

AN EXAMINATION OF BIAS IN REPORTING STORIES
ABOUT GAYS IN THE MILITARY, 1993-1995,
AND WOMEN IN COMBAT, 1991-1995 IN
TIME, NEWSWEEK, AND U.S. NEWS &
WORLD REPORT

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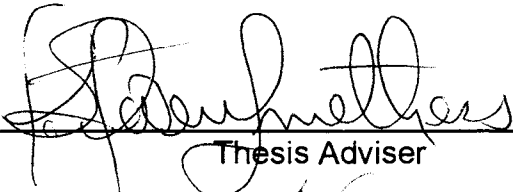
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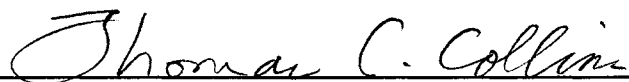
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PREFACE

This thesis is a content analysis of bias in coverage of gays in the military and women in combat in Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report. The actual time period covered in gays in the military was from January 1, 1993, to January 1, 1995, and women in combat was from January 1, 1991, to January 1, 1995. The author examined the three newsmagazines for extent of bias as well as for types of bias against gays in the military and women in combat. Proportions of coverage were calculated for the extent of bias. The types of bias were broken down into seven categories of adjective bias, verbal bias, adverbial bias, attribution bias, contextual bias, outright opinion and photographic bias. The biases were also determined to be either positive or negative.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis adviser, Dr. J. Steve Smethers, for his intelligent supervision and constructive guidance. Without his help, I could not have accomplished this study. I am also appreciated my other committee members, Dr. Charles A. Fleming and Dr. Marlan Nelson, for their patient instruction and invaluable advice through my graduate study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General

In this extremely complicated and diverse society, people must confront numerous confusing portrayals of reality. Due to the limitation of real experiences, people today depend more and more on the news media to know what is happening around them, and more importantly, beyond them. With society's increasing dependence on media messages, the media undoubtedly play a more powerful role in depicting social reality for the general public. In order to give their audiences a true and clear picture of the world, good faith with the public is the foundation of all worthy journalism.

Due to the powerfully informative function of the news media, journalists feel some obligation to remain objective and accurate in order to prevent distortion in their reports. There is some research, however, indicating that the conceptions of media professionals inevitably influence news according to their own preferences, beliefs and ideas. The social responsibility theory, which originated with the reports of the Commission on Freedom of the Press in 1947, declares that the news media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to society, and that to meet such obligations, high or professional standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance should be set.¹ This concept, developed

in the 20th century in the United States, explained the purpose of the media-- which is to inform, entertain, sell, and raise conflict to the plane of discussion.²

Under this doctrine, the media in a modern society are to give a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning, serves as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism, offers a means of projecting the opinions and attitudes of the groups in society to one another, helps in the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society, and reaches every member of the society through the current information, thoughts, and feelings, which the press supplies.³

Indeed, the mass media strongly impact the psychological, moral, economic, political, cultural and educational aspects of every individual. They function to benefit society when those who operate them do so with good intentions; however, the audiences are obviously misguided by the flow of irresponsible information if the media are manipulated to achieve self aims. Therefore, journalists should not only write in clear and concise language so the reader is not confused. They should also reject sensationalism when reporting. Most importantly, objectivity and accuracy are the ultimate goals that journalists must fully achieve.

Nevertheless, some people have criticized that mass media are "lowering the public's cultural tastes, increasing rates of delinquency, contributing to general moral deterioration, lulling the masses into political superficiality, and suppressing creativity."⁴ No matter what influences the media have on

individuals, no one can deny the power of the media in constructing meaning for people's lives. Especially in this diverse society, composed of many different groups, the mass media should be more cautious to accurately and objectively define different social issues. They must provide a comprehensive interpretation of any group to the other groups in society to prevent antagonism among them. If the general public can access the inner truth of the life of a certain group, it is believed that they will respect and understand it more. As the social responsibility theory suggests:

In order to help society inform itself and act intelligently, the press should try to represent all important viewpoints, not merely those with which the publisher or operator agrees. It has a responsibility to minorities in the publication of complete and objective news accounts. Moreover, the press should accurately portray the social groups, the Chinese and the Negroes, for example, since persons tend to make decisions in terms of favorable or unfavorable images and a false picture can subvert accurate judgment.⁵

Background

Since the Revolutionary War, government policies have regulated who serves in the U.S. military and under what conditions.⁶ But the failure of the military to give equal treatment to minority groups from then on has been brought into question.⁷ For example, before 1948, African Americans were only required or allowed to join the military when white troops were in short supply.⁸ Historically, they were segregated from white troops and were often assigned menial occupations in peripheral units.⁹ Moreover, all-black units were usually commanded by white officers.¹⁰ Racial segregation remained in the armed services until President Harry Truman's historic Executive Order 9981, issued a

few months before the 1948 election.¹¹ The order “declared...the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin” and required that the policy “shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible.”¹² After the policy of racial desegregation was instituted by the military, the proportion of black service members dramatically increased by the Vietnam War era.¹³

On the other hand, Congress also passed Public Law 625 in 1948, the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act.¹⁴ It allowed women to serve in the military with some restrictions, such as no service in combat.¹⁵ But between 1948 and 1980, the role played by women as service members in the armed service increased considerably.¹⁶ Due to political pressure, legislation, court rulings, and Department of Defense initiatives, restrictions such as involuntary discharge for pregnancy, limiting female naval personnel going to sea, and admitting women to the military academies, were finally ended.¹⁷ During the Persian Gulf War in 1991, women often shared tents, latrines, and shower facilities with men.¹⁸

In contrast to the armed services’ increasingly non-restrictive policies concerning race and gender, their opposition to admitting homosexual personnel intensified after World War II.¹⁹ Before the 1940s, sodomy had been considered a criminal offense, and campaigns were launched to purge military units of people suspected of engaging in homosexual acts.²⁰ The military, therefore,

prohibited homosexuals from serving in the military solely based on homosexual behavior, not on gay identity.

In 1966, an Army regulation entitled "Personnel Separations-Homosexuality" described military policy regarding homosexual soldiers:

Personnel who voluntarily engage in homosexual acts, irrespective of sex, will not be permitted to serve in the Army in any capacity, and their prompt separation is mandatory. Homosexuality is a manifestation of a severe personality defect which appreciably limits the ability of such individuals to function effectively in a military environment. Members who engage in homosexual acts, even though they are not homosexuals within the meaning of the regulation, are considered unfit for military service because their presence impairs the morale and discipline of the Army.²¹

But, ironically, the military has relaxed its homosexual policy during manpower shortages and has tightened vigilance when troop demands are lower.²² Many gay men and lesbians volunteered to serve during the Vietnam era. But, after the war, with the advent of the All-Volunteer Force, military policy on homosexuals became more restrictive.²³

In 1982, the military's policy concerning homosexuality was revised. The policy stated that "homosexuality is incompatible with military service. The presence in the military environment of persons who engage in homosexual conduct or who, by their statements, demonstrate a propensity to engage in homosexual conduct, seriously impairs the accomplishment of the military mission."²⁴ Between fiscal years 1980 and 1990, the military discharged 16,919 men and women under the separation policy.²⁵ The New York Times reported in 1990 that, according to Pentagon data, about 1,400 gay men and women were discharged each year. Separations reached a high of 2,000 in 1982 and a low of

about 1,000 in 1990.²⁶ It could not be determined how many escaped being discharged or asked to resign. However, studies by Berube and Humphrey confirm in detail the common knowledge that a sizable number of lesbians and gay men presently serve in the military. Many gay men and lesbians confessed to having lied on their applications.²⁷

Reversing the military's policy has become a priority for advocates of gay and lesbian civil rights.²⁸ Several lesbians and gay men, such as Army Sergeant Perry Watkins, Midshipman Joseph Steffan, and Col. Margarethe Cammermeyer publicly disclosed their gayness and vigorously challenged their discharges through the legal system. By that time, national organizations including the APA (American Psychological Association) and AMA (American Medical Association) had officially condemned the policy. Both organizations have reversed the claim that homosexuals are mentally ill and affirm the civil rights of these people. APA also made a statement in 1991 which opposed the armed services exclusion and dismissal of individuals with homosexual orientation.²⁹

Gays in the Military and Women in Combat

From the beginning of 1993, American media focused its attention on the status of homosexuals in the armed services. Interest in this issue was due to a variety of factors, including the Military Freedom Act of 1992 introduced by U.S. Representative Patricia Schroeder of Colorado. The bill would have prohibited the Armed Forces' practice of discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation. Additionally, legal proceedings surrounding the reinstatement of an admitted

homosexual, Keith Meinhold, to the Navy also dominated the national news agenda. In Meinhold's case, Los Angeles Federal district court judge Terry Hatter ruled that the ban violated equal protection of Meinhold's rights as guaranteed by the Constitution.³⁰

Perhaps the greatest amount of coverage was generated by President Bill Clinton's campaign promise to end the military's ban on gay men and lesbians openly serving in the military which dominated most of the first 100 days of Clinton's presidency.³¹ The resulting policy, "Don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue," is likely to generate a series of court cases based on the freedom of speech and self-incrimination statutes of the U.S. Constitution. On October 1, 1993, the Pentagon delayed implementation of this policy in response to a federal judge's order prohibiting discrimination against homosexuals.³² On October 29, the U.S. Supreme Court urgently requested the Clinton administration to temporarily limit enforcement of the order so as to implement the "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue" policy.³³ District court judges have ruled that the old ban is unconstitutional, but the government is appealing those decisions.³⁴ And the Pentagon has issued new rules that allow homosexuals who do not engage in homosexual conduct and keep quiet about their sexual orientation to serve in the armed services.³⁵

The intention of lifting the ban thus failed to achieve unanimous support after President Clinton officially made the announcement. The major disagreement among the President, military leaders and members of Congress

was: Should someone be able to serve their country in uniform if they say they are homosexual, but do nothing which violates the code of conduct, undermines unit cohesion or morale, apart from that statement?³⁶ The President was forced to compromise, which left in doubt a final resolution of his campaign pledge to end discrimination in the military. After an extensive review conducted by a military working group, several new guidelines on homosexual conduct in the armed forces were issued in June, 1993. Nevertheless, the President's ultimate goal of lifting the ban against homosexuals openly serving in the armed forces was not met.

Homosexuality has always been a focus of military concern despite society's increasing acceptance of homosexual men and women and evidence that homosexuals currently serve in the U.S. armed forces. Attitudes about homosexuality in the military have gradually changed. In a 1977 Gallup survey, 51 percent of the adults who were surveyed felt that homosexuals should be allowed to serve in the armed forces.³⁷ In a follow-up survey in March 1991, 69 percent of the interviewees felt similarly.³⁸ In another poll, 81 percent of the Americans stated that homosexuals should not be discharged from military service merely on the basis of their sexual orientation.³⁹ Nevertheless, a national survey in late 1992 found that the issue of allowing homosexuals to serve in the armed forces fell between two extremes. Fifty-seven percent believed that homosexuals should be permitted to serve in the military.⁴⁰ But opinion on this subject was not fixed. When a variety of polls, employing differently worded

questions were examined, response rates in favor of allowing homosexuals to serve in the military ranged from 35 to 57 percent.⁴¹

Obviously, stories about ending discrimination against homosexuals in the armed services generated extensive coverage from the mass media. The media undoubtedly played a very powerful role in affecting public opinion on this controversial issue. But many people feel that the coverage in the news media has addressed failed to present the issue in an unbiased manner. For example, a poll surveyed by U.S. News & World Report in 1993 showed that 56% of voters worry that media portrayals of gays have had a negative influence on society. Another poll, completed in December 1992, found that 45 percent of the soldiers at two Texas Army bases indicated that they would resign if forced to serve with openly gay soldiers. But other relevant questions, such as how many soldiers would work with openly gay soldiers, were not mentioned.⁴² Likewise, feminist scholars have argued that the news presented a white male narrative which excludes women's voices and perspectives.⁴³

Conversely, news stories presenting the issue of gays in the military have often catered to the perceived attitudes and prejudices of the white male majority. For example, one study found that coverage from the Washington Post "presented a male, heterosexist discourse which reinforced homophobic myths and stereotypes, promoted militarism and rendered women invisible, while legitimating arguments against repeal of the ban."⁴⁴

Just as the issue of the ban on homosexuals in the military has prevailed in society, the issue of women in combat has also been a polarizing question. Over the last 25 years, women in the military have not only increased in number but also transformed from the traditional roles of nurse and clerk into positions of greater risk and responsibility. The integration of women into the military has been a gradual process. When the second world war broke out, women could only expect to serve as nurses in the armed services. In 1948, the Women's Armed Services Integration Act, which gave permanent status to military women, was created. But the Act dictated that there would be only a two-percent ceiling on the proportion of women in the services (excluding nurses).⁴⁵

Starting in the 1970s, a series of barriers to women serving in combat roles began to fall in relatively rapid succession. In 1967, a decision lifted the restrictions which prevented women from rising above the rank of lieutenant colonel. Then women were permitted to enter the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) in 1972, and to accept pilot training in 1973. The expansion of opportunities for women to serve at sea also began in 1972. Service academies were opened to women in 1976. Although the government enhanced career options for women in the military and promoted them at a rate similar to that for men in the armed services in past few decades, the fact remained that the combat-exclusion rule precluded significant number of women from becoming generals or colonels.

Although there are actually no statutory restrictions on how women can be deployed, the Army derived its combat-exclusion policy from Title 10 in 1948 and further prohibited women from joining direct combat units in the infantry, armed forces, and combat engineers. The Army's formal definition reads as follows:

Direct combat is engaging an enemy with individual or crew-served weapons while being exposed to direct enemy fire, a high probability of direct physical contact with the enemy's personnel, and a substantial risk of capture.⁴⁶

In the past few years, gender is no longer generally accepted as a legitimate barrier to women wishing to serve in combat roles. The evolution went largely unnoticed until the Persian Gulf War, when TV relayed images of a mixed gender military force. Of the more than 40,000 women who served in the Gulf War, 11 were killed in action. As Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said, "Women have made a major contribution to this effort. We could not have won without them."⁴⁷ In addition, coalition commanders also said that "American military women had performed magnificently."⁴⁸

The Persian Gulf War undoubtedly highlighted the dramatic recent changes in the roles of women in the military. The general public became involved in the complicated and emotional issue of whether women should serve in combat or in other direct combat positions within the U.S. military. This issue also caused a wider variety of concerns which include the history and nature of war, physiology, psychology, sociology, family and cultural values, the legal consequences of a change in the law, and most importantly, the classic concerns of the military itself: combat readiness, unit cohesion and military effectiveness.

In 1993, over 230,000 women made up about 11 percent of all military personnel on active duty.⁴⁹ The Air Force, with 14 percent of its personnel being female, has the highest proportion of jobs available for women.⁵⁰ But without piloting bombers and fighter planes, they are only allowed to fly transport planes and serve on refueling crews. The Navy, with 10 percent female personnel, prohibited women to serve on board, with the exception of hospital ships, until 1977.⁵¹ Today, women sailors can serve aboard transport and supply ships, but they can only serve on combat ships for up to six months at a time. The Army, which is 11 percent female, has the largest total number of women (86,000).⁵² However, under the policy, women are prohibited from serving in direct combat positions within the military.

At the conclusion of eight months of research, the Presidential Commission decided to support the continuation of America's long-standing exemption of women from combat duty in 1992.⁵³ Whatever official conclusions are ultimately drawn from the Persian Gulf War, the status of women in the U.S. armed forces was permanently altered and universally recognized in the war's aftermath. Despite the fact that many obstacles to women's participation in the military have been overcome during the past few decades, the borderline that excludes women from combat units has not been crossed. As long as there are women in the military, the pressures to end the combat-exclusion will continuously remain. And it is believed that to allow both sexes to choose whether or not to go into combat would be the end of an effective military force.

Statement of the problem

Social responsibility theory dictates that journalists must fulfill an important obligation to be objective, present an accurate and clear picture of the world to their audiences, and be completely detached from government influences. The misuse of language in news reports can distort the views of those who need a clear understanding of complex world issues. In particular, the controversial issues guiding this study must be covered through objective viewpoints from different levels and should not be tainted by the prejudices of reporters or photographers.

Methodology

This study employs a systematic content analysis as the method of inquiry. Kerlinger, in his classic text Foundations of Behavioral Research, defines content analysis as a method of analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner to measure variables.⁵⁴ This study's content analysis examines all stories about homosexuals in the military presented from January 1, 1993 to January 1, 1995 and women in combat from January 1, 1991 to January 1, 1995 by the three national news magazines, Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report. The system of analyzing media bias as developed by Merrill, Endnotes and modified for this particular study, is used.

Significance of the study

By analyzing how the three news magazines portray the stories about gays in the military and women in combat, the study is useful for the readers of these

news magazines, who might otherwise assume that coverage of these issues will be unbiased and impartial. Furthermore, it is hoped that readers will be more alert to the overall issue of bias in the media. Scholars and students might also more fully understand the role of the mass media and realize the difficulty of reporting news more responsibly. Finally, it will be beneficial to reporters and journalists in the mass media to be challenged to improve their coverage of such controversial issues.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to gather data concerning possible biases in reporting in Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report regarding the stories about gays in the military from January 1, 1993 to January 1, 1995 as well as women in combat from January 1, 1991 to January 1, 1995, and further to see if the three magazines fulfilled their obligations under the media codes and the general concept of social responsibility. The secondary purpose is to examine for differences among the three magazines to determine if some publications were more objective than the others. The purpose is to compare the coverage of the two issues to determine if there was a difference in the amount of bias in the coverage by these three news magazines.

This study will provide answers to the following questions:

a. To what extent were the magazines biased in their reporting of stories about gays in the military from January 1993 to January 1995 and women in combat from January 1991 to January 1995?

b. Which magazine(s) were more or less biased than the others?

c. Which types of bias were most frequently used by each of the magazines?

d. Which issue, gays in the military or women in combat, received more positive or negative treatment in terms of bias?

Limitations

Because the research in this study was limited to three news magazines, the results cannot be considered representative of all American news media. Further, the results should not be applied to other events or time frames.

Organization of Research

Chapter II examines other research studies related to this research, and reviews theories of mass communication that are significant to this study.

Chapter III explains the methodology employed in this research.

Chapter IV presents the research findings and provides a detailed discussion of those findings.

Chapter V provides a summary of the study with conclusions, concluding comments and recommendations for further study.

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CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Generalization

In essence, very few studies have been written regarding the media's coverage of gay men and lesbians in the military or the separate issue of women in combat. Most of the material has tended to focus on stereotyping and portrayals of women's job roles. But due to intensive debates in recent years, the issues of gays in the military and women in combat, on the other hand, have gradually become important social subjects. Thus, it is necessary for the mass media to cover homosexuals in the military and women in combat fairly, because the agencies of mass communication are an educational instrument, perhaps the most powerful there is and they assume a role like that of educators in stating and clarifying the ideas toward which the community should strive.¹ In this literature review, research covering the treatment of several minorities in the news media as well as the issues of homosexuals and women will be discussed separately to see how the academic community has uncovered negative portrayals of minorities by the mass media, and to further determine the degree to which their audiences have been presented with unbiased, objective, and comprehensive sources.

Basis of Study

Content analysis is a popular method in mass communication research because access to media content is readily at hand. With content analysis people can make various kinds of comparisons and analyses. For example, closely analyzing the content of a known liberal or conservative publication, people might be able to determine what the writers or editors intended their readers to gain from a particular message. Hence, people can make inferences about the intent the message reporters or editors might have.

One of the most distinguished researchers using content analysis system in their studies was John C. Merrill, who looked at stereotyped images of three U.S. Presidents as presented in Time magazine in 1965. Merrill measured the different types of bias used by the magazine to examine whether journalists had fulfilled their social responsibility to report an accurate and unbiased account of the news. He was especially interested in the presence or absence of loaded words and in general contextual impressions. His six categories of bias were still commonly used by researchers in mass communications.

Merrill found that what nearly everyone recognized as a lively style of writing also masked an element of political bias.² The magazine had a way of throwing in occasional words that, in an unobjectionable piece, might subtly build a positive or negative image. The result of Merrill's study concluded that Time indeed editorialized in its regular news columns and used "a whole series of tricks to bias the stories and to lead the reader's thinking."³

Recent research indicates that bias might still be found in such publications. For example, one study conducted by Heidi McLean in 1991 also analyzed potential bias by Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report during the coverage of the Persian Gulf War to determine whether the three newsmagazines fulfilled their professional responsibilities to write clearly, objectively and in an unbiased manner while covering the war.⁴ The author concluded that the three publications did not fulfill their responsibilities as ethical members of the journalistic profession.⁵ The author also concluded that coverage was not in keeping with the theories of the press under which the newsmagazines claim to operate.⁶

Another study that used Merrill's system was conducted by Chiung-Hui Li in 1993. Li analyzed news coverage concerning the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China, specifically how the three national newsmagazines -- Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report -- presented the stories of these two political entities over the past five decades.⁷ Li also used Merrill's method as a basis for analyzing possible biases in the three news magazines. The author concluded that these three national news magazines contained judgmental and subjective statements.⁸

Minorities and Media

The relation of mass media to sexism and racism in American society has been a popular issue for communication researchers. Several studies have ascertained how the mass media cover different racial and ethnic minorities and

the sexes, and how these groups should be treated if the media are to contribute to building a non-discriminatory environment. Many scholars have argued that the mass media create images of minorities from the viewpoints of the perceived attitudes and prejudices of the white majority. They have also long held that the news presents a social construction of what occurred, rather than presenting an objective record of events.⁹ Critical researchers suggest that this construction is raised in an ideology that upholds and reinforces the dominant culture by presenting its views as natural and a matter of common sense.¹⁰

Numerous studies have examined this issue in terms of racial minorities. For example, in 1968, the Kerner Commission pronounced that the news media had failed to serve either white or non-white audiences adequately, and thus contributed to conditions spawning misunderstandings and violence.¹¹ A 1988 survey of 117 black state legislators found the majority feeling the white press did not do a good job of covering the black community, and was unfair in its coverage of crime news involving blacks.¹²

By and large, news organizations have failed to communicate to both their black and white audiences a sense of the problems America faces and the sources of potential solutions. The media report and write from the standpoint of a white man's world. Sights and indignities are part of the Negro's daily life, and many of them come from what he now calls the white press-- a press that repeatedly reflects the biases, the paternalism, the indifference of white America.¹³

One study regarding the press' portrayal of Black Americans in 66 sampled issues between 1950 and 1980 concluded that:

On the one hand, the coverage provided many indications of the ... management's positive attitudes toward local Blacks, its avoidance of stereotypical coverage, and its efforts to include Blacks in its portrayal of the

city's life. But the coverage also suggested the paper made little effort to portray the problems of local Blacks, to explore their contribution to the city."¹⁴

Hispanics are the second big minority in America. The news media have varied greatly in the quality of their coverage, but stories about Hispanics were rare in both the news and sports areas. Gerbner reported that for the 1991-1992 season, Hispanic characters on TV were scarce and the remaining ethnic U.S. minorities were "most conspicuous by their absence."¹⁵ According to a study conducted by two Southwest papers in 1989, coverage tended to focus on Hispanics as "problem people."¹⁶ One-fourth of the stories about Hispanics dealt with judicial or criminal activities. Leaders of this minority believed that there was "an overemphasis on crime and negative news, a shortage of positive news, and that the media just did not cover Hispanic events and individuals as much or as prominently as non-Hispanic activities."¹⁷

Women and the Media

Perhaps the greatest amount of work regarding portrayals of minorities in the mass media has centered around one of the key variables of this study, women. Concern over media portrayals of females has been important since the 1950's, when the traditional domesticated roles were presented on television situation comedies. The image of women in the media has changed over the last thirty years. In the 1960s, when most females stayed at home, the media portrayed women as searching for better ways to do laundry and seeking improved formulas for shiny hair.¹⁸ Women's roles were limited to that of wife

and mother, and women were seen almost exclusively in domestic settings. In the 1970s, women began to emerge from the home. The image of the new woman shifted from homemaker to sex object. In addition, women in the role of victims of crime and violence increased as the decade progressed.¹⁹

Since 1947, participation of women, single and married, in the labor force has expanded significantly. In 1973, more than half of American women between 18 and 64 were gainfully employed. The number of women in professional occupations has also grown substantially. But, compared to the actual female employment status, working women are underrepresented in the mass media. Cantor found that women in TV-commercials were mostly represented in domestic roles, while men were more likely to be portrayed in occupational roles or non-domestic activities.²⁰ Women are seldom portrayed as real working females with independent lives and careers. Conversely, the media usually portray women as either sex objects or docile homebodies, housewives, and mothers.²¹ As Dal Dearmin said, "the portrayal of women in the media has often been one of exaggeration, distortion and intended ambiguities."²²

In 1978, Gaye Tuchman studied the symbolic representation of women in the mass media and found that relatively few women are portrayed there, although at the time women represented 51 percent of the population and well over 40 percent of the labor force.²³ Women were symbolized as child-like adornments who needed to be protected or were dismissed to the private confines of the home.²⁴ The working women who were portrayed were

condemned; others were trivialized. Other research done on the portrayals of working women also indicates that the portrayals do not depict women in a socially responsible manner. It can be summarized that the media are still not accurate in their representation and presentation of women's roles.

The mass media generally devote less space to women than to men and act as a vehicle for stereotyped images that bear less and less relation to women's real lives.²⁵ The advertising industry sees women both as targets and as objects. Both news programs and features markedly play down the role of women.²⁶ Two particular criticisms have been labeled against the media for their portrayal of women. The first concerns the underrepresentation of women in the media, which means that women are frequently omitted from media depictions.²⁷ The second concerns the misrepresentation of women in the media, which means that a distorted view of women is often presented.²⁸

Margaret Gallagher wrote Unequal Opportunities: The Case of Women and the Media as part of a study conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 1979.²⁹ She investigated the portrayals of women and found the media as a cultural force do not simply reflect, but subtly and indirectly, help to shape social reality.³⁰ " It is also believed that the news portrayal of women is mainly dominated and controlled by men. One study in 1991 conducted by Women in Communications showed that "women comprise 52 percent of the U.S. population, references to females averaged 13 percent in

issues of Newsweek, Time, and U.S. News & World Report published during August 1991, while men were referred to 87 percent of the time.”³¹

The Portrayal of Women on TV

Television’s portrayal of women is very important, not only because they are frequent viewers, but also because television portrayals are reflections of women’s lives, and implicit endorsements of beliefs and values about women in a very popular forum.³² Dating back to the 1950’s, television producers felt compelled to portray women in dependent, domestic roles.³³ By the 1970’s, women were portrayed as rambunctious rebels who were only intermittently heroic and seldom womanish.³⁴ They were also more likely to be found in situation comedies than in other types of programs.³⁵ But since then, women have become more militant about their rights, as the level of discontent has risen among women in all strata, especially among the well educated and employed.³⁶

The findings documenting the misrepresentation of women on television, film and print have supported women’s complaints about inadequate and inaccurate media representation.³⁷ According to Susan Faludi, author of Backlash, due to a decrease of women viewers in the 1980’s, producers rarely attempted to portray working women in more upbeat, positive roles.³⁸ However, many of the portrayals had shortcomings regarding independent women.³⁹ Margaret Gallagher conducted a review of studies dealing with different aspects of the relationship between men and women and the media, including the portrayal of women on North American television. The studies found that women were

underrepresented and occupied less central roles than men.⁴⁰ Employed women were shown in traditionally female occupations, as subordinate to men, with little status or power.⁴¹ As Signorielli says,

Neither the comedies nor the dramatic genres have shown society realistically, as simple comparisons between social conditions reported in the news and those portrayed on prime time demonstrate how unrepresentative television's views of society have been.⁴²

Homosexuals and the Media

Not only are minorities confined to racial groups, they are also composed of people from different nationalities, religious affiliations, and even sexual orientations. In the recent years, gay men and lesbians have increasingly been noticed by society as well as the mass media and have received a great deal of attention from researchers. With no doubt, media images of homosexuality and the gay and lesbian community are somewhat important as sources of information. Social responsibility theory dictates that the mass media must provide the general public with a clear and objective picture of, in this case, homosexuals.

Much has changed in the relations between mass media and gays and lesbians in the last 35 years. Starting in the late 1960s, gays began confronting repressive laws and discrimination. Their demands for equal protection began to be viewed as legitimate news, although the legitimacy of their demands still was viewed as questionable. Time examined homosexuality in a less condemnatory way, but most of the media then treated gay news as homophobic views.⁴³ For example, in October 1969, a San Francisco Examiner article referred to gay men

as “semi-males” and “drag-darlings.”⁴⁴ Protests were held by gays and lesbians to persuade the media to move beyond the negative stereotypes. By the late 1970s and 1980s news coverage of the gay and lesbian community varied depending on the nature of the market and management.⁴⁵ The San Francisco Chronicle hired openly gay reporters and ran detailed stories on gay topics. The major news networks, however, deferring to their national audiences, rarely touched the topic. When they did, they treated the gay community as an alien presence with emphasis on sadomasochism, public sex and drag queens.⁴⁶ Moreover, most of the news media were unfamiliar with homosexuality and, therefore, were unwilling to report on gay issues.⁴⁷

The issue of gay men and lesbians has long been a complex issue for the mass media. For years, homosexuals were barely mentioned in the pages of family papers, and when they were given coverage, gays and lesbians were discussed with thinly disguised hostility as “perverts.”⁴⁸ As late as 1978, a Tulsa World headline said that an Oklahoma politician who denied being gay had been accused of “Abnormal Sexuality.”⁴⁹ Most news media reporters are still reluctant to report on issues affecting gays, especially in some conservative states. One main problem is that the gay issue does not fit into any easily defined news frame.⁵⁰ But, once the issue is mentioned by the news media, the portrayal of gay men and lesbians as either deserving or undeserving of equal civil rights not only tells people about their social standing and the prevailing societal view of homosexuality, it also points to ways in which that portrayal may be challenged.⁵¹

As Pearce pointed out, the strategies often employed by the mass media toward the gay issue are negative. The media can ignore them, just not perceive them or condemn them; the media can settle for one or other possible interpretations of what they are and thereby reduce ambiguity. The media may use the anomaly as a negative reference point, all that something should not be; the anomalous event may be labeled as dangerous and reacted to appropriately, and this may involve violence.⁵²

Most of the time, media portrayal of gays and lesbians has been forced to cater to the perceived attitudes and prejudices of the white majority.⁵³ Loren Ghiglione, the President of American Society of Newspaper Editors, suggested that "homophobia might be the last acceptable form of discrimination among so-called acceptable Americans, including editors."⁵⁴ Besides, Nava and Dawidoff contend:

The media, reflecting society at large, maintain rough guidelines for the airing of irrational prejudice. When gays seek to address their fellow citizens through the media they find themselves in a double bind. To gain a public hearing, they are commonly expected to "debate" people who regard homosexuality as a sin and homosexuals as unnatural perverts, not American citizens. So long as the public debate about gay rights equates the claims of gay Americans with the prejudices of those who hate homosexuals, public discourse about the issues arising from those claims will be stalled. The media must move beyond prejudice and shock value to consider how gays will be integrated into the American mix.⁵⁵

In the 1980s, the AIDS epidemic forced the media to confront the existence of a large gay community. Analysis shows that the mass media initially viewed AIDS as a disease reflecting gay men's "promiscuous and abnormal" sexual behavior and lifestyle.⁵⁶ But in 1983, the Journal of the American Medical

Association suggested that AIDS could be transmitted by “routine household contact.”⁵⁷ At that time, the media began to take AIDS seriously and turned to the gay press for accurate and up-to-date information about the epidemic. AIDS did force the media to regard the gay community more seriously and in a different light.

In contrast to women and most other marginalized groups, gay men and lesbians have had little help in understanding or defining themselves as gay.⁵⁸ But fortunately, the media began to provide better coverage of the gay community, particularly in large cities with large, visible, and active gay and lesbian populations. A number of cable channels along with public television and the broadcast networks have also begun to produce shows which reflect the lives of gays. In addition, the number of stories about the gay and lesbian community in the New York Times increased 65 percent from 1990 to 1991 and the paper began using the “gay” instead of “homosexual.”⁵⁹

Nevertheless, these changes have been viewed by the gay community as inadequate. In one survey, 77 percent of 227 senior newspaper editors conceded that their gay and lesbian coverage was fair, poor or not enough, which is probably a generous estimate.⁶⁰ In smaller and more conservative communities today, the change in local press coverage is less marked. For the most part, the mainstream media have been charged with pursuing a policy of alternately defaming or ignoring significant numbers of consumers, the gay and lesbian population.⁶¹ The controversy over “outing” shows that the press still

treats homosexuality as a very private and problematic issue, reflecting a homophobic assumption that being labeled gay or lesbian represents a derogatory, and possibly libelous comment.⁶² Likewise, gay and lesbian personnel still have difficulty in being open.⁶³ As Fejes and Petrich say,

The important goal of the gay and lesbian movement is achieving an affirmative visibility in the mainstream media while at the same time sustaining community media, such as gay and lesbian newspapers, magazines, and video.⁶⁴

Although gay men and lesbians have faced uneven treatments in the political arena, especially at the national level, they have made some progresses in the seemingly less inviting world of private business in recent years. Hundreds of companies, including IBM, Eastman Kodak, Harley-Davidson, Dow Chemical, Du Pont, 3M and Time Warner, have specific policies banning discrimination based on sexual orientation.⁶⁵ Moreover, many big enterprises such as Wall Street law firm Milbank and Tweed provide health or other benefits for gay employees' partners.⁶⁶ Yet many gay men and lesbians still fear that exposing their sexuality may hurt their chances for promotion, and stay closeted even at firms that vow equal treatment. A 1992 survey of 1,400 gay men and lesbians in Philadelphia found that 76% of men and 81% of women conceal their orientation at work.⁶⁷

Summary

Some argue that blacks, Hispanics, women, and gays have received stereotypical treatment in the nation's news productions, newsrooms, and journalism schools.⁶⁸ As Bramlett-solomon commends,

Who, if not journalists, will call attention to the fact that most racial minorities, for example, do not fit the stereotypes? Popular stereotypes would have us believe that black Americans are not genetically equipped to do well in society outside of sport; that Hispanics are too lazy to achieve; that American Indians are too uncivilized to excel; and that Asian-Americans are model minorities because they work harder than other students, respect their teachers, and have a strong work ethic.⁶⁹

Changes in stereotypes are basic to changes in attitudes, and the media, print and electronic, are undoubtedly powerful shapers of popular images and attitudes. Indeed, stereotypes do not change easily. On the contrary, they must be challenged, not only by people who consume the media but by those who create the images.

Stereotypes partially result from the biased reporting of the news media. Likewise, the media play a very important role in helping people avoid stereotypical images if reporters can be sensitive to the issue. The studies cited here provide evidence of the media's lack of sensitivity toward the two groups that are the focus of this research: women and gays and lesbians. But few studies have attempted to view media portrayals of these groups in their attempts to achieve equal status in the armed services. This study seeks to examine possible biases in coverage by Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report concerning the stories about gay men and lesbians in the military and women in combat. Results from studies such as this study may challenge reporters and journalists in the mass media to improve their coverage of such issues if any bias is found.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

General

This study uses content analysis to examine possible bias in coverage in Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report, as these publications covered the issue of gay men and lesbians in the military from January 1, 1993 to January 1, 1995, and stories covering the issue of women in combat from January 1, 1991 to January 1, 1995. For years, homosexuality has remained a focus of military concern despite society's increasing acceptance of homosexual men and women and evidence that homosexuals have served and currently serve in the U.S. armed forces. Since President Clinton stated his determination to end discrimination against homosexuals in the military and reverse the exclusionary policy on homosexuals serving in the armed forces in 1993, the issue of homosexuality in the military further resulted in intense and overwhelming discussions in society at large. People became engaged with this complex issue of whether gays and lesbians enjoyed the same rights as heterosexuals in the military.

As far as the issue of women in combat is concerned, the Persian Gulf War highlighted the recent dramatic changes in the role of women in the military. When people learned from the mass media that more than 40,000 American

women served their country with courage and honor in the Persian Gulf War, the general public became involved in the complicated and emotional issue of whether women should serve in combat or in other direct combat positions within the U.S. military.¹

The author is interested in investigating media bias as presented in these three magazines with respect to their coverage of these groups and their relationship to the U.S. military. Furthermore, this study seeks to compare the coverage of the two issues to determine which issue received the most biased treatment in the coverage of these three magazines. The magazines were chosen due to their reports on a full range of human experiences and their prestige in international communication. In addition, their high circulation rates make them highly accessible to many people, and undoubtedly, what is written in the three magazines can have some effect in shaping public perception about these issues.

Research Design

Content analysis is often used to systematically search for bias in media content. This method is also useful to study the objectivity of journalists' reports. In particular, it is a type of methodology used by researchers to "determine the manifest content of written, spoken, or published communications by systematic, objective, and quantitative analysis."² This definition places several demands on the content analyst, as mentioned by Babbie: "As a mode of observation, content analysis requires a considered handling of the what, and the analysis of data

collected in this mode, as in others, addresses the why and with what effect.”³

The researcher must define the categories of analysis so precisely that other analysts can apply them to the same body of content with the same results. The researchers also should analyze content in terms of all relevant categories.

Further, Kerlinger stressed:

Content analysis, while certainly a method of analysis, is more than that. It is ... a method of observation. Instead of observing people's behavior directly, or asking them to respond to scales, or interviewing them, the investigator takes the communications that people have produced and asks questions about the communication. It is also a method of studying and analyzing communications in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner to measure variables.⁴

Selection of the Media for Analysis

This thesis analyzes three magazines: Time, Newsweek, U.S. News & World Report. These are general newsmagazines of national circulation in the United States. Unlike most newspapers, they attract wider readership from all regions. All of these three magazines had circulations of more than 2 million in 1994.

Magazine Profiles:

Time:

Time magazine is the oldest of the magazines and its circulation figures in 1994 were 4,159,533. Its routine columns include “Critic’s voices”, “World and national news”, “Milestones”, “Science”, “Religion”, “Cinema”, “Books”, “Medicine”, “Theater”, “Music”, “Sports”, “People and Essay”. The magazine’s stated objective is to better serve the needs of busy, curious, intelligent readers.⁵

Founded in 1923 by Henry Luce and Briton Hadden, Time has three goals: to bring a sense of order to the weekly mass of information and a sense of priorities to the news, to package that news in a manner that is compelling and accessible and finally, to analyze the issues.”⁶ These two founders also claimed that Time was founded with the aim of serving the modern necessity of keeping people well informed.

Newsweek:

Newsweek was founded in 1933 and its circulation in 1994 was 3,100,000. Its routine columns include “National affairs”, “International news”, “Business”, “Society”, “Lifestyle”, coverage of the arts and opinion pages and features which include “Periscope”, “Letters”, “Perspectives”, and “Newsmakers”. Its editor-in-chief, Richard Smith, claimed to create impact journalism, and the publication seeks to make people engage in thinking about and talking about what is in the magazine.⁷ In addition, not only does Newsweek cover breaking news over the weekend, but its stories also tend to be longer than the standard newsweekly departments.⁸

U.S. News & World Report:

U.S. News & World Report was founded in 1933 and its circulation in 1994 was 2,351,313. The routine sections in U.S. News & World Report are “Outlook” (consisting of controversial issues or government issues, commentaries and the latest trends), “U.S. News”, “Special report”, “World report”, “Business”, “Science & society” and “News you can use”. Although it does not report over the

weekend, it emphasizes service features and personal-finance pages-- "News You Can Use."⁹

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

The overall objective of this study is to determine how well these three news magazines fulfilled their obligations and their general concept of social responsibility. This study will provide answers to the following questions for the three magazines' news coverage of gays in the military from 1993 to 1995, and women in combat from 1991 to 1995:

- a. To what extent were the magazines biased in their reporting of stories about gays in the military from January 1993 to January 1995 and women in combat from January 1991 to January 1995?
- b. Which magazine(s) were more or less biased than the others?
- c. Which types of bias were most frequently used by each of the magazines?
- d. Which issue, gays in the military or women in combat, received more positive or negative treatment in terms of bias?

Therefore, this study is guided by the following null hypotheses:

- a. There is no bias in these three magazines' news coverage of gays in the military and women in combat.
- b. There is no instance of bias, either positive or negative, among the three magazines.

c. If there are any instances of biases, all three magazines have equivalent frequencies of instances of bias.

d. There is no difference in biased treatment between the issue of gays in the military and that of women in combat.

Definition of Terms

1. “Extent of News coverage” was defined as how much information about gays and women in the military appeared in Time, Newsweek and U.S. News & World Report, either in standalone articles or summaries and photographs.

2. “Bias” was defined as descriptive expressions which may stimulate or affect people’s perceptions away from neutrality or create favorable or unfavorable attitudes. It includes positive (favorable meaning) and the negative (unfavorable).

3. “Categories of Bias” are the six categories of bias reported by Merrill: attribution bias, adjective bias, adverbial bias, outright opinion, contextual bias and photographic bias. Categories were defined according to Fedler’s study.

Isolated words and phrases were classified as examples of adverbial, adjectival or attribution bias. Entire sentences which were deemed biased were classified as ‘outright opinion’ of the author, and whole paragraphs that contained positive or negative impression were classified as ‘contextual bias.’¹⁰

In the category of photograph bias, photos were judged as positive or negative regardless of what the captions read. Photographs were seen as positive, even if the captions were negative, since photos give a more immediate

impression of the image portrayed. The captions were judged in the categories of outright opinion if they are biased.

Sampling

Given the relatively short time span that the issue of gays serving in the military has occupied the nation's news agenda, no sampling was used for the study. In addition, due to the relatively few stories written about women in combat in the past five years, the author used all the stories about the issue from these three magazines. A total of 44 articles were chosen for study. The information included summaries, interviews and general articles on gays and women in combat issues.

Units of Analysis

The headline, lead, photograph, caption of each article and the overall content were the basic units of analysis.

Categories of Analysis

The study is based on the example of two studies done in 1979 by Merrill, Fedler, Meeske and Hall. The following definitions are those used by Merrill, who established six categories of bias: adverbial, adjective, attribution, outright opinion, contextual and photographic. Another category of bias, verbal, was also added. Each instance of bias was noted as being either favorable (positive) or unfavorable (negative). The seven categories of bias are explained as follows:

Attribution Bias:

Attribution bias is caused when the writer intends to attribute information to a source by a negative verb. For example, the attribution verb “said” is neutral, but “yell” evokes an emotional response like other attribution verbs. Likewise, “smile” is counted as a favorable verb and “snap” is regarded as an unfavorable verb.

Adjective Bias:

Adjective bias is a type which may build up an impression of the one being described (i.e., “disgusting” lifestyle or “talented” American women). This bias is created by using favorable or unfavorable adjectives. The use of adjectives in reporting is very common, but it is very important for reporters to use them carefully so as not to appear subjective and make a favorable or unfavorable impression.

Adverbial Bias:

Adverbial bias occurs when the writer uses an adverb to reinforce the verb to create a favorable or unfavorable image in the reader’s mind (i.e., he yelled “sarcastically” or “flamboyantly” dressed). In this respect, a magazine can create a subjective impression by telling how or why a person said or did something.

Contextual Bias:

Contextual bias is not very specific since it may appear in whole sentences or paragraphs or in other units of meaning, even an entire story. The writer may use subjective viewpoints to lead the reader’s thinking by the overall meaning of the report, not by specific words and phrases alone. Therefore, the entire story

or paragraph can be biased just by the tone of the author's writing, creating a favorable or unfavorable implication. Since one's own biases or interpretations might very well determine what he or she considers contextually biased, it was necessary to get the opinions of the panel of coders who examined the data for this study. Contextual bias was counted only when there was agreement among the panelists.¹¹

Outright Opinion:

Outright opinion, according to Merrill, is the most blatant and obvious type of bias or subjectivity in news writing. Writers can use their own judgment to create a favorable or unfavorable image. Hayakawa defines this type of judgment as "all expressions of the writer's approval or disapproval of the occurrences, persons, or objects he is describing."¹² Readers do not expect to find the judgments of the writer in a news magazine except in a signed column or editorial.¹³ It is possible that opinion may be attributed to someone else which makes it easy to think a statement is outright opinion. For example, "everyone thinks gay people have lost their minds" -- an unfavorable opinion.

Photographic Bias:

Photograph bias can be identified from the impression left by a photograph based on expressions on the subjects' faces, their surroundings or any visible emotions. The study counted all positive and negative instances of bias.

Verbal Bias:

This bias indicates the use of verbs expressing action in reference to gay people and women. The use of some verbs can reinforce biased actions within the context of the story (i.e., the verb “distinguished” can be used to appeal to the reader’s emotions, which would be a positive verb; “demoralized” is counted as a negative verb).

The Quantification System

Each item for analysis was counted and listed for each magazine. Items of bias were listed under the different categories of bias whether items were favorable or unfavorable with respect to the stories about gays in the military and women in combat.

Coding

Three coders were involved in the study including the author. Each coder read every article about gays and women in the military from Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report, and recorded instances of obvious bias according to the seven categories of bias, whether the items were positive or negative. The three coders discussed and reached an agreement if they had doubts about ambiguous statements. Also, a pretest was conducted in order to check the procedures and estimate intercoder reliability.

Statistical Analysis

Since the data collected were nominal, chi-square analysis was used to determine relationships and differences in coverage in Time, Newsweek, U.S.

News & World Report. In order to find out if there were any significant differences, a 95 percent level of confidence was used.

Endnotes

¹ Heather Wilson, "Women in Combat," The National Interest (Summer 1993) : 76.

² Arthur Asa Berger, Media Research Techniques (Newbury park : Sage Pub. 1991), 25.

³ Earl Babbie, The Practice of Social Research (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1992), 314.

⁴ F. H. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research: Education and Psychological Inquiry (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1964) : 544.

⁵ "A Letter from the Managing Editor," Time, 132 (July 18, 1988), 4.

⁶ Standard Periodical Directory (Baltimore, MD: Oakbridge Communication 1993) , 1116.

⁷ S.I. Hayakawa, Language in Thought and Action (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), 42.

⁸ Edwin Diamond, "Next 'U.S. Timeweek'" New York 21 (December 5, 1988) : 43.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Fred Fedler, Mike Meeske and Joe Hall, "Time Magazine Revisited: Presidential Stereotypes Persist," Journalism Quarterly 56 (1979) : 354.

¹¹ John C. Merrill, "How Time Stereotyped Three U.S. Presidents, "Journalism Quarterly 46 (1968) : 565.

¹² Edwin Diamond, "Next 'U.S. Timeweek'" New York 21 (December 5, 1988) : 565.

¹³ Ibid.

Chapter IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

General

The following is an analysis of data derived from calculating instances of positive and negative biases concerning the stories of gays in the military and women in combat from three major national news magazines. Bias has been broken down into seven categories. The nature of coverage has also been examined, as the reporting styles of Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report have been reviewed. Finally, examples of each of the seven types of bias are given.

Intercoder Reliability

For the purpose of examining coders' understanding of the analysis method, and to achieve uniformity in making decisions, an intercoder reliability test was conducted among the three individuals who coded data for this study after the coder had practiced in a group. The test was performed using the formula $R = 2M / (N1 + N2)$.¹ "R" represents the intercoder reliability coefficient, "M" is the number of coding decisions on which every two of the three coders agree, and "N1" and "N2" represented the total decisions made by coder one and coder two respectively, coder one and coder three respectively and coder two and coder three respectively. On a scale of 0 to 1.0, where 1.0 is perfect reliability or

uniform agreement, 0.99 indicates high agreement among coders' decisions. The intercoder reliability between coder 1 and coder 2 was 0.98. The intercoder reliability between coder 1 and 3 was 0.96. The intercoder reliability between coder 2 and coder 3 was 0.95. Overall, the correlations ranging from 0.95 to 0.98 were high enough to insure that the differences in coding were not so significant that they would affect or change the conclusion.

Coding Procedure

Three coders, this researcher --a Chinese graduate student at OSU (Oklahoma State University) from Taiwan --and two other Americans --one is a graduate student in the TESEL (Teaching English as Second Language) department at OSU and the other is a coordinator in the Multicultural Development & Assessment Center at OSU--categorized the bias according to Merrill's classification method.

Statistical Analysis

A Chi-square analysis was employed to test the correspondence between expected and observed frequency occurrences for each variable. The level of significance was set at 0.05, which means that the probability of occurrence by chance for a found relationship is less than five in one hundred times.

Findings

Extent of Coverage

The extent of coverage includes the number of articles and photographs concerning the issues of gays in the military from January 1, 1993 to January 1,

1995 and women in combat from January 1, 1991 to January 1, 1995 in the three news magazines. Overall, concerning gays in the military, Time published 13 articles, including 20 photographs. Newsweek had 7 articles that included 15 photographs. U.S. News & World Report published 11 articles, including 23 photographs. Regarding women in combat, Time published 5 articles, including 6 photographs. Newsweek had 6 articles which included 19 photographs. Finally, U.S. News & World Report had 2 articles that included 3 photographs.

The extent of coverage, including the number of articles and photographs related to gays in the military and women in combat in the three national news magazines, is shown in Table I and Table II.

TABLE I
EXTENT OF COVERAGE OF GAYS IN THE MILITARY
IN TIME, NEWSWEEK, AND U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT,
FROM JANUARY 1, 1993 TO JANUARY 1, 1995

ITEMS	Time	Newsweek	U.S. News	Total
No. of Articles	13	7	11	31
No. of Photos	20	15	23	58
Total	33	22	34	79

TABLE II
EXTENT OF COVERAGE OF WOMEN IN COMBAT
IN TIME, NEWSWEEK AND U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT,
FROM JANUARY 1, 1991 TO JANUARY 1, 1995

ITEMS	Time	Newsweek	U.S. News	Total
No. of Articles	5	6	2	13
No. of Photos	6	19	3	28
Total	11	25	5	41

Table III shows the total number of occurrences of bias in coverage of gays in the military from 1993 to 1995 in the three national newsmagazines.

Table III
OCCURRENCES OF BIAS IN REPORTING ON GAYS
IN THE MILITARY, 1993-1995, BY MAGAZINE

Magazine	Time	Newsweek	U.S. News	Total
Positive	36	48	50	134
Negative	30	13	21	64
Total	66	61	71	198

Simple Chi Square Statistic = 0.76
Table Chi Square = 5.991 ($p < 0.05$, $df = 2$)

Simple Chi-square tests were conducted to find where the difference is significant at the 0.05 confidence level. A simple chi-square analysis of the data calculated a value that indicates no significant differences in the occurrences of bias in the extent of coverage of gays in the military among the three national newsmagazines.

Total occurrences of bias in covering women in combat from 1991 to 1995 by the three national newsmagazines are shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV
OCCURRENCES OF BIAS IN REPORTING ON WOMEN IN COMBAT,
1991-1995, BY MAGAZINE

Magazine	Time	Newsweek	U.S. News	Total
Positive	37	60	10	107
Negative	7	15	11	33
Total	44	75	21	140

Simple Chi Square Statistic = 31.51

Table Chi Square = 5.991 ($p < 0.05$, $df = 2$)

Simple Chi-square tests were conducted to find where the difference is significant at the 0.05 confidence level. Using chi-square analysis, significant differences in the incidence of bias among the three magazines, were found.

Newsweek had more occurrences of bias than the other two magazines. Analysis

of the frequency of positive bias indicated that a significant difference was found at the 0.05 level among three news magazines. Newsweek had the most positive bias among the three magazines. With regard to occurrences of negative bias, there is no significant difference found at the 0.05 level among the three news magazines.

Table V shows occurrences of bias per square inch by three magazines.

TABLE V
OCCURRENCES OF BIAS PER SQUARE INCH BY MAGAZINE

	Time	Newsweek	U.S. News
Gays in the military	1.5%	1.3%	1.7%
Women in combat	0.9%	1.7%	0.34%

Considering that all the articles examined do not have the same length, which might influence the frequency of bias, the author calculated the occurrences of bias per square inch of articles in the three national newsmagazines regarding the reporting on gays in the military and women in combat. Thirteen stories of gays in the military and 5 stories of women in combat, comprising a total 979 and 239.5 square inches, were published by Time. Seven stories of gays in the military and 6 stories of women in combat, composed of a total 458 and 518 square inches, were covered by Newsweek.

Eleven stories of gays in the military and 2 stories of women in combat, comprising a total 934 and 36 square inches, were published by U.S. News & World Report. The figures indicate the same results as the previous finding. On the one hand, there are no significant differences in occurrences of bias at the 0.05 confidence level in the extent of coverage of gays in the military among the three national newsmagazines. On the other hand, Newsweek had more significant occurrences of bias than U.S. News & World Report in the coverage of women in combat.

Instance of Bias in Coverage:

The following table (Table VI) concerns overall positive instances of bias (broken down by category) in the coverage of the issue of gays in the category for each magazine.

Table VI
OVERALL OCCURRENCES OF POSITIVE BIAS BY CATEGORY
ON GAYS IN THE MILITARY, 1993-1995, BY MAGAZINE

	Att	Ver	Adj	Adv	Out	Con	Pho	Total
Time	0	4	8	1	8	13	2	36
Newsweek	0	3	7	3	12	18	5	48
U.S. News	0	6	3	4	12	19	6	50
Total	0	13	18	8	32	50	13	134

Complex Chi Square Statistic = 7.065

Table Chi Square = 21.026 ($p < .05$, $df = 12$)

Att = Attribution bias Ver = Verbal bias other than attribution Adj = Adjective bias

Adv = Adverbial bias Out = Outright opinion bias Con = Contextual bias

Pho = Photographic bias

The complex chi square demonstrates that there is no significant relationship between type of bias and magazine. That is, no magazine was more apt to use any particular type of bias than any other magazine. Nevertheless, because the frequency counts are low, the chi-square test may not be valid.

The following table (Table VII) examines overall instances of negative bias by category in the coverage of gays in the military for each magazine.

Table VII
OVERALL OCCURRENCES OF NEGATIVE BIAS BY CATEGORY
ON GAYS IN THE MILITARY, 1993-1995, BY MAGAZINE

	Att	Ver	Adj	Adv	Out	Con	Pho	Total
Time	1	2	4	2	9	11	1	30
Newsweek	0	1	2	1	2	4	3	13
U.S. News	1	1	0	3	5	7	4	21
Total	2	4	6	6	16	22	8	64

Complex Chi Square Statistic = 9.448

Table Chi Square = 21.026 ($p < .05$, $df = 12$)

The results of the complex chi square analysis demonstrates that there is not a significant relationship between bias and magazine. Therefore, no magazine was more apt to use any particular type of bias than any other magazine. However, because the frequency counts were low, the complex chi test may not be valid.

Table VII examines overall instances of positive bias by category in the coverage of women in combat in Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report.

Table VIII
OVERALL OCCURRENCES OF POSITIVE BIAS BY CATEGORY
ON WOMEN IN COMBAT, 1991-1995, BY MAGAZINE

	Att	Ver	Adj	Adv	Out	Con	Pho	Total
Time	0	14	2	3	3	9	6	37
Newsweek	0	14	7	2	4	20	13	60
U.S. News	0	1	2	1	1	3	2	10
Total	0	29	11	6	8	32	31	107

Complex Chi Square Statistic = 9.503

Table Chi Square = 21.026 ($p < .05$, $df = 12$)

The complex chi square demonstrates that there is no significant relationship between type of bias and magazine. That is, no magazine was more apt to use any particular type of bias than any other magazine. Nevertheless, because the frequency counts are low, the chi-square test may not be valid.

Table IX examines overall instances of negative bias by category in the coverage of women in combat in Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report.

Table IX
OVERALL OCCURRENCES OF NEGATIVE BIAS BY CATEGORY
ON WOMEN IN COMBAT, 1991-1995, BY MAGAZINE

	Att	Ver	Adj	Adv	Out	Con	Pho	Total
Time	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	7
Newsweek	0	3	2	1	1	6	2	15
U.S. News	0	3	0	1	3	4	0	11
Total	0	6	2	2	6	13	4	33

Complex Chi Square Statistic = 9.372

Table Chi Square = 21.026 ($p < .05$, $df = 12$)

The results of the complex chi square analysis demonstrates that there is not a significant relationship between bias and magazine. Therefore, no magazine was more apt to use any particular type of bias than any other magazine. However, because the frequency counts were low, the complex chi test may not be valid.

Table X shows occurrences of the seven categories of bias in reporting on gays in the military and women in combat by the three magazines.

TABLE X
OCCURRENCES OF SEVEN CATEGORIES OF BIAS IN
REPORTING ON GAYS IN THE MILITARY, 1993-1995
AND WOMEN IN COMBAT, 1991-1995, BY MAGAZINE

	Att	Ver	Adj	Adv	Out	Con	Pho	Total
Time	1	14	16	7	30	31	11	110
Newsweek	0	20	13	11	15	56	21	136
U.S. News	1	18	8	4	17	30	14	92
Total	2	52	37	22	62	117	46	338

Complex Chi Square Statistic = 19.88

Table Chi Square = 21.026 ($p < 0.05$, $df = 12$)

Complex Chi Square tests were conducted to find where the difference is significant at the 0.05 confidence level. The complex chi square analysis demonstrates that there is no significant relationship between a combined count of both types of bias and the magazine.

Table XI shows the overall occurrences of positive and negative bias in reporting on gays in the military and women in combat by the three magazines.

TABLE XI
OVERALL OCCURRENCES OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE BIAS IN
REPORTING ON GAYS IN THE MILITARY, 1993-1995,
AND WOMEN IN COMBAT, 1991-1995, BY MAGAZINE

	Gays in the military		Women in combat	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Time	36	30	37	7
Newsweek	48	13	60	15
U.S. News	50	21	10	11

A simple chi-square calculated no significant difference at the 0.05 confidence level in the amount of positive bias between coverage of gays in the military and women in combat by Time magazine. However, the calculated chi-square value of occurrences of negative bias shows a significant difference at the 0.05 confidence level between coverage of gays in the military and women in combat by Time magazine. Time had more negative bias in reporting on gays in the military than women in combat. In other words, the difference seems to indicate that Time had a more negative attitude toward gays in the military than

women in combat. For Newsweek, a simple chi-square calculated no significant difference at the 0.05 confidence level in the occurrence of both positive and negative bias between coverage of gays in the military and women in combat. Calculated simple chi-square values show that significant differences were found at the 0.05 confidence level in the occurrence of positive bias between coverage of gays in the military and women in combat by U.S. News & World Report. The publication had more positive bias in covering gays in the military than in covering women in combat. The differences seem to indicate that U.S. News & World Report had a more positive attitude toward gays in the military than women in combat.

Examples of Favorable and Unfavorable Bias

Verbal Bias:

Some instances of verbal bias when referring to women in combat in Time magazine were: negative--“degrading;” positive--“commanded,” “clears,” “proved,” and “distinguished.”

Newsweek’s descriptions of women in combat included: negative--“demoralized,” “gutted;” positive--“directed,” “assimilated,” and “love.”

U.S. News & World Report’s examples of verbs included: negative--“erode,” “lack;” positive-- “flying,” “cleared,” “led,” and “directed.”

Some instances of verbal bias when referring to gays in the military in Time magazine were: positive--“ignited,” “pledged;” negative--“dumped,” “stuck,” “quelled,” “mulls,” “smooth,” and “peppered.”

Newsweek's descriptions were: positive--"gunning;" negative--"barring," "grapples," "fuzzing," "stirs," "shout," "stuck," "refused," "disillusioned," and "provoked."

U.S. News & World Report's examples of verbs included: positive--"moved," and "march." negative--"grappling," "barred," "pierces," and "destroy."

Adverbial Bias:

Positive--In the issue of women in combat, Time mentioned that "Colonel Cammermeyer with uniforms she proudly wore during 26 years in the armed forces."

Negative--Newsweek wrote that "only the Marine Corps showed some hesitancy, deliberately delaying a few support units that contain women." Another article described the "objections to women on the front lines are deeply entrenched."

Negative--U.S. News & World Report wrote that "women would seriously erode combat readiness," and positive--"women have served successfully and proudly in the demanding field of naval aviation."

In the issue of gays in the military, positive--Time used "gays proudly wore," and "gays are working openly."

Negative--Newsweek described, "he often returned from shore leave flamboyantly dressed."

Negative--U.S. News & World Report mentioned, "most officers and enlisted men agreed that openly gay soldiers would wreak havoc in the armed services."

Adjective Bias:

Positive--Some of the adjectives used by Newsweek were: “women are armed and ready at a U.S. desert base,” “women are competent, capable, and committed,” and “... with great pride and hope -- for so many talented American women in the military.”

Positive--Time adjectives included: “lured educated and motivated young women,” and “called the new role for women historic.”

U.S. News & World Report mentioned some adjectives which were: positive--“she merited as the top new graduate,” and “defining moment.”

In the issue of gays in the military, Time described, “a decorated Army nurse,” “getting snarled,” “unflagging vigilance and tactical deception,” “snickering colleagues,” “700 celebrated gays,” “Mixner was aghast,” and “it’s Nunn’s dog and pony show.”

Newsweek used some adjectives such as “the gay community is now engaged in a formidable battle,” and “homosexuality remains exotic and forbidding terrain for most servicemen.”

U.S. News & World Report described, “it provides considerable evidence of political agility,” “rocky start on a rough agenda,” and “supreme court issued a landmark decision.”

Attribution Bias:

In the issue of gays in the military, Time mentioned that “he snapped he opposed the gay ban.”

Contextual Bias:

Several instances of this type of bias were found in the magazines. Time reported:

A greater barrier to a combat role for women in public sensitivity to possible female casualties. Yet the military knows the combat exclusion is artificial protection. The critical point is that these women were trained for whatever contingency they encountered. They could and did fire their weapons where necessary. -- positive.

Newsweek described:

Everybody raises a hand, male and female, and swears to support and defend the same Constitution. Women are competent, capable and committed. Women are an integral part of the best-trained military force in the world. The services should have the flexibility to assign the best-qualified person to the job, regardless of gender. That's the bottom line. -- positive.

U.S. News & World Report mentioned:

When U.S. Army officers dispatched Capt. Linda Bray's military-police unit to secure a Panamanian military dog kennel, they didn't know they were making history by sending women into combat... In Washington, proposals to relax restrictions on women in combat came alive. -- positive.

In the issue of gays in the military, Time mentioned:

It's done sotto voce. But somehow word gets passed. The Air Force is the most hospitable armed branch; the Marines and Army are the pits. Entertainment and medical jobs are the safest; artillery and infantry units the roughest. If possible, head for bases around San Francisco or Washington; steer clear of South Korea and Hawaii. Join groups like Alcoholics Anonymous; for those in the Navy, especially, they are safe enclaves. But Bob Damron's Address Book; it lists gay bars near military installations both at home and abroad. But be careful: such clubs are off limits and are often scouted by bands of military police known as "courtesy patrols." Be alert for changing code words. If someone says, "Don't go straight, go forward" or asks, "Are you a friend of Dorothy's?" you'll know you've found the Emerald City. -- positive.

Newsweek described:

Someday, Desert Storm may be viewed as a major turning point for gays in the military. -- positive.

U.S. News & World Report described:

Others say the inclusion of gays within the military will be far less difficult than many expect. First, despite the lifting of the ban, few expect gays in the military to flaunt their sexual preference. -- positive.

Advocates of the ban's removal point out that other nations don't prohibit homosexuals from performing military service. -- positive.

Outright Opinion:

The following are examples of opinions found in each of the three magazines that were examined for biased in the issue of women in combat:

Examples from Time included:

Women give life. Sustain life. Nurture life. They don't take it. -- negative.

Some women do want to do the job, and in an era in which high technology blurs battle lines and brains may edge out brawn, there is no good reason to deny them the chance. -- positive.

Examples from Newsweek included:

Only the Marine Corps showed some hesitancy, deliberately delaying a few support units that contained women in the wary days of the mobilization. -- negative.

Women can plot coordinates and push buttons as fast as men. -- positive.

Examples from U.S. News & World Report were:

Ask the Israelis. They are the only ones with extensive experience of women in direct combat. -- positive.

In the issue of gays in the military, Time's examples were:

It's not normal for a man to want to be with a man or a woman with a woman. -- negative.

At the extreme, distaste for gays can lead to violence. As gays and lesbians become more visible, hate crimes rise in direct correlation. -- negative.

The example of Newsweek included:

Though politicians are unlikely to embrace the cause during an election year, polls show a majority of Americans believe gays should be allowed into the armed services. -- positive.

Unless they acted, groups like the National Organization for Women, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and the American Civil Liberties Union would get the upper hand in the national debate over gays in uniform. -- positive.

Photographic Bias:

Newsweek had many positive photos concerning the issue of women in combat. Most of those photos portrayed women in combat as smart, capable and competent warriors. For example, one photograph showed a woman sitting in the tank and checking the panel. Some photos were accompanied by captions that read: "Women Warriors: sharing the danger," "... stay cool at a U.S. base in Saudi Arabia," and "armed and ready at a U.S. desert base." Time had fewer photos devoted to women in combat. But the photos in Time tended to be more positive, such as a photo that showed one woman holding a gun with no fear in the desert. U.S. News & World Report had fewest photos, but its portrayal toward women in combat was also positive. Regarding the issue of gays in the military, Newsweek and U.S. News & World Report contained nearly the same amounts of photos while Time had the fewest photos. Generally speaking, photos in these three newsmagazines regarding gays in the military were fairly neutral. Most of

the photos shown in the three newsmagazines were gay people wearing military uniforms.

Endnotes

¹ Chiung-Hui Li, "An Examination of Bias in Coverage in Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report of the People 's Republic of China and the Republic of China, 1949 -- 1993" (Thesis., Oklahoma State University, 1994), 48.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary

This study examined possible bias in the coverage of gays in the military from 1993 to 1995 and women in combat from 1991 to 1995 in the three magazines, Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report. A total of 44 articles and 86 photographs related to gays in the military and women in combat in the three national news magazines were examined. The extent of coverage was measured by calculating the total number of square inches per article, per issue by each magazine (Time has 979 square inches in gays in the military and 239.5 square inches in women in combat; Newsweek has 458 square inches in gays in the military and 518 square inches in women in combat; U.S. News & World Report has 934 square inches in gays in the military and 36 square inches in women in combat). Bias was broken down into seven categories: verbal bias adjective bias, adverbial bias, attribution bias, contextual bias, outright opinion and photographic bias. The biases were then determined to be either positive or negative by the three coders.

Considering that the three national newsmagazines do not have same length or same number, the author also calculated the proportions of bias counts per square inch per article in each of the three newsmagazines. The proportion

of coverage was calculated in order to obtain a more accurate representation of how much space each magazine devoted to the issues of gays in the military and women in combat in relation to the amount of space devoted to the other news. Overall, U.S. News & World Report (1.7 percent) and Time (1.5 percent) had a higher proportion of coverage of gays in the military during the period studied than Newsweek (1.3 percent). In regards to women in combat, Newsweek (1.7 percent) had an obviously higher proportion of coverage during the period studied than Time (0.9 percent) and U.S. News & World Report (0.34 percent). The result demonstrated that although the proportion of bias counts per square inch per article in each of the three newsmagazines may be different, the figures showed the same results as the previous findings.

Research Questions and Findings:

a. To what extent were the magazines biased in their reporting of stories about gays in the military from January 1993 to January 1995 and women in combat from January 1991 to January 1995?

The complex chi square analysis yielded no significant occurrences of positive or negative bias for the issue of gays in the military among the various categories of bias. Likewise, the complex chi square analysis yielded no significant occurrences of positive or negative bias for the issue of women in combat among the various categories of bias. The complex chi square yielded no overall significance among the various categories of bias for both gays in the military and women in combat.

Comparing the coverage in the three magazines, the simple chi square analysis found significantly more positive treatment of the women in combat issue, since there were more occurrences of positive bias in all categories. Of the three publications, Newsweek had the most positive coverage. However, no statistically significant differences between positive and negative bias were found for gays in the military among Time, Newsweek, and U.S. New & World Report. Also, simple chi square analysis yielded some significant differences in the treatment of the issues of women in combat and gays in the military in two of the publications studied, Time and U.S. News & World Report.

No significant difference was found in the occurrence of bias in the extent of coverage of gays in the military among the three national newsmagazines. Regarding the issue of women in combat, Newsweek had more significantly positive attitudes than Time and U.S. News & World Report.

b. Which magazine(s) was more or less biased than the other?

Findings indicate that Newsweek was the most biased among three magazines concerning the issue of women in combat. U.S. News & World Report was the least biased of the three publications. No significant differences were found among the three magazines concerning the issue of gays in the military.

c. Which types of bias were most frequently used by each of the magazines?

For women in combat and gays in the military, contextual bias seemed to be the most prevalent type of bias for all three news magazines, although complex

chi square analysis could not find conclusive evidence of significance for overall negative or positive instances of bias, or overall combined instances of bias by category for each magazine.

d. Which issue, gays in the military or women in combat, received more positive or negative treatment in terms of bias?

As previously mentioned, two magazines did show significant bias in their coverage of the two issues studied here. Time had a more negative attitude toward the issue of gays in the military than women in combat. In other words, Time was more supportive of the issue of women in combat than that of gays in the military. And U.S. News & World Report had a more positive attitude toward the issue of gays in the military than that of women in combat. No significant differences were found in Newsweek.

Nature of Coverage

The three newsmagazines examined in this study read alike and often used identical quotes from the same sources. Yet, the reporting styles of the three magazines are quite different. Time and Newsweek had the tendency to emphasize stories of human interest. For example, a headline in Newsweek said that "An army captain tells why females should fight." This article introduced the story of a female graduate of West Point who related her beliefs in an interview on why and how females should be allowed to serve in combat roles. Another example was found in Time, "Hearts and minefields: A son's admission of his homosexuality to his Marine father adds poignancy to the debate about how open

gays can be in the military.” U.S. News & World Report, on the other hand, had the propensity to rely on stories reflecting public opinion, usually based on national surveys. For example, the title of one story was: “Straight talk about gays: gay rights are front and center as Bill Clinton moves to end the military ban on homosexuals. But Americans are deeply ambivalent on the issue.” In this story, U.S. News & World Report reflected the general public’s conflicting views on gays in the military.

Although many instances of positive and negative bias were found, most of the bias in the three magazines was positive toward the issues of women in combat and gays in the military. Newsweek obviously appeared to be more supportive of women in combat than Time and U.S. News & World Report. Newsweek portrayed women as capable and competent members in combat. Most headlines, “Women warriors: Sharing the danger;” “The right to fight;” “Women have what it takes;” and “Women flying high,” implied that women should enjoy the same rights as men in serving in combat without any difficulties.

U.S. News & World Report also appeared to have more positive attitude toward gays in the military. It seemed to imply that gays in the military is an issue of discrimination, prejudice and rights about which the public should be seriously concerned. One story even stated that,

Although no one can doubt that many thousands of gay men and women have served, and continue to serve, honorably and well, homophobic prejudice runs deep and wide through all four branches of the uniformed services... Gays in the military is a civil rights issue, a matter of ending discrimination. In short, the battle is equity versus order, the rights of individual gays versus the rights of individual soldiers and the military as a whole.

In addition, U.S. News & World Report wrote that “gays are demanding not just tolerance but the right to be open about who they are, just like heterosexuals, without fear that they will face discrimination.” In the issue of women in combat, only two articles were found in this publication, which might affect the objectivity of the result.

According to the findings in this study, Time was the least supportive of the issue of gays in the military. Stories in this publication implied that gays in the military still confront much pressure from military officials, whose strong, unsupportive voices create a greater challenge to lifting the ban. As Time mentioned,

In a meeting with Clinton after the election, Powell repealed his personal objection to lifting the ban. But the President-elect left the meeting believing that the general would not stand in his way. It came as a shock when Powell went public with his opposition during a Jan. 12 speech at the U.S. Naval Academy.

Another example said, “Committee members peppered Schwarzkopf and other witnesses with questions that seemed designed to depict gays as a greater risk to ‘unit cohesion’ than women and blacks.”

Conversely, women in combat portrayed by Time was very positive. It implied that women are very capable of confronting and overcoming tough challenges once they serve in combat. One headline introduced the story of women in combat as “A new breed of brass or the new top guns.”

Examples of favorable and unfavorable bias:

Verbal bias

Verbal bias explains the action of the sentence. It can also set the tone of the story and place a person, place or event in a positive or negative light.

Ex: "During the Persian Gulf war, women distinguished themselves in the cockpits of helicopters, midair refueling tankers and the lumbering C-141 transport jets that ferried troops across enemy lines." The verb distinguished stresses the success of women in combat.

Ex: "It wasn't that women couldn't fight. It was that they got blown apart. Female casualties demoralized the men and gutted unit cohesion." The verbs demoralized and gutted seem to show contempt towards the importance of women in combat.

Adverbial bias

Adverbial forms of bias can be used to create a favorable or unfavorable impression and are usually connected to the verb. Negative and positive adverbs were found in several articles.

Ex: "Since 1973, women have served successfully and proudly in the demanding field of naval aviation." These two adverbs indeed emphasize the favorable attitude toward women.

Ex: "Gays are working openly in the White House and on Capitol Hill, at least two of them as elected members of Congress." The adverb openly gives people some positive hints that gays can expose their identities without difficulties in their working environment.

Adjective bias

Adjective bias concerns those descriptive words that qualify or define a person, place or thing. The type of adjective used can possibly place the noun being described in a positive or negative light in the mind of the reader.

Ex: “The Joint Chiefs and their powerful squadrons of lobbyists on Capitol Hill went to work on lawmakers, raising fears about sexual misconduct and reportedly circulating a graphic video titled *The Gay Agenda*, which featured some of the more flamboyant entries in a gay parade.” The adjective flamboyant casts a negative impression on gays by implying that these individuals tend to flout their homosexuality in a flashy, extravagant manner.

Ex: “Women are competent, capable and committed. Women are an integral part of the best-trained military force in the world.” These three adjectives are obviously very positive words which can be regarded as the highly complimentary toward women.

Attribution bias

Attribution bias deals exclusively with the wording used when attributing quotes to their source. The type of attribution used could place the quote in a favorable or unfavorable light.

Ex: “Nunn snapped: ‘We can’t have the commanders out in the field saying what do I do? Call the attorney general!’” The attribution snapped (negatively affective) is a word designed to appeal to the reader’s emotions, to give a judgmental stimulus.¹

Contextual bias

Contextual bias concerns the overall meaning of a paragraph or sentence.

Ex: “The critical point is that these women were trained for whatever contingency they encountered. They could, and did, fire their weapons where necessary.” These two sentences seem to imply that women are full of courage and determination.

Ex: “When U.S. Army officers dispatched Capt. Linda Bray’s military-police unit to secure a Panamanian military dog kennel, they didn’t know they were making history by sending women into combat... In Washington, proposals to relax restrictions on women in combat came alive.” This paragraph seems to imply support for women as competent soldiers in the army.

Outright opinion

This type of bias constitutes subjective opinions on the part of journalists while reporting the news. This study found several instances of opinions that were interjected.

Ex: “When it became known in a unit that someone was openly homosexual, polarization occurred, violence sometimes followed, morale broke down, and unit effectiveness suffered.” These two sentences obviously constitute subjective and extremely unfavorable opinions from the viewpoints of the writer.

Ex: “It’s not just a matter of physical strength. It’s mental and emotional strength as well. God knew what he was doing when he allowed women to bear children and gave [women] the ability to handle that mental and emotional

stress.” These three sentences are obviously filled with the subjectively favorable tone from the writer.

Photographic bias

Photographic bias was measured by the overall impression given in each photo. It will give readers a direct and fast impression which may be either positive or negative.

Ex: One photo, published in Newsweek showing an openly gay, Navy Lieutenant Thorne, as a confident and brave soldier who looks up to the sky, is considered a very positive image toward gays in the military.

Ex: Another photo published in Time shows one woman soldier as she marches with several men. She looks like a person who is filled with confidence and courage. This photo gives readers a very positive images toward women in combat.

Conclusions

Although differences in the audiences' cognitive behavior might influence their judgments of news bias, certain reporting and writing techniques, such as colorful adjectives and judgments, undoubtedly produce biased impressions of what is reported. On the other hand, reporters might select what they like to report and omit some other important events which they dislike, or they may have the tendency to positively color issues they favor or add a negative light to issues they do not support. In this case, the media have an important responsibility to project a representative picture of constituent groups of society. If they cannot

accurately present an authentic reflection of the needs of gays and women in relation to their potential military involvement, the media is not performing in a socially-responsible manner.

According to the Hutchins Commission, a responsible press should truthfully project every group's image to increase understanding among society as a whole. Prestigious print media such as Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report have an important influence in constructing the reality for all readers, due to their large circulations and distinguished worldwide reputations. Generally speaking, people who read through news magazines may be looking for "proper perspective and serious backgrounding" concerning the quality of reporting, although what is found may be more entertainment than information.² Reporters and journalists must know not to weave facts into "semi-fictionalized language patterns" or have "preferential or prejudicial treatment of news subjects."³

This study used the system developed by John C. Merrill for examining bias in news content. There are, however, some deficiencies. For example, Merrill's original study did not consider all forms of verbs and focused mainly on attribution verbs. Obviously, attribution verbs are not the whole part of the entire family of verbs. In addition, the categories of outright opinion bias and contextual bias are not mutually exclusive. In other words, if a reporter uses outright opinions in his or her story, then all the outright opinions might actually lead to contextual bias. Therefore, future studies may continue to look at bias employing a modified examining system, such as adding verbal bias rather than attribution bias,

examining all the adverbs which create slanting, and classifying outright opinion bias in the category of contextual bias. Combination of these categories might also help this study be more scientifically conclusive. Due to the relatively small sample size, it was virtually impossible to attain statistical significance in any of the categories of bias under which this research was conducted. Making the previously-suggested consolidations in these otherwise weakly defined categories might increase the chance of achieving significance in future replications of this study.

Additionally, all categories of bias might not be equal. For example, if one photograph in the story gives readers a very strong impression, either positive or negative, then readers could immediately perceive possible bias in an article without reading it. Therefore, future studies might exclude the category of photograph bias in order to get a more objective result.

Moreover, although agreements were finally reached and the three coders developed congruent judgment on bias categories, some flaws were unavoidable in this study. For example, the three coders could have strong beliefs in support of these issues or, conversely, they might disagree with either or both of these topics. Cognitive behavior is so complicated, and is influenced by many factors, which might inevitably influence judgments on bias. Therefore, the three coders might use a potentially biased method to examine bias if they owned preexistent attitudes toward these two issues.

men. Such positive exposures in other media may have promoted more favorable treatment in this instance.

Moreover, the positive reporting could also result from some efforts of President Clinton, noted scholars and some news organizations. Considerable evidence from some studies demonstrates that homosexuals in the military pose no documented threat to national security and show no evidence of poor work performance.⁵ Many studies, on the other hand, also show that women can act as soldiers in wars as good as men, and are capable of confronting and overcoming tough challenges if they serve in combat.⁶

In addition, the American Society of Newspaper Editors issued a 1990 report noting the problems of gay and lesbian journalists because of unchallenged homophobia and furthermore pointing out the insufficiency of news coverage of the gay community.⁷ The report also attempted to educate reporters and newsroom editors about the concerns of gay news professionals and the need for better reporting on gay topics. Many papers began to provide more, less biased coverage of the gay community. As a result, the debate over the banning of gays from military service was initially framed as a conflict between the gay community, represented as a highly organized interest group, and the Pentagon.⁸ More importantly, since the Clinton Administration has sought to lift the ban, the gay issue has been framed more as one of civil rights, with frequent reference to President's Truman's 1948 desegregation of the military.

Although this study tended to reflect a more positive bias toward the causes of gays and women in the issues studied, media professionals should still pay closer attention to the ways in which they portray women and gays, because there is still a strong need for the media to attempt to accurately reflect their changing roles in society. In addition, it is true that some irrational prejudice or stereotypes towards minority groups, such as women and gays, still remains and can be easily seen in the most articles of national news magazines. By this study, it is ultimately hoped that some irrational prejudice or stereotypes, at least, can be gradually eradicated from people's hearts.

Recommendations for future study

This content analysis covered the short period of time from 1991 to 1995 concerning the issue of women in combat. Since this issue has always been a polarizing question over the last 25 years, a longer period of time to examine this issue is necessary for future research. Although the stories regarding gays in the military before 1993 were rather scarce, future examination could still include relevant stories using broader coverage of gays in modern society.

Moreover, the only medium studied for its content was print media which was confined to the three major national news magazines of Time, Newsweek and U.S. News & World Report. A study of magazine content might describe only one facet of coverage of gays in the military and women in combat. To characterize coverage more completely, and provide better understanding, the

research questions addressed in this study also could be addressed with other types of news media, such as television network news, and newspapers.

It is realized that this research provides very narrow coverage of the larger issue of equal opportunity for women and gays. Perhaps choosing articles that cover special events, such as the gay rights movement or the role of working women in society, could provide a broader overview of these two movements.

Endnotes

¹ John C. Merrill, "How Time Stereotyped Three U.S. Presidents," Journalism Quarterly 42 (1965) : 564.

² Ibid., 569.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Michael Nava and Robert Dawidoff, Created Equal: Why Gay Rights Matter to America (St. Martin's Press, New York, 1994) : 125.

⁵ See Franklin D. Jones and Ronald J. Koshes, "Homosexuality and the Military," American Journalism Psychiatry, 152, no, 1, (January 1995), Isay RD, Being Homosexual: Gay Men and Their Development. New York, Avon Books, 1989.

⁶ See Heather Wilson, "Women in Combat," The National Interest (Summer 1993), Charles Moskos, "Army Women," The Atlantic Monthly (August 1990).

⁷ Fred Fejes and Petrich Kevin, "Invisibility, Homophobia and Heterosexism: Lesbians, Gays and the Media," Review and Criticism (December 1993): 405.

⁸ Ibid.

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