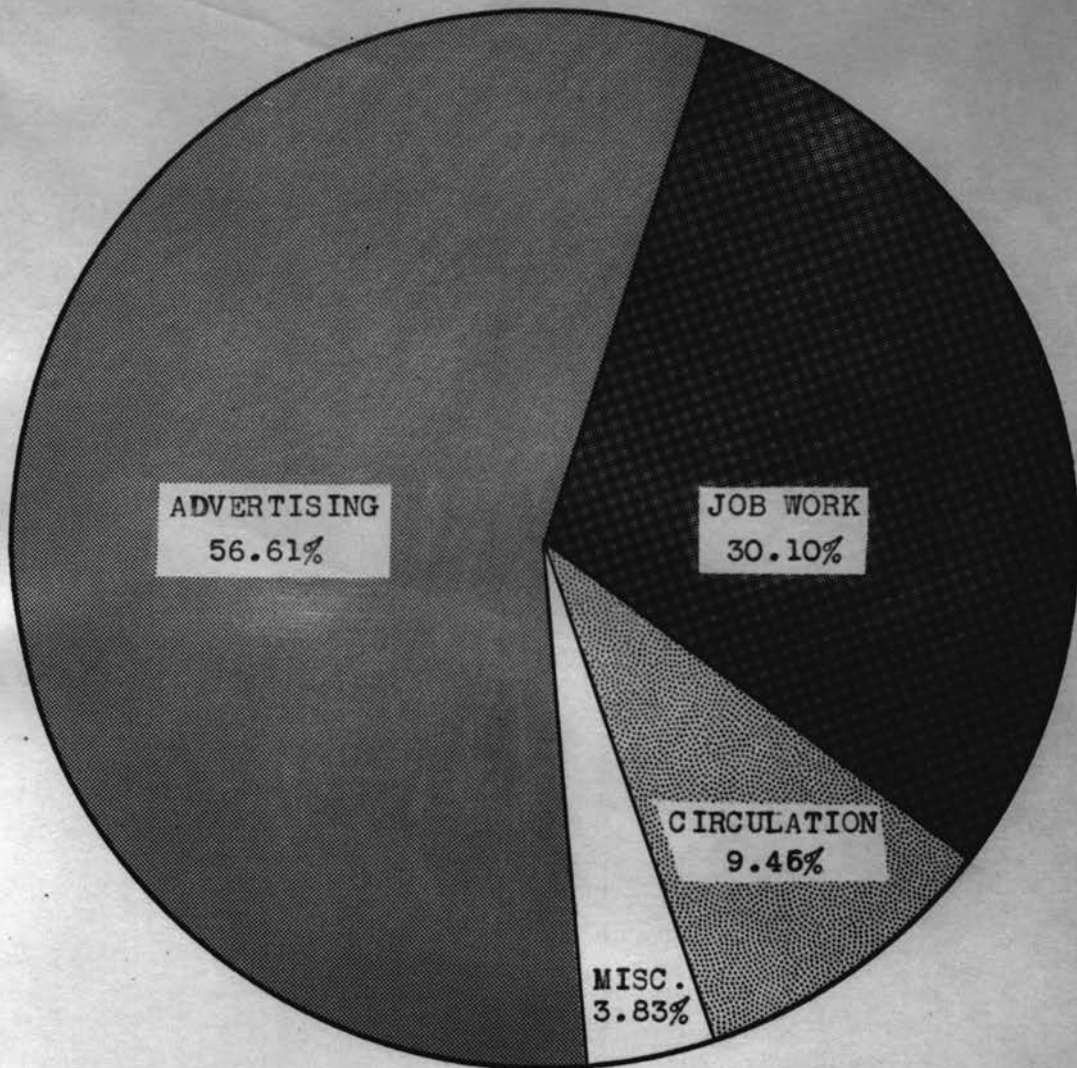
TABLE VII

DISTRIBUTION, BY RANGES, OF PERCENTAGES OF  
INCOME DERIVED FROM JOB WORK



Percentage ranges of gross incomes derived from job work, as reported by 97 weeklies.

TABLE VIII  
DISTRIBUTION OF GROSS INCOME



Average percentages of gross income derived from the four main sources, as reported by 97 weeklies.

cent, 29.7 per cent, 12.5 per cent, and 2.7 per cent for income derived from advertising, job work, circulation, and miscellaneous, respectively. Also, the average circulation of these weeklies was found to be 1,967<sup>1</sup>, slightly higher than the average of 1,772 found in this study for Oklahoma.

In another survey conducted by the Weekly Newspaper Bureau, weeklies from 32 states participated and the results were as follows: Average percentage of income from newspaper (including advertising and circulation) 68.20 per cent; printing sales, 27.81 per cent; miscellaneous, 5.51 per cent. Their average number of employees was five. For Oklahoma the average is 5.14.

#### Number and Utilization of Typesetting Machines

The average number of typesetting machines in each plant was found to be 1.35. Of the 108 questionnaires supplying information on this particular question, 72 listed only one typesetting machine per plant, 31 had two, four had three, and one had no machines at all. This one, with no machine, was the plant reporting the smallest circulation of the group (350).

Of the 107 replies to the question regarding whether or not these machines were utilized by both plants or if each department had its own machines, 106 stated that the machines

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<sup>1</sup>Theodore A. Serrill, "Weekly Papers' Profits Drop; Labor Offsets Higher Gross," The National Publisher, XXIX (October, 1949), p. 22.

were used by both departments and one stated that each department had its own machines.

### The Job Shop

On questions concerning the job shop, 99 reported that theirs was combined with the regular news plant; four stated that their job shops were maintained separately, but under the same roof (thereby making use of the same utilities); one reported separation with operation in different buildings; and another reported that the job shop had been leased out to another person.

It is significant to note that the one isolated case reporting that each department had its own machines was the one maintained in a separate building and is a semi-weekly, showing that, even in the three cases of separation of departments in the same building, typesetting machines are still used by both departments.

## CHAPTER IV

## RESPONDENTS' REASONS FOR SEPARATION, COMBINATION

Reasons for Separation

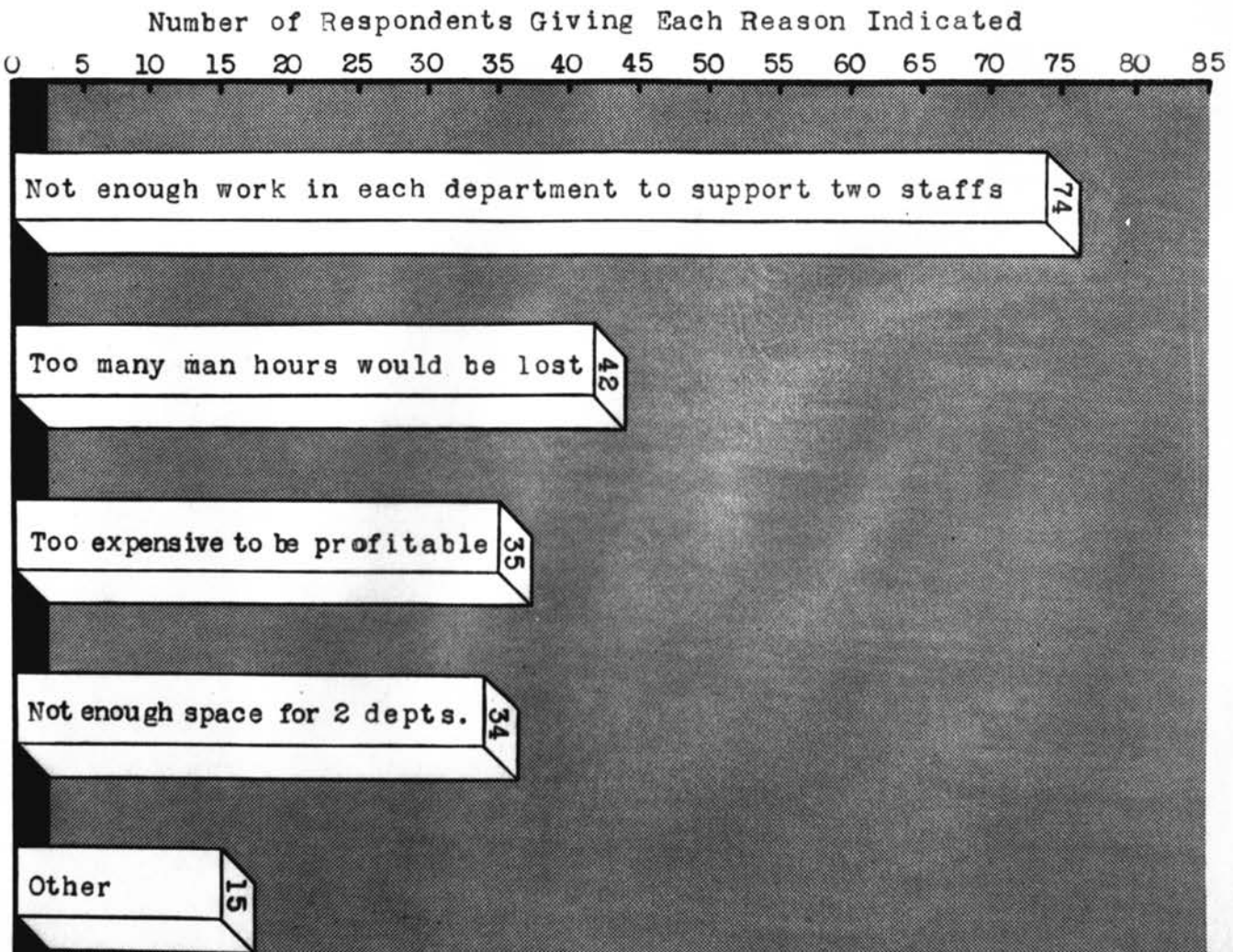
Of those respondents reporting separation of their job shops, one gave as the reason for such a move the fact that the job work had interfered too much with the newspaper deadline; two contended that it caused too many interruptions with work on the newspaper; one desired to increase job output by separating the departments; one was striving for simplification and departmentalization; and two others said that separation eliminated the conflicts between the job and news departments and increased the efficiency of the staffs.

Reasons for Combination

Of those expressing opinions to the effect that separation would be impractical in their plants, 74 stated that there would not be enough work in each department to maintain two separate staffs; 35 believed such a move would be too expensive to be profitable in the long run; 34 reported that space was too limited for such a division of departments in their plants; 42 feared it would result in too many man-hours being lost on slack days; and 15 others made comments which are discussed in the following chapter. For a comparison of the relative importance of these reasons as given by the respondents, see Table IX.



TABLE IX  
REASONS DISFAVORING SEPARATION



Distribution of reasons given by 98 respondents as to why separation would not be practical in their plants.

### Opinions Favoring Separation

Opinions expressing the belief that separation would be practical in allowing more complete coverage of local news were expressed by five respondents. The belief that separation would eliminate confusion between the job and news departments was voiced by two others. Seven thought increased profits would result through more concentrated effort in each department. One believed it would serve to open publishers' eyes to the fact that they are not charging enough for job work and would consequently raise their prices. (Table X.)

### News Coverage Hampered?

Of the 106 opinions expressed concerning the completeness of their local news coverage, 89 felt that the time devoted to job work in their plants was not hampering their coverage, while 17 others did feel that the time spent on job work was lessening their service to their communities. This is shown in Table XI.

One plant reporting 80 per cent of its time devoted to job work contended that its news coverage was not hampered, while two other newspapers which spend only 25 per cent of their time on job work claimed that this time so spent was hampering their coverage. (It might be significant to consider the circulations of these three plants as a further indicator of the conditions there. The one spending 80 per cent of its time on job work has a circulation of 600; the other two, spending only 25 per cent of their time on job work have 1,550 and 2,000 circulations. This raises the

TABLE X  
REASONS FAVORING SEPARATION

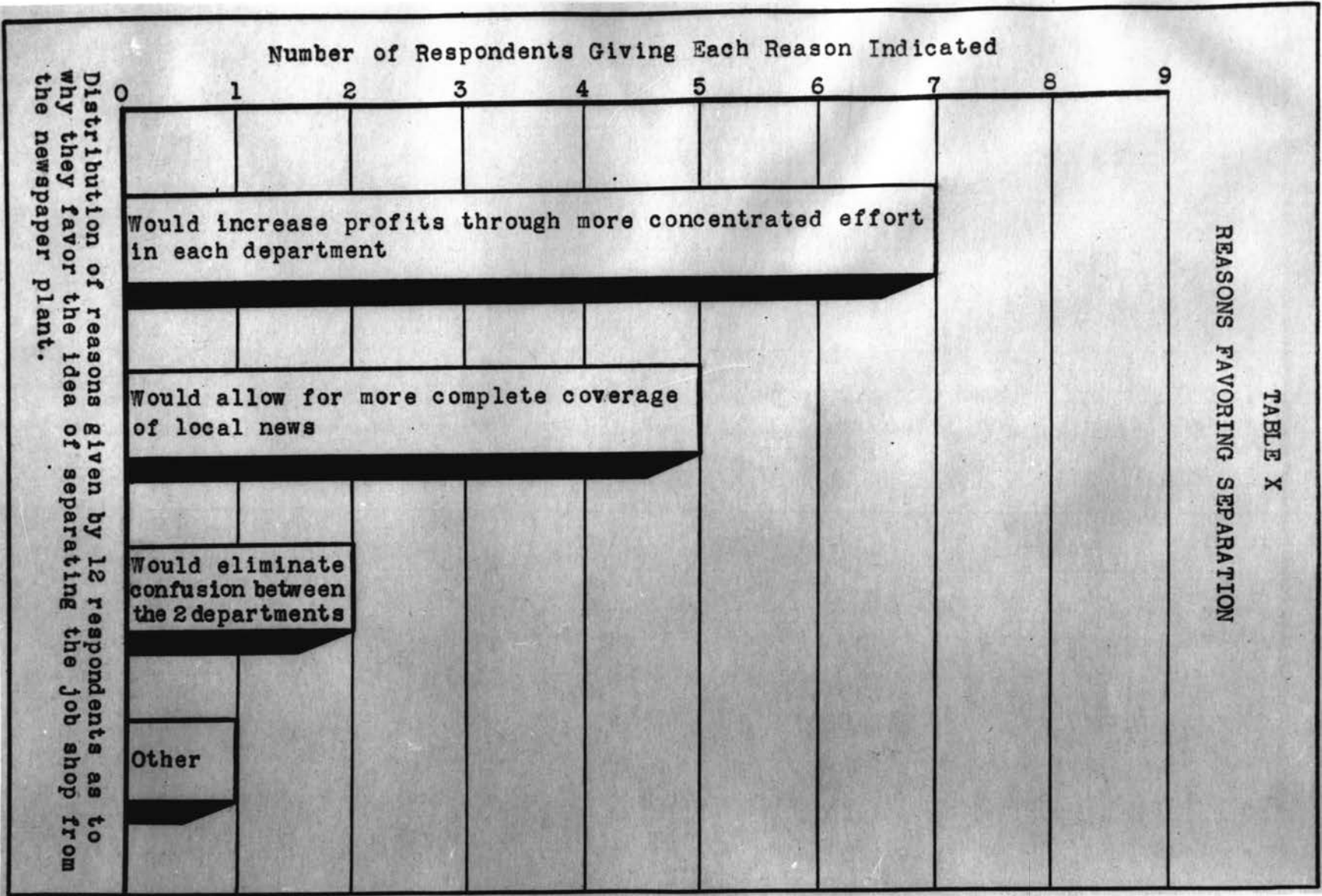
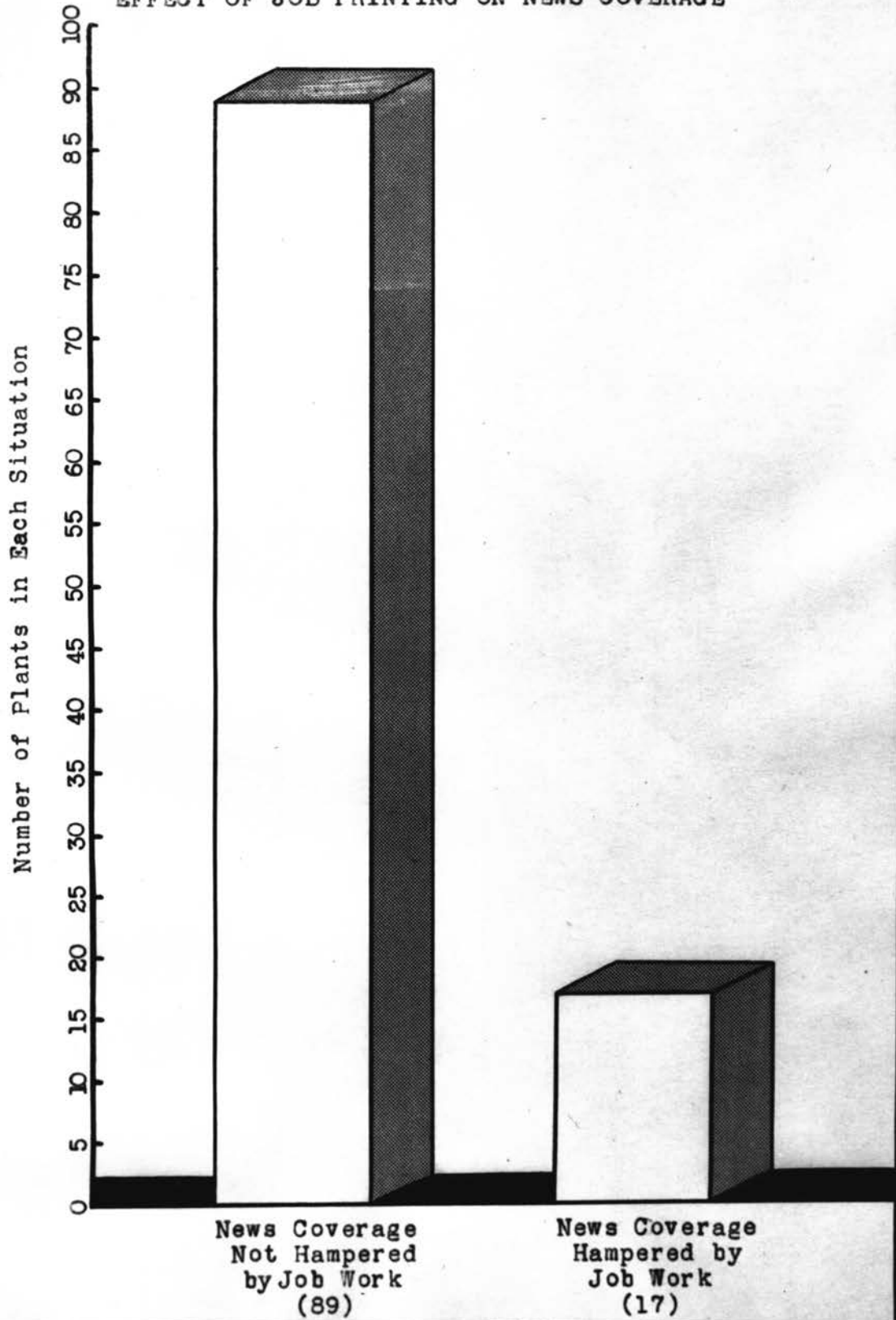


TABLE XI  
EFFECT OF JOB PRINTING ON NEWS COVERAGE



question whether or not the conditions prevailing in each community has a lot to do with the extent of the actual coverage. Location or conditions might vary in the community, as is revealed in the case of one plant in a resort center which devotes 60 per cent of its time to job work with only 20 per cent gross income from it.)

However, 16 of the 17 who believed that their coverage was being hampered still felt that separation would be impractical in their cases, leaving only one of the group favoring divorcement of the job shop. Of the 89 who contended that their news coverage was not hampered, four were of the opinion that separation would be a practical move. Eight others, representing both groups, were "on the fence," so to speak. They gave reasons why separation would be impractical and then countered with reasons why it would be practical. Some of these derive as little as 8, 10, or 15 per cent gross income from job work, while three plants, devoting 50, 75, and 75 per cent of their time, respectively, and receiving 75 per cent of their gross income from job printing still opposed separation.

Of the 12 people expressing opinions favoring separation, the percentages of gross income from job work ran 8, 10, 15, 20, 20, 20, 20, 25, 30, 35, 50, and 67, thus covering a rather good cross-section of the sample with respect to gross income received from job work.

## CHAPTER V

## AUTHORITIES' PRO'S AND CON'S CONCERNING SEPARATION

Authorities Express Opinions

During the course of this study, the writer wrote to several nationally prominent men in the weekly newspaper field to obtain their opinions concerning the problem of separation.

Theodore A. Serrill<sup>1</sup>, general manager of the Pennsylvania Newspaper Publishers' Association, expressed his views this way: "I firmly believe that job printing, in most cases, must be an integral part of weekly newspaper publishing. One of the few exceptions I would make is in plants where several weeklies are published, thus providing a flow of business during the whole week."

Don C. Haynes, service director of the National Editorial Association, took a similar stand on the issue, saying, "A great degree of the income of the average weekly paper comes from job printing, and it is therefore a necessary evil if it can be called an evil at all. Undoubtedly the time and effort devoted to job work does hamper and limit efforts toward complete news coverage. However, there is very little that can be done about this when you realize that anywhere from twenty-five to seventy-five per cent of the total income is due to job printing. You will find

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<sup>1</sup>Co-author of the article concerning the PNPA weekly newspaper survey mentioned in Chapter III of this study.

almost every publisher extremely happy with the situation no matter the complications that are involved. The matter of whether the job shop shall continue as a part of the general plant or if it should be maintained as a separate unit apart from the newspaper is one that is governed entirely by economics. Most plants are not large enough, and even in the large one it would be too costly, or perhaps luxurious, a practice.

"Undoubtedly if this problem was solved and the work entirely separated it would be a perfect situation. The trouble is that it would cost too much money to be practical."

James Clifford Safley, in his book on the country newspaper, had this to say:

Commercial printing, commonly known as job printing, is a "necessary evil" in a country newspaper office. It is an "evil" in that it not only does not pertain directly to the newspaper, publication of which is the principal business of the country newspaperman, but it interferes with the issuing of the newspaper. Job printing is necessary because it constitutes a large part of the business received by a country office, often half or more of the total receipts being derived from this source. Country newspapers do not have enough strictly newspaper business to permit them to discard job printing, much as it gets in the way of the newspapers. Larger papers have sufficient newspaper business to enable them to leave commercial printing strictly to job shops. Either they operate job shops independently, and use in them neither employees nor equipment belonging to the newspaper, or they do not accept job printing. Fortunate indeed is the newspaper that is large enough to be operated strictly as a newspaper.

Rush job printing often gets in the way of the mechanical production of a newspaper, so that the paper either is slighted in order that it may be issued on schedule, or its publication is delayed. A rush order for job work, placed at the last minute, is speeded to completion so that a customer will not be disappointed,

while the paper is delayed, and thousands of readers are disappointed.

Nevertheless, job printing must continue as a part of the country newspaper business, and it must be handled judiciously, yet with as little interference as possible with the operation of the newspaper.<sup>2</sup>

More reasons for the combination of departments in weekly plants are given by Thomas F. Barnhart, who says,

Commercial printing, referred to by old timers as "job printing," is usually a companion business to that of publishing a weekly paper. It goes hand-in-hand with publishing because most newspaper plants are so equipped and staffed that machines, presses, and personnel are adapted to commercial work as well as publishing. The combination is natural enough when it is recalled that each business is dependent upon the printing trades for its output and finished product.

Ole Buck, one-time field director of the Nebraska Press Association, and a former nationally known figure in the country newspaper field, explained the combination of publishing and printing in the following manner:

"There are two reasons why a job department is almost always found in connection with a country newspaper. One is that many country printers could hardly get along without the revenue provided by this branch of the business. The other is that so many small towns cannot possibly support an exclusive job shop, that it is a convenience to them to have that need supplied by their newspaper."

Aside from the advantages of the revenue from commercial printing, the tie-up is a boon in other ways. Back shop workmen, whether owners or employees, while not busy in producing the paper, a task usually occupying only three or four days, may turn to commercial printing to make up a week of profitable employment. Other results, equally desirable, are that the newspaper by its multiple services, becomes recognized as printing headquarters for the community, a condition which enables it to maintain larger payrolls.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>James Clifford Safley, "The Country Newspaper and Its Operation", pp. 369-370.

<sup>3</sup>Thomas F. Barnhart, "Weekly Newspaper Management", p. 15.



It is perfectly natural that commercial printing is linked with weekly newspaper publishing. Historically, our early newspapers were products of colonial printing shops, and the same close relationship exists today because the factors of production are essentially the same. From the business viewpoint, commercial printing is the companion business of the newspaper because it takes up the slack in the working time of printers and machines and because it supplies a necessary business to the community.

The volume of commercial printing done by weekly plants varies so greatly, because of such factors as emphasis by the owner, location of plant, competition, equipment, and personnel, that it is difficult to isolate a typical plant. Yet one may ascertain from the Moore-Roe survey that in towns in the 1,000 to 2,000 population group, the commercial printing constitutes an average income of \$3,904.97, or 28.9 per cent of the total annual business. The average the country over for all weeklies is approximately \$5,000.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Barnhart, op. cit., p. 357.

## CHAPTER VI

## OKLAHOMA PUBLISHERS AIR PRO'S AND CON'S OF SEPARATION

Majority Favor Combination

The majority of the comments made by the Oklahoma publishers surveyed seem to coincide pretty well with the opinions expressed in the previous chapter.

One weekly publisher stated, "I do not believe a country shop can survive on newspaper advertising alone, unless:

1. A one-man shop--owner being the one man to do it all.
2. It is a county seat paper and gets all legal publications for the county.
3. It is an advertising-minded town, and I have yet to see my first one.
4. Subscriptions will not pay for cost of paper in publication.

"The job shop in connection with the newspaper is the only salvation for survival. If the ordinary newspaper in a country town is all the man has to do I do not see what he would be doing the other three days a week."

Another says, "We believe this problem is directly connected with the size of the operation. If the field is large enough to adequately support a good newspaper and a good commercial printing establishment, it appears desirable to at least have them highly departmentalized. Most weekly newspapers do not have enough job work to warrant a separate business, and most weeklies need this additional job

printing to keep the employees busy.

"In our case, we find that job printing is necessary to smooth out the work week. We feel it would be impossible to keep production at a profitable level unless job work is included to occupy slack times."

The mutual benefit idea is presented by another, who says, "I believe the combination of job shop and weekly is the ideal set-up, as it gives our men diversification of work and makes them better qualified to go out from our shop into other fields and it brings much more traffic through our office. They go hand-in-hand. Our newspaper strengthens our job department and vice-versa."

The monkey is placed on management's shoulder in the statement that, "The answer, in all cases, rests with the management. If an operator is partial to newspapering, he is inclined to blame his job shop for any shortcomings; if he likes commercial printing he is very likely to put the shoe on the other foot. Fortunately, we operate both and operate them in harmony."

The expense angle is brought out by one, who writes, "Much of the materials necessary for publishing a newspaper are also necessary for doing job work. To separate the two departments would mean the added expense of a \$10,000 typesetting machine and several thousand dollars worth of other equipment that could be used in both departments."

Another contends it all depends on the size of the plant, volume of business, and availability of help. He

adds, "In a small plant like mine with only three part-time employees, division of the departments would be impractical. Job printing is a minor item in our budget and does not interfere with the newspaper in any way. All the printing is done on Friday and Saturday after the newspaper is off the press, and while we are working on the newspaper no job printing is done. I have found the same to be true in other small plants. In larger plants where I have worked, the volume of printing has been greater and less sporadic. With a steady flow of jobs in and out of the shop it is more practical to divide the two departments."

Emphasis upon size of operation is also stressed by another. "No doubt there is sound argument for the division of job printing and newspaper departments. The larger the operation the more desirable division would be, I think. In our case, which is probably similar to many country weeklies, our space and equipment are inadequate for separation.

"As far as our personnel is concerned, our printers work on both the newspaper and printing. Our front office doubles in news, advertising, circulation, bookkeeping, and what have you."

In opposing separation, one states, "With the same men and machinery used on both the paper and job work, separation here isn't thinkable. Our news editor does no other work; she is free to spend all her time on news."

A rather good picture of overall operations is portrayed by this publisher. "Since this is a weekly newspaper, well

equipped for most all phases of newspaper and printing production, I feel that it would be entirely impractical to separate the two departments. Our mechanical staff uses Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday to publish a 12 to 16 page weekly, then devotes Thursday, Friday, and Saturday to the printing department.

"Our news writing is not interrupted to any great degree by this change of duties in the back shop. Another factor is the use of newsmen and advertising men to pick up job orders during their regular news and advertising runs. While I admit that it is considerably disconcerting during busy press days to take time off to figure a job, I feel that the weekly newspaper has no other alternative. In the daily field, the problem is quite different. Usually the town is larger, the field of commercial printing is much greater and calls for special skills and equipment not found in the average weekly shop. In those cases, I think separate commercial printing and office supply departments are the only logical answer. What the average weekly needs to do to meet this problem is to improve its equipment to eliminate man hours. We have recently installed a new Miehle Verticle job press, turning out up to 5,000 per hour, which for the time being, is taking care of our log-jam in commercial printing. Good, modern equipment, I think, is the answer to many of these problems for both weeklies and dailies."

One publisher, who had seriously been contemplating separating his job shop and combining it in his office supply and stationery store that he operates in a separate building

decided against it, stating, "Such a move would have meant better delivery on job work; the specialization and added sales effort by the office supply staff would have created more job sales or gross volume, BUT, had the action been taken, the disadvantages are:

1. Additional capital investment would had to have been made--a typesetting machine, and fonts of type (second-hand) would have been \$5,000; extra cutter, \$950; miscellaneous extras in machinery and type that would have duplicated facilities now in newspaper shop, like metal saws, metal, makeup tables, etc., \$1,000. So, an added capital investment would have been necessary.
2. Our community is away from metropolitan skilled printer labor. We do not have printer or extra board where skilled men can be called in. Hence, available labor lies in our job and news crew. The newspaper pressure begins at Wednesday noon and lasts until Thursday noon on normal paper and the pressure period is from Tuesday through Thursday on larger plants. So, regardless of separation of plants, our men would have to be working in both plants.

"Because shop costs in manufacturing and capital expense (shop) are the greatest costs in a newspaper and job plant, we believe it is advantageous to unload both the newspaper and job manufacturing on one plant.

"Should the time come when the town is large enough for a twice a week newspaper--to gainfully employ a full crew--then a separate job shop might be justified."

One operator of a small shop expressed his dislike for doing job work but contended that the 15 per cent income from it represents an important and necessary part of his living.

Another small-scale operator believes running even a small paper is a full-time job and that there isn't enough job work in small towns to justify the time spent on it. His only reason for continuing output of job work is that small towns expect the local paper to take care of their printing needs.

An opposite view comes from another respondent who says, "The job work here could be increased but if it was the news and job departments would have to be separated. It is surprising how much job work can be done in a small town. We never work job work either." (It is interesting to note that in his plant half of the time is devoted to job work, which produces 35 per cent of the total gross income.)

#### Some Like Idea of Separation

On the side favoring the idea of separation, one publisher announced his plans to move the job shop into an adjoining building. It is to be combined there with his office supplies business as he believes the two go well together. He states, however, that if the buildings were not connected he would not consider it economically feasible to separate.

Some job work is turned away by one publisher who refuses

to let it interfere with getting the paper out on time. He says, "We turn off some work (usually the unprofitable) because we will not let it interfere with the newspaper. The newspaper must come out on time; the commercial work is usually out when promised, but not always when wanted. I believe I would separate the two if we published more than once a week, because we could then keep the newsmen busy every day and perhaps borrow a printer on peak loads."

Another would like to keep his shop as a separate business, but, in his words, "We have never seen fit to do so. It would necessitate keeping time of all employees on all job work, even to the time spent in the front office on estimating, bookkeeping, etc. We may be working on the paper and one man will stop to take care of a job. The machine may be on paper one hour and job work the next. The equipment is all in one building, and separation would require division of rent, lights, heat, taxes, insurance, etc.

"We still think it might be profitable to make the separation. The job shop could be set up as a separate business with separate name and shipments of supplies could be billed to job shop and bills paid separately. Overhead should be divided on the basis of time used in each department. I daresay many publishers would discover some 'revealing' facts about job work and would, as a result, have the guts to raise their prices on job work."

One publisher, in a community where job work constitutes quite a problem with regard to disrupting the regular



newspaper work, puts it this way; "It is really hard for us to say what percentage of time is spent on job work, as we have no records. Maybe an hour or two will be spent on job work, then over to newspaper work, followed by a bill or something to be set, printed, and then sold as advertising in the newspaper. I think the time is coming when most of the shops will separate the two as the profit is not in job work that once was because of the fine, fast presses. These presses cost more money than the small shop can afford, and without knowing it, most small shops are not making what they think they are out of job work."

#### Miscellaneous Remarks

"I can see certain advantages to separation but cutting our staff and equipment in half would mean that we could handle much less news. Since we are in a competitive situation we must publish a good newspaper. This requires a maximum effort on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday."

"Would increase general overhead expense."

"Lack of equipment--would not support two staffs."

"Separation of plants not practical in small town of 2,000 such as ours--county seat town of 4,000 and up might be in very few cases."

"I think the cost of the machinery involved is the biggest reason at present favoring the consolidation of news and job departments."

"The job department is all that makes a newspaper possible in a small town like this. We could make more money with just the job department."

CHAPTER VII  
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Resume' of Findings

In view of the fact that weekly staffs spend 36.43 per cent of their time on job printing and derive from it 30.1 per cent of their gross income, it is evident that it is an important means of utilizing manpower and a major source of the weekly plant's revenue.

Nearly 85 per cent of Oklahoma's weekly publishers interviewed for this study do not believe that their news coverage is being hindered by job work. The replies indicate that in 89 plants coverage is not being hampered, while in 17 others it is. Even 16 of the 17 who feel that their coverage is being impeded believe that separation would be impractical.

As for separation, the vast majority of weeklies (99) have their departments combined. Four of the five which have separate departments still maintain them in the same building, thus avoiding the expense of separate rent, insurance and utilities. In only one case is the job shop actually installed in a separate building (this a semi-weekly) and one other publisher plans to move his job shop into an adjoining building soon.

Opinions expressed in the survey overwhelmingly favor combination of the news and job departments, the main reason being that there would not be enough work in each department to maintain two staffs. This opinion was expressed by 74 of the respondents. Forty-two contended that separation would

result in the loss of too many man hours during slack time; 35 expressed the belief that separation would be too expensive to be profitable in the long run; and 34 indicated that space was too limited in their plants for a division of departments.

Of the 99 respondents who have not separated their job shops, only 14 opinions were expressed favoring separation. Of these, seven believe more concentrated effort in each department would result in increased profits; five believe it would allow for more complete coverage of local news; and two feel that it would eliminate confusion between the job and news staffs.

From the five who have made the separation, these reasons were given as having influenced their decisions: Interference with newspaper deadline; too many interruptions with work on the newspaper; too much conflict between job and news departments; and desire to increase job output.

Of the 108 plants replying to the question, 72 have only one typesetting machine, pointing out the fact that equipment is inadequate in most plants for a division of departments.

### Conclusions

With only five of a total of 109 respondents reporting separation, weekly publishers seem pretty much in agreement that job printing is an integral part of their overall operations, despite the fact that separation is looked upon as the ideal situation.

The logical course for weekly plants, therefore, seems to be to concentrate on improving the combined efforts of their news and job departments for the utmost utilization of manpower and utilities.

Inasmuch as most patrons of weekly plants are both advertising and job printing customers, the combined plant is probably the best selling device the weekly plant has in serving its patrons and achieving a good customer relationship.

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