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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

AN ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL BIAS IN EVENING NETWORK NEWS DURING
THE 1996 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS

A Dissertation
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

By
JANET MURPHY
Norman, Oklahoma
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AN ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL BIAS EVENING NETWORK NEWS DURING
THE 1996 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

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Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

I.	Chapter 1:	Introduction	1
II.	Chapter 2:	Literature Review	7
	A.	Historical Development of Journalism and the Concept of Objectivity	7
	B.	Bias in Media Political Coverage	13
	C.	Nonverbal and Visual Content of Television	23
	D.	Research Questions	27
III.	Chapter 3:	Methodology	29
VI.	Chapter 4:	Results	40
	A.	Phase I: Coders' Judgment of Bias	40
		1. Amount of Coverage	
		2. Positive Coverage of Clinton More Than Dole	
		3. Bias Over the Course of the Campaign	
		4. Coverage by Network Correspondents	
		5. Differences in Kinds of Stories	
		6. Addressing Structural Bias	
		7. Visual and Nonverbal Elements	
	B.	Phase II: Evaluation of Stories	70
		1. Highly Favorable Clinton Stories	
		2. Highly Unfavorable Clinton Stories	
		3. Highly Favorable Dole Stories	
		4. Highly Unfavorable Dole Stories	
V.	Chapter 5:	Discussion	99
	A.	Findings	99
		1. Amount of Coverage	
		2. Positive Versus Negative Coverage of the Candidates	
		3. Bias Over the Course of the Campaign	
		4. Coverage by Network Correspondents	
		5. Differences in Kinds of Stories	
		6. Addressing Structural Bias	
	B.	Limitations of the Study	111
	C.	Directions for Future Research	113

BIBLIOGRAPHY

TABLES

ENDNOTES

APPENDICES

List of Tables

- Table 1: Crosstabulation of Candidates Mentioned in a Story
By Candidates Who are the Story's Main Focus
- Table 2: Mean Numbers for Overall Favorable or Unfavorable
Coverage by Length
- Table 3: Frequencies of Visual Tone Per Candidate
- Table 4: Frequencies of Overall Tone Per Candidate
- Table 5: Mean Numbers for Candidate Coverage by Networks,
Months, and Hard versus Soft News
- Table 6: Tone of Stories Aired Before Opponent's Stories
- Table 7: Tone of Stories Aired After Opponent's Stories
- Table 8: Tone of Stories Aired Without an Opponent's Story
- Table 9: Frequencies of Overall Favorable or Unfavorable
Clinton Coverage by Week
- Table 10: Frequencies of Overall Favorable or Unfavorable
Dole Coverage by Week
- Table 11: Analysis of Variance for Overall Favorability in
Clinton Stories and Month
- Table 12: Analysis of Variance for Overall Favorability in
Dole Stories and Month
- Table 13: Analysis of Variance for Overall Favorability in
Clinton Stories and Network
- Table 14: Analysis of Variance for Overall Favorability in
Dole Stories and Network

Table 15: Analysis of Variance for Overall Favorability in
Clinton Stories and Hard or Soft News

Table 16: Analysis of Variance for Overall Favorability in
Dole Stories by Hard or Soft News

Table 17: Visual Characteristics of Presidential Campaign
News Stories

Table 18: Nonverbal Characteristics of Campaign News Stories

Table 19: Crosstabulation of Coverage Favorability in
Clinton Coverage By Coverage Favorability in Dole
Coverage

Abstract

In 1969, Spiro Agnew accused the media of bias against Republicans in the 1968 presidential election process. While this accusation was nothing new, it was the first time that a person of vice presidential status had made the charge. This indictment of the media touched off a series of research into the political leanings of a supposedly "objective" press and broadcast system. Existing literature generally demonstrates that significant evidence of bias was not present or that it was not the commonly understood political bias. The questions raised about bias were the catalyst that brought about the formation of several research institutions whose sole concern is the exploration of media bias. These institutions remain popular today and generate a variety of data. However, unlike early studies, recent research conducted by nonpartisan groups show some evidence of media bias.

This present research examines the possible scientific evidence of bias in the network evening news. Further, it proposes to forward determination of bias by inclusion of nonverbal and visual exhibitions of bias and examination of the possible change in media bias over the course of an election campaign, up to Election Day. Finally, the study includes the examination of the highly biased stories by focus groups. The study analyzes the evening news reports

from the three major networks during the official election campaigning time (from Labor Day to Election Day).

This study consists of two phases. The first phase submits the data set to content analysis. Coders' analyses include visual and verbal content and overall media bias. The coders determine presence of media bias on a five-point scale from "highly favorable" to "highly unfavorable." The second phase involves only those stories coded in phase one as obviously favorable or obviously unfavorable. Its purpose was to assess verbal and visual content in biased stories in addition to first phase coding. The second phase utilizes focus groups to identify interactions between both verbal and visual content. The conclusions provides exploratory data that may direct future research.

The study found that, while coverage of Clinton was mostly neutral, coverage of Dole was negative. Mean numbers for Dole revealed that stories were more unfavorable in the first month of the campaign than in the last. Clinton was covered fairly over the months. Coverage of the 1996 election was unfavorable to Dole in placement of story and amount of positive versus negative coverage. Of the three networks included in this study, all covered Dole on average more unfavorably than favorably. ABC's coverage was significantly more unfavorable than CBS or NBC. More stories featured Clinton without mentioning opponent than

Dole. The content analysis did not find that visual coverage was statistically significant in tone of the coverage; but focus groups utilized elements of visual, verbal, and nonverbal communication in discussing the level of bias in the coverage.

AN ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL BIAS IN EVENING NETWORK NEWS DURING
THE 1996 PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. (Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to Edward Carrington from Paris, Jan. 16, 1787.)

Jefferson believed strongly in the power and need for the press—the press that he knew was not objective, but rather openly and pointedly partisan. Although not drafted by Jefferson, the Constitution reflects his thoughts.

The First Amendment safeguarded a biased press, not an objective press. The debate that rages today is one that the Founding Fathers would not have thought to consider. Then again, they would not have envisioned media moguls or massive media conglomerates. The question of objectivity is a new question in history, mostly evolving during the explosion of television into the American home. With media objectivity in question, other issues arise: do objective media best serve the democracy as the self-proclaimed fourth estate? If objective media do best serve democracy, then are they objective or do they merely appear so? And, is an “objective” media even possible? While the first and third questions are philosophical discussions, the second provides interesting fodder for quantitative research. It is the

second question with which researchers currently concern themselves. If a biased press hides behind a shroud of objectivity, then it lies to the American people, and maybe to itself.

In 1969, then Vice President Spiro Agnew, whom the media were hounding at the time for ethics violations, complained to a crowd of Florida ralliers that the media were biased. He accused them of being liberal and allowing their political perspective to taint their reports. It was the first instance of someone of his stature indicting the press for bias. Since that time, media credibility has decreased, as more Americans believe that the media are self-serving and politically slanted.

The GOP has continued to claim that the mainstream media are biased in favor of Democrats. During the 1996 San Diego convention, Republicans funded GOP-TV to air simultaneously with other coverage to counter "negative attacks" and to offer a different perspective on the convention events, albeit slanted as well. GOP-TV appeared on cable stations in January, 1994 (Goetz, 1994). GOP-TV is not the only cable "news" network offering partisan coverage. National Empowerment Television also broadcasts political news with a slant. American Political Channel boasts an advisory council that presumably will cross partisan barriers (Goetz, 1994). Understanding that objective news coverage emerged for economic as well as for

fairness reasons, this action raises an interesting question: does cable now allow openly biased media to re-emerge and to survive?

When asked his opinion of GOP-TV, ABC News vice president and executive producer of special events, Jeff Gralnick said: "As long as people... understand that GOP-TV is being broadcast with a point of view, then I have no problem with it" (PoliticsNow, August 29, 1996). Gralnick seems to indicate that ABC News, and certainly the other networks, are not broadcasting with a point of view. Network critics from all sides disagree. They charge that the networks are covertly biased; that is, networks prefer the illusion of objectivity, in order to maintain broad audiences, and the appearance of partisan independence.

Accuracy In Media, Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, and the Center for Media and Public Affairs, although taking different viewpoints, agree on one thing—they believe the media are biased to varying degrees. For AIM, the media have proven themselves repeatedly and consistently against the conservative viewpoint. Reed Irvine established AIM in 1969, the same year of Agnew's comments. In a recent interview, Irvine said: "Objective journalism has always been a thing of the past, or better, a hope for the future" (PoliticsNow, December 5, 1996). Irvine said that the problem of liberal bias is not only in how media cover certain political stories, but also what stories they choose

to cover. He also noted that while some claim conservative bias because of the big corporate bodies that are consolidating the media ownership, the liberal editors, producers, etc., dominate the newsroom.

FAIR founder and political pundit Jeff Cohen called comments made by Reed Irvine, AIM founder, "silly" (PoliticsNow, December 12, 1996). Cohen believes that the media are conservative and has written prolifically on the subject of media bias. Cohen contends that the big corporations drive the media. Therefore, journalists are not only conscious of who writes their paychecks, but of who buys their ads. He cites numerous anecdotes to support his claim (Cohen & Soloman, 1995).

In a December 12, 1996, interview, Cohen said that the responsibility lies with news consumers: "... If news consumers were more aggressive in seeking out alternatives, especially news sources not dominated by big money, this would lead to a growth in independent alternative media and a boon for democracy" (PoliticsNow, 1996).

The Center for Media and Public Affairs would tend to agree with AIM, but only marginally. The problem with both AIM and FAIR is that they research media bias from drastically different political perspectives—one liberal, one conservative. Larry Sabato of the University of Virginia, and Robert Lichter, now director of CMPA, founded the non-profit organization (CMPA) as a non-partisan effort

to research media bias. The group claims to use scientific content analysis in their explication of political news. Using mostly content analysis, CMPA submits newscasts to daily scrutiny. Like AIM, they have found more favorable coverage for the Democrats than Republicans. Also, CMPA has found more critical and negative coverage of the GOP than of Democrats.

While Cohen and FAIR have used numerous anecdotal and logical arguments to support their contention of conservative media bias, they offer very little scientific evidence. If they could exhibit through survey of the media or content analysis that pro-conservative bias exists, their point would be better made.

The questions that each of these media watchdog groups leave are:

1. Do the media change coverage over the course of the campaign;
2. Are there anchors or reporters making a greater number of biased statements than others;
3. And, if visual presentation were taken into account, would the significance of bias be stronger?

This present research pursued the question of bias in the media during presidential electoral campaigning, and secondarily, the question of visual verses verbal forms of bias. First, the review outlines the roots of objectivity in American journalism. Second, the literature review

explains what researchers have found with regard to bias. Third, research on visual and nonverbal communication through television will provide a basis for understanding the modes of possible bias. Lastly, the review will identify the proposed research questions.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Historical Development of Journalism and the Concept of Objectivity

The concept of objectivity is relatively new to the American press. Since the Federal Communications Act of 1934, objectivity has followed broadcast journalists as a part of their duty. Prior to the turn of the century, the media were openly right or left politically. In fact, they were often largely, if not totally, supported by political parties.

Since the beginning of this century, then, journalism has been striving for objectivity. McEnteer (1991) reports that only 5% of the newspapers in the 1860s considered themselves independent of a political party. By the 1890s, nearly 25% declared independence. As the century turned, the trend toward objectivity/political independence continued. From 1924 to 1934, Stenaas (1986-1987) records that political neutrality was the norm. In the "Mayflower Decision" of 1941, the Federal Communications Commission prohibited broadcasters from expressing their own thought on controversial issues (Efron, 1971). Because of the obvious limitation of free speech in this ruling, the Fairness Doctrine was developed to allow broadcasters the right to express their views as long as they sought "all sides of controversial issues." To not provide time for opposing

views, the FCC ruled, is to be biased. Later the Supreme Court found that the Fairness Doctrine is not constitutionally required (Red Lion Broadcasting Company v. Federal Communications Commission, 1969).

Reasons for this trend toward a tradition of objectivity vary. Ognianova and Endersby (1996) argue that economic factors caused the trend. The more central the viewpoints expressed by the press, the more the papers maximized their audience. They report that newspapers needed a broader market, which required the papers to become more varied in their political viewpoints. Roshco (1975) comes to the same conclusion. He writes that political neutrality was more profitable for American newspapers and, therefore, objectivity became a tactic for maintaining market stability and success. The term "objectivity" did not come into existence until the 1920s when it was used as a means to attract readers (Streckfuss, 1990). As media developed into broadcast, Americans sought the same objectivity for the new media: radio and television.

Newspapers are a much more local medium. Excluding a few papers, newspapers feature news for a defined, small region. The same is true of local news stations, but the news stations are mostly affiliated with national networks. It is from these networks that the majority viewers receive their news. Eighty percent of those surveyed reported that they watch the evening network news (Lichter & Noyes, 1997).

Robinson and Sheehan (1983) found that 60% of the news that led on CBS evening news concerned the president.¹

Although absolute objectivity is neither possible nor desirable (Becker, 1991; Condit & Selzer, 1985; Glasser 1984; Glasser & Ettema, 1989; Hemanus, 1976; Ognianova & Endersby, 1996; Udick, 1993), journalism schools continue to train students in balance and fairness. Also, the 1987 Society of Professional Journalists code of ethics cites objectivity as a "noble" pursuit, one for which journalists "must strive." One can logically arrive at the need for media objectivity. The public and journalists expect news reporters to be objective (Bennett, 1983; Epstein, 1973; Joslyn, 1984).

Because audiences expect the news to be a source of non-partisan information, they often use the news in attitude formation and decision-making (Kaid, Down, & Ragan, 1990; Lang & Lang, 1984; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Iyengar, Peters, & Kinder, 1982; Robinson, 1976).

Iyengar and Kinder (1987), near the conclusion of their book, write:

The evidence testifies ... to the American media's deep commitment to 'objectivity.' As a professional ideology, objectivity includes three commitments: to independence (journalism should be free from political pressures); to balance (journalism should present without favor the positions of all contending parties); and to objectivity (journalism should simply present the facts, without passing judgment on them). (p. 131)

A reminder of the power and impact of news was given in research of the Bush-Rather encounter. One study, using the encounter, found that audiences responded negatively to Bush when they only viewed the mini-documentary prepared by CBS Evening News (Kaid, Downs, & Ragan, 1990). When the audience viewed both the documentary and the confrontation, their evaluations of Bush became more favorable. Other research reveals the audiences evaluate candidates on media agenda as well.

Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder (1982) demonstrate through research that audiences evaluate presidential performances on the evening news' positioning of certain problems. Audiences also may experience malaise as a result of viewing television news (Robinson, 1976).

Experimental studies also indicate that television exposure to varying political formats can have an influence on some candidate image characteristics (Kaid & Sanders, 1978; Keating & Latane, 1976; Patterson, 1980). Drew and Weaver (1990) show that different channels have varying effects on the viewers. Television influences both cognitive learning and attitudes, while newspapers more likely influence cognitive learning only. However, Miller, Goldenberg, and Erbring (1979) found that newspaper readers experienced more political malaise. Katz, Adoni, and Parness (1977) found that recall was enhanced when pictures and words matched, as did Gunter (1982). Other experimental

studies also reveal that television viewership positively enhances knowledge of campaign issues (Drew & Weaver, 1991). In an election campaign setting, some new evidence shows that television news coverage exerts cognitive and persuasive influences (Bartels, 1993; Cappella & Jamieson, 1994; Chaffee & Hochheimer, 1983; Edwardson, Grooms, & Proudlove, 1981). Experiments and surveys also show that viewers assess their candidates based on issues emphasized in the news (Iyengar, Peters, & Kinder, 1982, 1984; Krosnick & Kinder, 1990). One study of channel-effect found that people who view a program and people who read about the event have markedly different reactions (Meyer, 1972).

One experimental study attempted to relate measured bias with perceived bias (Brosius & Staab, 1989). They found that skilled newspaper readers more accurately ascertain the level of bias detected via content analysis than casual readers. Readers could more accurately perceive bias in shorter rather than longer articles. It appears that the more experienced the reader, the more accurately the reader is able to detect bias accurately.

Despite the importance of objectivity to viewers and the empirical evidence of the impact of bias, journalists are seemingly moving away from objectivity to interpretation. This is particularly true of some high profile journalists. In increasing numbers, those in broadcast media are discounting the importance of

objectivity. Bernard Goldberg, CBS news correspondent wrote in the Wall Street Journal that the bias of the networks was so blatant that it was "hardly worth discussing anymore." They don't sit around strategizing and planning the slant of the news, he wrote. "We don't have to. It comes naturally to most reporters."

Broadcast anchor legend Walter Cronkite echoed the sentiment in a speech March 21, 1996 to Radio and TV Correspondents Association dinner guests. He said: "... everybody knows that there's a liberal, that there's a heavy liberal persuasion among correspondents." But this is nothing new.

Solzhenitsyn said, when speaking the Harvard University commencement now two decades ago:

There is yet another surprise for someone coming from the totalitarian East with its rigorously unified press: One discovers a common trend of preferences within the Western press as a whole (the spirit of the time), generally accepted patterns of judgment, and maybe common corporate interests, the sum effect being not competition but unification. Unrestrained freedom exists for the press, but not for readership, because newspapers mostly transmit in a forceful and emphatic way those opinions which do not too openly contradict their own and that general trend" (Solzhenitsyn, 1978).²

Meyer (1972), in the conclusion of a study comparing the effects of channels on impact of media bias wrote: "Perhaps a liberal bias in the reporting process not only reinforces liberal attitudes of readers, but it may also be

a major contributor to initial development of liberal attitudes" (p. 202).

A content analysis of military coverage revealed a definite attitude in one network. Lefever (1975) studied CBS's evening coverage of the military. He found bias not in terms of political partisanship, but in political position. CBS preferred the "dove" to the "hawk" position when considering national defense.

If the journalists' personal political affiliation has any influence on how they cover stories, the polls and surveys of journalists are incriminating. In a 1992 Freedom Forum-sponsored poll of 1,400 journalists, 44% considered themselves Democrats. Only 16% affiliated themselves as Republicans. Thirty-four percent said they were independent. If one looks at the political correspondents and Washington bureau chiefs, the picture changes only slightly. A vast majority of reporters, 89% say they voted for Clinton (The TIO/Roper Report, 1996). Seven percent reported they voted for George Bush. While 50% said they were Democrats, 61% called themselves "liberal" or "moderate to liberal."

Bias in Media Political Coverage

Since Agnew's comments on media bias, numerous articles have not only attempted to measure bias, they have tried to define it (Cirino, 1971; Doll & Bradley, 1974; Efron, 1971; Hackett, 1984; Hofstetter, 1976; Hofstetter & Buss, 1978;

Iyengar, 1990; MacLean, 1981; etc.). The research has shown mixed results, due in part to how researchers define it.

Efron (1971) published The News Twisters, a nonacademic study that tended to confirm Agnew's accusations. According to Efron, the broadcast media were indeed biased. This study found that the network news actively slanted their coverage of the Vietnam War and U.S. policy. Also, the researcher observed that networks favored the Democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey over his Republican opponent, Richard M. Nixon in the 1968 presidential election. The problem with the study was its lack of scientific rigor. The researcher coded the material, and the material lacked the sort of representativeness of a random sampling. The scholarly community was skeptical of the findings and, therefore, more rigorous studies followed. These studies found quite different results.

Frank (1973) found that the TV networks actually exhibited very little political bias in coverage of the 1972 presidential campaign. In his comparison of the three networks, Frank concluded that a wide variance existed with network programming across the types of the news messages sent and across formatting. Not all "slant" was toward the same direction; therefore, he concluded support for the assertion of media bias was weak. Additionally, Frank used a Likert-type scale to determine story treatment and story favorability scores. This resulted in an indication of very

slight liberal bias, but the bias was not statistically significant. The author also addressed the type of bias that may occur due to programming and time constraints. While no significance was found for this type of bias, later researchers delved into the question of possible channel-structural bias.

Three years later, another researcher looked again at the question of media bias, including structural bias. In his research, Hofstetter (1976) found that the bias the media exhibited was not political, but rather situational or structural. In his study of the 1972 presidential campaign, he defined bias in three ways: situational, structural, and political. The type of bias that is problematic for media is political bias. Political bias comes from the reporter (e.g., positive or negative, pro or con). Therefore, the reporter or editor interjects bias. Consequently, political bias also is the most controllable on the part of the media, whereas situational and structural are not. Situational bias is the result of the environment surrounding a news event. For example, while one presidential candidate is out shaking hands, the other pursues a "rose garden" strategy. If the media show one candidate in more people-oriented interactions, it may be because he or she really was in more such situations. In this way, bias occurs because of the candidate's position or because of the surroundings in which the candidate is filmed as orchestrated by the candidate or

campaign manager. Structural bias comes from the characteristics of the media themselves. Television relies on video to tell the story and demands that candidates fit comments into short spaces of time (e.g., sound bites). Hofstetter's main criterion in determining political bias was to observe differences in coverage across networks. Admittedly, the author writes that the "Achilles heel" of the argument is that the networks could be all similarly biased. Despite this weakness, Hofstetter makes two conclusions. First, most coverage was ambiguous or neutral rather than favorable or unfavorable. Second, although structural and situational biases were present on all three networks, these biases generally reflected sheer quantity of coverage, not evaluative aspects of the coverage. This coverage tended to favor Democrats over Republicans.

Later, Hofstetter and Buss (1978) argue that the study of media bias should include bias as selectivity. That is, they assert that bias is additionally exhibited in what the reporter chooses to report or not report as well as how they choose to represent the story's facts. Their model for bias also includes selectivity as a matter of relevance and not just "a question of balance and impartiality" (p. 521). Hofstetter and Buss reiterate the need to separate structural bias from political bias. Identification of political bias is measured with variation between media, variation within a medium, or variation in reporting.

Finding similar variations in all three makes the strongest case for political bias; although, if any of these are present, bias is assumed. The authors assert that evidence of political bias also may be exhibited by observing how media covered political events.

A later study by Michael Robinson and Margaret Sheehan (1983) showed that Ted Kennedy received more negative press coverage than Jimmy Carter, and that Jimmy Carter received more negative coverage than Ronald Reagan. To add fodder to the mixed trough of findings, a 1980 survey found that four out of five journalists voted for the Democratic presidential candidate (Lichter & Rothman, 1981). This by no means implies intent to spin on the part of the journalists. In fact, empirical studies have found little information concerning the reporter motivation. However, research is beginning to reveal a pattern. Journalists are largely Democrat, and election year reporting is slightly more favorable for Democratic candidates. This seems to be true even when polls show the public favors the Republican candidate.

Clancey and Robinson (1985) found network news favored Mondale and Ferraro. Each received slightly more positive coverage than negative. Coverage of Reagan was negative 10 to 1, and Bush received only negative coverage.

Researchers discovered similar results in 1988 election coverage. Lichter, Amundson, and Noyes (1989) researched

coverage of the primaries. Networks marginally favored Democrats over Republicans—56% good press to 54%. When the researchers delved deeper they found a widening gap between coverage of the two parties. Reporters and anchors spoke favorably of Democrats 64% of the time, while Republicans received only 52% positive evaluations on-air. The researchers concluded, however, differences are still minimal and mostly due to a beloved candidate, Rev. Jesse Jackson. Jackson received 78% positive coverage between January and April of 1988.

Other content analyses have revealed that bias takes different shapes. In a 1992 election study, Sabato (1993) reported journalists had no ideological bias but preferred the politicians they personally admired. He wrote that Bush's main problem was not the press, but rather Bush himself. Sabato's post-election survey discovered that 35% of Americans believed the press had treated Bush unfairly, while only 19% believed Clinton had received ill treatment. Four years earlier the public had seen media coverage differently.

The 1989 TIO/Roper Report found that the majority of the public (54% and 55%, respectively) believed television broadcasters treated both Bush and Dukakis "about right." Only 23% of the public believed the medium treated Dukakis unfairly, and 13% of people thought Bush was treated unfairly. Treatment of the candidates includes not only

fairness in tone, but amount of time reporters allowed them to speak.

According to the Center for Media and Public Affairs (cited in Budiansky, 1996), the amount of time given to the candidate to speak is shrinking. The Center reports that the average candidate sound bite on the major networks is seven seconds—down from eight in 1992, nine in 1988, and a laborious 42 seconds in 1968. CMPA director Robert Lichter also accuses the media of overreacting to the perceived manipulation of political imagemakers (Budiansky, 1996). Instead of allowing candidates to speak for themselves, reporters elevated themselves to the position of arbiter. "Commentary and editorializing became 'truth telling.' Consider the arrogance in something you call a 'reality check.' When politicians say something, it's a lie; when journalists say something, it's 'reality,'" Lichter said.

More over, studies are revealing bias in other ways. Lowry and Shidler (1995) report that in the 1992 campaign sound bites stopped shrinking (unlike what CMPA research suggests). They also found in their research of sound bites that no significant bias was present in selection of candidate statements. However, sound bites made by others favored liberal over conservative viewpoints.

For this study, political bias is defined as a distortion of the facts of a story favoring or disfavoring a particular viewpoint. That is, the inclusion or exclusion

of verbal or visual material such that the story favors or disfavors a political perspective or candidate beyond the facts of the story. In the political arena, reporters may expose positive and negative information. Simply because a reporter airs a story saying that Clinton may have accepted contributions of Indonesian business owners, does not mean the story is biased. If, however, the story includes a smiling picture of Clinton superimposed over a picture of \$100 bills, the story would be interjecting bias. Verbally, the story would be considered biased if the reporter referred to the president as "conniving," or the like. Also, if the reporter decided to exclude a statement of defense issued by the White House, the story would be biased because available, relevant, and official information was left out.

The need for future bias research is similar to what Hofstetter and Buss (1978) proposed. There is a current need to use triangulation to analyze bias. Currently, the predominant form of analysis is content analysis. They also propose studying bias in three dimensions: over time, amount of coverage, and representativeness of coverage.

The authors fail to mention in their study (for reasons unknown) a multi-method, cross-media study Evarts and Stempel (1974) conducted on the 1972 campaign. Evarts and Stempel analyzed television, newsmagazine, and newspaper coverage. The study, through content analysis and symbol

analysis, found that newsmagazines favored Republicans slightly. Newspaper editorial endorsements did not significantly relate to newspaper coverage. In totem, they found no support for significant media bias. Others have researched the visual images of newsmagazines for bias (Moriarty & Garramone, 1986; Moriarty & Popovich, 1988) and found little support for the allegations of bias as well.

Current research, while appearing thorough, fails to account for the story's visual aspect, even though the research is most commonly of television coverage—a visual medium. Media bias researchers have concentrated on news report content, not on the camera's inclusion in the newsgathering process (Buss & Hofstetter, 1976; Clancey & Robinson, 1985; Cohen & Soloman, 1995; Efron, 1971; Evarts & Stempel, 1974; Hofstetter, 1976; Lefever, 1975; Lichter, Amundson, & Noyes, 1989; Lichter & Noyes, 1997; Paletz & Guthrie, 1987; Robinson & Sheehan, 1983). Hence, the research lends more credence to what the correspondent says, rather than in what the story shows. However, television is a visual medium. It conveys the message through the content, as well as through the camera's eye to the viewer at home. Therefore, it is important to include the visual aspect in any television study. In fact, Hofstetter's argument for structural bias is partially based on the differing structures of the media. Whereas, newspapers

inherently focus on verbal aspects of any story, television innately relays the visual.

Kepplinger (1982), in his study of German election coverage said: "... one can assume that the visual content reflects underlying individual views of a person or an event held by those who produce the television news films." He found that visual bias was more pronounced than verbal content bias in public reaction coverage. The camera shots, as analyzed by camera operators, were much more flattering to one candidate than the other. The researcher concluded that the visual coverage revealed how the journalist actually sees the candidate.

The relationship of camera operator to reporter is important to note. It may be possible that the camera operator interjects bias as well as the reporter. However, the reporter is ultimately responsible for the story that airs and often directs the camera operator on what shots to take or not take. As a leader is responsible for the team accomplishments, so is a reporter responsible for the content of a story in totum. Future research should investigate the level of influence of the camera operators and possibly the relationship of the operator to the reporter.

Verbal content remains the main thrust of research regarding media bias since the inception of the research area. For example, the CMPA research noted the repeated use

of the words "presidential" and "gentleman" when the media referred to Clinton. They reported the consistent use of "mean" and "petty" when referring to Dole (Lichter & Noyes, 1997). MacLuhan (1964) identified the inherent problem with such an approach in his description of different dimensions of media. For newspaper, the message is sent through the written verbal channel. The words used transmit the message with some nonverbal communication (e.g., font usage, story placement, etc.). Nonverbal communication accompanies the message to indicate importance of the story, type of story, and so forth. In radio, verbal content again is important with the nonverbal communication being predominantly paralanguage. The most commonly researched political medium of recent studies is television. In television, the message is transmitted both verbally and nonverbally, with an emphasis on visual images.

Nonverbal and Visual Content of Television

The television medium does more than merely transmit pictures and sounds. It selects and transforms visual and auditory information for the viewer.
Tiemens (1978, p. 363)

Kaid and Davidson (1986) identified three major elements in assessing political commercials: a) verbal content; b) nonverbal content; and c) video production techniques. Their goal was to assess the use of these factors within commercials in relaying issue or image information to the voting public. The same could be argued

for television news stories. While the candidate controls the factors in a commercial, producing the best image, the reporter or editor and candidate share control of these factors in a news story.

CMPA researchers continue to study verbal content of broadcast news stories. Unfortunately, their research misses a critical part of the communication—visual images. For instance, the candidate controls what he or she will wear, or what events he or she will attend, or whether or not he or she will have close contact with the audience pictured. The reporter (or producer) decides what footage he or she will use in telling the story. The reporter may not use the footage of the candidate shaking hands, but rather use the footage of the candidate speaking. Therefore, the viewing audience sees the candidate speaking to an audience, but not interacting with the audience. As a result, the candidate's image is more distant than what is reality. The journalist then biases the coverage through selective editing. So CMPA research captures what is said, but misses what viewers see. They are beginning to make a few attempts at analyzing visual representations.

Hellweg and Phillips (1981), while analyzing debates, also researched the verbal and visual content to assess fully communication effectiveness through a medium. They argue that the visual content must be included when analyzing television coverage. However, the confines of a

debate limited their study, which for television production purposes commonly entails candidates on a stage. This is unlike a campaign trail, where the scene changes moment by moment. A news story study could not feasibly be limited to Hellweg and Phillips' content analysis criterion. They used, as their unit of analysis, each camera shot in examining camera movement, vertical screen placement, framing, image size, horizontal screen placement, vertical alignment, and vector orientation. Over the course of a campaign, news stories from the three networks involve thousands of camera shots. However, this might prove interesting for another study.

Hellweg and Phillips (1986) provide a firm foundation for the assessment of television coverage. Their assessment also included the nonverbal communication, as shown through the camera lens. They accounted for candidate gestures, postures, and eye contact. Other studies also validate the impact of nonverbal communication on the viewing and voting public (Adams, 1983; 1984; Kaid, Chanslor, Roper, & Tedesco, 1993; McKinnon, Tedesco, & Kaid, 1993; Schwartz, 1973; Tiemens, Hellweg, Kipper, & Phillips, 1985).

Likewise, Tiemens (1978) found that Gerald Ford enhanced visual bias in televised debates by maintaining less eye contact with the camera and by grimmer facial expressions than Jimmy Carter. Taking Tiemens content analysis of camera shots during debate broadcasts, the

researcher found that camera angle, composition, and screen placement favored Carter. The author reasoned that while his study identifies the favorable aspects of visual coverage, it is unable to identify the impact on viewers, if any. Other studies have examined viewer impact.

According to Garramone's (1983) study of political advertisements, the viewing public remembers visual images more often than audio information. She also concluded that the presence of nonverbal messages obstructs audio message recall. The visual images sent through television are a powerful part of the message. This study represents an initial effort to combine the visual, verbal, and nonverbal elements of a news story in assessing media bias. Subsequent research should focus on fully integrating these factors.

Critics of including visual images in current mass media research say that these images have different meanings for each individual. Graber (1984) argues that practical, effective ways exist to code such information. Her arguments center on what she terms "gestalt coding." This procedure entails: (a) inclusion of the anchor's comments before or after the story; (b) the newscast context; (c) the reporter's verbal and nonverbal editorializing; (d) the audiovisual message (including words, pictures, and nonverbal sounds); (e) and the interactive effects of stories within the same newscast. Graber submits that it is

impossible to completely assess a message without context. Some might think it remarkable that Graber (and this study) even giving the coders subjective license, were able to retain high reliabilities. Graber found that in assessing candidate traits both words and pictures favored Democrats.

Graber's work also leads to discussion of another gap in current research. Much of the research is quantitative, but as several authors admit, includes insufficient qualitative information from media consumers. Coders do well in assessing bias in media. Reliabilities for many of the studies mentioned above are 80% or better. What is lacking is how the viewer perceives bias. This study will not tackle the full magnitude of this gap, but rather will make definitive inroads for future study.

Research Questions

With this research in mind, the following questions persist in understanding media bias in political coverage:

RQ1: Did network news coverage of the presidential campaign favor Bill Clinton over Bob Dole in terms of the amount of coverage given?

RQ2: Did the network news coverage of the presidential campaign provide more positive coverage of Clinton than of Dole?

RQ3: Were differences in amount of positive/negative coverage present over the course of the campaign, from early to late?

RQ4: Are differences in positive/negative coverage identifiable among major network correspondents?

RQ5: Are the differences, if any, more apparent in certain kinds of stories than in others (i.e., hard vs. soft news, feature stories or campaign reports vs. other story types, etc.)?

RQ6: If differences exist, are they attributable to Hofstetter's definitions of structural/situational bias, rather than political bias? (i.e., when bias was detected did all three networks report in a similar way, rather than differing in their bias.) As mentioned before, Hofstetter (1976) asserted that bias may be structural/situational rather than political. According to Hofstetter, structural bias occurs when television maintains an audience by using dramatic stories or short presentations of fact. Time and dramatic footage (i.e., Dole's fall from a campaign podium) are then structures of the medium.

RQ7: Are these differences, if any, more apparent in verbal or visual elements of news?

RQ7a: Can patterns in word choice or usage be attributed to these differences, if any?

RQ7b: Can patterns of photography, graphics or video choice be attributed to these differences, if any?

RQ7c: Can patterns of nonverbal communication be attributed to these differences, if any?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

To answer these questions, this researcher conducted a content analysis of television evening news reports from three national networks (ABC, CBS, and NBC) during the 1996 presidential election. This study examined all presidential election stories from Labor Day (2 September) to Election Day (5 November) 1996. These dates are traditionally viewed as the general election period for political campaigns. During this time, networks ran 483 stories and devoted 13 hours 8 minutes of airtime on the evenings news. Across the three networks, ABC aired 169 campaign stories for 4 hours and 26 minutes of airtime. CBS offered 159 stories at 4 hours, 28 minutes. NBC broadcast 155 stories at 4 hours, 14 minutes of airtime (Lichter & Noyes, 1997). This research used only a portion of the stories that CMPA identified and analyzed.

The definition adopted in this study differed slightly from CMPA's definition. Stories for this research were only included if they mentioned at least one presidential candidate or running mate. This approach yielded a more narrowly defined news story for analysis. Campaign coverage involved the race for presidency, as well as political party coverage, unnecessary to this current analysis. This focus ousted stories of political party coverage when candidates were not mentioned. Also, the story parameters differed

from the CMPA work. Rather than separating commentary commonly attached to the front and back of campaign stories by anchors, coders here included this information as part of the story. Coders only separated the commentary from the preceding or foregoing story if the anchor's focus changed. This inclusion maintained more context of the story as the public viewed it. Finally, this research concentrated on evening news, which 80% of those surveyed said they watch an average of 4 days a week (Lichter & Noyes, 1997). Morning news coverage was not included. Refinement of the stories yielded 333 news stories. Coverage was nearly even among the three networks: ABC aired 128 presidential election stories; NBC broadcast 102 stories; and CBS had 103.

In addition, coders viewed the campaign stories as complete segments and were required to distinguish the beginning and ending of stories within campaign news segments. In this way, the coder could better ascertain where the story was originally aired within the segment, before or after the story of an opponent. Again, the purpose of this process was to allow the coder to code the story within its original "habitat."

The Center for Media and Public Affairs established, through scientific content analysis, that media slightly favored Bill Clinton in the 1996 election, as noted earlier. This research proposes to extend media coverage studies to include an analysis of not only verbal, but also visual

content. Although past media bias research included visual content analysis (Frank, 1973; Graber, 1976; 1984; Patterson & McClure, 1976), contemporary researchers have not utilized visual analysis. Also, recent research has not included nonverbal communication in visual images. In particular, this present study included analysis of the candidate in relation to the audience.

In two phases, this study identified bias in political news coverage, if any, and then subjected biased stories to a second phase for further analysis by focus groups. Because nuances of nonverbal communication within a newscast context are both unique and challenging, focus groups helped to determine the form of the bias. Additionally, groups provided insight into what parts of news people employ in assessing bias. The focus groups helped answer research question 7 and its subsections.

The total number of highly favorable or highly unfavorable stories coded in either visual or overall categories were 88. Initially, the study was designed to submit all the highly biased stories to focus group analysis. However, because the number of biased stories was larger than anticipated, a sample was randomly selected for use in this study's second phase. Four focus groups consisting of four to six members viewed randomly assigned stories from the sample of biased stories. Focus group members were recruited through various academic, civic, and

professional organizations. One group came from a class held at Oklahoma Christian University, in their evening degree completion program. One group was gathered from workers in a building in downtown Oklahoma City. One group was recruited from workers and associates employed at a group home for children in Southern California. One group was drafted from a miscellaneous collection of acquaintances, unfamiliar with the research and relatively unfamiliar with the researcher. Facilitators ensured groups were politically diversified, but placed few direct limitations on groups. The groups were either video or audiotaped; complete transcripts are available from the author of the study.

The unit of analysis for this research was the broadcast news story from the introduction by the news anchor to the exit of the story given by the anchor or in other cases, from the change of reporters within a news segment. This research utilized broadcast network evening news reports from the 1996 campaign from ABC, CBS, and NBC. For all stories, coders recorded the date the story aired, story's length, network that broadcast the story, and the story's anchor and reporter. Coders reviewed each story as many times as needed to analyze the content appropriately.

The news stories were coded for content in the following categories: type of story (routine campaign report, candidate feature, or issue feature); and placement

of story (before or after the opponent's story, or alone), if discernable. The story type category was patterned after CMPA research. Story placement was included because the context of the nightly campaign news segment may increase or decrease the impact of bias. For example, a negative story on Clinton followed by a negative story on Dole may ultimately lessen bias for both. At least it shows that the network is evenly negative to the candidates. Graber (1984) also argues for the inclusion of such information in bias research.

Also coded were the types of experts cited, if any (independent political consultant, campaigns' media or political consultant, campaign or party official, candidate or running mate, other journalist or academic resource). The inclusion of experts increase the concentration on the "horserace" (Patterson, 1980). Concentration on the horserace may have impacted Dole negatively, who was behind in the polls throughout the election. Therefore, such information would impact the impression of his campaign.

Another defining factor of this study is identification of individual reporters and anchors for each story. While the numbers of reporters during an election campaign is somewhat large and disperse, there are key reporters or "Boys on the Bus" who have a significant enough N-size to analyze. A future study should analyze individual journalists by making the unit of analysis smaller. This

division enables researchers to code anchors and reporters separately and thus compare them.

Another feature of this research is the analysis of visual and verbal content. Coders analyzed the story for the following information: the candidate's name; the dominant issue covered; and the visual tone of the story for each candidate, if mentioned (favorable, neutral or unfavorable on a 5-point scale). The final question requested coders to provide the perceived dominant tone of the story (favorable, neutral or unfavorable on a 5-point scale).

Coders ranked the level of bias for each candidate separately for each story based on the candidate's inclusion in the story. If a candidate was not mentioned, he was not coded. The assessment used a Likert-type scale to determine level of bias, from highly unfavorable to highly favorable, as did Frank (1973). Frank utilized a 7-point scale, this study preferred a 5-point scale. The more common approach is to have three categories: positive, neutral or fair or normative, and negative. However, this limits the amount of information attained from a more detailed bias assessment.

Because "positive" and "negative" are words common when discussing candidates, less common terms were chosen. The researcher felt that the terms "favorable" and "unfavorable" would be less common to the coders and, therefore, they

could better assess whether the reporter was going beyond the facts of the story when reporting.

Coders assumed that a report might be simultaneously unfavorable to one candidate without being favorable to the other. In other words, simply because Candidate A may benefit politically from a negative report of Candidate B, it does not mean that the report is favorable to Candidate A. Therefore, coders ranked stories based upon their favorability level for each candidate separately.

Further, the coders were instructed to consider the level of bias "beyond the facts of the story." A story about money from foreign contributors to a particular campaign is negative, but may be factual. A reporter's inclusion of terminology referring to Clinton's character may be biased within the context of the story. Coders were to ask themselves: "Is the story going beyond the facts?" If the answer was "yes," then they were to ask: "How which way (favorable or unfavorable) and how far?" The researcher called the coders several days into the coding process to remind them of the criteria for assessing bias.

A defining goal of this study is the identification of visual images in each story. The following categories explored visual and nonverbal content: type of visual (over-the-shoulder graphic, still photograph, slide graphic, and taped footage); and candidate in spatial relation to other people (candidate is shown alone, touching distance to

audience, speaking distance, public distance, further, or unable to determine). Patterson and McClure (1976) used similar spatial categories in their research. Additionally, because the reporter is an extension of the viewer through the camera, coders assessed the dominant candidate in relation to the reporter (reporter is not shown with candidate; reporter is within touching distance of the candidate; speaking distance; news conference; and other or unable to determine). Tactile and spatial forms of nonverbal communication are indicators of relationship (Birdwhistell, 1970; Burgoon, 1983; Hall, 1966).

Due to the conjecture involved in other forms of nonverbal communication, spatial and tactical relationship were the only nonverbal forms coders determined. Focus groups were able to identify other forms of nonverbal communication in their discussions.

Four trained coders of various political leanings explored the data set. Intercoder reliability averaged $+0.89$.³ Coders were screened for their political affiliation and strength of that affiliation. Strong political beliefs, this researcher feared, would limit the coders' objectivity. As media watchdog sources (the most predominant of which have either liberal or conservative ties) exist, this researcher's hope was that this study not become another biased report on bias. Coders for this project reported the following demographics and political affiliations: one

minority registered Democrat, moderately active in politics; one inactive (nonvoting) registered Democrat; two registered Republicans, both voted in the last election, but had little interest in political matters. Also, the three coders who voted said they were ticketsplitters. Coders included one undergraduate, two graduate students, and one professional with her bachelor's degree. The professional is a member of the media, which was initially a cause for concern, but intercoder reliability indicated a high level of agreement with the other coders.

As Perot only received a single digit percent of the vote, the Reform Party was not included in this study. However, because of his presence in the election, the coding sheet and book included his coverage as an alternative. Another study might include possible bias against third party candidates.

The second phase subjected stories coded as biased to a more qualitative study. In doing so, this research focuses on the elements that make a story biased through verbal and visual content. Focus groups obtained through civic and community groups consisted of four to six members (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1988). The Institutional Review Board examined the process for this study and found it exempt from further review (see letter dated January 12, 1998, attached as Appendix C).

Each group viewed eight or nine stories. With viewing and discussion time, focus groups met for an average of one hour each. After a group viewed each story, they were asked to assess whether or not the coverage was favorable or unfavorable to either of the candidates. Test groups were asked two additional questions, including those defining visual and nonverbal aspects of this study. However, the groups became fatigued and participants began to drop out after the first hour. One group required two hours to finish the study. However, when groups were asked, "Do you perceive the coverage as either favorable or unfavorable to either Clinton or Dole?" they identified visual and nonverbal elements of the coverage without the need for additional questions⁴. This result also demonstrated the need for inclusion of visual and nonverbal elements in future studies; as viewers include those elements when assessing media bias themselves. Groups were allowed to review stories twice, so that they could pick out some finer points, but would not be burdened with excessive detail so as to become exhausted and ineffective.

Prior to the discussion of each story, group members were required to determine their impression of the level of favorable or unfavorable coverage for each candidate on a 1-5 scale, as the coders did in the first phase. Once each member determined the level of bias, if any, they were allowed to discuss it. This is a quasi-Nominal Group

Technique (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1988). The intent of ranking stories was to start discussion and avoid group think.

The groups were instrumental in discovering the dynamic of verbal and visual content. They identified specific behaviors exhibited consistently in the reporting of biased stories. Group members described favorable and unfavorable aspects of the coverage. This resulted in three advantages for the study. First, the group was better able to identify more visual and nonverbal content than could one person. Second, by using the experiences of its members, the group could identify nuances that a coder might feel inadequate or unwilling to identify. Third, a group offered an open discussion of media bias by viewers. Triangulation is a growing part of research. It added a qualitative edge to quantitative information gained in the first phase. It also provided some initial answers to the question of impact on voters.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Analysis in phase one revealed similar results to those CMPA found, but, because of differences in the unit of analysis and story definition, results also yielded some unanticipated results. This section first explores content analysis findings and then presents focus group findings.

Phase I: Coders' Judgment of Bias

Networks provided new insight into 1996's coverage of campaigns. Each network offered their version of campaign finance coverage. CBS's "Follow the Dollar," ABC's "Money Watch," and NBC's "Money Trail," all of which continued past the '96 coverage, concentrated on the campaign finance issue. Networks also provided feature coverage of the Charles Kuralt genre with "Across America" by Mike Boetcher with NBC. During these segments, Boetcher, traveling across America in a RV, told tales of average voters, people of small town America, and broadcast their views of the campaign.

In a move to quell criticism that campaign coverage is not issue-oriented or possibly to provide equal access, CBS, in a bold move, allowed Clinton and Dole two and one half minutes each to speak on four subjects. Over four nights, viewers could tune to CBS and listen to the two candidates address issues that voters chose through a CBS poll—education, taxes, social security, and health care. This

action dedicated roughly 20% of CBS's nightly news to issue concentration by the candidates. A future study should investigate whether or not the candidates, when given this extraordinary opportunity, really addressed the evening's issue or merely engaged in political posturing. To add balance, CBS also staggered the presentation over the nights, so that neither candidate had positional advantage over the other during the series.

The present study's purpose was to analyze possible bias in evening network news. This chapter reveals the findings of both phases of the research. Each research question is addressed here coupled with the supporting empirical data and analyses. Focus group data are discussed in the chapter's latter half.

Amount of Coverage

The first question asked whether the coverage favored Clinton in terms of amount of coverage. The research answered the question in several ways: number of stories, length of the stories, and sole focus (i.e., one candidate is discussed without mention of the other). An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests.

Clinton was the focus of 106 stories and Dole was the dominant candidate covered in 112 stories. Running mates are in essence an extension of the candidate. Al Gore and Jack Kemp were the focus of few stories. Eight stories centered on the running mates: Gore was the dominant

character of two stories, while six stories concentrated Kemp. Candidates were evenly covered in 54 stories, such that no candidate dominated.

While it is important to know how many minutes each candidate received in total, the length of each exposure is equally important. Often bias researchers have discussed coverage in collective minutes. However, viewers do not watch in collective minutes, rather they are exposed in spurts of time. In other words, was coverage more favorable to one candidate or the other in the length of each story. In broadcast, importance is measured in amount of time given per story and placement of the story. The closer to the newscast's beginning and the longer the story, the more important that story. Therefore, the average length of stories for each candidate would indicate the level of importance given it by the news agency, as well as overall time dedicated throughout the election process.

The largest percentage of stories in which Clinton was the focus lasted between one and two minutes (40%). The largest percentage of Dole's stories was likewise one to two minutes in length (43%). The picture changes when considering the number of stories focusing on Clinton without notable mention of Dole, or number of Dole stories without mention of Clinton. In how much of the coverage did each candidate have the "stage" to himself?

Coverage that was election-oriented predominantly mentioned both Clinton and Dole. Dole was the sole figure of 20 stories (17.9% of Dole's stories). Clinton was the sole figure in 40.6% of his stories (see Table 1). In more than 78% of Dole's stories, Clinton was mentioned as well. In stories where Clinton was the dominant candidate, Dole was included in the coverage 58% of the time. In 54 of the stories, candidates were evenly covered so that no one candidate dominated. Political parties were noticeably mentioned in 178 of the 333 stories studied.

In the short period of time that a broadcast journalist has to tell the news, facts may be left out or shortened and, therefore, people may perceive bias. To investigate whether length impacted determination of bias, this study examined the relationship of story length and bias (other structural factors are discussed later in this section). For Dole, visually neutral stories were 1-2 minutes in length. Of those stories, 84.4% were neutral. Half of the stories that ran three or more minutes were neutral. Of the longer stories (more than 3 minutes), 40% were visually negative. Eight of the 17 visually positive stories were between 2-3 minutes (47%). However, overall analysis of variance for favorability of Dole coverage resulted in no significance for length of the story. In addition, this information may also be limited in interpretation because of uneven n-sizes.

For Clinton, neutral stories were shorter (see Table 2). Stories airing less than a minute in length were visually neutral 82% of the time. One- to two-minute stories were neutral 73.5% of the time; 2-3 minutes 76.5% of the time. Stories longer than three minutes were neutral visually 69.6% of the time. Of the favorable stories, 56% were between 1-2 minutes in length. Fifty-six percent of the slightly unfavorable and 50% of the highly unfavorable were in the 2-3 minute timeframe. No significance was found between overall tone of Clinton coverage and story length using an analysis of variance.

Neutral stories in the overall content of Dole stories were spread evenly in less than 1, 1-2, and 2-3 minutes in length. However, only 8.3 percent of the neutral stories were in the more than 3-minute timeframe. Of stories running longer than three minutes, 59.2% were negative (37% were highly unfavorable alone). This is partly due to the fewer number of long stories. The largest percentage of unfavorable Dole stories (37.5%) was 1-2 minutes in length. The largest number of slightly unfavorable stories was evenly split between the 1-2 and 2-3 minute timeframe, 39.2% each. Four of the five highly favorable stories ran under two minutes, but 41.7% of the slightly favorable stories were 2-3 minutes in length. An analysis of variance revealed the difference in length was not significant in Dole stories, $F(6, 244) = 2.05$, $p = .06$. Differences in

story length were not significant between mean scores of overall tone of Clinton's stories either, $F(6, 252) = 1.22$, $p \geq .29$. Length of the individual story does not seem to have a significant impact on the story's overall tone in the 1996 campaign.

In answering research question number one, the data showed that amount of coverage favored Clinton only slightly. Sheer numbers of stories did not favor one candidate over the other. Length of stories did not tend to favor Clinton, but stories more than 3 minutes long were unfavorable to Dole. Any interpretation of data regarding length should use caution as the n-sizes were uneven. Clinton received much more coverage where he was covered without noticeable mention of his opponents.

Positive Coverage of Clinton More Than Dole

The second research question asked whether campaign coverage was more positive for Clinton than for Dole. Coders identified the level of bias with regard to visual content only, then identified the overall level of bias. Coders left blank level of bias for any candidate who was not shown in the story. Also, if the story did not noticeably identify the candidate, overall tone of the story was left blank for that candidate (see Appendix B for the coding sheet).

In terms of the number of stories, Clinton's stories were visually neutral nearly 76.1% of the time (see Table

3). Favorable stories occurred 16.8% of the time. That is, 10 stories were highly favorable (4.8%) and 25 were favorable (12%). Visually, 15 stories (7.2%) were unfavorable or highly unfavorable. For Dole, stories were mostly neutral. Forty-nine percent were coded as "neutral." Two stories were highly favorable, and 15 were favorable. A total of 30 (14%) stories were labeled unfavorable. Highly unfavorable stories were 3.8% of the total Dole coverage, and unfavorable stories were 10.5%. In terms of visual representation, more than three-fourths of the stories were neutral to either candidate. Clinton fared only slightly better than Dole when examining only biased stories.

Table 4 provides frequencies for overall tone of Clinton and Dole stories. With regard to Clinton, if one combines "favorable" and "highly favorable" categories and "unfavorable" and "highly unfavorable" categories, the biased to neutral stories are split 50/50. Favorable and unfavorable stories are evenly divided. So if the story about Clinton was not neutral, he had an even chance of receiving favorable or unfavorable coverage. Clinton's mean scores showed very slight favorability ($\bar{M} = 2.97$, $SD = 0.98$). See Table 5 for more immediate information on mean scores for the study.

On the contrary, Dole's stories were largely negative. The number of negative stories involving Dole outweighed neutral stories by 11. Neutral stories numbered 108. Total

unfavorable stories numbered 119 (40 highly unfavorable, 79 unfavorable). Negative stories represented 46.8% of the total Dole stories. Of 244 stories involving Dole, 17 of them were positive. Of those, seven stories were highly favorable. Dole's mean scores also reveal a negative slant ($\bar{M} = 3.56$, $SD = 0.89$, see also Table 5). While it appears that the stories for Clinton were neither favorable nor unfavorable particularly, Dole's stories were mostly unfavorable. Coverage for Dole was least often favorable. In fact, as Tables 3 and 4 show, visually unfavorable and overall unfavorable stories for Dole occurred twice as often as for Clinton.

These stories were not necessarily viewed alone, however, which would possibly change the reception of the message. Stories are not viewed in a vacuum, rather they are seen in concert with other stories of the day. In an effort to balance coverage, newscasts may couple election stories together. For instance, on a preview of debate strategies, CBS's Phil Jones ended his story by talking about Dole's possible attacks on Clinton's character saying "the last thing (Dole) needs is a gasp, boo, or hiss from a questioner who thinks he's being too mean." Dan Rather connected that story with Rita Braver's report by saying that Clinton was "shrugging off questions of how he will handle it if Dole decides to go negative" at the debate that night.

It may enhance the negative effect on Dole if a positive story about Clinton follows. A future media effects study might test this dynamic. For now, this present study shows the following information from the 1996 election.

Because placement is a determiner of importance in a newscast, where stories about each candidate are placed with regard to the opponent is appropriate for this study. It is somewhat confusing to understand the categorization with three variables (placement, tone of Dole stories, and tone of Clinton stories), see Tables 6, 7, and 8 for more explanation.

Of Dole's highly favorable stories, all were placed before a story of Clinton. Nearly half (45%) of the highly unfavorable stories of Dole were placed after stories about Clinton. One-quarter of Dole's highly unfavorable stories were shown prior to a story about Clinton. Favorable or highly favorable Clinton stories were placed before highly unfavorable stories of Dole nine times. Stories deemed neutral to Clinton preceded 38.7% of the slightly unfavorable stories for Dole and 50% of the highly unfavorable stories. Differences in placement of the story by tone of Dole's stories was found statistically significant, $F(3, 244) = 6.45, p > .000$. Three favorable stories to Dole came before stories coded as unfavorable or obviously unfavorable to Clinton.

Forty-one percent of the moderately favorable Dole stories were seen prior to a story of Clinton. Highly unfavorable stories about Clinton were most commonly shown (56%) neither before nor after a story about Dole. Of Clinton's obviously unfavorable stories, one was displayed before a favorable story of Dole. Differences in placement of stories by overall tone of Clinton's stories were not statistically significant, $F(3, 252) = 2.31, p \geq .07$.

The research question was specifically concerned with positive coverage of Clinton over Dole. As such, more stories were positive with regard to Clinton than to Dole. A higher percentage of negative Dole stories aired after stories about Clinton. No known studies have researched impact of story placement. It appears from this research that more investigation into placement impact is necessary. Of course, primacy-recency research would be helpful in application to this context.

Bias Over the Course of the Campaign

Research question number three inquired into the relationship of bias to coverage over the course of the campaign from Labor Day to Election Day. To assess this information, the data were examined by week (see Tables 9 and 10) and by month (see Tables 11 and 12). Over the course of the campaign, the percentage of neutral stories for Clinton was highest at the first week of the campaign (88.9% or 8 of 9 stories). One story in the first week was

coded as slightly unfavorable. In the third week of September and in the third week of October, neutral stories of Clinton accounted for only less than a third of the stories aired. October's low point was less than one-quarter of the stories shown in the second week. However, visual content during these weeks was not necessarily negative, or for that matter, positive. During these weeks, 32.2% of the stories for September and 45.7% for October were positive. Negative stories aired during that same time kept pace with 35.7% for September and 31.5% for October. Just prior to the election, the percentage of negative stories of Clinton increased to more than a third of the stories broadcast, neutral coverage during that week was at 55.3%. For Dole, the tone of the overall coverage was different, as seen in Table 9. Based upon weeks, significance could not be tested because of low n-sizes in many cells. Later, significance is tested for bias coverage across the election months: September, October, and November (see Tables 11 and 12).

Of eight stories in the beginning week of the campaign, five were unfavorable for Dole. One story was slightly favorable, and two were neutral. Week two was not much more positive for Dole. Although neutral stories comprised 42.1% of the stories shown, negative stories were 52% of the coverage. In the week that Clinton had evenly distributed coverage (one third of the coverage as neutral with nearly a

third positive and the other third negative), 50% of the stories covering Dole were negative. He faired no better in the final week of September where he received negative coverage in 62% of the Dole stories aired. Interestly, no favorable Dole stories aired in September.

Coverage in the month of October was much like that of September, except that all but two positive stories would be shown. Those two were aired in the few days of November before Election Day. The first and third weeks of October had negative coverage of Dole 56.7% and 64.7% of the time, respectively. The even weeks of the month found lower negative numbers. The second week's coverage was more than a third negative (38%), and the week prior to the election was an even 40% of the Dole coverage. More than one-quarter of the coverage was negative during the week of the election.

When analyzing bias coverage by months, an analysis of variance found no significance in visual tone for either candidate over the course of the campaign. Table 11 reveals the same is true for overall tone for Clinton stories; no significance was found, $F(2, 252) = .47, p \leq .62$. For Dole stories, overall tone showed no significance, $F(2, 244) = 2.88, p = .057$), also see Table 12. As the frequencies by week show in Table 10, tone at the campaign season's start was more negative for Dole than at the last of the season

(September, $\underline{M}$ = 3.70, $\underline{SD}$ = .83, $\underline{N}$ = 80; October, $\underline{M}$ = 3.55, $\underline{SD}$ = .96, $\underline{N}$ = 130; November, $\underline{M}$ = 3.26, $\underline{SD}$ = .66, $\underline{N}$ = 34).

While analysis by week did not reveal any notable trend over the course of the campaign, analysis by month did provide interesting results. Differences between months for Clinton coverage did not reveal much information, but coverage of Dole did show more favorability as the campaign progressed. Statistical tests did not reveal significant differences.

Coverage by Network Correspondents

The fourth research question queried as to bias among network correspondents. In other words, were there individuals or networks that were more biased than others? This section will first explain the findings concerning networks and then will explain the findings concerning correspondents.

The coverage of Clinton was similar in all three networks. Neutral coverage was highest with NBC, 53.9% of their coverage. CBS was "neutral" 48.1% of the time and ABC was "neutral" 45.4% of the time (see Table 5). The distribution of positive to negative was split evenly between positive and negative for all three networks. ABC was positive 26.8% and negative 27.8% of the time. CBS was positive 24.1% of the time and negative 27.9% of the time. NBC's coverage was only 1% different between positive and negative coverage (26.8% positive, 27.8% negative). Table

13 shows an analysis of variance revealed no significance between the tone of Clinton stories and networks, $F(2, 252) = .21, p > .81$.

ABC stood out when analysis turned to tone of Dole's coverage. As shown in Table 5, ABC was negative more often than the other two networks. Neutral coverage percentages were like Clinton's, only a little less so. Percentages of neutral coverage for Dole were 37.1%, 50%, and 46.8% for ABC, NBC, and CBS respectively. Of their coverage ABC was positive in 3.3% of the stories, NBC was positive in 7.7% of their coverage, and CBS was most positive with 10.4% of their coverage favoring the Senator. Analysis of variance yielded no significance for visual tone of either candidate. Mean scores for overall tone of the coverage for Clinton and Dole were $M = 2.97$ ($SD = .98, N = 252$) and $M = 3.56$ ($SD = .89, N = 244$), respectively. Network coverage tone for Clinton was not found to be significant. Significance was found in the variance between networks' coverage of Dole, $F(2, 244) = 3.27, p = .04$ (see Table 14), however. CBS and NBC's coverage leaned negative; both networks' mean scores for Dole were 3.45 ($SD = .87, N = 78$; $SD = .94, N = 77$, respectively). ABC's coverage leaned more heavily negative with $M = 3.75, (SD = .84, N = 89)$.

Negativity dominated ABC's coverage of the Dole campaign. Of the networks, they had 44.3% of the coverage, while NBC and CBS nearly had an even split of the remainder.

Of the highly unfavorable coverage, ABC aired 45% of it. CBS aired 12 highly unfavorable stories or 30% and NBC had 25% of the very negative stories. In sum, the majority of ABC's coverage was negative, 59.5%. NBC and CBS were negative in their coverage 42.3% and 41.9% respectively. See Tables 4 and 12.

To better understand reasons for the biased coverage, certain aspects of storytelling may be useful. In newsgathering, experts are utilized to help bring a story perspective that a reporter telling the story alone lacks. Correspondents used a variety of experts to help tell the stories of the '96 campaign. The most commonly used authorities were the candidates and running mates themselves, although the most common approach was not to use expert commentary at all. Studies revealed that unattributed statements are more common than attributed statements (Graber, 1984; Patterson, 1980; Popovich, Moriarty, & Pitts, 1993). Studies found this type of coverage to lead to more "horserace coverage." In the context of the '96 election, where one candidate trailed in the polls the entire campaign, horserace coverage might lead to more negative coverage for that candidate. Of 333 stories, no expert commentary was used in 128. The candidate or running mate was allowed to speak for himself in 117 of the stories. Campaign officials were quoted in 55

of the stories. Other sources, such as academicians or other journalists, were used in 45 stories.

In this election, voters seemed to be of particular concern. Entire reoccurring features attempted to explain or tap into the thoughts of the voters. "Across America," Lisa Myers' special features on Soccer Moms and a focus group after watching one of the debates, each tried to reveal the voters feelings.

Another feature of election coverage was the ever-present poll, assessed in more detail later in this chapter. Polls are commonly used to assess the sentiment of the voters, and yet voters were the main topic in only 4.9% of the stories. Also, voters voiced their opinions in only 31 (roughly 11%) of the stories. Independent political consultants commented in 27 stories, and campaign media consultants spoke in 19 stories. CMPA noted that reporters took more time talking than any other source within stories; 73% of airtime was consumed by reporters and anchors more than in years' past (Lichter & Noyes, 1997).⁵

In the three months involved in this study,⁶ more than 75 correspondents helped cover the campaign. The mainstays, that is the anchors, had a hand in 259 campaign stories of the candidates, remembering that these do not include coverage of the parties or state or local campaigns. On CBS, Dan Rather anchored 94 stories, more than the other network anchors. He also was the reporter on 24 stories. CBS's

weekend anchor John Roberts opened for 13 presidential campaign stories. During the weekends, Peter Jennings of ABC anchored 91 stories and in 29 stories he was also the reporter, more reporting than either of the other network anchors. He shared the anchor job during the weekends with Carole Simpson, who opened 20 stories. Other correspondents covered during Jennings absence, but in only 7 stories. Tom Brokaw anchored for 74 presidential campaign stories, and also reported in 24 of those.

Reporters are the backbone of any newscast. They provide the current, close-up coverage of the candidates. For this election, as with most elections, reporters from each network were assigned to each of the candidates. Other reporters provided support, but campaign reporters were responsible for giving updates on the candidates almost on a daily basis. For NBC, the campaign reporters were David Bloom and Jim Miklaszewski. ABC had Jim Wooten covering Dole and Brit Hume covering the White House, although actual campaign coverage for the White House at ABC was moved more than the other networks. CBS's Phil Jones (the Dole camp) and Rita Braver (the Clinton camp) offered coverage in the standard media entourage fashion.

These reporters, along with the anchors, were more closely studied simply because they had filed enough stories to study. Other reporters were combined to provide

collective insight, but little could be assumed about a miscellaneous group of extraneous reporters.

With regard to the coverage of Clinton, 7 of the 12 stories aired by Brit Hume were favorable or obviously favorable to the president. Nine of 14 of Jim Wooten's reports were unfavorable or highly unfavorable to Clinton. Rita Braver's coverage was closely divided between favorable (38%), neutral (29%), and unfavorable (33%). The anchors turned reporters had the majority of their reports categorized as neutral (64% for Jennings; 57% for Brokaw; 71% for Rather). Similarly, the majority of the reports anchors executed concerning Dole were neutral (75% for Jennings; 73% for Brokaw; and 53% for Rather). Reporters told a different story for Dole. Of nine reports that Brit Hume filed mentioning Dole, four were unfavorable or highly unfavorable. Wooten, assigned to cover Dole's camp by ABC, reported 20 stories mentioning Dole, 17 of which were unfavorable or highly unfavorable. One Wooten story was coded as neutral and two stories were considered slightly favorable. Significance tests on this data were not possible due to small n-sizes.

For Phil Jones, also assigned to the Dole camp, coverage was more spread out, although it still leaned toward unfavorable. Of the 25 stories submitted, 10 were coded as unfavorable or highly unfavorable. Eleven were neutral and four were slightly to obviously favorable. The

third news correspondent assigned to the Dole camp was David Bloom (albeit for only the latter part of the campaign). Sixty percent of the stories he submitted mentioning Dole were slightly or highly unfavorable (12 out of 20). Two of the 20 were favorable in some respect.

Research question number four asked if differences in coverage existed between network correspondents. Coverage of Clinton was neutral, with no statistically significant differences found between networks or network correspondents. Coverage of Dole was negative. ABC was significantly more negative than the other two networks.

Differences in Kinds of Stories

The fifth question asked whether certain kinds of stories lend themselves to more bias than others. This study utilized four main categories: hard and soft stories, purpose of stories, types of issues, inclusion of polls. Story purposes were mostly routine campaign stories. More than two-thirds (70%) of the stories contained standard election updates. Of the routine campaign stories 62 included a mention of polls, which represents 26.7% of the total routine stories. Issues were the basis of 63 stories and features, like those mentioned before, and were the main part of 33 stories. One of the strongest criticisms against media campaign coverage has been their concentration on the horserace. In this campaign, however, coverage focused on campaign strategy with 90 stories, rather than

the horserace with 77 stories. Fifty-three stories targeted candidate behavior for coverage. Other foci included policy in 44 stories and voters in 15 stories. The information gained in this category should be taken lightly. While CMPA has apparently been able to get good intercoder reliabilities using these divisions, this study's intercoder reliability on this category was .50 (see Appendix A).

Issues used in this study were taken from those used by the CMPA (Lichter & Noyes, 1997). No identifiable issues were discussed in 20% of the stories. Of those that did discuss issues, 61 talked about the tone of the campaign (23% of the stories mentioning issues). The second major issue of the campaign coverage was campaign finance with 31 stories. Of the issue stories, 38.3% reflected negatively on Clinton. For Dole, issue stories also reflected negatively 38.9% of the time. The issue proving most negative for Dole was "Tone of the Campaign." Of those stories, 53.5% were unfavorable or obviously unfavorable for Dole.

Routine campaign stories were harsher to Dole than Clinton. Routine stories were slightly unfavorable 32.7% of the time and highly unfavorable 17.5%. Particularly interesting were strategy stories that were highly unfavorable 18.8% and unfavorable 34.8% of the time. Out of 11 stories about voters, nine of them were either highly unfavorable or unfavorable toward Dole. Half of the horse

race stories reflected negatively on Dole (30 of 62 stories). Using analysis of variance, no significance was found between topic and visual tone of the stories for either candidate. Neither was the overall tone of Dole's stories found to be significant with the topic covered. The differences between topic and overall tone for Clinton's stories resulted in finding significance at the $p \geq .01$ level, $F(3, 252) = 3.57, p \geq .01$. Issue feature stories were slightly unfavorable with a mean score of 3.23 ($\underline{n} = 60$). In those stories where the coder could not determine the purpose of the story based upon the categories given, the mean score for Clinton stories measured 3.80, but the $\underline{n}$ -size was notably low ($\underline{n} = 5$).

Stories of the candidates during the 1996 presidential campaign were mostly hard news (62%) as opposed to soft news (38%). The hard news category included timely items concerning the campaign. Features or sidebar types of information were considered "soft" news. Generally, these stories lacked the timeliness of hard news. An analysis of variance showed that soft news was significantly different from hard news with regard to Clinton, $F(1, 252) = 6.46, p > .01$, see Table 15. Hard news was neutral. Its mean score was 3.09 ($\underline{SD} = 1.01, \underline{N} = 156$). Soft news leaned slightly positive ($\underline{M} = 2.77, \underline{SD} = .88, \underline{N} = 96$). For Clinton, soft news was generally good news, not so for Dole.

With Dole, the soft news was not good news. Even though soft news accounted for 40.6% of the Dole coverage, 58.6% of it was negative. In hard news, Dole's coverage was unfavorable 42.1% of the time. So when the story involved soft news or features, the coverage was negative. An analysis of variance revealed the mean score for soft news ($\underline{M} = 3.74$, $\underline{SD} = .90$, $\underline{n} = 99$) was significantly more negative than for hard news ($\underline{M} = 3.44$, $\underline{SD} = .87$, $\underline{n} = 99$). Table 16 shows the difference between overall tone of Dole stories and hard or soft news was measured at the $\underline{p} \geq .01$ level, $\underline{F}(2, 210) = 6.60$, $\underline{p} \geq .01$).

The problem with soft news is that it is not as necessary as the hard variety. A newscast must include the hard news, but soft news is often included by choice. Soft stories are often offshoots of the day's news. Soft coverage included explanations of campaign finance and the ways that political parties and candidates work together to get more funds to support the campaign. This coverage also included explanations of the Electoral College and changing over of government land to national parks. It also included reactions of the voters. In some of the coverage, polls helped to spark the reason for feature or issue coverage. For example, poll numbers showing Dole's lack of support among women voters ignited Lisa Myer's feature on "Soccer Moms."

Research question number five inquired as to the differences in coverage between kinds of stories. The content analysis showed that differences between topic and overall tone of coverage for either candidate were not significant. Differences between the purpose of the story (i.e., routine, strategy, issue, etc.) and Dole revealed no significance either. However, differences between purpose by tone of Clinton coverage were significant. Distinctions between hard and soft news yielded the more interesting results. Soft news was significantly more favorable for Clinton and unfavorable for Dole. Hard news was neutral for Clinton and unfavorable for Dole. But, soft news was more unfavorable to Dole than hard news, although neither were favorable.

Addressing Structural Bias

Hofstetter (1976) regarded media bias as largely due to structural factors, as previously explained in this study. The fear of bias is one of political bias. If the bias found here is structural, then technology must change before the bias can diminish. However, if the bias found here is political, then people (i.e., networks, reporters, anchors, etc.) must change before bias can decrease. Research question number six regarded this concern. This study addressed structural bias in the same ways that Hofstetter outlined: by time and across networks. Another criterion for determining political bias is across media, which was

not within the scope of this present research. But, Hofstetter and Buss (1978) wrote that if any one of these criterion is present, then political bias is assumed.

Coverage across the networks is similar, as shown in Table 5, in that they all, on average, covered Dole more negatively than Clinton. However, ABC coverage of Dole was significantly more negative than the other two networks. In addition to the results exhibited earlier concerning bias in networks, further examination is necessary to see if biased coverage was different in how networks displayed the information.

Taped footage was the most common type of visual support used in stories (see Table 17). It was present in 287 of the 333 stories coded. Comparing the tone of the coverage among the networks when taped footage is included in the story yields few differences among networks.

Stories with taped footage were favorable to Clinton 28.4% of the time on ABC, 29.9% with NBC, and 21.1% with CBS. Slide graphics were utilized in 129 stories. Negative stories comprised 28.4% of ABC's stories with slide graphics, 19.4% with NBC, and 31% with ABC. The third most used type of visual supplement to the news stories was over-the-shoulder graphics ($\underline{n}$ = 54). Of those stories that used these graphics, 7.7% of CBS's stories favored Clinton, 20% of NBC's, and 30.8% of ABC's. Although there appears to be some drastic differences here, the $\underline{n}$ -sizes were too small in

all three networks to make any conclusions from this data (CBS's and ABC's $\underline{n} = 13$, NBC's $\underline{n} = 15$). Cell sizes on Dole's coverage using over-the-shoulder graphics were also low (CBS's $\underline{n} = 13$, ABC's $\underline{n} = 11$, NBC's $\underline{n} = 16$). However, despite lack of statistical tests, as with much of the other results, there does appear to be a different picture for Dole.

Of the stories using taped footage, 60.6% of ABC's were unfavorable to Dole (unfavorable, $\underline{n} = 29$, 38%; highly unfavorable, $\underline{n} = 17$, 22%). NBC's stories including taped footage were negative 47.1% of the time, and coders recorded 39.5% of CBS's stories as negative. Positive footage accounted for 3.9% of the ABC stories using taped footage, 8.8% for NBC, and 11.3% for CBS. Slide graphics used in ABC's Dole stories were negative 56.7% of the time. NBC's stories using slide graphics were negative 42.2% of the time, and 12 out of 26 of CBS's stories using slides were negative. Neither CBS nor ABC had slide graphics in the positive stories that they ran. NBC had 2 out of 44 positive stories that used slide graphics.

One of the trademarks of reporters is to be shown on location sometime during the story. Whether on the campaign trail or at the White House or wherever, the message to viewers is "on the spot" coverage. The observations of this study are that the reporters are not necessarily on the campaign trail in standups, but they are most likely

outside. The reporter was not shown in a standup in 55 of the stories. The remainder of the stories had reporters on the campaign (19.8%), outside but unsure of location (10.2%), and at the studio (24%).

Networks covered the stories in the same way. That is, they used similar types of visual support, similar depiction of the reporter on the scene, and similar types of experts. Yet, if what Hofstetter argues is true, then the networks should have been similar in how they were perceived in their bias. So if the bias can be attributed to structural bias, the structure in which they work is their medium and they are all working in the same medium, then they should be similarly biased. This is not the case, though. ABC was significantly more negative toward Dole than the other two networks.

In regard to research question six, the study found that some bias may be attributed to structural bias. That is, the coverage provided by networks was all unfavorable. However, ABC's coverage was significantly more unfavorable than the other two networks. Under Hofstetter's definition, differences between networks must be attributed to political bias.

Visual and Nonverbal Elements

The last question of interest to this study concerned patterns of verbal, nonverbal, and visual elements in

communicating bias. To answer this question, the study employed both content analysis and focus groups.

As a distinct additive to this study, the visual and nonverbal elements of broadcast news are assessed. Besides assessing the existence and, if so, level of visual bias, the coders coded utilization of graphics. They also coded for spatial or tactical relationship of the candidate with regard to the audience, spatial or tactical relationship of the candidate with regard to the reporter, whether or not the reporter was shown and the reporter's apparent location (see Table 18).

The common visual supplement to news stories was taped footage. That is no surprise here. Taped footage gives the story movement and appearance of timeliness. Other graphics such as slides, most commonly used when referring to a poll, do not show people and don't appear to have advancing information. Even if the footage is yet another shot of the candidate shaking hands and kissing babies, it still affords the impression of newness more than still graphics. Eighty-six percent of the stories included taped footage. Other types of graphics included mug shots, still photographs, slide graphics, and over-the-shoulder graphics, like those seen just above the shoulder of the anchor (Table 17).

Using ANOVA, significance was not found in visual nor overall tone for either candidate with regard to use of taped footage. Use of slide graphics did not significantly

change the visual or overall tone for Clinton or overall tone for Dole. When slide graphics were used in Dole stories, the stories were assessed as more negative, although only slightly. Mean scores for visual tone of Dole's stories moved from exactly 3.0 ($\underline{n} = 117$) to 3.2 ($\underline{n} = 93$), $F(1, 210) > 6.15$, $\underline{p} > .014$) when slide graphics were present.

Phil Jones was shown within touching distance of the candidate more than all other reporters—four of the nine times. For the most part though, reporters were seen without the candidate.

Most of the visual coverage was neutral. Table 5 shows the mean scores for coverage of each candidate. As discussed earlier, in the first weeks of the campaign, the percentage of the visual content coded as "neutral" ranges from 62.5% (5 out of 8 stories) to 80% in the last week of September. In the weeks just prior to the election, the visual coverage remains steady, but increases only slightly in the last week of October with 88.9% of the coverage coded as "neutral." The greatest percentage of negative coverage came in the first week of October with 27% of the stories coded as slightly unfavorable. Favorable visual coverage hit a high the next week with 20 percent of the stories coded as slightly favorable.

An important hallmark of this research is its assessment of bias apparent in the presidential campaign

coverage. Coders were asked to view stories while asking themselves these questions: First, when viewing the story, did the reporter/anchor comment "beyond the facts"? That is, did the reporter or anchor comment on visual presentation enhance, detract, or spin the facts? Second, if the story went beyond the facts, was the coverage favorable or unfavorable. Once the coder determined slant of coverage, they then decided whether or not the coverage was obviously one or the other. Coders were asked to be conservative in their judgment if they felt uncertain. Inter-coder agreement for this category was 80.8% (see Appendix A). Table 3 shows that coders found visual content was overwhelmingly neutral. Of those stories viewed as slightly biased or obviously biased, Clinton was favored. Visually Clinton was highly favored in 10 of the stories, as opposed to two for Dole. Clinton was viewed as highly unfavorable in six stories. Eight stories were highly unfavorable for Dole (22 were coded as "unfavorable"). Mean scores reveal that the visual coverage was not very different (for Dole $\bar{M} = 3.09$, $\underline{SD} = .60$, $\underline{N} = 210$; for Clinton $\bar{M} = 2.89$, $\underline{SD} = .68$, $\underline{N} = 209$).

When considering nonverbal, visual and verbal content (referred to as "overall tone"), coders reported 21 highly favorable stories for Clinton and five for Dole. Unfavorable stories were more numerous for Dole ($\underline{n} = 79$ unfavorable stories; $\underline{n} = 40$ obviously unfavorable) than for

Clinton ($\underline{n}$ = 47 unfavorable stories; $\underline{n}$ = 16 obviously unfavorable). Collectively unfavorable stories for Dole ran at about 48.8%, while Clinton received negative press 25% of the time. Simply observing the face value of the mean scores for each candidate is revealing. Clinton's overall average coverage was neutral ($\underline{M}$ = 2.97, $\underline{SD}$ = .98, $\underline{N}$ = 252). Dole's coverage was slightly unfavorable ($\underline{M}$ = 3.56, $\underline{SD}$ = .89, $\underline{N}$ = 244).

Moreover, news stories are not only about a candidate at a time. Candidates are covered in concert as part of the election, not in isolation. During the stories in which Clinton was covered fairly, Dole was covered negatively 31.6% of the time. His coverage was highly unfavorable 10% of the time that Clinton was covered fairly. Of the times that Dole received neutral coverage, Clinton was receiving somewhat negative coverage 13.6% of the time and highly negative coverage 7.4% of the time. Table 19 shows the crosstabulation of the two variables. Empty cells did not allow the use of chi square for significance analysis. Coders were asked not to code for candidates that were not covered in the story.

Content analysis revealed very little information about the use of visual or nonverbal elements in tone of coverage, even in tone of visual coverage. Visual coverage was nearly neutral for both candidates. Stories using slide graphics for Dole were more unfavorable than those without slides.

Candidates' spatial relationship to the audience and candidates' spatial relationship to the reporter yielded no significant differences.

Once the content analysis results were tabulated, those stories coded as highly unfavorable or highly favorable for both candidates were subjected to further analysis. A more than one-third of the stories were randomly selected and randomly assigned to each of four groups. They then viewed the tapes and commented on the coverage.

Phase II: Evaluation of Stories

Focus groups provided an intriguing insight into how viewers perceive, not only bias in the media, but the media themselves. This section is devoted to describing the focus groups and synthesizing the conversations that they had when viewing the tapes. The information that groups provided reinforced some of the information already found in the content analysis portion of the study. One cautionary note: the groups were not a random sample, and none of what they conclude is generalizable nor should be taken as such. Rather, the information that they provide, particularly with regard to patterns of coverage in visual, nonverbal, and verbal content, provides data for ensuing research. They are trailblazing.

Because the group members were guaranteed anonymity, descriptions of the participants are notably and purposefully vague. As exhibited in the discussion of each

group, the groups were mixed politically, ethnically, and in gender. The groups also were from different socioeconomic and educational backgrounds. The only effort to formulate group mixture was with regard to political affiliations. This researcher did not feel it appropriate that any group have all members from one political group for this particular study. Schmitt-Beck (1994) found that individuals identify more readily information opposing their political beliefs. Thereby, if the groups are from one political group, they would identify more information concerning their group. If the groups are mixed, then more information is gained. Probably the most surprising tidbits to come from the discussions was the cordiality of the members to one another when offering opposing political views and the nearly instant camaraderie when asked to critique the television medium. It seemed as if they set aside differences to attack a common "foe."

Members were told that they were part of a media study prior to attending the session and soon after their arrival were informed of the general nature of the study. Groups were unaware that all of the stories they watched were coded as highly biased, either positively and negatively. Therefore, the group members were not predisposed to the idea that the stories were biased when talking about them. Neither were they informed of the patterns in coverage that the study was trying to identify, namely verbal, nonverbal,

and visual. Every group discussed nonverbal, visual, and verbal content of the coverage, however, without being told to look for it. Three different facilitators conducted the groups.

Again, groups watched each story, ranked their response to the story, and then discussed each story. Of the highly favorable and highly unfavorable stories for each candidate, a stratified sample of 40% was randomly selected for viewing by the focus groups. This 40% sample was stratified by candidate and story favorability. Thus, forty percent of each category was taken: highly favorable Dole, highly unfavorable Dole, highly favorable Clinton, highly unfavorable Clinton. Highly favorable and highly unfavorable stories numbered 88. Stories included in this number were those stories coded as any of the following: visual tone, highly favorable or highly unfavorable for either candidate; and overall tone, highly favorable or highly unfavorable for either candidate. The resulting 40% sample consisted of 35 stories. One group watched eight stories. The others watched nine stories. The stories were randomly assigned to each of the four focus groups. Groups viewed 16 highly unfavorable stories for Dole and three highly favorable stories of Dole. For Clinton, groups viewed 7 highly unfavorable and 9 highly favorable. One story was coded as highly unfavorable for both candidates.

Groups were diversified in race, gender, and political affiliations. Group 1 viewed nine stories: four from NBC, three from ABC and two from CBS. None of the stories were by the same reporter. Three of them were highly favorable for Clinton. Two were highly favorable for Dole. Three were highly unfavorable for Clinton, and one was coded as highly unfavorable for Dole.

The group was comprised of three women and one man. Two members were white, one was Native American, and one was African-American. The group was evenly split Republicans to Democrats.

Group 2 watched nine news stories: two each from CBS and NBC and five from ABC News. Jim Wooten reported two of the stories. Lisa Myers reported in two as well. Seven of the reports were coded as highly unfavorable to Dole. One report was highly negative to Clinton and one report was highly positive. The group was made of one Democrat, one independent, three Republicans. Two were women, and three were men.

Group 3 members watched eight stories: one from ABC, two from CBS, and five from NBC. None of the reports had the same reporter. Five of the reports were coded as highly unfavorable to Dole and three were highly favorable to the president. An additional story highly unfavorable to Dole was also supposed to be watched by the group, but a technical problem occurred, and they were unable to view or

comment on it. The group contained two Mexican-Americans and four Caucasians. Two of the group members were women and four were men. Two were registered Democrats, two were Republicans and two were independent.

The last group viewed eight stories. Even though the stories were randomly assigned to the different groups, seven of the eight were from ABC News. Only two of the reports had the same reporter. One of the stories was highly unfavorable to both Clinton and Dole. Two others were highly unfavorable and one was highly favorable to Dole. Two were highly unfavorable and one was highly favorable to Clinton. Group members were more diverse than the other groups. Three members were female, and two were male. Political affiliations included one registered Libertarian, one Democrat, one independent, and two Republicans. Racially the group involved one African-American, one Hispanic, and three Caucasians.

The following information presents focus group responses to stories concerning Clinton and then for Dole. The stories are summarized briefly before group comments on each. The groups are identified in order 1 to 4 for each section, within the group stories are identified in the order in which the group viewed them. Stories are numbered according to their order of appearance for the group. Stories were not necessarily shown in groupings of favorable or unfavorable, Dole or Clinton, or by date when the stories

were originally aired, but were randomly assembled on the tapes.

Highly Favorable Clinton Stories

The sample included nine highly favorable Clinton stories. Group 1 had three favorable stories.

Group 1, Story 1. Brit Hume reported (October 17, 1996, NBC) that Clinton was focusing on his campaign after the debate the night before. In the first report, they noted that the story focused on Clinton and did not include Dole. When asked, "if a story is proceeded or followed a story focusing on Dole would you consider it biased?" a member responded that it would depend upon the clip's tone and content. "If the story was negative, then [OK]....," she said. Others voiced similar opinions, that if the story stood alone in the news cast, then the amount of coverage should be even for both sides.

Story 4. This story by Rita Braver for CBS (September 18, 1996) focused on Bill Clinton and his environmental strategy. He signed a bill at the edge of Grand Canyon, making the Grand Staircase Escalante Mountains a national park. Braver mentions that Clinton may have ulterior motives because he signed it in Arizona, a winnable state, as opposed to Utah, which he is not likely to win. For Clinton, the group identified the use of "ploys," such as the signing ceremony in Arizona instead of Utah, because he had a chance of winning Arizona. Braver began her report noting the

"grandeur of the Grand Escalante Mountains." One of the members immediately following the story referred to the "grandeur of him (Clinton) being out there."

This group identified a close connection between visual and verbal elements when identifying bias. They noted the backdrop for the signing of the environmental package in Arizona, while the reporter was saying that it was a tactic to get Arizona voters. They noted that while the maneuver may have been a smart political move, it wasted their taxpayer dollars to fly him there to sign it. "What was wrong with him signing it in his office?" one member asked.

Story 9. This story was a feature concerning the Electoral College by Bryan Williams (November 2, 1996, NBC). It showed how many electoral votes are needed to win, and how the electoral process is completed to elect the president. The consensus of the group on this story was that it was largely neutral and informative.

Group 2, Story 4. The story, reported by Brit Hume (October 7, 1996, NBC), showed Clinton's comments during the previous night's debates. Also, the report showed prominent business people, normally Republicans, endorsing Clinton. The group recalled the report referring to Clinton as "fair," "generous," and one paraphrased the image as "the people's man." The impression the group had was that the report was neutral for Dole and very favorable for Clinton. In clarifying, they not only noted the words used in

conjunction with Clinton, but also noticed video of cheering crowds at the beginning of the story. They note that it appears from the reporter in the background talking about the debates the night before and the music and crowds that Clinton was victorious in the debates. One member also noted that Peter Jennings introduction to the story was incongruous with the story itself. Jennings had said that the debates had not served as a "springboard" for either camp, yet the story seemed to show something different.

Group 3, Story 6. This was a report from Bryan Williams (September 18, 1996) concerning the Clinton campaign trail. The report began with Clinton in Chicago fundraising, then moves to Arizona. During the signing of the Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, the report showed Robert Redford in the front row of the crowd. The signing infuriated representatives from Utah. The report also talked about it playing well with environmentalists. The group members disagreed on the story's level of bias. They chose extremes. One member believed the report to be negative, because the report used words like "manipulative," and the report referred to the strategy behind the signing as not being about environment, but about politics. Others thought that the report, while positive for Clinton, was not necessarily "highly favorable." Another noted the inclusion of Robert Redford in the report, saying that it was an unnecessary favorable inclusion. The member said he felt

that merely including the picture of Redford smiling and looking approvingly at the president was biased. The report may have briefly referred to Redford, but did not name him.

Story 3. Dan Rather reported a summary of current polls with Clinton having a steady lead and some other statistical data on Clinton. The group questioned the use of polls. They concluded that inclusion of one candidate with regard to statistical information, must include the other candidate. Because the reporter gave a synopsis of Clinton's record, and not Dole's the group felt that that gave Clinton an unfair advantage. One member said, "It's not what you see, it's what you don't see."

Story 4. Anne Compton (October 20, 1996, ABC) reported on Clinton's campaign efforts, which then leads into fundraising for Democrats. Compton said that Clinton was so confident in his race, that he was helping others, hoping for a coattails effect. Because he was so confident, Clinton made no appearances to the public until Ohio. The report included a poll mention, wherein Clinton was holding steadily ahead. The group viewed the report as unfavorable to Clinton because, while showing that Clinton was confident and ahead, it also showed him as being arrogant. Others in the group agreed. The group did not say much concerning this report.

Group 4, Story 3. The story by Barry Serafin (September 26, 1996, ABC) focused on the Census Bureau figures and the

increase of family incomes. The feature also showed that the poverty rate decreased. The reporter said Clinton "pounced" on the new figures. The group had a concern about the use of statistics. The members seemed to agree that this report was strongly in favor of Clinton. The reasons they cited were misleading statistics and missing, and therefore unbalanced, information. They felt that the statistics that the reporter used were misleading. One member noted, "The reason household income is going up is because so many families are being forced to have two workers in a family and that make a hundred times difference." Several members also felt that information was being left out for the benefit of the president, such as incomes being lower for minorities because of lower two worker households.

Story 4. This story (Jerry King, ABC, September 27, 1996) reported that Clinton's campaign swing through the Northeast and Texas is a success. The reporter noted that Clinton is "surprisingly ahead" in former Republican states. The group members noted that words such as "successful," "comeback kid," and phrases such as "He's blowing away states" were used. The members observed that statements from the White House were a basis for much of the report. One member noted that the graphic of a map used in the report was speculating on what states Clinton would take. Generally group consensus held that Clinton's victory was a

foregone conclusion, although they had difficulty defining why they felt that way.

Highly Unfavorable Clinton Stories

The sample contained seven highly unfavorable stories regarding Clinton. Group 1 had three stories. Group 2 had one story. Group 3 had no stories highly unfavorable to Clinton, and Group 4 had three, one of which was also coded as highly unfavorable to Dole.

Group 1, Story 3. Brit Hume of ABC reported November 1, 1996 on campaign finance reform and the position of each candidate on the issue. The group members noted that in this story while the reporter is saying negative things about Clinton, that he is shown with people who seem to be admiring him. The video of Dole in this story is of him in a darkened Hall of Congress, and Clinton is waving and interacting with the "fans." Some members also commented that Dole was not only shown in his long-time stomping grounds, but that he was shown nearly alone. Clinton, on the other hand, was shown with people. One member felt that the story was more neutral although it was negative for Clinton because of the positive video. Through the discussion members seemed to turn from thinking that the report was neutral or slightly negative to Clinton and began to view the story as more positive to Clinton because of the steps that he was taking to give illegally gained money back. Members commented that an inclusion of Newt Gingrich

into the story was biased because of his negative persona at the time. Later in this discussion, members begin bringing their remembrances of the campaign separate from the story. It appeared that they were attempting to put the story in context with the happenings of the time. One member recalled seeing a Dateline ("or something") about Dan Quayle to support their belief in negative bias of the media. Another member recalled seeing a documentary on "the Man from Hope," Arkansas.

Story 7. October 21, 1996, NBC's Andrea Mitchell reported on the foreign contributions to Bill Clinton's campaign. She mentioned John Huang, Riatti, and the Indonesian contributors. Group members thought that this story was highly unfavorable for Clinton. One said, "Clinton just came off looking really bad, the only thing they said about Dole was they kind of made a joke about him getting money back from the other side, you know." When pressed, very little support was given for why the members identified it as negative. When asked if they thought the reporting was biased or the information itself was biased, one member said that the information was bad, but she did not think it was biased.

Story 8. Jim Miklaszewski reported on Clinton and his campaign stops. It showed former Governor Ann Richards speaking at a rally in San Antonio and told of Clinton's future campaign destinations. The group disagreed with the

coder believing that the story was obviously favorable to Clinton. Reasons for the clip's favorability were that it showed him speaking to a cheering crowd. One member noted that the story did address Clinton's illegal contribution controversy. No one member related that to the clip being particularly negative though.

Group 2, Story 7. Linda Douglass discussed John Huang's contribution enlistments and access to Clinton. It also talks about foreign businessman Riatti's questionable contributions to Clinton. The story questioned Huang's activities as illegal, and noted that Republicans were calling for an investigative council. Group members agreed that this story was highly negative to Clinton. One member commented that it was not that the "editorial" was negative, but that the information was negative. Another member said "It wasn't unfair. They told the facts as they were." Others seemed to agree with the assessment.

Group 4, Story 1. Reporter James Walker of ABC (September 16, 1996) focused on drug use among teenagers and provided statistics about teenage drug abuse. The story contended that drug use is on the rise because of the lack of attention in the '80s. One group member actually felt that this report bode well for Clinton. She said, "When they were talking about the drug usage and they said, 'well obviously he hadn't done much but presidents Reagan and somebody else' ... it was like they tried to cover it up."

Another disagreed saying that the report was saying that Clinton was not doing enough about the drug problem. Other members agreed with the latter. One member questioned the statistics that were used, wondering if they were not showing the whole picture. He remarked that the statistics only showed from 1992 when Clinton took office and not before.

Story 6. Jerry King (October 13, 1996, ABC) reported that crime figures had fallen. Also the story noted Clinton's ban of rohypnol, the date rape drug. Clinton was shown in Albuquerque on the campaign trail "lending his coattails" for other Democratic candidates. After finishing this story, one member remarked, "What was that picture of Clinton? He looked ten years younger." This group seemed to feel that the story was favorable to Clinton, not unfavorable as the coder had coded. They reasoned that the inclusion of Clinton's smiling picture behind statistics showing a decreased in the crime rate was favorably biased. One member commented on a favorable picture in the over-the-shoulder graphic as well. She called it the picture "right behind their head." She said that it was there while the anchor was commenting on the low rate of crime.

A female member of the group commented on the phrases used with regard to Clinton versus Dole. She included "he's holding steady" and "he's going to keep rolling." She said, "It like he's unstoppable." At the same time, she said, the

media are saying, "Dole's hanging in there." Another member added that the time Dole spoke he sound or appeared confused. One member related that to what she felt was the media's lack of coverage of Dole's scoring higher on physical tests than Clinton. She added that showing Dole fall (a story which was not shown to this group) was simply reiterating the image of Dole as an old man.

Story 8. This story was coded as highly unfavorable for both Dole and Clinton. Linda Douglass of CBS reported on elite political spending to dine with the president. The story is primarily about campaign spending and use of "soft money" on both sides of the campaign trail. The group members felt that the story was unfavorable to both candidates, but that it was more unfavorable for Dole than for Clinton. Overall the members commented that the areas of bias included what the report did not say and what the reporters did not do. Knowing in hindsight the things that would be revealed after the election, the group mentioned that they did not feel that the press really did their job until after the election was over.

Highly Favorable Dole Stories

Focus groups viewed a total of three highly favorable stories for Dole. Group 1 had two stories, and Group 4 viewed the other. The groups observed the following information in those stories.

Group 1, Story 5. The story by Dan Rather (CBS, October 3, 1996) focused on Dole and his foreign economic advisors. The group felt that this story was negative, rather than positive, to Dole for several reasons. One reason was that Dole was shown giving a speech without interaction with people. Several group members seem to think the story cut Dole's comments too short. They also felt that the editor had made a poor choice in the selection of what video to play of Dole. One member said, "I noticed that they cut away from part of his speech and then jump back in again and made him seem like he was just rambling." One group member felt that they coverage was actually fair because both sides got an even amount of time and comment. Although, she noted, that the Mike McCurry's name calling was in her perspective "like a little kid coming up on the playground and, you know, calling names." She was referring to Michael McCurry calling the Dole camp "nattering naysayers."

Story 6. David Bloom of NBC (October 7, 1996) reported that Dole felt good about the debate the night before. Primarily the story focused on Dole's use of the trust issue as a foundation for other issue discussions. The group agreed that this story was very favorable to Dole. The story included an advertisement of Elizabeth Dole which group members thought of as a positive inclusion to the story. The members sidetracked on Elizabeth Dole, comparing

her at times to Bill Clinton (in style, personable) and contrasting her with Hillary Clinton (in several respects). One member regarded the use of a one-on-one interview with the reporter as positive for Dole. Group members also agreed that who is reporting affects their attitude toward the story as whether or not it is biased, based upon the what they perceive as the fairness of the reporter. One member put it this way, "You know Walter Cronkite's not going to lie to you" (ironic, considering Cronkite's statement noted earlier) and then she said, "like Peter Jennings, he's one of those people I respect because to me he seems fair."

Group 4, Story 5. The story by Jon Donvan of ABC (October 13, 1996) focused on Dole's campaign strategy and discussed how "hard" or "soft" Dole's attacks of Clinton character should be. The report shows Jack Kemp attacking sharply Clinton's character. The group members overall felt that the report was positive to Dole. The references to terms used were not as well recalled. The members used vague references to relay what they felt was portrayed in the story, such as "his failing campaign," "gentlemen kind of guy," "nice guy." One member felt that the comments about Dole not turning negative on Clinton gave the impression that Dole was spineless, and the member felt that the report purposefully showed dissention in the Republican

Party. Several felt that Dole was portrayed as a nice, "old" man.

Highly Unfavorable Dole Stories

Focus groups saw 17 stories highly unfavorable to Dole. Group 1, because of random assignment only had one negative Dole story. Group 2 viewed seven. Group 3 watched six, and Group 4 saw three. One of Group 4's stories was coded as "highly unfavorable" for both Clinton and Dole.

Group 1, Story 2. This story by Jim Wooten (ABC, October 17, 1996) concerned Dole's focusing on the campaign after the debate the night before. The group identified several phrases and other story attributes that made them feel the report was unfavorable to Dole. The report referred to Dole as if "it's too late." The group noted that when the reporter said, Dole "attacked Clinton," they felt this was negative for Dole. One member likened Dole's image in the story as a "vicious attack dog." Another later said, "He (Clinton) comes across better on camera. ... It's like looking at a Doberman and a Cocker Spaniel. You know, this one is more petable." She noted that Clinton comes across as friendlier and more reachable. She later said that she felt that the media in this instance were not so biased as was the candidate's persona transmitting via the camera. Members also noted the difference between the way the candidates were portrayed in the different stories. One member commented that in one story Dole is in a darkened

room with just the press around, and in another story Clinton is out running on the beach. The member then remarked that a fanatic was yelling at Clinton while on the beach, and so the example was weakened. But he seemed to note the disparity between where the candidates were shown during the reports. One is inside and sheltered. One is outside exercising or waving or shaking hands. The placement of the story was identified as "dampening the story" when a negative story is followed by a negative story of the opponent.

Group 2, Story 1. This story reported on Clinton's signing the Family Medical Leave Act and the Republican reaction to the Act. Also, the story by John Cochran (ABC, September 10, 1996) showed Clinton commercials claiming Dole as anti-family. Group members felt that the tone of this story was highly negative for several reasons. One reason they identified was the amount of time Dole was given. Clinton was covered extensively in the story. When Dole was shown, one member remarked, he was using strong defensive hand gestures, while Clinton was seated calmly at a desk. She said, "when they show Dole, it's like someone else had said, it's like very vocal, very defensive. It's almost like you're presenting a calm person verses someone who's really almost trying to fight to keep his ground." The same group member commented that the lighting on Clinton was "much better" than on Dole. When pressed the member said,

"Clinton's presentation was much more attractive than Dole's."

Story 2. The story showed Dole attacking Clinton's character. The reporter noted that speech was not considered as sharp or tough on Clinton as it should have been. Also, the story showed Dole singing theme song, "Dole Man" (to the tune of "Soul Man). The group agreed that the story was very unfavorable for Dole. Members noted the reporter using phrases, such as "struggling campaign" in referring to Dole and "they're (Republicans or advisors) are wanting Dole to go after Clinton's character." They also noted a nuance that one described as the "new campaign is the old campaign and it's not working." In this report, several members felt that the coverage was negative, not Dole's persona and not the news about Dole's, but that the coverage itself was negative. They also felt that the coverage portrayed Dole's campaign as disorganized and struggling. One member said, "do you want someone who's struggling and disorganized running the country?" Generally, the group was able to identify some impressions or nuances, but was at a loss as to why. When pressed for detail, they continued using vague terms to describe impressions and had difficulty expressing what exactly gave them their impressions.

Story 3. Bob Zelnick of ABC reported (September 22, 1996) on Dole's launching a new campaign attack in Illinois.

The report noted that Dole was returning to his economic plan including the 15% tax cut. The story showed Dole calling Clinton a "tax and spend" president. The group began identifying why they felt that this was a highly negative story for Dole with comments made by the anchor. The anchor said Dole was "trailing badly" and that "he was trying to catch up." In describing Dole's strategy, the reporter remarked how Dole had to change issues from his tax plan to an attack on Clinton because "it wasn't working," one member commented. The members recalled Zelnick giving the impression that Dole doesn't get his messages across, and that he basically doesn't have a chance to win. One member said that the most important parts of the story are the beginning and the ending (later other members agreed concerning the importance comment). She said, "the first thing is that he (Dole) is trailing and the very last thing is the man won't win." Others agreed that the reporter had negatively commented on Dole at the beginning and ending of the story.

Story 5. In this story, Dole criticized the media and public for approval of Clinton. Reporter noted that Perot would not support Dole, despite Dole campaigners requests to do so. The story showed Dole not responding to inquiry about Perot. The group agreed that this story, too was highly unfavorable to Dole. Group members found footage of Wallace sitting, listening to Dole's speech plus footage of

a statue of Jefferson Davis—a form of bias. One person said, "They had Dole come across as the bad, mean guy. I mean they had him up there with two radicals." Another responded, "yeah, you have a rebel and someone who supported segregation." Yet another member said, "I thought it was very unfair to show Wallace." Group members even perceived a comment about Dole "going down to rally the troops" as biased because it insinuated that Dole was losing the battle. Group members also found some words in the story biased, like referring to Dole as "lashing out" or "livid." As a whole the group seem to feel that Dole was taken out of context in the comments that were included in the report. "They (media) dissected it (Dole's speech) to use what they wanted," one member said.

Story 6. Phil Jones of CBS noted that voters doubt Dole can pull off across-the-board 15% tax cut plan. He ends his report with a comment about how "Dole will have to read my lips," an obvious reference to the much criticized George Bush promise in the 1992 election of "no new taxes." One member referred to the comment as the "most obviously negative statements because they are comparing him to another Republican who made a promise and broke it." Members in this group questioned the use of polls. Several of them felt that it influenced either people who decide not to vote because of a foregone conclusion or people who are undecided but want to vote for a winning candidate. The

members noted that a graphic used in the story had Dole "looking mad" as a backdrop to negative numbers for him.

Story 8. Lisa Myers of NBC reported on "Soccer Mom" voters. Myers observed a gender gap in favor of Clinton and not Dole. This story contains comments from a woman saying Dole is "out of touch." Another said that the sole reason she is not voting Republican is because of "Gingrich." The group not only felt that the report was unfavorable for Dole, but that it was very favorable for Clinton. The two main comments that the group concentrated on were comments made by the interviewees in the story, the "Soccer Moms." Both of the comments are noted in the description. The members also noted that the scenes used with regard to these women put them in an All-American setting to show "mainstream" America. The members did not say that this visualization was necessarily biased, but that the women were made more credible through the family-type scenes.

Story 9. This story was a feature on "soft money." It detailed the amount of soft money contributions of each candidate. It discussed the loophole that candidates use to open the door for unlimited donations from individual donors through their partisanship. Several members seem to believe that the story was highly negative for Dole and positive for Clinton, although coders coded it as negative for both. One member felt like the story was balanced because it was not promoting one side or the other. He said, "I thought that

this was quite neutral. I thought that they did a fairer job." Another said, "For everything that they had for the Republicans, they seemed to have something also for the Democrats." The others argued that the inclusion of "Watergate" when talking about Dole's acceptance of soft-money and Dole's association with the tobacco industry made the report slightly more negative for Dole.

Group 3, Story 1. This group had two main factions on this story--those who thought it was negative to Clinton and those who thought it was neutral. Neither seemed to think it was negative to Dole as the coding suggests. The story by Brit Hume (ABC, November 5, 1996, Election Day) first showed the Clintons voting, then discussed the carnival-like atmosphere in downtown Arkansas. The story also talks about Clinton's confidence and how far the Dole campaign is behind. The part of the group that thought the story was negative to Clinton commented that the reporter emphasized the Clinton's being an hour late to vote and the reporter's comment of "what others have described as arrogance" when reference to Clinton's attitude. Those who thought the story was neutral felt the comments were slight and that they were factual or justified.

Story 2. This story by Phil Jones (CBS, September 19, 1996) would have been a typical report from the campaign trail except for Dole's fall from the podium. The video shows Dole's fall and explains what happened to cause the

fall. It includes an interview with photographer who catches Dole. Dole is shown later joking about the plunge. A still photograph by the photographer that caught Dole from his fall shows Dole on the ground. The story follows with poll showing Clinton's lead. The group was also greatly divided on this story.

For some members the coverage was highly negative in regards to Dole. They felt that the impression given was that Dole's fall showed his age and that he did not have the physical fortitude for office of the president. While others noted that the reporter countered the sheer negative impact of such a nasty spill with Dole joking and with comments noting his stamina. The others countered by saying that Dan Rather opened the story with a question of harm to Dole's campaign. Rather said, "what affect does this have on his campaign?" One member then coupled that comment with comparing the images shown of Clinton (in another story) with that of the images shown of Dole. For Clinton, he said, "Clinton's images were flag waving," but Dole is shown falling off a stage. The other side argued that the media did show Dole falling, but that they buffered the pictures of the fall with pictures of him well, walking around, and joking. The main objection to the story seemed to be the reporter or anchor interjecting the issue of Dole's capability to handle the office. One member said it this way, "The issue of whether his' (Dole) physically capable is

not raised by the people. It's raised by the news media. That's the problem that I have with it."

Story 5. The story is by Tim Russert before the debates (NBC, September 17, 1996). In it Ross Perot is pushing for the debates to include him. The Dole camp doesn't want him to participate, citing his lack of support in the polls as a factor. The story also includes Dole and Clinton negotiators meeting to hash out agreements to the debate formats. This group was easily the most disputatious. A couple of the members felt that the story was positive for Clinton, but did not mention whether they thought it was negative to Dole. They cited comments from the reporter about Clinton being 15 points ahead in the polls.

Story 7. This story was a routine campaign trail story by John Cochran, ABC (September 2, 1996) about the beginning of the campaign. The story reports that Dole is gathering steam for a come-from-behind victory. Cochran reports that Dole and Kemp are separating for the remainder of the campaign, and that odds are against them winning. The group was nondescript in their assessment of the story. They agreed that it was very unfavorable to Dole, but the facilitator did not probe as to the reasons.

Story 8. David Bloom of NBC reports that Dole has started attacking Clinton. In it, Dole predicted Clinton would raise taxes in next term. Bloom commented that Dole

was beginning to play hard ball. Clinton's camp responds with an attack ad. The report ends with mentioning a poll. The group noted three problems with the report. First, they commented on the inclusion of the poll that they termed as the "horserace mentality." But said that the information was negative for Dole as a matter of fact, not bias. Second, they objected to the inclusion of the statement calling Dole "mean-spirited." Finally, the group commented on the inclusion of the ad attacking Dole's attacks. The last line of the ad was "Bob Dole-bad for our future." Mostly they believed that the comments favored Clinton and were unfavorable to Dole.

Group 4, Story 2. This story by Barry Serafin (ABC, September 25, 1996) focused on campaign contributions from the Republican Senatorial Committee to other Republican races, such as the gubernatorial race in Louisiana and critics of the Republican Party. The group identified several statements made in the report that they felt were unfair. Terms referring to Dole or the Republican Party included, "fumbling," "creating loopholes." One member disliked the information that she felt was missing. She said that it was unfair to mention the soft money received by the Republicans and not talk about the soft money received by the Democrats from labor unions.

Story 7. This story by Peter Jennings (ABC, October 14, 1996) began by showing Hillary Clinton campaigning for a

democrat in Michigan. The story is primarily about the AFL-CIO and about union efforts to support Democratic candidates nationwide.

Story 8. This story by Linda Douglass (CBS, September 25, 1996) was coded as negative for both candidates concerning campaign financing and the loopholes the candidates have used to enhance their campaign coffers. The group seemed to feel that the story was indeed negative for both Clinton and Dole, but they offered little in the way of solid information about what was biased. They noted that there was some information about the different types of donors for the parties, but did not support their comments with additional detail.

At times during discussions in the groups, members could identify overall portrayals or feelings or tenor, but could not pinpoint a single source of the impression. Members in each group at times had difficulty expressing what it was that they were seeing, just that it was there. In trying to define it they sometimes pulled from past experiences with the media, from something they had read, or historical references that they could remember.

According to the focus groups, Clinton was favorably described as, "fair," "generous," "confident," "successful," and unfavorably described as manipulative, "arrogant," and "criminal." In coverage of Dole, reporters or others referred to him as "out of touch," "old," "mean-spirited,"

and "desperate." Dole was favorably referred to as "gentlemanly," "a nice guy," and "trustworthy."

Groups noted attractiveness of pictures shown, interaction with the audience, use of polls, and lighting as additional factors in assessing media bias. While content analysis provided minimal information with regard to visual and nonverbal elements in tone of candidate coverage, viewers do utilize these elements in gauging the level of bias.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The finding most key to media bias studies is of course, did the study find bias in the coverage? Researchers at CMPA have answered that question for the 1996 election. Yes, only slightly. This research did not counter their findings. It confirmed the findings and humbly added to them. The media favored one of the candidates, and they differed little in how they chose to do it. First, this section will consider the findings of the content analysis, then it will tackle summarizing further the focus group discoveries and, in the process, answer the questions asked at the start of the study.

Phase I: Coder Judgment of Bias

Coverage of the 1996 presidential election was different from previous years on several counts. CBS handed over the microphone and camera to two of the candidates to address specific issues dictated by the voters. Each network had ongoing series concerning the financing of campaign, possibly spawned by campaign financing scandal in the White House during the election. More veins of communication were more widely used by the media and the candidates, such as the Internet. Political parties and the press, as well as a host of other interested groups, posted information about the election on Web pages. Networks formed alliances to

have 24-hour cable stations. Even so, the CMPA reports that 80% of those polled watch the nightly news.

This may explain the decrease in the time networks dedicated to the 1996 campaign. Lichter and Noyes (1997) reported that coverage of the last election decreased by nearly 44% from 1992 coverage and 30% from coverage of the '88 election. If one merely reviews the number of stories focusing on the candidate, it appears as if the Dole and Clinton camps were covered evenly, Clinton and Gore having only ten fewer stories than Dole and Kemp. If sole coverage is an advantage, then the scale tips in Clinton's favor. He was the sole focus in nearly 41% of the stories. It appears that may be an advantage when taking into account that the coverage of Clinton tended to be more positive than that of Dole, as discussed later.

Story length differed little between candidates. Most of the stories for both candidates ran somewhere between one and two minutes. It appears that overall the amount of coverage time favored neither Bill Clinton nor Bob Dole in this election.

Positive Versus Negative Coverage of the Candidates

Of the stories broadcast, the vast majority were deemed neutral. Stories about Clinton were neutral nearly 50% of the time. Dole's coverage was neutral slightly fewer times at 44.3%. In fact, Clinton's coverage is nearly a traditional bell curve. Eight percent of the stories about

Clinton were highly favorable and 6% were obviously unfavorable. When collapsing categories on opposite sides of the spectrum, they are nearly even: 25% unfavorable and 26% unfavorable. The real difference in the coverage comes when comparing the favorable and unfavorable stories about Dole. Dole was favorably covered in only 7% of the stories, while unfavorable stories occurred 48.8% of the time. It is not so much that the coverage favored Clinton, as it disfavored Dole.

Stories focusing on one candidate were rarely shown by themselves; therefore, this study proceeded to identify if stories were seen before or after the opponent's story. Fifty percent of negative stories about Dole followed neutral stories about Clinton. Most of Clinton's negative press occurred neither before nor after a story about Dole, Dole was mentioned in 11 of those stories.

Bias Over the Course of the Campaign

Not much change in coverage occurred over three months of the campaign. Levels of biased coverage shifted, but not so much with the passage of time as with the occurrence of events. Very little can be concluded from the data concerning the course of the campaign with regard to Clinton. The coverage did not change much even with the introduction of the John Huang story in October. In the first and third weeks of October,⁷ negative coverage

increased dramatically for Dole. These were the weeks in which the debates were held.

Coverage By Network Correspondents

Identifiable differences existed more often among the reporters than either the networks or the weekday anchors. The correspondent coded as neutral most often with regard to Clinton was Tom Brokaw (as a reporter, not including stories he anchored). Nearly three quarters of the stories he aired concerning Dole were neutral. The only noticeable difference was Rather's treatment of the two candidates, although the majority of the stories he filed about Dole were neutral. Stories involving Clinton were neutral 71% of the time, and Dole stories were neutral 53% of the time.

While Jim Wooten was largely negative in stories involving Dole (20 of 17 stories), his stories were not much more favorable to Clinton (9 of 14 stories). Rita Braver's stories were evenly favorable, neutral, and unfavorable to Clinton, whom she covered most often. She included Dole in ten stories she filed, four of which were negative. The largest discrepancy in reporting is that of Brit Hume, who aired 12 stories involving Clinton seven of those were positive. His coverage of Dole though included nine stories, four of them were negative, although it is unfair to make assumptions on so few stories. The majority of reports turned in by anchors themselves were neutral. Dan Rather showed fewer neutral stories of Dole, and Peter

Jennings and Tom Brokaw submitted fewer neutral stories for Clinton, but by and large they were neutral in their coverage.

A study of the coverage by these reporters over a period of years would increase the n-size and also help to identify or negate the tendencies seen here. As it is in this study though, few conclusions can be made from these numbers.

Differences in Kinds of Stories

One-fifth of the stories had no identifiable issue covered. Of those that did, the top three issues discussed in this election were tone of the campaign, campaign finance, and character of the candidates. Both Dole and Clinton were least favored in issue types of stories. While type of issue and coverage of Clinton were not associated, Dole was least favorable when the issue story concerned tone of the campaign. Surprisingly campaign finance, a thorn in the Clinton camp's side in the last election, did not result in him being covered in a particularly negative light. A comparison between hard and soft news did not yield an association with either Clinton or Dole. The discoveries with regard to the purpose of stories are questionable as the reliability numbers for that category were extremely low. While there may be differences in how the media decided to cover the campaign, it appears that the kind of story lent itself anymore to one side over the other.

Addressing Structural Bias

Like Hofstetter's (1972) research, this study found that the clear majority of stories were neutral to both candidates. Hofstetter's assertion is that if networks report a story differently, then there would be evidence of political bias.

The differences between the networks do not show so much in the overall positive or negative coverage of the candidates. ABC was the highest with 59.5% of the coverage being negative. NBC and CBS were at about 42%, which is a difference of more than 10%. Actually the more obvious difference was in the type of visual used. ABC was again around 60% negative when the story used taped footage. The others were each more than 10% lower than that. With Clinton, the differences could not be associated with the network coverage. It seems that the coverage is not so much for Bill Clinton, as against Bob Dole. In the 1972 campaign coverage, the differences; may very well have been due to structural differences, it does not seem to be the case here.

To discover whether the visual content was a contributor to political bias or structural bias, more research would be necessary. This present study discusses the differences in coverage in visual content between the two candidates, as it was designed to do, but does not

ascertain well the differences in visual coverage between the networks.

To add more support for this claim, consider the types of experts used. The most commonly used type of expert was the candidate or running mate. One would think this would be predominantly positive in tone of the coverage. With Clinton, no real association could be made between the variables. Dole's coverage was a little different. Where stories included comment from Dole or Kemp, 45.2% of ABC's stories were negative. NBC's and CBS's were negative 39% of the accounts.

One would be hard pressed to find an organization as large as the network evening news staffs and say that the entire network is biased; however, if one observes the differences between individual reporters, the result is much clearer. The majority of coverage from ABC came from Peter Jennings, Brit Hume, and Jim Wooten. Jennings reported neutrally in 12 of 16 stories he aired about Dole. Brit Hume likewise was neutral the majority of the time when talking about Dole, 5 of nine stories were neutral, although the 4 others were all unfavorable. Jim Wooten was unfavorable 17 of the 20 times he had Dole in a story. This appears less politically biased when taking into account that Wooten was only a little less unfavorable to Clinton, nine of 14 were unfavorable (two were favorable).

Focus groups demonstrated that they knew television news had some constraints due to the medium with which they work, but they placed a strong emphasis on the choices that the media make. One participant said, "just because news is bad, doesn't mean that it's biased." If the groups are a representation of people who are watching the news, then the audience seems savvy to fact versus opinion in the news. What this research shows is that the media moderately favored Clinton over Dole, and that the favoritism was both structural and political.

Phase II: Evaluation of Stories

Differences in Verbal or Visual Elements

In reviewing the comments made by the groups, there appears to be two major themes in the media coverage of 1996: "Clinton is in a race he probably won't lose" and "Dole is in a race he can't win." Groups noted maps showing states Clinton is expected to win, references to poll numbers, and pictures showing police officers behind Clinton. Comments included "Dole is fighting his way" or "it's too late" or references to Dole changing his strategy in hopes that he might win. Groups also commented on the media showing Dole in a dark room or hall, while Clinton was speaking at the podium.

What focus groups noticed first when assessing bias were the words that the reporters or experts used. In each group, they first identified what words the reporters used

and then tied what they heard with what they saw. They noted that when referring to Clinton, reporters used words like, "successful," "grandeur," "ploys," "manipulative," "generous," "risky," and "confident." They identified entire phrases, such as "the people are behind him," "raising eyebrows," "comeback kid," and "he's blowing away states." Dole was described as "fumbling," "desperate," "old," "mean-spirited," and "argumentative." His campaign was described several times as "failing." Group members were able to better pull out negative words than positive ones. In two of the groups in particular, members were better able to pull out positive words describing the opposing candidate when they thought that their candidate had been slighted. Anchors' commentary before or after the story were viewed as biased on several occasions. In one instance, Rather asked "what affect will this (fall from the podium) have on his campaign?" In another Jennings said that the debates did not serve as a "springboard" to either campaign, and yet the report that followed showed Clinton as if he as victorious. Most members expressed a great deal of frustration and cynicism when viewing the reports, some members were strongly cynical and critical of the coverage.

Shortly after identifying the words used within the stories, several groups moved quickly to describe what they had seen. Two groups identified the differences in lighting between Bill Clinton and Bob Dole. One group noted a

picture used in a slide graphic showed a younger Clinton. They felt that much of the footage of Dole was with him speaking to a crowd, while Clinton was noted in a variety of places: on the beach, speaking to crowds, shaking hands, signing legislation at beautiful landmarks, etc. Groups noted the people shown with the candidates: one group commented on Robert Redford being shown in a Clinton crowd smiling and another remarked on footage of a statue of Jefferson Davis and a close up of George Wallace at a rally for Dole.

Groups were shown stories separately from their newscast segments. Because the biased stories were commonly surrounded by more neutral stories, the groups were not subjected to watching the stories within the news segment as the coders were. This led to several groups commenting on the absence or little time spent on the missing candidate. For example, they viewed a story about campaign finance and noted that Dole had not been mentioned. What they did not realize until they were told was that the stories may have followed or preceded a story concentrating on the opponent. Participants indicated that amount of time is important in neutral coverage. Time is a form of nonverbal communication as applied here (Hall, 1966). Most of their visual recall involved the taped footage or other pictures that were shown, but every group eventually mentioned elements of nonverbal communication. Included in their comments were

how Clinton was smiling, waving or other gestures (body movement), shaking hands.

The current research has tapped into the elements of a campaign that are identifiable, and the results have been somewhat mixed but mostly have shown a small amount of bias in support of the Democrat Party or more accurately perhaps, against the Republican Party. What the focus groups do is take the research a bit further. The focus groups in this present study found that while they were able to describe certain elements that lead them to believe that the reports were favorable or unfavorable, what the focus group keyed in on was what they themselves had trouble describing—the nuances of communication.

Included within this assessment is not only verbal content, but also the interaction of nonverbal communication by the candidates, nonverbal communication by the anchors and reporters, plus the added feature of visual effect—that is the tape footage, slide graphics, maps, mug shots, etc.

This is by no means a complete analysis on bias in media, even with the focus groups; but what the focus groups add to the study of bias is the deeper richer context for the research that is the next step in studying bias. The research must take an additional new avenue in describing and analyzing bias. In addition, what use of focus groups taught is that the media may be more biased than the research indicates; but that word searches and coders may be

too restricted to analyze them. Focus groups also brought to light the overwhelming problem of studying bias. That is, bias resides mostly with the beholder. It is not an easy task to research a subject in which so few people agree uniformly. Nearly every person in the focus groups varied in their perception of bias. Controls exist to help us in studying and defining bias, but what this present research found in the focus groups was the people vary in their assessment, utilization, and definition of exactly what is biased.

Part of the nature of qualitative research is that it allows the research to take possibly unexpected turns. At times, the focus group study seemed to metamorphosize into more of a study of how people assess bias and less a descriptive study of bias.

For three of the four groups, partisan lines seemed to vanish as they banded together to critique the media, favorite punching bag of living rooms and Oval offices alike. One group, however, appeared to draw on and maintain partisanship when viewing the reports, finding little agreement. In research, the stories are studied first individually then collectively, but voters view the individual stories with regard to their understanding of the collective.

Limitations of This Study

As with any research, this study has some limitations important for understanding the findings and putting them in context. First, the researcher cannot be sure that all of the stories were collected. As this researcher was limited in resources to record the stories, a few stories may be missed. A University of Oklahoma research team compiled the newscasts from the election time period, and then graciously consented to giving this researcher only the reports concerning the presidential candidates. During the compilation process, some of the stories may have not been included.

Second, focus groups carry with them several disadvantages with the many positives that they lend to research: Stewart and Shamdamsani (1988) identify five, four of which apply to this study. Generalizability of focus groups was addressed earlier. They note that interaction among group members causes responses not to be independent of one another (i.e., group members make comments with regard to what they think the other group members will think) and the group may be dominated by very dominant or dogmatic personalities. This is particularly a problem in an area where it seems either one has a strong opinion or one not only has no opinion, but neither wants to hear or discuss it.

Stewart and Shamdamsani (1988) also noted that there is difficulty in summarizing and interpreting information from focus groups, and the moderator may bias results intentionally or unintentionally. The study attempted to curtail the influence of the moderator, both by having different facilitators conduct the groups and by having the facilitators interject as little as necessary to conduct the group. It is, however, important that the reader guard against over emphasizing the results of the focus groups. They are and continue to be a valuable resource of rich and deep data, but are only a starting point from which to launch more research on bias in the media.

Third, the length category was condensed into categories, much like age is in most demographic surveys. So rather than exact time for each story, the results gave categories of length (e.g., less than 60 seconds, 1-2 minutes, etc.). The problem is obvious to much more experienced researchers. In an effort to make the jobs of the coders easier, the researcher reduced what was potentially ratio level data to nominal level data. While that did not limit the validity or reliability of the study, it certainly limited analysis.

Fourth, focus groups could only see a small portion of the biased coverage. Finding patterns within eight or nine stories was very difficult.

Also, the necessity of having focus groups view more than one story at a setting and then enter discussion on each is problematic. Some of the groups exhibited a pattern of learning about bias, therefore, separating them from how they would normally view the news. In addition, they may have sought more diverse avenues to assess bias because of they felt pressured to discuss new items with each story. Similarly, some groups viewed only unfavorable stories of Dole and favorable stories of Clinton simply because stories were randomly assigned to the groups. Ideally, each group would view only one or two stories.

Finally, reliability of the purpose of the story was much too low. Any information with regard to routine versus issue stories should be questioned. This problem is due in part to the researcher not defining the category better. Research from CMPA has used these categories with success, but this researcher was not as successful with this category. It information is offered here concerning the category, but any conclusions from it should be questioned strongly.

Despite the limitations, the findings of this study are of value. They enhance previous findings and provide grounds for future research inquiries.

Directions for Future Research

As this study demonstrates, the coupling of qualitative and qualitative methodologies offer unique insight into bias

research. This study not only provided rich data to add to the collection of growing information on the 1996 presidential campaign coverage, but also hopefully opened doors to new possibilities. Some of these areas of future research are identified within the text of the study.

Bias studies provide a rich resource of never-ending questions, but this study wishes to provide a few of the many possibilities. Four particularly interesting paths resulted from this study. First, the use of focus groups in this study were insightful into both what viewers perceive as bias and what nuances exist that current research has not been able to identify. It may have been more fruitful to have groups decide between highly favorable and highly unfavorable stories from a sample of stories, then have coders code only those stories to see what characteristics exist in those stories. The coder could be more defined in their search for measures of visual images, camera shots per candidate, etc. Then, in addition, if a computer analysis of the words that were used with regard to each candidate were conducted, even more detailed information could be gathered. More diverse measures used in the study of bias would deepen and enrich our understanding of bias. Focus groups were not able to see all of the coverage, nor would they care to. But, in studying the tendencies of reporters, focus groups might be able to see if there are consistencies in the way a reporter reports on a particular candidate.

This might have a twofold result: (a) find characteristics of bias in vocal inflections, facial expressions, and spatial relationships, and (b) see if these characteristics are applied to one candidate over the other. It would be particularly interesting with regard to those reporters who follow the candidates in their entourage.

This then brings to light another area of continued research, that of the reporters. The second path of research would be to study the reporters more closely. The problem with studying one election at a time is that trends of partisanship are difficult to find. Basically, you have reporting over a relatively short period of time during which you have, like in this study, more than 70 reporters. Future studies might compare reporters over several elections to see if there exist any trends favoring one party. This would increase the n-size as well provide more room for analysis. While it appears that the networks report the candidates in generally the same way, it also appears that the reporters do not report in the same way. A larger N-size would give more information on the way reporters conduct themselves during a campaign. Also, a fruitful vein of research might be to study the characteristics of neutral stories. Research has done so as a byproduct of bias research, but the focus of the research has been on bias rather than neutrality. The question is

not what does a biased report look like so to avoid it, but rather what does a neutral report look like so to do it.

Third, research has concentrated the connection of reporters' political affiliations to media bias. This current research revealed that one entire network covered one candidate differently from the other. With this noted, future research should study the political support habits of the network (i.e., those who own the network). It seems plausible to conclude that if a reporter knows what candidates and issues the owners prefer, they may report accordingly.

Fourth, research should include more analysis of video in campaign coverage. Focus groups were identifying what the content analysis did not—that visual or nonverbal images were tied to or maybe enhanced the bias of the report. Recognizing that this may very well be significant to these particular focus groups, it is at least worthy of further research. One idea would be to take slides and footage out of the reports and submit them to focus groups for discussion to see if they perceive bias only in the visual portion of the report. Other qualitative types of research would be to take a small sample of highly biased stories and interview the reporters that submitted them to see if there are recurring explanations for inclusion or exclusion of certain information. Prior studies have interviewed camera operators, but not reporters.

Some Concluding Remarks

What the analyses don't give is a sense of the interaction between characters and elements. They do not tell or show the nuances of interaction between reporter, camera, and viewer--nor can they. They capture individual words, but cannot connect the words very well. They capture the images, but cannot connect the images with the words. And the viewer sees it all and reacts to it all, but "it" alludes the researcher. This may be the very thing that explains the impression of a biased gatekeeper, and yet the research finds little bias in the disconnected elements.

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Table 1

Crosstabulation of Candidates Mentioned in a Story
By Candidates Who Are the Story's Main Focus

Focal Candidates	Candidates Mentioned	
	Only One Mentioned	Others Mentioned
(N = 333)		
Clinton/Gore		
	<u>N</u>	
	44	64
	%	
	40.6	59.4
Dole/Kemp		
	<u>N</u>	
	25	93
	%	
	26.8	73.2
Perot/Choate		
	<u>N</u>	
	18	18
	%	
	50	50
Others		
	<u>N</u>	
	3	14
	%	
	21.4	78.6
Even Coverage		
	<u>N</u>	
	0	54
	%	
	0	1.0

Note: Chi square analysis could not be utilized because of inadequate N-sizes in some categories.

Table 2

Mean Numbers for Overall Favorable or Unfavorable Coverage
by Length

<u>Length</u>	<u>Clinton</u>		<u>Dole</u>	
	<u>M</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>n</u>
1-10 Seconds	3.33	3	3.00	2
11-20 Seconds	3.13	8	3.25	8
21-45 Seconds	2.74	27	3.38	26
46-60 Seconds	2.81	16	3.00	13
1-1:59 Minutes	2.83	84	3.62	85
2-2:59 Minutes	3.16	82	3.58	83
> 3 Minutes	3.03	32	3.89	27

Note: Tests for length and tone yielded no significant difference for Clinton, $F(6, 252) = 1.23$, $p > .29$, or Dole, $F(6, 244) = 2.05$, $p = .06$.

Table 3

Frequencies of Visual Tone Per Candidate

Candidates	<u>n</u>	%	<u>N</u>
Clinton			209
Highly Favorable	10	4.8	
Favorable	25	12	
Neutral	159	76.1	
Unfavorable	9	4.3	
Highly Unfavorable	6	2.9	
Dole			210
Highly Favorable	2	1	
Favorable	15	7.1	
Neutral	163	77.6	
Unfavorable	22	10.5	
Highly Unfavorable	8	3.8	

Table 4

Frequencies of Overall Tone Per Candidate

Candidates	<u>n</u>	%	<u>N</u>
Clinton			252
Highly Favorable	21	8.3	
Favorable	45	17.9	
Neutral	123	48.8	
Unfavorable	47	18.7	
Highly Unfavorable	16	6.3	
Dole			244
Highly Favorable	5	2	
Favorable	12	4.9	
Neutral	108	44.3	
Unfavorable	79	32.4	
Highly Unfavorable	40	16.4	

Table 5

Mean Numbers for Candidate Coverage by Networks, Months, and
Hard versus Soft News

Variable	Clinton			Dole		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>n</u>
Networks						
ABC	2.99	1.05	97	3.75	0.84	89
CBS	2.91	0.93	76	3.45	0.88	78
NBC	3.00	0.98	79	3.45	0.94	77
Months						
September	2.89	1.00	82	3.70	0.83	80
October	3.02	0.98	134	3.55	0.96	130
November	2.94	0.98	36	3.26	0.66	34
Hard versus Soft News						
Hard	3.09	1.01	156	3.44	0.87	145
Soft	2.77	0.88	96	3.74	0.89	99
Total	2.97	0.98	252	3.56	0.89	244

Table 6

Tone of Stories Aired Before Opponent's Stories

Candidates	<u>n</u>	%*
------------	----------	----

(N = 66)

Clinton

Highly Favorable	5	7.5
Favorable	16	24.2
Neutral	22	33.3
Unfavorable	18	27.3
Highly Unfavorable	5	7.6

(N = 69)

Dole

Highly Favorable	5	7.2
Favorable	5	7.2
Neutral	32	46.4
Unfavorable	10	14.5
Highly Unfavorable	40	16.4

Note: Percentages were rounded up to the next tenth if greater than .05.

Table 7

Tone of Stories Aired After Opponent's Stories

Candidates	<u>n</u>	%*
------------	----------	----

(N = 79)

Clinton

Highly Favorable	11	13.9
Favorable	14	17.7
Neutral	39	49.7
Unfavorable	13	16.4
Highly Unfavorable	2	2.5

(N = 71)

Dole

Highly Favorable	0	0
Favorable	1	1.4
Neutral	23	32.4
Unfavorable	29	40.8
Highly Unfavorable	18	25.3

Note: Percentages were rounded up to the next tenth if greater than .05.

Table 8

Tone of Stories Aired Without an Opponent's Story

Candidates	<u>n</u>	%*
(N = 91)		
Clinton		
Highly Favorable	4	4.4
Favorable	11	12.1
Neutral	54	59.3
Unfavorable	13	14.3
Highly Unfavorable	9	9.9

(N = 89)

Dole		
Highly Favorable	0	0
Favorable	6	6.7
Neutral	48	53.9
Unfavorable	25	28.1
Highly Unfavorable	10	11.23

Note: Percentages were rounded up to the next tenth if greater than .05.

Table 9

Frequencies of Overall Favorable or Unfavorable Clinton
Coverage by Week

<u>Dates</u>	<u>*Overall Tone for Clinton Stories</u>				
	1	2	3	4	5
Sept. 1-7	0	0	8	1	0
Sept. 8-14	0	2	11	2	2
Sept. 15-21	4	5	9	8	2
Sept. 22-30	5	7	13	2	1
Oct. 1-7	4	5	15	1	0
Oct. 8-14	2	1	15	6	3
Oct. 15-21	3	13	8	8	3
Oct. 22-31	1	4	26	13	3
Nov. 1-7	2	8	18	6	2

Note: Tone was measured on a 5-point scale: 1 was coded as highly favorable; 2 was favorable; 3 was neutral; 4 was unfavorable; and 5 was highly unfavorable.

Table 10

Frequencies of Overall Favorable or Unfavorable Dole
Coverage by Week

<u>Dates</u>	<u>*Overall Tone for Dole Stories</u>				
	1	2	3	4	5
Sept. 1-7	0	1	2	3	2
Sept. 8-14	0	1	8	4	6
Sept. 15-21	0	2	10	10	2
Sept. 22-30	0	0	11	13	5
Oct. 1-7	2	2	9	9	8
Oct. 8-14	2	2	12	9	1
Oct. 15-21	0	2	10	14	8
Oct. 22-31	1	0	23	10	6
Nov. 1-7	0	2	23	7	2

Note: Tone was measured on a 5-point scale: 1 was coded as highly favorable; 2 was favorable; 3 was neutral; 4 was unfavorable; and 5 was highly unfavorable.

Table 11

Analysis of Variance for Overall Favorability in Clinton
Stories and Month

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	<u>F</u>
Between Groups	2	0.91	0.46	0.47
Within Groups	249	238.83	0.96	
Total	251	239.74		

Note: No significance was found for variance between the means over the months of the campaign for Clinton coverage.

Table 12

Analysis of Variance for Overall Favorability in Dole
Stories and Month

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	<u>F</u>
Between Groups	2	4.53	2.27	2.88
Within Groups	241	189.54	0.79	
Total	243	194.07		

Note: No significance was found for the variance between means over the months of the campaign for Dole coverage.

Table 13

Analysis of Variance for Overall Favorability in Clinton Stories and Network

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	<u>F</u>
Between Groups	2	0.40	0.20	0.21
Within Groups	249	239.34	0.96	
Total	251	239.74		

Note: No significance was found for the variance between means of Clinton coverage for networks.

Table 14

Analysis of Variance for Overall Favorability in Dole Stories and Network

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	<u>F</u>
Between Groups	2	5.13	2.56	3.27*
Within Groups	241	188.95	0.78	
Total	243	194.08		

* $p \leq .05$

Table 15

Analysis of Variance for Overall Favorability in Clinton
Stories and Hard or Soft News

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	<u>F</u>
Between Groups	1	6.04	6.04	6.46*
Within Groups	250	233.70	0.93	
Total	251	239.75		

* $p \leq .01$

Table 16

Analysis of Variance for Overall Favorability in Dole
Stories by Hard or Soft News

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean Squares	<u>F</u>
Between Groups	1	5.15	5.15	6.60*
Within Groups	242	188.92	0.78	
Total	243	194.08		

* $p \leq .05$

Table 17

Visual Characteristics of Presidential Campaign News Stories

Visual Elements	<u>n</u>	%
Taped Footage	287	86
Slide Graphic	129	38.7
Over-the-shoulder	54	16.2
Mug Shot	49	14.7
Still Photo, Not Mug	23	6.9
None/Uncertain	19	5.6

Table 18

Nonverbal Characteristics Of Campaign News Stories

Nonverbal Elements	<u>n</u>	%
Candidate in Relation to Others		
Shown Alone	26	7.8
Touching Distance	46	13.8
Social Distance	33	9.9
Public Distance	165	49.5
Greater than Public	1	.3
Unable to Determine	35	10.5
Candidate in Relation to Reporter		
Reporter Shown Alone	291	87.4
Touching Distance	9	2.7
Social Distance	7	2.1
News Conference	8	2.4
Not Shown	13	3.9
Unable to Determine	5	1.5

Table 19

Crosstabulation of Coverage Favorability for Clinton
Coverage By Coverage Favorability for Dole Coverage

Dole Stories	Clinton Stories				
	1	2	3	4	5
Highly					
Favorable	0	0	3	3	3
Favorable	0	2	8	15	10
Neutral	1	3	53	31	10
Unfavorable	1	3	11	15	3
Highly					
Unfavorable	0	2	6	1	3

Note: Tone was measured on a 5-point scale: 1 was coded as highly favorable; 2 was favorable; 3 was neutral; 4 was unfavorable; and 5 was highly unfavorable.

^aSome empty cells prevented use of chi-square analysis to determine significance.

^bN = 187.

APPENDIX A

Intercoder reliabilities for each category

Coder Number	N/A
Story Number	N/A
Network	100
Date	100
Time	100
Placement	87.5
Length	75
Anchor	100
Reporter	100
Hard/Soft	75
Purpose of Story	50
Dominant Candidate Covered	75
Dominant Issue	100
Leading News Topic	75
Poll mentioned	100
Candidates Mentioned	100
Candidate's Party Mentioned	77.5
Type of Experts Used	79
Video	95.5

Answer next three questions only if visual other than anchor is used.

Candidate in relation to other people:	90
Reporter's location throughout majority of story	97.2
Reporter's standup	80.5
Tone of the visual content	80.8
Tone of Story	80

APPENDIX B

CODE BOOK

1. **Coder Number:** Write the number assigned to you. (1) Penny Eubank; (2) Tony Alley; (3) Jason Graham; (4) Amy Greene
2. **Story Number:** Number the stories in order of their appearance (100-299 for Penny; 300-499 for Jason; 500-699 for Tony Alley; 700-899 for Amy). You will have no where near 199 stories, but in case you have over 100 I needed to make provision. You will separate stories when the newscast changes reporters. The most common scenario is for the anchor to introduce a story/reporter and the reporter reports, then the anchor transits to the next story. The anchor may also add info to the report, if so, code it as part of the story with which the information fits. The average number of stories per segment is 2, although many segments have only one story. A few segments have as many as 5 stories, but that is rare. If you have any trouble discerning the separation of a story, please do not hesitate to call me (H) 478-8882 (O) 5527. I have the original dubs of the segments and can help you determine the beginning and end of a story.
3. **Network:** Determine which network aired the story. The list of reporters/anchors provides the corresponding networks, if you have trouble. Also, each network has an identifier located in the lower right corner.
4. **Date:** Give the month and day in that order. See your index sheet for exact dates. The story segments for each network are in order of appearance. Single digit months and days should be prefaced by a zero. For instance, the 2nd of September, 1996, would be written 0 9-0 2. Since all stories aired in 1996, the year is unnecessary.
5. **Time:** Determine at which newscast this story was aired evening weekday or weekend. Refer to your story list for this category. A "W" follows dates that are Saturdays and Sundays. All other dates are weekdays.
6. **Placement:** Determine at what point this story aired. Was it after his opponent during this segment? Was it before? If the story neither followed or follows another campaign story code as "alone." Mark (4) if you simply can't tell. Two indicators will help you determine this category. If no other story for that day is on your index sheet then the segment is complete, code it accordingly. If that day has two or three entries on your index sheet, they are in order of their appearance. Days were not separated between the coders.
7. **Length of Story:** Use a stop watch or a watch with a second hand. Be as accurate as possible.

8. **Anchor:** Take from the list of reporters and anchors. At times, the anchor and the reporter are one in the same. In those instances, code 8 and 9 with the same number.
9. **Reporter:** Reporters and anchors are on the attached list by network. If you cannot find the reporter listed, then write in the name. The anchor will sometimes report for the story instead of breaking away to an individual reporter. So the anchor would be the reporter for that story. Anchors are noted on your list by an (A) at the end of their names. (A/R) simply indicates that the person may fill both anchor or reporter roles. The attached list should be comprehensive. If I do not have the reporter's name on the list, write the name in. I will take care of it in the data input process.
10. **Hard/Soft:** Code the story as "(1) Hard" if the story is a straight news story. If the story is more of a feature then code it as "(2) Soft." For instance, a story about policy issues such as education, economy and the like would be an example of "hard" news. How Hutchinson, Kan., is reacting to Sen. Dole running for office would be coded as "soft" news. Or how soccer moms are reacting is "soft." Think of soft news as human interest stories.
11. **Purpose of Story:** (1) routine campaign story: generally refers to the stories of the daily campaign trail; whistle stops; etc. (2) candidate feature: refers to stories that detail the personal or professional life of the candidate, not including his run for office (3) issue feature: refers to stories reporting the candidates' stands on certain issues and what is happening concerning the issue. (4) none or unknown: refers to stories that were none of the above or could not be determined. For instance, abortion was an issue covered in several stories, mainly around the Republican Convention because of the wording controversy in the GOP platform.
12. **Dominant Candidate Covered:** Code for the candidate or running mate upon whom the story focused. Coverage of candidate's wives (maybe 2 or so stories) should be coded as the candidate. Place a "0" in the space if the candidates were covered equally.
13. **Dominant Issue:** If the story mentioned any issues, which was the dominant issue which the reporter covered. The issues listed are from the current literature on the 1996 election. If the story covered several issues equally, that is no dominant but issue coverage still present, then code "16" and write "several."
14. **Leading News Topic:** Code for the main reason for the news story.
 - (1) **Candidate Behavior:** refers to stories that concentrate on what the candidate is doing on the campaign trail. Reporter may report on physical stamina or interaction with staff or audience, etc.
 - (2) **Horse Race:** refers to stories that concentrate on what the candidates are doing in relation to each other. These stories generally emphasize how each hopeful is doing in the polls.

- (3) **Policy Issues:** refers to stories that emphasize the platform of each candidate; what they propose to do in office; what promises they are making; what stands they are taking or not taking in their speeches.
 - (4) **Strategy and Tactics:** refers to stories whose emphases are the political maneuvers and plays the candidates and their campaigns make during the course of the election. Separate from "Candidate Behavior" by asking yourself "Is the reporter concentrating on the action (Cand. Behav.) or on the intent behind the action?"
 - (5) **Voters:** refers to story topics which have as their main purpose the actions and reactions of the voters with regards to the candidates' political moves.
 - (6) **Other:** if a story emphasizes a topic other than those listed here, please record and identify to the best of your ability.
 - (7) **Undetermined:** if the topic of the story cannot be determined and you have reviewed the story several times to determine the topic, you may use this option.
15. **Poll mentioned:** Polls are the comparison of how the candidates are doing with the voting public in acceptance value. Statistics about crime, unemployment or the like are NOT polls. Polls are only about the standings of the candidates.
16. **Candidates Mentioned:** This variable does not identify the focus of the story, but rather who within the story is mentioned. (1) Only one: if the reporter only mentions one candidate/running mate, as identified in category #12.
- (2) Clinton/Gore and Dole/Kemp
 - (3) Clinton/Gore and Perot/Choate
 - (4) Dole/Kemp and Perot/Choate
 - (5) Clinton/Gore, Dole/Kemp and Perot/Choate
17. **Candidate's Party Mentioned:** Code "(1) Yes" if the reporter noticeably mentioned the candidate's party.
18. **Type of Experts Used:** Check all experts used whether by the reporter or by prerecorded shot of the expert. (1) independent political consultant: consultant, not associated with the campaign or with any media or academic source
- (2) campaign's media or political consultant
 - (3) campaign or party official
 - (4) candidate or running mate
 - (5) other journalism or academic resource
 - (6) voter or person on street
 - (7) no experts used
19. **Video:** Place a check mark before any type of shot/video that is identified in the list. "Not used" would indicate that the reporter did a straight stand up without cutting away or that the anchor did the reporter him/herself without using any graphic images, such as slide graphic or over-the-shoulder graphic.

20. Candidate in relation to other people. Where was the candidate the majority of the time the candidate was shown.
21. Reporter's location throughout majority of story. Choose one based upon where the reporter seemed to be through the camera's eye.
22. Reporter's standup. A standup is a head and shoulders shot of the reporter. Where did the reporter seem to be through the eye of the camera.
23. Tone of the visual content. Rate candidate with a 1 = obviously favorable candidate; 2 = favorable; 3 = neutral or fair; 4 = unfavorable; 5 = obviously unfavorable. Leave blank if no video or mention of candidate or unsure. Rate a 1-5 based upon your overall impress of the visual content only.
24. Tone of Story: Rate candidate with a 1 = obviously favorable candidate; 2 = favorable; 3 = neutral or fair; 4 = unfavorable; 5 = obviously unfavorable. Leave blank if no video or mention of candidate or unsure. Rate a 1-5 based upon your overall impress of the visual content only.

CODE SHEET

1. Coder Number _____	1
2. Story Number _____	2-4
3. Network _____ (1) ABC; (2) NBC; (3) CBS	5
4. Date _____ -- _____ (00-00/Month--Day)	6-9
5. Time _____ (1) evening weekday; (2) weekend; (3) undetermined	10
6. Placement _____ (1) before story of opponent; (2) after (3) alone (4) unsure	11
7. Length _____ (1) 1-10 sec. (2) 11-20 sec. (3) 21-45 sec. (4) 46-60 sec. (5) 1-1:59 min. (6) 2-2:59 min. (7) 3 plus min.	12
8. Anchor _____ (01-47; see attached list)	13
9. Reporter _____ (01-47; see attached list)	14-15
10. Hard/Soft _____ (1) Hard (2) Soft	16
11. Purpose of Story _____ (1) routine campaign story (2) candidate feature (3) issue feature (0) none/unknown	17
12. Dominant Candidate Covered _____ (1) Clinton (2) Dole (3) Perot (4) Gore (5) Kemp (6) Choate (7) other	18
13. Dominant Issue _____ (01-17; see attached list)	19-20
14. Leading News Topic _____ (1-7; see attached list)	21
15. Poll mentioned _____ (1) yes, with no infographic (2) yes, with infographic (3) no (4) uncertain	22
16. Candidates Mentioned _____ (1) Only one (2) Clinton and Dole (3) Clinton and Perot (4) Dole and Perot (5) Clinton, Dole and Perot	23
17. Candidate's Party Mentioned _____ (1) Yes (2) No	24

18. Type of Experts Used: Check all that apply

- ☐ (1) independent political consultant
- ☐ (2) campaign's media or political consultant
- ☐ (3) campaign or party official
- ☐ (4) candidate or running mate
- ☐ (5) other journalism or academic resource
- ☐ (6) voter or person on street
- ☐ (7) no experts used

25-31

19. Video : Check all that apply

- ☐ (1) taped footage
- ☐ (2) slide graphic
- ☐ (3) over-the-shoulder graphic (not a photo)
- ☐ (4) still photograph (not a mug shot)
- ☐ (5) mug shot
- ☐ (6) not used

32-37

Answer next three questions only if visual other than anchor is used.

20. Candidate in relation to other people:

- ☐ (1) candidate is shown alone;
- ☐ (2) candidate is close enough to touch public;
- ☐ (3) candidate is in social speaking proximity;
- ☐ (4) candidate is in public speaking;
- ☐ (5) candidate further than public;
- ☐ (6) unable to determine

38

21. Reporter's location throughout majority of story

- ☐ (1) reporter is not shown with candidate
- ☐ (2) reporter is shown within touching distance of candidate
- ☐ (3) reporter is shown within speaking but not touching distance
- ☐ (4) reporter is in news conference setting
- ☐ (5) unable to determine

39

22. Reporter's standup

- ☐ (1) no standup shot; (2) standup at campaign (3) standup not at location
- ☐ (4) standup, studio (5) standup, location unknown

40

23. Tone of the visual content . Rate candidate with a 1 = obviously favorable to the candidate; 2 = favorable; 3 = neutral or fair; 4 = unfavorable; 5 for obviously unfavorable to the candidate. Leave blank if no video of candidate or unsure.

- ☐ Clinton
- ☐ Dole
- ☐ Perot

41-43

ANSWER THIS QUESTION ON ALL STORIES.

24. Tone of Story: Rate candidate with a 1 = obviously favorable to the candidate; 2 = favorable; 3 = neutral or fair; 4 = unfavorable; 5 for obviously unfavorable to the candidate. Leave blank if unmentioned or unsure.

_____ Clinton

_____ Dole

_____ Perot

44-46

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Part A

Tone of Story: Rate candidate with a 1 = obviously favorable to the candidate; 2 = favorable; 3 = neutral or fair; 4 = unfavorable; 5 for obviously unfavorable to the candidate. Leave blank if candidate was unmentioned.

STORY 1	_____ Clinton	_____ Dole
STORY 2	_____ Clinton	_____ Dole
STORY 3	_____ Clinton	_____ Dole
STORY 4	_____ Clinton	_____ Dole
STORY 5	_____ Clinton	_____ Dole
STORY 6	_____ Clinton	_____ Dole
STORY 7	_____ Clinton	_____ Dole
STORY 8	_____ Clinton	_____ Dole

END NOTES

¹Robinson and Sheehan conducted the study in 1980, an election year.

²This excerpt was taken from the commencement address Solzhenitsyn delivered June 8, 1978, at Harvard University.

³ Coders analyzed a random sample of 10 stories from the 1996 network coverage of the presidential election campaign to determine intercoder reliability. Reliability ranged from +.50 to +1.00, with an average intercoder reliability of +.89. The category reflecting purpose of the story achieved the lowest level (+.50) of agreement. Coders achieved perfect agreeability (+1.00 on categories such as: network, placement, anchor, reporter, dominant issue, poll mentioned, and candidates mentioned. For the formula used, see North, Holsti, Zaninovich, & Zinnes, 1963.

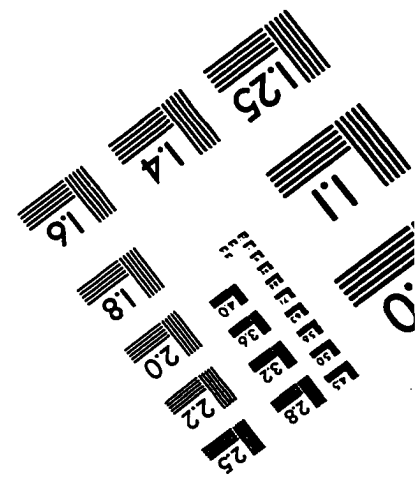
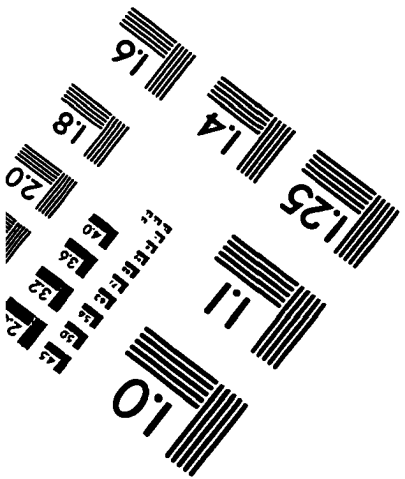
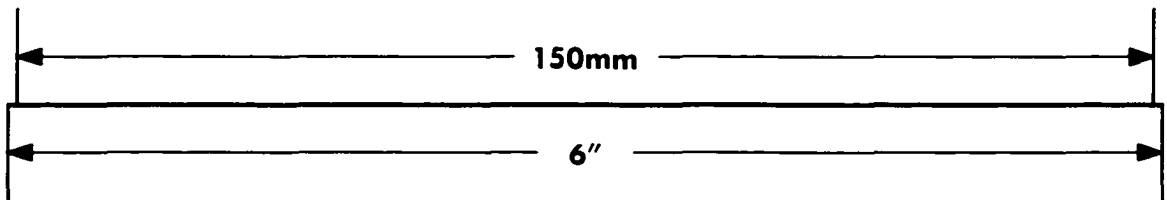
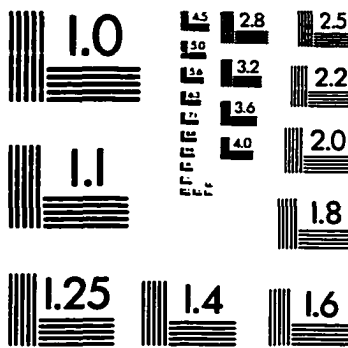
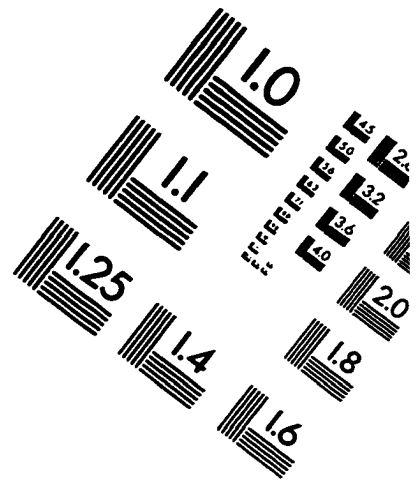
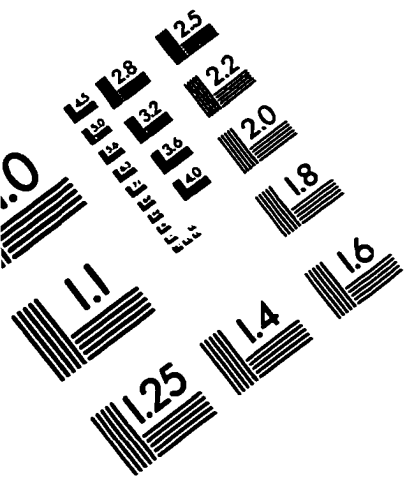
⁴ A probing question was included to help facilitate detailed discussion. It read, "If so, what about the coverage do you perceive as either favorable or unfavorable?"

⁵Initially the information was downloaded off of the Internet, immediately following the campaign's conclusion. The research was originally viewed on the CMPA web page (now at <http://www.cmpa.com/>). Later, the CMPA used the information in their second edition of Good Intentions Make Bad News: Why American Hate Campaign Journalism, which is now cited in the bibliography. The text is no longer available on the web page.

⁶The Lichters are part of a continuing study of media through their direction of the Center for Media and Public Affairs. Therefore, while the portion of their work they attribute to the campaign includes the tradition Labor Day to Election specifications, their work is ongoing. The Markle Foundation funded the research for these three months (and possibly others of which this researcher is unaware) as part of their "Presidential Election Watch" series.

⁷ For purposes of this study, weeks were defined as seven days rather than adhering to the days of the week (i.e., Sunday through Saturday). Therefore, the first week of October refers to October 1 through October 7. The third week then was October 15-21.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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