

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPER PORTRAYAL  
OF ABORTION TOPICS, JANUARY 1, 1986,  
TO DECEMBER 31, 1986

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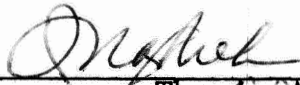
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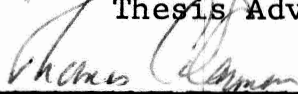
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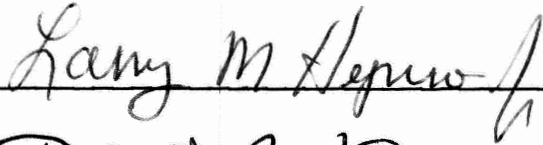
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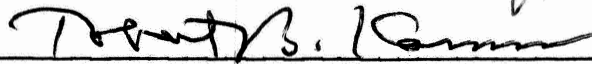
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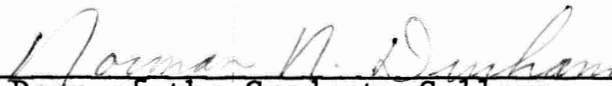


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## PREFACE

This descriptive study is about the characteristics of news articles on abortion which were published in American newspapers during 1986. In the middle of that year, the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirmed a 1973 ruling legalizing abortion.

The primary objective of this study was to determine whether the high court generated enough substantial interest in the topic to cause a significant increase in media coverage of this "explosive" issue that divides American society.

The method of investigation was content analysis. Results confirmed the hypothesis predicting increased coverage of abortion topics around the date of the Supreme Court ruling. However, the expected influences of regional location, newspaper circulation size, and sex of the reporter proved insignificant.

The researcher discovered, among other things, that the most carefully devised coding system can fall like the proverbial house of cards in the face of computer programs. Modern technology is extremely efficient in handling much of our "busy work" nowadays; however, the capacity of a computer to grasp chunks of information pales before that of the human brain. In the light of this, the researcher

had to modify the identification system for articles analyzed in this study so that artificial intelligence can better "understand" the information.

That I learned many things in the doctoral program is an understatement. Our language is inadequate for expressing the benefits one gains from this academic experience.

The history of education, at first dull as most histories usually are, became a fascinating adventure as my coursework progressed. By seeing the events of higher education in terms of a timetable, I was able to understand better the various subjects we studied in the program. I believe such is the ideal of interdisciplinarity in the concrete: areas of knowledge coming together in a student's understanding during their periods of common occurrence.

One other concept that stood out in my mind as I completed this last hurdle in my formal education is that of crisis being a "problem situation and an opportunity for change." I now switch to a personal note as I recognize how my mother, Mrs. Rosaline Vda. de Buhay, rushed to my side as I experienced life's most devastating and seemingly insurmountable crisis while I was finishing my coursework for the doctorate. The problem situation opened an opportunity for me to feel the reality of a true mother. To her I dedicate this work and future successes I hope to reap.

I also want to recognize the assistance of other people in this endeavor: Drs. Marlan Nelson, Robert Kamm, Thomas Karman and Lawrence Hynson--the members of my dissertation

committee--for their valuable suggestions and encouragement; Dr. Donald Allen, who has retired but continues to share his time and expertise with aspiring researchers; Dr. Harry Heath, for his constant support and encouragement; and the late Dr. Walter J. Ward, for the lessons in communication research and in life.

Also, I would like to give thanks to Gerry and Ted Nelson; Elton, Dorothy and Chris Nixon; Al and Adel Tongco; Fr. Don Smith; Louise Malloy; Betty Jo, Raleigh and Allen Jobes; Hazel Williams; Nelia Natividad; Marissa Whitfield; Sister Carmen Segovia; Johnny and Cora Cordero; Haifa El-Agha, and Mandy Ali for their friendship and moral support.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The subject is abortion.

Just as the slavery question once divided this country, the abortion issue also polarizes.<sup>1</sup> Various segments of the population, down to the family level, have taken divergent views on this matter, and acts by strong supporters on either side have resulted in violent, and sometimes well publicized, acts.

In addition to the debate on whether pro-choice or pro-life is the right stand, there also is much media-related discussion as to which side is getting the public's attention.

Jim Edwards, editor of a Massachusetts newspaper, wrote in 1986 that the success of the pro-choice movement is attributable largely to the way media has treated the abortion question.<sup>2</sup>

By keeping the public in the dark, the most influential newspapers have participated in a conspiracy of silence that allows otherwise intelligent and compassionate people to accept at face value the cliches of the prochoice movement.<sup>3</sup>

Exactly opposite the above generalization is the contention of the Ladies' Home Journal about what it

perceives as the success of the pro-life movement.

...Even more impressive than their recent success at fund-raising has been the movement's ability to attract the kind of media attention money can't buy. Like other successful mass movements, the right-to-life groups have been extremely skillful in focusing attention exactly where they want it.<sup>4</sup>

It is important that abortion be a subject of mass communication research. Abortion touches the mainstream of human life.

...Abortion is simply the most visible (and perhaps most accessible) place for ordinary Americans to grapple with the philosophical issue of personhood. Determining the morality of abortion depends upon determining whether or not the embryo is a full-pledged person. And this effort, in turn, calls on different assumptions about what are the important boundary markers of personhood.

It is particularly relevant that the debate on personhood--whether it occurs in the broader context of bioethics or in the narrower context of abortion--is a debate on the allocation of scarce resources. Abortion is therefore one of the few questions in which ordinary people have presumed to make judgments about bioethics. Perhaps because pregnancy is such a common experience in all corners of the social world, people have firsthand ideas and feelings about it...<sup>5</sup>

Communication probably has an important role in the decision to abort an unborn child, since ways and means of achieving balance in life are a constant subject of discussion. A baby that is unwanted, for whatever reasons, upsets the balance in the life of either or both parents. The decision to let a human embryo grow to term or to abort its development is a process often affected by information about the pros and cons of either choice. One source of

such information is the mass media.

This study focuses on the latest decision handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court on the issue of abortion. On June 11, 1986, the high court reaffirmed its 1973 landmark decision legalizing abortion under certain circumstances.<sup>6</sup> In a 5-4 ruling on a Pennsylvania case, the high court declared unconstitutional the provisions of a state law that required medical doctors to obtain the "informed consent" of women seeking abortions after telling them about possible "detrimental physical and psychological effects" of such an operation. The state law also required that the public record contain a report of each abortion performed.

The Supreme Court ruling was seen as an important victory for supporters of individual privacy and the right to decide family matters with minimal government interference.

Writing for the court's majority, Associate Justice Harry A. Blackmun struck a clear chord for individual discretion in personal and intimate matters.

'A woman's right to make that choice freely is fundamental,' Justice Blackmun said.

'States are not free, under the guise of protecting maternal health or potential life, to intimidate women into continuing pregnancies,' he added.

Blackmun--the author of the 1973 Roe v. Wade abortion decision--further indicated that the Pennsylvania regulations 'wholly subordinate constitutional privacy interests and concerns with maternal health in an effort to deter a woman from making a decision that, with her physician, is hers to make.'<sup>7</sup>

Why must we focus on rulings by the Supreme Court?

Tarpley notes that from a societal perspective, the issue

of the nature and extent of mass media coverage of the Court is an important one.

The august court is a significant political institution, having the 'final' word about many judicial cases and ultimately defining the quality and parameters of Americans' lives to the extent that the Court does directly through its decisions and indirectly by establishing precedents for lower courts to follow in a wide range of issues.<sup>8</sup>

Using the June, 1986 decision as a benchmark, the time frame of this study will begin on January 1, 1986 and end on December 31, 1986. This study will examine news articles about abortion before the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its decision on the Pennsylvania case, and after said decision was published. This study hopes to determine trends in media coverage of the issue through a content analysis of newspaper articles on the subject.

Content analysis is an efficient way of investigating media messages. Kerlinger, in his classic text Foundations of Behavioral Research, defines content analysis as a method of analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner to measure variables.<sup>9</sup>

From its beginnings in World War II, when Allied intelligence units monitored radio broadcasts to determine enemy troop concentrations, content analysis flourished into the most widely used research method in mass communication. Tannenbaum and Greenberg reported in 1968 that the analysis of newspaper content was the largest single category of master's theses in mass communication.<sup>10</sup>

Comstock cited the same trend in the study of television

programming. He reported in 1963 a total of 225 content analyses of TV programming, a figure that was expected to rise continually due to growing concern about violence in programs, the treatment of women and other minorities, the popularity of music videos, and other types of shows.<sup>11</sup>

A more recent study of research in mass communication was done in 1984 by Wilhoit. Through a comparison of two sets of journal articles published from 1944 to 1980, she found mass media content and the mass communication process to be the prevailing subjects for investigation.<sup>12</sup>

Although this study uses content analysis as its method of research, it is closely inked with another media concept: agenda-setting.

Agenda-setting was first explored in the early seventies by McCombs and Shaw, who tested the hypothesis that the media are effective at telling people what to think about, if not what to think.<sup>13</sup>

The literature on the agenda-setting function of the press has generally supported the notion that there exists a consistent, though sometimes low, correlation between media emphasis and subsequent audience issue salience.<sup>14</sup>

Weaver and Elliot make distinctions between what they see as the press' transmitter and filter roles. Press coverage--or plain reporting of what has happened--is regarded as the fulfillment of a transmitter role. When the press stresses or de-emphasizes an issue, it is then fulfilling a filter role.<sup>16</sup>

In covering the U.S. Supreme Court's activities through

its rulings, therefore, the press keeps uppermost in people's minds those issues which the Court deems worth considering. In other words, it sets the agenda for people's thoughts. It guides them on what to think about.

Strohman and Seltzer link the media and public opinion formation, thus:

The rationale for studying the media's impact on public opinion lies in the notion that the public utilizes information appearing in the media for the formation of opinion about and perception of a given phenomenon.<sup>17</sup>

Smith puts forth the idea in another way:

...media are viewed as prominent subsystems within the larger social system of the community; thus, they tend to reflect the values and concerns of the dominant groups in the communities they serve.<sup>18</sup>

As a consequence, media are likely both to affect and be affected by public opinion.<sup>19</sup>

Having noted these connections, why, then, does this study concentrate on newspaper articles? Why not magazines, or television newscasts?

The main reason is credibility. Izard reported in 1985 that journalists rank second to members of the clergy in ratings of honesty and ethical standards among people in different fields.

A majority of the respondents thought the journalism profession ranks high in public respect. They expressed the opinion that, overall, journalists are ethical and knowledgeable and their works are accurate most of the time.<sup>20</sup>

Izard said that nearly two-thirds of his study's



respondents, who come from all of the country's 107 area codes, thought that "almost all" or "most" of what the media disseminate is believable.<sup>21</sup>

Also, the respondents recognized that newspapers are likely to devote more attention to all story situations in the Izard study because of greater space availability.<sup>22</sup>

On the choice of print over electronic media for content analysis, Atwater, Salwen and Anderson chose to study the three largest newspapers serving the Lansing, Michigan, area rather than monitor television or radio broadcasts.

Print rather than broadcast media were selected because previous research has shown that newspapers have a stronger agenda-setting influence than television.<sup>23</sup>

#### Statement of the Problem

What are the characteristics of newspaper coverage of the abortion topic before and after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling of June 11, 1986?

#### Objectives of the Study

The investigation aims to answer the following questions:

1. Which side--the pro-choice or pro-life--in the abortion debate received more exposure in newspaper articles in 1986?
2. Which region in the United States printed the most news on abortion during 1986?
3. Which news themes received the most exposure in

in newspaper articles published in 1986?

4. Is the sex of the reporter related to the amount of media exposure on abortion topics?

5. Is newspaper circulation related to media exposure of abortion topics?

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested by this investigation:

1. A majority of U.S. newspapers will cover the abortion issue.

2. Newspaper coverage of the abortion issue will be highest on the East and West coasts.

3. Newspaper coverage of the abortion issue will be highest in June and during the months immediately before and after the June 11, 1986, U.S. Supreme Court ruling.

4. There will be a direct relationship between newspaper circulation and the amount of coverage devoted to the abortion issue.

5. Female reporters will tend to write longer articles on abortion than male reporters.

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## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

To say that a lot has been written about abortion is almost an understatement. Scholarly and popular publications have touched upon this subject countless times, in spite of the fact that the issue is clouded

...because all the terms used to qualify abortion already have a partisan coloring. Even in the social sciences, where abortion is concerned, there seems to be no consensus as to what is being studied.<sup>1</sup>

Popular debate in the U.S. over the abortion issue appears intractable. It is argued that such intractability results from disagreement, not simply about the morality of abortion itself, but also about the nature of underlying moral systems and the process of moral judgment.<sup>2</sup>

The relatively rapid passage from a therapeutic rationale for abortion in the U.S. to a philosophy stressing the primacy of individual choice was achieved largely because of support of the powerful medical profession. The reason abortion in the U.S. was converted from a private decision to a subject of acrimonious public debate in which politicians are required to take sides is that the sponsors of "abortion on demand" are motivated not by personal interest but by general humanitarian considerations.<sup>3</sup>

An examination of American Doctoral Dissertations yielded no previous study on media coverage of the abortion issue. Sections on mass communication, general sociology, and family sociology were examined.

Sociological Abstracts, which catalogues pertinent divisions such as mass phenomena, including social movements, public opinion and mass communications, listed numerous articles on abortion. However, most of these articles were about attitudes, morality, demographic characteristics, legal aspects, and arguments of polarized groups on the issue.

Before 1973, different states in the U.S. had varying statutes governing abortion. A case in Texas reached the United States Supreme Court in the early seventies, giving rise to the now-famous Roe v. Wade decision, which prohibited states from interfering with women's rights to abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy.

#### Sociological Attitude Studies

Granberry noted that the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision reflected a more relaxed attitude toward abortion prevalent in the United States between 1965 and 1972.<sup>4</sup>

Ebaugh and Honey used data from the General Social Survey of the National Opinion Research Center, 1972-1978, with emphasis on a comparison of attitudes before and after the 1973 Roe and Doe<sup>5</sup> Supreme Court decisions. They noted that while there had been an increasing liberalization of attitudes toward legalized abortion... by 1975 the trend began to change and attitudes became slightly more conservative. By 1978, they said, the conservative trend was pronounced.<sup>6</sup>

... Since 1978... the U.S. public's approval of the legalization of abortion initially increased but then dropped to the lowest level ever recorded by the General Social Survey. Religion... and education continue to be strong predictors of attitudes, as are individual beliefs about pre-marital sex, divorce and euthanasia. It is suggested here that the same factors that predict abortion attitudes among persons also predict abortion attitudes among the general public.<sup>7</sup>

This finding is supported by the investigation of Singh and Williams, who also used data from the General Social Survey to examine differences between attitudes and behavioral intentions with making a personal decision on abortion. Their findings show differences between attitudes and behavioral intentions on a limited scale in abortions for medical reasons. However, for discretionary abortions, a sizable proportion of the respondents "would approve abortions for others but not for themselves."<sup>8</sup>

Studying time-series data on births in the U.S., Hogan assessed the impact of the Roe v. Wade decision upon fertility. He said the U.S. Supreme Court had no discernible impact on births for the nation as a whole.<sup>9</sup>

Granberg and Granberg called the 1978 conservative trend a "slight drop" in approval for abortion. Their analysis of nine surveys administered to U.S. adults by the National Opinion Research Center of the University of Chicago concluded that support for abortion rose to an average of 67 percent in 1980, and that support for civil liberties and women's rights are tied to abortion approval. They cited moral conservatism and strength of Catholic and fundamentalist Protestant commitment as the links to

disapproval of abortion. They also said the evidence does not provide a definite answer as to which side will win in the ongoing controversy.<sup>10</sup>

#### Related Media Studies

A handful of studies on the content of communication regarding, or related to, abortion are discussed in the following pages.

Adamek noted in 1985 that sociologists who write textbooks have the chance to demonstrate scientific objectivity when discussing the controversy-ridden issue of abortion. His study of 18 family sociology books revealed few, if any, pro-choice and pro-life advocates among the authors. "However," he qualified, "majority appear to be more familiar with pro-choice sources, rationales and perspectives." Adamek speculated that the textbook authors probably did not recognize their familiarity with one side of the issue and, therefore, were not aware that their presentations were quite imbalanced. The method of study was content analysis.<sup>11</sup>

Adamek also analyzed the responses of a representative probability sample of 1,506 U.S. adults to an open-ended question put forward by the National Opinion Research Center. Respondents were asked to list the main arguments for and against abortion. The purpose of this open-ended question was two-fold: to determine which arguments were mentioned most frequently, and to determine what types of respondents tended to mention which arguments. Adamek also found that



pro and con arguments were generally equally salient for different sociodemographic and attitudinal variables. However, he also noted that although social scientists have documented changing public opinion and attitude correlates on the abortion issue, relatively little information has been available regarding which arguments for and against abortion were reaching the general public.<sup>12</sup>

Tarpley examined a four-year period during which American newsmagazine coverage of the U.S. Supreme Court was analyzed. The main focus of the study was to determine whether U.S. newsmagazines published more stories about media-oriented than nonmedia-oriented decisions by the high court. His finding was that 47 percent of overall coverage dealt in varying degrees with the media, while 53 percent of published articles focused on nonmedia issues.<sup>13</sup>

The present investigation is relevant to Tarpley's study because both are about news on Supreme Court decisions. Also, as Tarpley pointed out, much has been written about the high court, but nearly as much has been produced about its interrelationship with the media.

...Society also has an interest in understanding how and why the media report on the Supreme Court the way they do. To possess that awareness is to deal more effectively with the messenger of the information. Traditionally, it is argued that Americans need to be informed about government to make enlightened decisions. They should also be informed about the messenger-media.<sup>14</sup>

Reich's master's thesis on editors' attitudes toward news about women and women's issues is farther removed from the current topic than the three cited so far. However, its

relevance stems from its conclusion that male editors had a tendency to give more prominence to negative stories about women.<sup>15</sup>

#### Newspapers v. Television

Why is this study focused on communication in print (specifically, newspapers) rather than the electronic media?

McIntyre's 1986 doctoral dissertation noted that regarding political matters (and abortion is a political issue, among others),<sup>16</sup> newspaper readers were considered to be the best informed. "The newspaper is widely received as the principal purveyor of political information," he wrote.<sup>17</sup>

Mulugetta's 1986 doctoral dissertation examined the effects of television and newspapers on the acquisition of political knowledge by the public and on the attendant knowledge gaps due to education during the 1980 presidential election campaign. Findings indicated that newspapers and television affected contestual (who ran against whom, representing which party, ideological-party association, etc.) knowledge, while only newspaper reading explained substantive (basic differences in the candidates' issue stands, ideological orientations, special group affiliations, etc.) knowledge level.<sup>18</sup>

Stempel sought to debunk the myth that television is the prime source of news. In an article in Presstime, he reported on a book, The Main Source, which offered this conclusion:

Television news should not be considered the public's main source of news. Of the many studies examined... not one indicated superior information gain by television news viewers when compared to the gain by users of other media. In some research, TV news viewers emerge as less informed than non-viewers, and that seems particularly true among those who claim that TV is their main source of news.<sup>19</sup>

Stempel also cited a study done at Indiana University, which gave insight about how people learned of major local events, and the role of the newspaper. A fire which killed one person and injured 34 others was the focus of a survey in which respondents reported that they first heard about the fire from other people, and that nearly all of them sought information from other sources. Radio and television coverage on the day of the event was the most relied upon, the most informative, and most the most trusted source that day.

However, when newspaper accounts became available... newspapers became the most trusted, most relied upon, and most informative source in the eyes of the students by a wide margin. When respondents were asked what single source was most helpful/informative overall, 62 percent mentioned newspaper, 25 percent mentioned a broadcast news source and 12 percent mentioned other people.<sup>20</sup>

In 1985 Izard reported the findings of a nationwide study which used random-digit dialing within each of the country's area codes to determine public confidence in the media. Among other things, the conclusions indicated that respondents recognized that "newspapers, because of greater space availability, would be likely to devote more attention to all story situations."<sup>21</sup>

Bogart's 1984 report, however, said that interview data from a national probability sample of 1,979 adults show that equal proportions of the population read newspapers and watch television during a typical weekday. He also said attitudes toward the news are typically casual or ambivalent, and that newspapers remained viable as a news medium, despite the growing popularity of television.<sup>22</sup>

Granted that the audiovisual appeal of television makes it more attractive as a source of information for many people. Still, studies indicate the difficulty of displacing newspapers.

Roberts examined the likelihood of people acquiring information and knowledge from the mass media. He said print media are found more effective than television.<sup>23</sup>

Also, even those who get their news mainly from television concede that salience of issues is greater in their minds when they have awareness of news topics through print media exposure prior to television exposure. Data came from interviews with 1,204 national news viewers.<sup>24</sup>

A special report in the January, 1987 Presstime summed what many researchers also know:

... the newspaper franchise will be more important and stronger than it is today, especially with the fragmenting of broadcast and other proliferation of message outlets. The consumer needs a single, reliable source that will serve as the starting point in the quest for information... There are few arguments, though, that the newspaper will continue to be one of the strongest, if not the strongest, information sources...<sup>25</sup>

## The Agenda-Setting Concept

Agenda-setting by the press means that the media have the ability to influence the salience of events in the public's mind.<sup>26</sup>

There is merit in reiterating here what Tarpley has said about media coverage of the U.S. Supreme Court:

From a societal perspective, the issue of the nature and extent of mass media coverage of the Supreme Court is an important one. The august court is a significant political institution, having the 'final' word about many judicial cases and ultimately defining the quality and parameters of Americans' lives to the extent that the Court does directly through its decisions and indirectly by establishing precedents for lower courts to follow in a wide range of issues...

Society also has an interest in understanding how and why the media report on the Court the way they do.<sup>27</sup>

Empirical evidence regarding agenda-setting was first published by McCombs and Shaw in 1972.<sup>28</sup>

Since then, a large number of studies have been conducted on the subject. DeGeorge in 1982 asserted that although agenda-setting studies have concerned the relationship between the mass media and the public audience, it is applicable to an almost unlimited communication environment.<sup>29</sup>

His findings support the following relationships:

### Intrapersonal Agenda

An increase in exposure has a positive relationship with the salience of a topic...

### Extrapersonal Agenda

The amount of exposure to a topic has a positive relationship with the amount of discussion about that topic.<sup>30</sup>

Expressed in another way, the conclusions mean that increased exposure to a subject accentuates the importance of those issues which one already thinks are important.

Blood in 1981 studied the concept of issue obtrusiveness, which proposed that the media exert minimal influence in setting the public agenda for issues that are obtrusive to people.<sup>31</sup>

Webster's dictionary defines obtrusiveness as calling to notice without warrant or request.<sup>32</sup>

If the public is already aware of the importance of an issue due to its innate importance--or obtrusiveness--Blood theorized that the media's agenda-setting effect will be minimal. He was right; findings of his study revealed that

... As obtrusiveness decreases (toward less experience with the issue), the relationship between media exposure and audience is strengthened. This suggests that the media set the agenda for issues people consider unobtrusive...<sup>33</sup>

Because they had no experience of an issue, people "depended" on the media for salience.

Such an idea is completely in agreement with the theoretical issue on needs, gratifications and effects. Katz, Blumer and Haas in 1973 proposed the central notion that mass communication is sometimes used by individuals to connect themselves with different social entities.<sup>34</sup>

DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach summarized what has been studied so far on agenda-setting. They wrote that neither individuals nor opinion leaders control the selection activities of the mass media. And although the media

deliver information on many topics, people don't have enough time and energy to form attitudes and beliefs about everything; therefore, they select topics and issues about which to concern themselves. From this selected roster of topics of importance, agenda-setting exerts an effect.<sup>35</sup>

DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach call attention to two features of the agenda-setting process: similarities and dissimilarities in agendas of concern about media-presented topics.

They present a solution, thus:

This seeming dilemma between tendencies toward both uniformity and differences in personal agendas can be resolved quite simply. Not all persons respond uniformly to media-presented information on a given topic; this has been understood by social scientists since the early formation of the individual differences perspective. People select material from the media in somewhat predictable ways that are related to their personal characteristics, problems, and needs... The social categories perspective permitted predictions to be made about differences in media habits because a given set of people were located at a similar point in the social structure...<sup>36</sup>

### Content Analysis

In the study of mass phenomena, some methods are overt and others are covert. Overt methods are those that are open to view; persons or objects being studied are aware of being observed. Surveys and experiments are examples of overt methods. Covert methods, also called unobtrusive measures, refer to those modes of observation that have no impact on what is being observed. An example of this is content analysis.

Webb discusses the general notion of unobtrusiveness and portrays the researcher--whether in mass communication, sociology, psychology, history, etc.--as a detective.<sup>37</sup> The advantage of being able to study something "in secret" cannot be overemphasized. Unobtrusiveness makes content analysis a very powerful research technique.

In The Practice of Social Research, Babie gave what we may call a layman's definition of content analysis:

... a method of collecting social data through carefully specifying and counting social artifacts such as books, songs, speeches, and paintings. Without making any personal contacts with people, you can examine a wide variety of social phenomena.<sup>38</sup>

Berelson has defined content analysis as "a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication."<sup>39</sup>

Krippendorff, whose definition of content analysis is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context," notes that Berelson's requirements of the technique to be "objective" and "systematic" are subsumed under the requirement of replicability in his definition.<sup>40</sup>

He wrote, "For a process to be replicable, the rules that govern it must be explicit and applicable equally to all units of analysis."<sup>41</sup>

Krippendorff took exception to certain parts of Berelson's definition for reasons of lack of clarity and too much restriction.



For example, Berelson chose the attribute "manifest" merely to assure that the coding of data in content analysis be intersubjectively verifiable and reliable. His definition has led many scholars to believe that latent contents are excluded from the analysis. The requirement to be "quantitative" has been similarly restrictive. Although quantification is important in many scientific endeavors, qualitative methods have proven successful particularly in extracting intelligence from propaganda, in psychotherapy, and, oddly, in computer analysis of linguistic data...<sup>42</sup>

Stempel notes the merits of both quantitative and qualitative content analysis.

...Those who have advocated qualitative content analysis have criticized published content studies for shallowness and lack of meaning. Such criticism, however, may well be an indictment of a study for failure to be systematic in the full sense of the word...

Those who advocate qualitative rather than quantitative content analysis also seem to overlook what would be lost in meaning if a study were not quantitative.<sup>43</sup>

Stempel also takes the middle ground with regard to manifest content by expressing doubt in maintaining objectivity if manifest content were abandoned. "The content analyst, after all, is at this point injecting a subjective interpretation..."<sup>44</sup>

The definition used by Kerlinger, whose Foundations of Behavioral Research is a classroom classic, resembles Berelson's:

Content analysis is a method of studying and analyzing communications in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner to measure variables.<sup>45</sup>

Kerlinger notes that a number of definitions have been offered by experts, and that his definition departs from

those by deliberately emphasizing the measurement of variables.<sup>46</sup>

It was Lasswell who summed the theoretical orientations of the individual differences and social categories perspectives by stating

A convenient way to describe an act of communication is to answer the following questions:

Who  
Says what  
In which channel  
To whom  
With what effect?<sup>47</sup>

Lasswell's model is conveniently applicable to the current investigation, thus:

The media

Transmits news about abortion (in 1986)

Through the newspapers

To the general public

And sets (or doesn't set) an agenda of issues.

This content analysis, therefore, goes beyond "number crunching" for the sake of measurement just because the variables are there. Aside from telling us whether news articles on abortion in 1986 covered the pro-life movement more than the pro-choice movement (or vice versa); whether newspapers in the coastal states were more liberal than those in the northern, middle and southern sections of the United States; whether large newspapers were more likely to print news about abortion than smaller ones; whether male writers were more likely to write longer articles about abortion than female writers, or vice versa; and whether

pro-life or pro-choice news received larger headline play, this study also will note whether the pattern of reporting by U.S. newspapers reflected the pattern of reality, or whether they sought to form an agenda of issues for the public to think about.

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## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

In studying the data for this research, the principal method employed was content analysis.

The technique was employed in modern times as far back as World War II, when intelligence personnel of the Allied Forces monitored radio broadcasts in Europe and Asia to determine changes in troop concentrations by the enemy.<sup>1</sup>

Also, investigations during the early 1940s on the authorship of historical documents added impetus to the uses of quantification in content analysis. In these studies, the documents in question were compared with known manuscripts through the use of word counts.<sup>2</sup>

Berelson's definition of content analysis as

.... a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of mass communications<sup>3</sup>

is closely paralleled by Kerlinger's, which goes thus:

... a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables.<sup>4</sup>

Both definitions incorporate these important qualities: the method or technique is systematic, objective, and quantitative.

System implies that application of definite rules is consistent. This has bearing on the selection of samples, the evaluation of items of communication, and the procedures for the coding and analysis of data.

By objective is meant that the researcher's personal views are not given room in the findings. This is assured by the use of explicit and comprehensive operational definitions and rules of classification, so that the study can stand the test of replication by other researchers and still yield the same results.

By employing quantitative methods, content analysis can produce an accurate representation of a message or a body of messages. Such representation may be described as precise, because quantification helps describe the data in very exact terms.

The results of content analysis constitute a description of message content and permit inferences on the nature of the communicator and the audience.<sup>5</sup>

Wimmer and Dominick put the uses of content analysis more widely: to describe the content of communications, to test hypotheses of message characteristics, to compare media content to the "real world," to assess the image of particular groups in society, and to establish a starting point for studies in mass media effects.<sup>6</sup>

This study describes the content of media messages on abortion, assesses the images of the two polarized groups on the abortion issue, and establishes a starting point for

studies of media effects (agenda-setting). In sum, from a parsimony of data, this content analysis produces a three-pronged body of information.

#### Definition of the Universe

This study considered newspaper articles on abortion, as published in United States newspapers from January 1, 1986, to December 31, 1986. Approximately midpoint between these two dates was the declaration of the latest U.S. Supreme Court ruling on abortion. The recency of the subject and its social ramifications make it an ideal topic for mass media research.

#### Sampling Procedure

News articles subjected to content analysis came from the Newsbank collection, to which Oklahoma State University's Edmon Low Library subscribes.

Newsbank is cited by Ward and Hansen as one of the major tools for access to information in libraries. Newsbank's prestige is parallel to that of of the New York Times Index, the Wall Street Journal Index, the Bell and Howell Newspaper Index, and the Canadian Newspaper Index.<sup>7</sup>

Wimmer and Dominick note that most content analysis in mass media involve multistage sampling.

... This process typically involves two stages (although it may entail three). The first stage is usually to take a sampling of content sources...

When the sources have been identified, the dates can be selected. In many studies, the time

period from which the issues are to be selected are determined by the goal of the project.<sup>8</sup>

In the case of this investigation, the first stage of the sampling was done by the researcher's data source (i.e., Newsbank). Newsbank collects articles on selected topics from up to 450 newspapers from all over the United States.<sup>9</sup>

Full-text articles of research value are selected from the newspapers and reproduced on microfiche each month. A printed index to the microfiche is published, and cumulated quarterly and annually.

News articles are selected from the social, health, legal, political, international, economic and scientific fields...

Trained information specialists select articles meeting Newsbank's criteria for both subject and content significance. The articles are then indexed by subject specialists.<sup>10</sup>

In a telephone interview, Newsbank Managing Editor Rosemary Vervoort told the researcher that the company policy is to get regional coverage and to avoid indexing personal accounts. "We also do not take wire service reports; what we select are items written by staff reporters of newspapers," she added.<sup>11</sup>

Stempel cites two points pertinent to non-use of wire service reports in a content analysis. Papers that depend on wire service coverage have some choices that involve cost, and what a newspaper can afford is related to its revenue. Small circulation newspapers, predictably, cannot afford what larger papers can.<sup>12</sup>

If a researcher intends to draw inferences about the behavior of news decision-makers, it also is best to study

news items that were written by staff members rather than those reported by wire agencies.<sup>13</sup>

Due to pre-selection made by the Newsbank staff, it was decided that no more sampling be done on the articles to be studied, i.e., the universe of Newsbank entries on abortion was designated as the subject of the content analysis.

A quick enumeration of the data, however, revealed a positively skewed distribution of collected articles. Some states were represented by as little as one article, while others had 18, 27, and 37 clippings. To make distribution more equitable, the researcher proposed that all representations of more than 12 articles be reduced to 12. It was argued that this procedure would help make the sample distribution more equitable.

Table I shows the actual and proposed sampling of Newsbank articles to be content analyzed, by state.

The proposal to reduce the samples of the larger contributors was abandoned later in favor of the universal sampling of Newsbank entries. It was argued that the high representation of some states might provide some insight into media systems.<sup>14</sup>

The news articles included in the study totalled 294. Fisk said content analysis works best on a large scale; the more it has to deal with, the more accurate it is.<sup>15</sup>

The researcher deemed the Newsbank total of 294 as large enough. And since it constituted the universe of the

TABLE I  
 PROPOSED MODIFICATION ON NEWSBANK SAMPLING  
 ON 1986 ARTICLES ON ABORTION

State	Number of Items		State	Number of Items	
	Old	Proposed		Old	Proposed
FL	1	1	AR	5	5
HA	1	1	KS	5	5
ID	1	1	KY	5	5
NE	1	1	MS	5	5
			VT	5	5
AZ	2	2	WI	5	5
DE	2	2			
IN	2	2	NJ	6	6
LA	2	2	RI	6	6
NB	2	2	UT	6	6
NC	2	2			
NM	2	2	CA	7	7
OK	2	2			
TX	2	2	MN	9	9
AK	3	3	NY	11	11
IL	3	3	WA	11	11
ND	3	3			
TN	3	3	PA	13	12
VA	3	3	DC	15	12
			OR	21	12
AL	4	4	MO	27	12
CT	4	4	OH	37	12
IA	4	4			
MA	4	4	CO	17	12
MD	4	4			

Mode = 2  
 Median = 4  
 Old Mean = 7  
 New Mean = 5

Newsbank collection for 1986, conclusions from analysis of the data could be comprehensive and accurate.

As suggested by a member of the dissertation committee the researcher also acquired information on the amount of abortion news listings in Newsbank from 1985 back to 1973, when the U.S. Supreme Court handed down the Roe v. Wade decision. Since OSU's holdings went back to 1982 only, the information was acquired through interlibrary loan.

The number of articles on abortion in Newsbank microfiche, by year, are as follow:

1986 -	294
1985 -	368
1984 -	365
1983 -	156
1982 -	112
1981 -	360
1980 -	406
1979 -	499
1978 -	511
1977 -	305
1976 -	276
1975 -	268
1974 -	474
1973 -	992

The above list indicates highs and lows in newspaper coverage of abortion topics, which could be the focus of future research on media attention to the subject.

The data for 1986 reflects a decreasing trend compared with entries for 1985; the decision to study 1986 data was based on recency and the fact that during the middle of that year the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its latest ruling on abortion and provided a unique opportunity to compare newspaper coverage spanning almost equal time periods.

#### The Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is the item that is actually counted. For the purpose of this research, the unit of analysis was the entire article.

A Lasswell study noted that of four methods of coding editorial content (symbol, 3-sentence, paragraph, and article), paragraph and article coding emphasized degree of bias the most. Also, article coding diminished the number of neutral entries and is the most rapid.<sup>16</sup>

Each article was assigned an identification number for systematic data analysis. The identification number contained the following information:

X
X
X
XX
XX
X

---

Region-State-Newspaper-Month-Date-Article Number

The IMS Directory of Publications divides the United States into nine regions, namely:

1. New England
2. Middle Atlantic
3. East North Central
4. West North Central



5. South Atlantic
6. East South Central
7. West South Central
8. Mountain States
9. Pacific States<sup>17</sup>

Each of the 45 states included in the Newsbank sample was assigned by IMS to one of the regions. This geographical information constituted the first block in the identification number of each article. Regions were assigned Roman numerals; states, by capital letters. (See Appendix A for assignments.)

Each of the 99 newspapers in the study was assigned a number; this constituted the second block of information. It became necessary to do this because some cities, such as Cincinnati and Washington, D.C., were represented by more than one newspaper in the Newsbank samples. (See Appendix B for numerical assignments of newspapers.)

By indicating the date of issue, the researcher was able to distinguish between articles published by the same newspaper. These data were given in the third block of the identification number. The first numeral represents the month; the second, the date of issue.

Finally, an article number was mandated by the fact that some newspapers published more than one news item about abortion on certain days.

### Categories for Analysis

If a unit of analysis falls under one and only one category, the categories are exclusive. If every unit of analysis falls into a predefined category, and an indefinite category called "Other" does not contain more than 10 percent of the units, then the categories are exhaustive. If different coders agree, overall, about the proper category for each unit of analysis, the system of categorizing is reliable.<sup>18</sup>

For this study, each news article was classified as to subject matter, thus:

1. The pro-choice side
2. The neutral side
3. The pro-life side

Pro-choice meant that the articles refer to the group which supports the idea that a pregnant woman should have the freedom to decide whether to have an abortion.

For the neutral category, the researcher borrowed Price's definition: stories that are balanced in direction, items that are balanced in direction, items that are mere announcements, and items that present a difficulty in deciding direction.<sup>19</sup>

The author expected only a few entries in this category because the literature reflects the polarized nature of supporters and opposers of abortion.

... The participants in the abortion debate not only have firmly-fixed beliefs, but each group has a self-designated appellation--

pro-choice and pro-life--that clearly reflect what they believe to be the essential issues.<sup>20</sup>

Pro-life meant that the articles refer to the group supporting the idea that all abortions--except in extreme medical cases--are illegal and immoral and, therefore, should be banned. Under its terms, women should not be given abortion "on demand."

Every content study is an analysis of what comes to people's attention.<sup>21</sup> This investigation focuses on the abortion issue, and determines which of the three sides enumerated above commands public attention the most. The content analysis refers to the context of occurrences rather than the conduct of the media. The researcher deemed this disinterested stance to be the best approach, thereby avoiding confusion in coding. Such confusion is evident when news reports of, say, a strike are recorded as "unfavorable to labor," thereby coloring the editorial position of a paper which could have been merely reporting the day's events.

Berelson refers to this researcher's chosen form of study as content analysis by subject matter distribution.<sup>22</sup> Content analysis is said to stand or fall by its categories. To ensure the strength of categories for the present study, the researcher studied every news article under investigation and noted its predominant topic. A complete list of topics discussed by the news articles is listed, per month, in Appendix C. Month-by-month listings constitute the first stage in the formation of topical categories.

The second stage grouped similar topics under larger terms, enumerated as follow:

1. Adoption alternative
2. Authority figure
3. Campaign tactics
4. Criminal acts
5. Ethical aspects
6. Funding
7. Group action
8. Judicial action
9. Legislative action
10. Medical aspects/scientific developments
11. Political implications
12. Psychological effects
13. Statistics
14. Teen abortions
15. Women's movement
16. Other

The above categories were defined, thus:

**Adoption alternative:** This denotes the suggestion of a third alternative to unwanted pregnancies. Instead of aborting the unborn child or rearing it grudgingly, a mother can give it up to be reared by another person.

**Authority figure:** It is a tenet in journalism that attribution makes a story more credible. When attributions are made to persons of authority on either side of the issue, a dimension of strength is added to the position discussed

in the article.

Campaign tactics: Use of advertisements, videotapes, slide shows, and counseling to sell one's views.

Criminal acts: This includes bombings, violence during rallies, mention of the word "murder" in relation to the abortion procedure, and other related actions.

Ethical aspects: This category includes discussion of the moral and religious aspects of the subject.

Funding: This includes any discussion of the monetary angle in abortion, such as insurance coverage, state funding for welfare abortions, and Medicaid payments for the procedure.

Group action: Rallies, protests, meetings, demonstrations, and organization of groups supporting either side.

Judicial action: Arrests, imprisonment, fines imposed on violators of the law, and court rulings.

Legislative action: The passing of ordinances, introduction of bills, and enactment of laws governing abortion.

Medical aspects/scientific developments: Discussion of the medical/physiological aspect of abortion, or the discovery of new drugs or procedures.

Political implications: Just as the positions or stands of politicians on AIDS testing has become crucial to their careers, their stands on the abortion issue also is one way voters determine whether they favor a certain candidate.

Psychological effects: No matter if a woman voluntarily chose to undergo the abortion procedure, she

nevertheless feels some psychological effects over the loss of a child.

Statistics: Figures are cited to support assertions, including opinion polls, records of abortions, etc.

Women's movement: References to a woman's right to self-determination.

Teen abortions: A theme which appeared so often in the clippings that the researcher thought it merited a separate category. A terminology related to this theme is parental notification, which usually appeared in relation to state laws and local ordinances.

The researcher implemented a pilot study to determine the applicability of the topical groupings. What emerged was a trend toward the elimination of some categories and the collapsing of certain topics based on relatedness of ideas.

Following is the final list of categories or themes of topics of news articles:

1. Ethical/Religious Aspects
2. Group Action
  - a. Ads, Information Campaigns, Counseling
  - b. Rallies, Protests, Signature Gathering
  - c. Bombings
3. Medical Matters
  - a. Physiological
  - b. Scientific Advances
  - c. Psychological Aspects

4. Government Action
  - a. Funding
  - b. Other Legislation
  - c. Judicial/Police Action
  - d. Political Implications
5. Women's Rights
6. Other

"Adoption alternative" was integrated under 2A, "Group Action," since it came up in relation to counseling.

"Authority figure" was dropped as a category because attribution to a news source, no matter how prominent, is a technique for establishing journalistic credibility, not a topic.

"Campaign tactics" and "criminal acts" were placed under the umbrella theme, "Group Action."

"Funding," "judicial action," "legislative action," and "political implications" were grouped under "Government Actions."

"Statistics" was dropped, since it was not a theme but an expository tool.

"Teen abortions," as mentioned in the initial presentation of themes, usually appeared in relation to state laws and local ordinances. That being the case, the entry also was placed under "Other Legislation" which fell under the larger division, "Government Actions."

"Women's Movement" was reworded into "Women's Rights" to make the topical category more reflective of the

pro-choice argument.

### Coding Procedure

Using the coding sheet shown in Figure 1, the researcher recorded the necessary information after reading each article. Following notation of the article identification number, the reporter's sex was recorded, based on the name in the byline. Headline type size was measured with a pica ruler.

... The headline sets the stage, as it were, for the manner in which the story is read. It establishes the frame of reference within which the facts of the story are perceived. It creates the first mood or impression which subtly and perhaps unconsciously dominates the reader's attention as he peruses the whole story.<sup>23</sup>

Each article was then read and classified as to subject matter through answers to the following questions:

1. Is the article predominantly about the pro-choice group, its activities, the viewpoints of its leaders or members, or effects of outside forces on the pro-choice group?

Articles which referred to abortion, as in "Medicaid Abortion," were classified under Pro-choice because the procedure was presumed and only the funding was in question. However, terms like "abortion protest" needed careful interpretation, as it could mean a gathering of either pro-choice or pro-life groups.

2. Is the article predominantly about the pro-life





group, its activities, the viewpoints of its leaders or members, or effects of outside forces on the pro-life group?

3. Is the article predominantly neutral or balanced, that is, does it discuss both pro-choice and pro-life viewpoints? Or, does it contain mere announcements and support neither the pro-choice nor the pro-life group?

Items that presented difficulty in determining the predominant subject were coded also under the Neutral category.

Having decided what the article was predominantly about, the researcher then determined the main topic according to the categories presented on pages 44-45.

Another category for analysis was article length. The unit of measure for this category was originally the column-inch. The researcher was advised to explore the possibility of using words per inch in the interest of precision. However, since this surface measure depends more on visual impact on the page rather than the exact length according to word count, the final unit of measure was decided to be the square inch.

An important consideration in choosing the square inch was the fact that newspapers used varying column widths, which made the use of the standard column-inch inapplicable.

Still another piece of information collected for correlation purposes was newspaper circulation. The researcher was interested in establishing topical preferences by large and small newspapers.

## Reliability

For purposes of content analysis, we define reliability as the degree of correspondence between two sets of frequencies of nominal data based on the results of analysis of the same communications by two independent groups of analysts.<sup>24</sup>

Budd noted that reliability in content analysis is a problem that the individual researcher must resolve to his own satisfaction within the limits of his study design and resources.<sup>25</sup>

Since the researcher worked alone on the data, coder reliability was established by having two other coders classify the content of news articles on abortion under the subject and topical categories.

Ten percent of the articles (30 news items) were each analyzed by two graduate students at Oklahoma State University's School of Journalism and Broadcasting. Tze Sun Li, a doctoral candidate in higher education-college teaching, also was working on a dissertation using content analysis procedures the summer this study was started. Jack Lancaster, a master's degree candidate and news editor of the Daily O'Collegian (OSU's campus newspaper), analyzed another set of news items.

The articles analyzed for intercoder reliability were selected by systematic sampling. Since the collection of Newsbank articles spanned a 12-month period, the researcher determined that the 10 articles for Li's coding activity be distributed in the following manner: two for January, three

for February, two for March, three for April, etc. Lancaster's items for coding were distributed in the opposite manner: three for January, two for February, etc.

Holsti's formula for determining reliability was applied to the codings:

$$CR = \frac{2M}{N_1 + N_2}$$

M is the number of category assignments on which both coders agree.  $N_1 + N_2$  is the total of category assignments made by both coders. CR is the coefficient of reliability.

Between the researcher and Li, the CR was 77 percent; with Lancaster, it was 71 percent.

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## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

#### Testing the Hypotheses

How do the findings stack up before the researcher's expected results?

... A hypothesis is a prediction. It says that if  $x$  occurs,  $y$  will also occur. That is,  $y$  is predicted from  $x$ . If, then,  $x$  is made to occur (vary), and it is observed that  $y$  also occurs (varies concomitantly), then the hypothesis is confirmed...

Even when hypotheses are not confirmed, they have power. Even when  $y$  does not covary with  $x$ , knowledge is advanced. Negative findings are sometimes as important as positive ones, since they cut down the total universe of ignorance and sometimes point up fruitful further hypotheses and lines of investigation.<sup>1</sup>

#### Hypothesis 1

Majority of U.S. newspapers will cover the abortion issue. This hypothesis predicts that most of the newspapers included in the study will have about the same number of published articles on abortion. This is based on the premise that the media routinely give exposure to controversial subjects.

The facts do not attest to the researcher's hypothesis. Table II shows the distribution of published articles on

TABLE II  
 DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES  
 ON ABORTION, BY STATE AND REGION

Region	State	No. of Articles
I		24
New England	New Hampshire	5
	Vermont	5
	Massachusetts	4
	Rhode Island	6
	Connecticut	4
II		30
Middle Atlantic	New York	11
	New Jersey	6
	Pennsylvania	13
III		63
East North Central	Ohio	37
	Indiana	2
	Illinois	3
	Michigan	16
	Wisconsin	5



TABLE II (Continued)

Region	State	No. of Articles
IV		50
West	Minnesota	9
North	Iowa	4
Central	Missouri	27
	North Dakota	3
	Nebraska	2
	Kansas	5
V		29
South	Delaware	2
Atlantic	Maryland	4
	District of Columbia	15
	Virginia	3
	North Carolina	2
	Georgia	1
	Florida	1
VI		15
East	Kentucky	5
South	Tennessee	3
Central	Alabama	4
	Mississippi	5

TABLE II (Continued)

Region	State	No. of Articles
VII		11
West	Arkansas	5
South	Louisiana	2
Central	Oklahoma	2
	Texas	2
VIII		29
Mountain	Idaho	1
States	Colorado	17
	New Mexico	2
	Arizona	2
	Utah	6
	Nevada	1
IX		43
Pacific	Washington	11
States	Oregon	21
	California	7
	Alaska	3
	Hawaii	1
	TOTAL	294

abortion, by state and by region, Regional divisions were adopted from the system devised by the IMS Directory of Publications.<sup>2</sup> (See Appendix A.)

Highest coverage of the abortion issue appeared in East North Central newspapers, notably in Ohio and Michigan.

The second highest coverage of the abortion issue appeared in newspapers in the West North Central region. Missouri newspapers ranked highest in exposure on the abortion issue. The second-ranking state in the region, Minnesota, printed only one-third the number of articles that appeared in Missouri newspapers.

The third-ranking region in abortion news coverage is the Pacific States. Oregon, however, was far ahead of Washington and California in giving exposure to abortion news.

The least exposure to abortion news was in the West Central States. Arkansas newspapers printed five articles of research value<sup>3</sup> during the 1986 calendar year, while Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas newspapers printed only two articles each.

The mean number of articles per region was 32.66 (or 37), which is close to the range, or difference between the highest and lowest scores, which is 39.

With a standard deviation of 15.70, the data indicate that six regions fell below the mean in number of abortion articles published, while three were above the mean. (See also Table I, p. 36.)

Data from Table II also can be used to test Hypothesis 2.

### Hypothesis 2

Newspaper coverage of abortion news will be highest on the East and West coasts. It was expected that states bordering the Atlantic and the Pacific would give more exposure to news on abortion than other states because the coastal regions are assumed to be populated by persons receptive to the discussion of controversial topics like abortion.

A rearrangement of the data from Table II, shown in Table III, indicates that the Pacific States ranked third in newspaper coverage of the abortion issue, while the Middle Atlantic, South Atlantic and New England states ranked fourth, fifth and seventh in the roster of newspapers according to number of published articles on abortion.

The East North Central region ranked first, with the highest number of published articles (63), followed by the West North Central region (30).

A chi-square test was performed to determine if there was a significant difference between the expected and the observed ranks of the regions of the country. The chi-square of 23.59,  $p < .01$ ,  $df=8$ , exceeds the 20.09 indicated in the chi-square table. Therefore, the observed ranks by region are statistically significant.

To determine the degree of relationship between regions

TABLE III  
RANKING OF REGIONS, BY NUMBER  
OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Rank	Region	No. of Articles
1	East North Central (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin)	63
2	West North Central (Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas)	50
3	Pacific States (Washington, Oregon, California, Alaska, Hawaii)	43
4	Middle Atlantic (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania)	30
5	South Atlantic (Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida)	29
5	Mountain States (Idaho, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada)	29
6	New England (New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut)	24
7	East South Central (Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi)	15
8	West South Central (Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas)	11
TOTAL		294

Chi square 23.59, 8 df,  $p < .01$

and number of published articles, the chi-square test was followed by the computation of the C coefficient. For the above data, the C coefficient is .98, indicating a strong relationship between region and number of published articles on abortion topics.

Why was coverage highest in the East North Central region?

Specifically, we examine Ohio and Michigan. In Ohio, the published articles on abortion were predominantly Neutral (16) and Pro-life (14). Most of the Neutral articles discussed Other Legislation (Government Action) and Rallies/Protests (Group Action). The Pro-life articles were almost equally distributed among Information Campaigns (Group Action), Rallies/Protests (Group Action) and Political Implications (Government Action).

Legislative actions in Ohio that drew media attention were mostly about fetus disposal ordinances. The preponderance of Group Action news can be traced to the fact that a large Planned Parenthood facility exists near Cincinnati and provides a locus for group protest activities. It also necessitates the kind of government regulatory activity as evident in the debates on passage of ordinances.

In Michigan, the majority of published articles were Neutral, and all but one were on Funding. Most of the reports were datelined Lansing, and comprised of stories on debates, deadlocks and compromises in the state legislature on the appropriation of monies for welfare abortions.

### Hypothesis 3

Newspaper coverage of the abortion issue will be highest during the months immediately before and after the June, 1986, ruling by the United States Supreme Court. The expectation was for the month of June to register the largest number of published articles on abortion, which was indeed the case. It also was expected that there would be a significantly large number of published articles on abortion during April and May, as well as during July and August.

Table IV indicates that April and May registered a considerable number of published articles, putting these two months in ranks 3 and 4 in the roster of months with the largest number of published articles. July trailed as sixth in rank, while August figured at the tail end, as the month with the least number of published articles on abortion.

The chi-square test for "goodness of fit" was applied to these frequencies to determine how well the empirical distribution, i.e., the distributions obtained from sample data, fit the normal distribution.

The obtained chi-square is 299.5,  $p < .001$ ,  $df=11$ .

Since the calculated chi-square exceeds the value found in the chi-square table, the differences in frequency are considered to be statistically significant, and the hypothesis is accepted or supported.

Another way of looking at the data on number of

TABLE IV  
NUMBER OF ARTICLES PUBLISHED PER MONTH

Rank	Month	No. of Articles
2	January	49
8	February	17
7	March	19
3	April	38
4	May	28
1	June	56
6	July	22
12	August	6
10	September	12
9	October	13
11	November	11
5	December	23
	TOTAL	294

Chi square 299.5, 11 df,  $p < .001$



published articles on abortion, by month, is by comparing the shape of the obtained information or empirical distribution, with the normal curve. The normal is the shape of the expected frequencies. Although the observed frequency curve is multimodal, its general shape still approximates that of the normal curve.

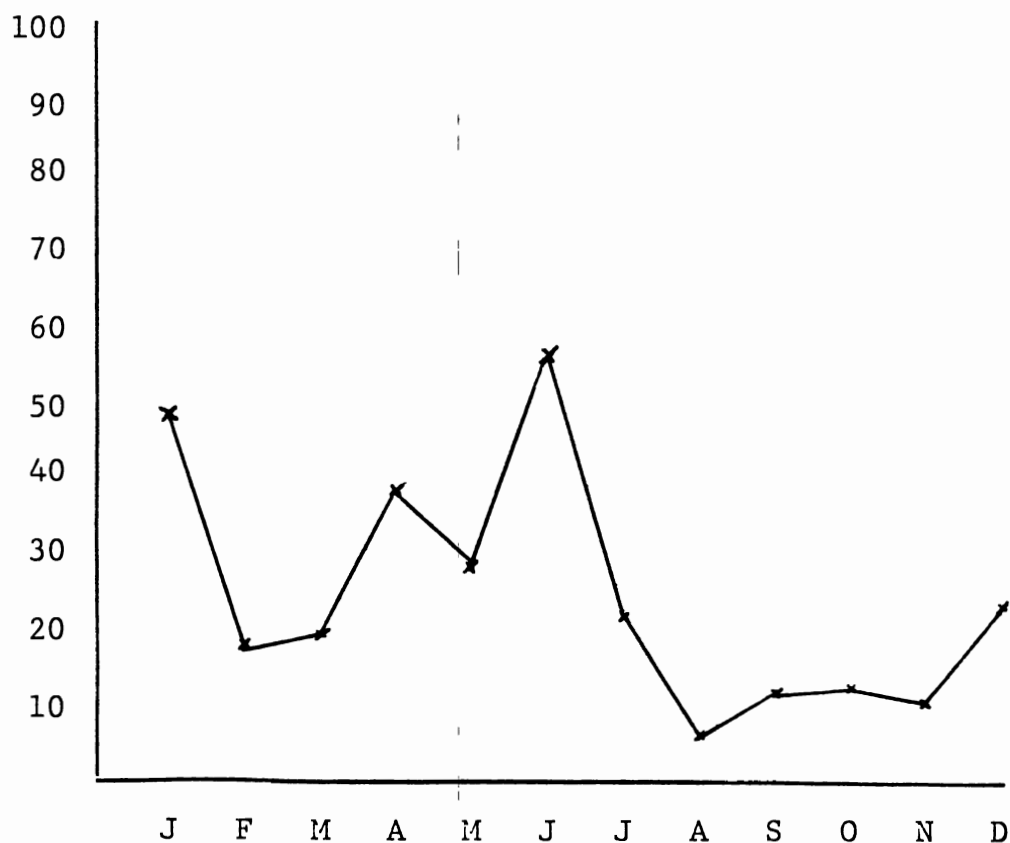


Figure 2. Distribution of Published Articles, By Month

#### Hypothesis 4

Female reporters will tend to write longer articles on abortion than male reporters.

Of the 294 articles in the study, 269 were used for this analysis. A total of 25 articles, or 8.5 percent, were dropped because bylines used initials for the first names; hence, the author's sex could not be determined by inspection of the byline.

Table V shows the distribution of published articles on abortion, according to stratified lengths, author's sex, and subject of the article.

During 1986, male reporters produced more articles than female reporters, overall (152 v. 117).

In the modal length of 41.60 square inches, male reporters produced more Pro-life articles (41 percent) than Neutral (37 percent) or Pro-choice (22 percent). Female reporters wrote about equal numbers of Pro-choice, Neutral and Pro-life articles (32, 36, and 32 percent).

The nonparametric test called contingency analysis was used to determine the relation between the reporter's sex and the subject matter of the news article. This test, also called cross-tabulation, is an extension of the "goodness of fit" test, but enables the testing of two or more variables.

Figure 3 shows the crosstabs for sex of reporter (M/F) and subject matter of abortion news articles (Pro-choice/Neutral, Pro-life). The numbers in the middle of the cells

TABLE V  
 DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES ON ABORTION,  
 BY STRATIFIED LENGTHS, AUTHOR'S SEX,  
 AND SUBJECT

Length	Male			Female		
	PChoice	Neutral	Plife	Pchoice	Neutral	Plife
20 sq. in and below	1	0	0	0	2	1
21 - 40	15	15	14	6	15	14
41 - 60	14	23	26	15	17	15
61 - 80	4	2	18	1	5	9
81 - 100	1	5	5	1	6	2
100 - 120	2	2	1	0	1	1
121 - 140	1	1	0	0	0	1
141 - 160	0	1	0	0	2	1
161 - 180	0	0	1	0	0	0
181 - 200	0	0	0	1	0	0
More than 200	0	0	0	1	0	0
Totals	38	49	65	25	48	44

Chi square 2.25, 4 df,  $p > .05$

are the observed frequencies, while the ones in the upper-right-hand corner of each cell are the calculated expected frequencies.

Computations yielded a chi-square of 2.25, which was not significant. Therefore, there is no relation between the sex of the reporter and the length of news articles on abortion. Female reporters did not necessarily write longer articles than male reporters, or vice versa.

	Pro-Choice	Neutral	Pro-Life	
Male Reporters	38	49	65	152
Female Reporters	25	48	44	117
	63	97	109	269

Figure 3. Crosstabs for Sex of Reporter and Subject of News Article

Figure 4 is a graphic illustration of the distribution of articles, by length.

The mode, which fell on the 41-60-square inch group, was distributed thus: Pro-choice, 26; Neutral, 42 and Pro-life, 51. A majority of these articles was accounts of Government Action, e.g., Funding or Other Legislation, and stories of Rallies/Protests (Group Action) by the Pro-life side.

Articles 21-40 square inches long comprised the second largest group according to length. Both Neutral and Pro-life articles had very large counts of write-ups on Rallies/Protests, while a high number of Pro-choice articles dealt with Government Action.

The more extended accounts of abortion news measured 61-80 square inches. Neutral articles numbered the most, and they ran the gamut of Group Action and Government Action. Pro-life articles were more distributed among the topics, but pluralities were recorded for Rallies/Protests and Judicial Action. In the case of Pro-choice coverage, Other Legislation took a larger share than the rest of the topics.

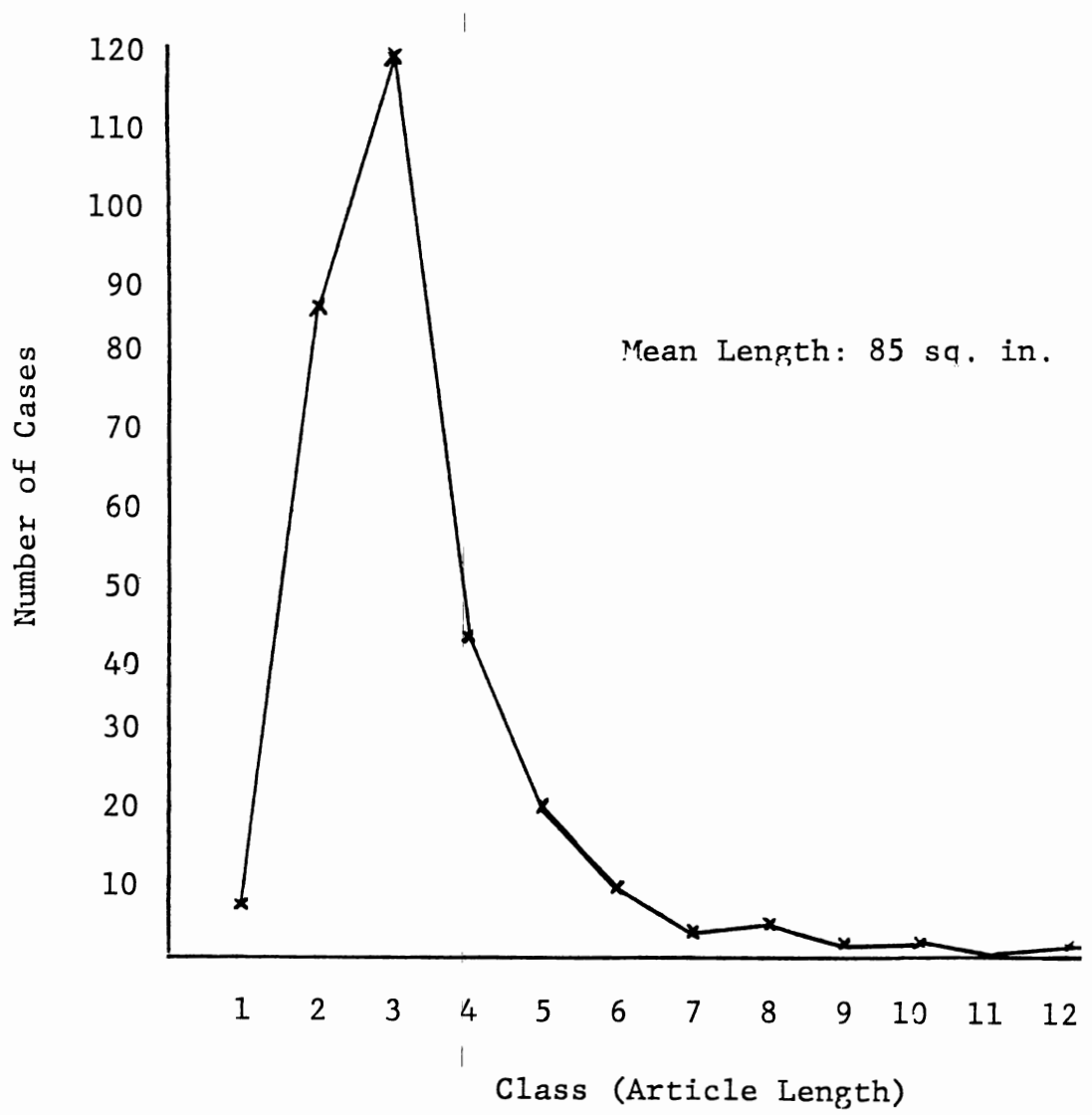


Figure 4. Distribution of Articles,  
By Length

Hypothesis 5

There will be a direct relationship between newspaper circulation and the amount of coverage devoted to the abortion issue.

What this hypothesis predicted was that the larger the circulation of the newspaper, the greater the amount of abortion news coverage.

The 99 daily newspapers represented in this study had circulations ranging from 7,800 to more than 1,000,000 copies. To manage the data more efficiently, the circulation was stratified as follows:

- Class 1 - Below 30,000 circulation
- 2 = 30,001 to 60,000
- 3 = 60,001 to 90,000
- 4 = 90,001 to 120,000
- 5 = 120,001 to 150,000
- 6 = 150,001 to 180,000
- 7 = 180,001 to 210,000
- 8 = 210,001 to 240,000
- 9 = 240,001 to 270,000
- 10 = 270,001 to 300,000
- 11 = 300,001 and above

The mean circulation of 172,473 falls exactly in the median (Class 6) of the stratified distribution. A listing of newspapers, sorted according to class and including data on regional representation and circulation, is in Appendix D.

How does circulation relate to abortion news abortion?  
Did large newspapers exhibit a tendency to print news on  
this topic more than small newspapers?

Table VI lists increasing classes of circulation  
(column 1) matched by number of published articles on  
abortion (column 3). After the Pearson product-moment  
correlation was used to measure the degree of relationship  
between the two variables, Hypothesis 5 was rejected ( $r=.04$ ).

Newspaper circulation explained only .16 percent of  
the variation in the frequency of publication of newspaper  
articles on abortion.

#### Analysis of Findings

Having compared the hypotheses against the findings,  
we now examine the probable reasons for our findings.

The prediction that a majority of U.S. newspapers  
surveyed by Newsbank will cover abortion news is based on  
the researcher's assumption that an "explosive" issue like  
abortion would be judged by gatekeepers, i.e., writers and  
editors, as being of great interest to the public; hence,  
worthy of being written about in the print media, specific-  
cally the newspapers.

...Abortion is simply the most visible (and perhaps  
most accessible) place for ordinary Americans  
to grapple with the philosophical issue of  
personhood...

It is particularly relevant that the debate  
on personhood--whether it occurs in the broader  
context of bioethics or in the narrower context  
of abortion--is a debate about the scarce  
allocation of resources. Abortion is therefore



TABLE VI  
 NEWSPAPER CIRCULATION AND NUMBER  
 OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES  
 ON ABORTION

Classification By Circulation	Number of Newspapers	Number of Articles	Average Number of Articles/Newspaper
1 Smallest Circulation	16	26	1.62
2	16	34	2.12
3	19	46	2.42
4	4	9	2.25
5	10	35	3.50
6	4	12	3.00
7	3	13	4.00
8	10	32	3.20
9	1	2	2.00
10	3	27	9.00
11 Largest Circulation	13	58	4.46
Totals	99	294	

one of the few questions in which ordinary people have presumed to make judgments about bioethics. Perhaps because pregnancy is such a common experience in all corners of the social world, people have firsthand ideas and feelings about it.<sup>4</sup>

As stated earlier, the media did not give uniformly substantial coverage to the abortion issue. By "uniformly substantial" is meant that the number of published articles on abortion was expected to cluster around a given count, e.g., 50, instead of the range that resulted from the study, which was 11 to 63 articles.

Given that the exposure accorded by the media to abortion news is not uniform for all the regions of the United States, what, nevertheless, are some characteristics of published articles on the subject?

#### Analysis by Subject

Table VII shows a breakdown of abortion news by subject. What is being discussed mainly in the articles? Which side in this polarized issue is receiving attention?

News about the Pro-life side received the most attention (116 items), but not too much more than the Neutral side (106 items). The Pro-choice side received the least attention overall (72 items).

Among the regions, newspapers in the Middle Atlantic Atlantic States (New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania) printed the largest number of Pro-choice articles. East North Central states like Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin together comprised the block that gave the

TABLE VII  
PUBLISHED ARTICLES ON ABORTION,  
BY SUBJECT

Region	Prochoice	Neutral	Prolife
I New England	8	11	5
II Middle Atlantic	13	9	8
III East North Central	11	28	24
IV West North Central	11	14	25
V South Atlantic	5	14	10
VI East South Central	5	3	7
VII West South Central	1	6	4
VIII Mountain States	9	8	12
IX Pacific States	10	13	20
TOTALS	72	106	116

most exposure to either both sides or neither side of the issue (Neutral). On the other hand, West North Central states like Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas together produced the largest number of Pro-life articles.

These findings should not be misconstrued to mean that the regional divisions mentioned above support either or neither side of the abortion issue. When a newspaper publishes an article about any subject, the decision to publish it is a mix of factors. These factors include: an outside occurrence which invites coverage; an interest on the part of the reporter covering the event, or on the part of the editor who assigned the reporter (which could be based on the assumption that readers might be interested in reading about said topic); and approval for publication by the editor. Such factors do not weight uniformly, particularly in the case of the abortion issue.

#### Analysis of Gatekeeper Bias

A related category of devices that help us select for attention those communications that are likely to contain useful information might be called "indicators." We learn that (at least in some newspapers) the more important news is likely to be given larger headlines than the less important news.<sup>5</sup>

Headlines of published articles on abortion ranged in height from 12 points to 78 points. The median headline size was 30 points; it also was the mode or most frequently occurring headline size. (See Appendix E for an illustration

of point sizes.)

Table VIII contains more detailed information on this measure of gatekeeper bias. For example, in the three most frequently occurring headline sizes (24, 30, and 16 points), the Pro-life side received the highest count, followed by Neutral articles, and then Pro-choice articles.

What were some of the topics of the Pro-life news articles that received the highest frequency in the modal headline sizes?

Tables IX-A, B, and C show that the news articles in these modal headline sizes were mostly about Group Action and Government Action.

What about the larger headlines, i.e., 42 to 78 points?

Twenty-six articles were headlined with 42-point size types. Almost half of the articles (12) were classified by the researcher as Neutral; 8 were about the Pro-life side, and 6, Pro-choice.

As the headline sizes increased, the tendency was for the article to be about the Pro-choice side.

This fact is not very comforting for the Pro-choice side. Larger headlines of minimal exposure do not make up for the constant attention received by modal headlines of the Pro-life category.

TABLE VIII  
 HEADLINE SIZES OF PUBLISHED ARTICLES,  
 BY SUBJECT

Headline Size (In Points*)	Prochoice	Neutral	Prolife	Total No. Articles
12	0	2	1	3
18	8	6	10	24
24	18	29	33	80
30	17	31	35	83
36	16	19	23	58
42	6	12	8	26
48	5	6	4	15
54	2	1	0	3
66	0	1	0	1
78	1	0	0	1
Totals	73	107	114	294

\* 6 points = 1 pica; 12 picas = 1 inch

TABLE IX-A  
 TOPICS OF PRO-LIFE ARTICLES WITH HEADLINES  
 OF 24 POINTS

Topic	Number of Articles
1 Ethical/Religious Considerations	1
2a Group Action Info Campaigns	7
2b Group Action Rallies/Protests	13
4a Government Action	2
4b Government Action Funding	2
4c Government Action Judicial/Police Action	6
6 Other	2
Total	33

TABLE IX-B  
 TOPICS OF PRO-LIFE ARTICLES WITH HEADLINES  
 OF 30 POINTS

Topic	Number of Articles
1 Ethical/Religious Considerations	3
2a Group Action Info Campaigns	6
2b Group Action Rallies/Protests	12
4a Government Action	2
4b Government Action Funding	4
4c Government Action Judicial/Police Action	6
4d Government Action Legislative Action	2
Total	35



TABLE IX-C  
 TOPICS OF PRO-LIFE ARTICLES WITH HEADLINES  
 OF 36 POINTS

Topic	Number of Articles
1 Ethical/Religious Considerations	1
2a Group Action Info Campaigns	4
2b Group Action Rallies/Protests	5
2c Group Action Bombings	1
4b Government Action Funding	6
4c Government Action Judicial/Police Action	4
6 Other	1
Total	23

ENDNOTES

1

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2

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3

See page 34.

4

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## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This study analyzed 294 news articles on abortion from 99 newspapers. Its aim was to determine which of the polarized sides on the abortion issue received more media attention in 1986; Pro-choice supporters are particularly vocal about what they claim to be imbalanced coverage in favor of the Pro-lifers.

The source of the data for this investigation was Newsbank, an indexing service to which Oklahoma State University's Edmon Low Library subscribes. Newsbank staff members read newspapers from 600 U.S. cities and select full-text articles of research value on several topics, including abortion. The universe of Newsbank's 1986 listing of articles on abortion was used as the sample for the study. The year 1986 was chosen because during that year, the latest U.S. Supreme Court ruling on abortion was handed down.

It was hypothesized that news coverage of abortion topics would rise chronologically with the interest generated by the Supreme Court decision. Other variables studied were the influence of regional location and sizes of newspapers,

the sex of the reporter, and editorial bias based on choice of headline sizes.

There were significant findings with respect to location: Ohio and Missouri newspapers led the states in news coverage of abortion topics, and the regions they represent (East North Central and West North Central) also overshadowed the predicted leadership of the East and West Coasts in publication of articles on the subject. There was no correlation between sex of the reporter and the length of articles on abortion, nor between newspaper circulation and number of articles published on the subject.

Most of the published articles on abortion were mere reportage, pointing to a need for more probing coverage of this subject, to touch upon its substantial aspects, the ramifications of which the public needs to know.

### Conclusions

The findings indicated that most of the published articles on abortion were mere reportage, that is, factual accounts of directly observed events and scenes.

Irrespective of the subject of the articles (Pro-choice, Neutral, or Pro-life), the topics usually reported were Group Action (notably Rallies/Protests) and Government Action (generally Funding and Other Legislation).

Journalists who are aware of the social responsibility of the press can discern from the above that the establishment falls short of its expected performance.

Mere reportage is not enough.

The Commission on the Freedom of the Press noted in 1947 that the freedom of the press comes with the responsibility of providing the current intelligence needed by a free society. It listed these five ideal demands:

1. A truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning
2. A forum for the exchange of comment and criticism
3. The presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society
4. The projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society
5. Full access to the day's intelligence.<sup>1</sup>

It is heartwarming to note that circulation size is not a significant factor in the publication of news on abortion. Were it so, pity the readers in small cities for what could have been a yawning lack of exposure of this wrenching moral and legal issue of our times.

Another finding which nullified the researcher's hypothesis can give consolation to journalists and readers alike: the sex of the reporter is not significant in determining the length of articles on abortion. Objectivity is an ideal much sought after in news reporting, and the fact that neither male nor female reporters indicate a general tendency to write longer articles due to sex bias is comforting to know.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The abortion issue gained widespread media attention in June, 1987, due to the sudden resignation of U.S. Supreme

Court Justice Lewis Powell. Powell's "swing" vote in the high court was said to be responsible for the 1973 decision to legalize abortion in the country. President Reagan's nomination of known conservative, Federal Judge Robert Bork, to replace the liberal-minded Powell was hotly debated in the U.S. Congress. Bork's nomination was eventually rejected.

The July, 1987 proposal of President Reagan that the use of federal funds for abortion counseling and related programs be prohibited also has fuelled discussions in many sectors.

With these factors in mind, a researcher can follow up with content analyses of abortion news.

Berelson noted that "direction" or "orientation" refers to the pro or con treatment of a subject matter.<sup>1</sup> Editorials lend themselves well to this type of content analysis. Abortion, a much-debated topic, certainly has figured in many editorials which can be compared, say, over a period of time to note possible changes in newspapers' editorial stance on the issue.

Magazines have a longer "shelf life" than newspapers, in the sense that issues do not become "stale" after one day. Because of their staying power on shelves and tabletops magazines can exert considerable influence on great numbers of readers. Articles on abortion, as published in selected periodicals, present another possibility for content analysis. Findings might be correlated with survey results on multiple

readership of issues, as what happens when a reader shares copies with family and friends.

Newspapers also might take the findings of this study and change their treatment of this sociological issue, lifting it to the plane of discussion instead of straight reporting. Using the common news pegs to guarantee timeliness, interviews with bioethics professors, theologians, social scientists and philosophers might be combined with survey data to provide more substantial reading on the abortion issue for the general public. Social responsibility so dictates.

Supporters of either side of the abortion issue also can use the findings of this study to modify their methods of promoting their causes.

Lazarsfeld and Merton have suggested two other functions of mass communication which seem to be applicable to mass-communicated news: status conferral and the enforcement of social norms. Status conferral means that news reports about a member of any society enhance his prestige. By focusing the power of the mass media upon him, society confers upon him a high public status... Mass communication has an ethicizing function when it strengthens social control over the individual members of the mass society by bringing their deviant behavior into public view.<sup>3</sup>

Media attention is much desired by publicity-seeking groups, but when such attention focuses on the socially condemnable activities of a group, the attention may be tinged with negative judgments, thus threatening increased public support. Efforts of publicity, therefore, become self-defeating.

As with the recommendation to the press, lifting the issue to a plane of discussion instead of attracting attention through "showy" activities such as bombings and protests might prove a more viable alternative when promoting one's side in the abortion debate.

The researcher would like to tell others embarking on similar investigations to take advantage of data bases now available in many libraries. Indexes such as Newsbank save much legwork and money during data gathering. Also, familiarity with computer technology is a must before one starts the research phase in a graduate program; such knowledge helps one to organize data for future analysis. Finally, it serves a graduate student very well to choose a good working committee. Academicians who work with students, instead of merely signing their forms, can provide valuable input in a research effort through networking with experts known to the professor, suggestions for data analysis, and the much-needed encouragement that is often crucial in the final stages of doctoral work,



ENDNOTES

1

The Commission on the Freedom of the Press, A Free and Responsible Press (Chicago, 1947), pp. 21-27.

2

Bernard Berelson, Content Analysis in Communication Research (New York, 1952), p. 150.

3

Charles R. Wright, "Functional Analysis and Mass Communication," People, Society and Mass Communications, eds. L.A. Dexter and D.M. White (New York, 1968), p. 102.

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## APPENDIXES

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APPENDIX A

REGIONAL AND STATE ASSIGNMENTS



## REGIONAL AND STATE ASSIGNMENTS

- I. NEW ENGLAND
  - A. New Hampshire
  - B. Vermont
  - C. Massachusetts
  - D. Rhode Island
  - E. Connecticut
  
- II. MIDDLE ATLANTIC
  - A. New York
  - B. New Jersey
  - C. Philadelphia
  
- III. EAST NORTH CENTRAL
  - A. Ohio
  - B. Indiana
  - C. Illinois
  - D. Michigan
  - E. Wisconsin

## IV. WEST NORTH CENTRAL

- A. Minnesota
- B. Iowa
- C. Missouri
- D. North Dakota
- E. Nebraska
- F. Kansas

## V. SOUTH ATLANTIC

- A. Delaware
- B. Maryland
- C. District of Columbia
- D. Virginia
- E. North Carolina
- F. Georgia
- G. Florida

## VI. EAST SOUTH CENTRAL

- A. Kentucky
- B. Tennessee
- C. Alabama
- D. Mississippi

## VII. WEST SOUTH CENTRAL

- A. Arkansas
- B. Louisiana
- C. Oklahoma
- D. Texas

## VIII. MOUNTAIN STATES

- A. Idaho
- B. Colorado
- C. New Mexico
- D. Arizona
- E. Utah
- F. Nevada

## IX. PACIFIC STATES

- A. Washington
- B. Oregon
- C. California
- D. Alaska
- E. Hawaii

APPENDIX B

NUMERICAL ASSIGNMENTS OF NEWSPAPERS

## NUMERICAL ASSIGNMENTS OF NEWSPAPERS

State	Newspaper	Number
Alabama	Birmingham News	1
	Montgomery Journal & Advertiser	2
Alaska	Anchorage Times	1
	Fairbanks Daily New-Miner	2
	Juneau Empire	3
Arizona	(Tucson) Arizona Daily Star	1
	Phoenix Republic	2
Arkansas	(Little Rock) Arkansas Democrat	1
California	Los Angeles Times	1
	Riverside Press-Enterprise	2
	Sacramento Bee	3
	San Bernardino Sun	4
	San Francisco Chronicle	5
Colorado	Denver Post	1
	Rocky Mountain News	2
Connecticut	The Hartford Courant	1
Delaware	(Wilmington) Evening Journal	1
District of Columbia	Washington Post	1
	Washington Times	2
Florida	Ft. Myers News Press	1
	Pensacola News Journal	2
Georgia	Atlanta Journal	1
Hawaii	Honolulu Advertiser	1
Idaho	Boise Statesman	1
Illinois	Chicago Tribune	1
	Rockford Register-Star	2
Indiana	Bloomington Herald-Telephone	1
	Indianapolis Star	2

State	Newspaper	Number
Iowa	Des Moines Register	1
Kansas	Topeka Capital Journal	1
	Wichita Eagle Beacon	2
Kentucky	Louisville Courier-Journal	1
	Owensboro Messenger-Inquirer	2
Louisiana	Baton Rouge Morning Advocate	1
	Shreveport Journal	2
Maryland	Annapolis Capital	1
	Baltimore Sun	2
	Westminster Carroll County Times	3
Massachusetts	Boston Herald	1
	Lowell Sun	2
	Springfield Morning Union	3
Michigan	Ann Arbor News	1
	Detroit News	2
	Grand Rapids Press	3
	Lansing State Journal	4
	(Pontiac) Oakland Press	5
Minnesota	Minneapolis Star-Tribune	1
	St. Paul Pioneer Press	2
Mississippi	Jackson Clarion-Ledger	1
	Meridian Star	2
Missouri	Jefferson City Post Tribune	1
	Kansas City Star	2
	Kansas City Times	3
	St. Louis Post Dispatch	4
Nebraska	Omaha World Herald	1
Nevada	Carson City Appeal	1
New Hampshire	Concord Monitor	1
	Manchester Union Leader	2
New Jersey	Elizabeth Daily Journal	1
	Hackensack Record	2
	Neptune Ashbury Park Press	3
New Mexico	(Santa Fe) New Mexican	1

State	Newspaper	Number
New York	Albany Times Union	1
	(New York) Daily News	2
	New York Post	3
	Rochester Democrat and Chronicle	4
	Syracuse Herald American	5
North Carolina	Raleigh News and Observer	1
	Salisbury Evening Post	2
North Dakota	Fargo Forum	1
Ohio	Akron Beacon-Journal	1
	Cleveland Plain Dealer	2
	Cincinnati Enquirer	3
	Cincinnati Post	4
Oklahoma	(Oklahoma City) Daily Oklahoman	1
Oregon	Eugene Register Guard	1
	(Portland) Oregonian	2
	Salem Statesman Journal	3
Pennsylvania	Norristown Times Herald	1
	Philadelphia Inquirer	2
	Pittsburgh Press	3
	York Daily Record	4
Rhode Island	Providence Journal	1
Tennessee	Nashville Tennessean	1
Texas	Dallas Times Herald	1
Utah	Salt Lake City Deseret News	1
	Salt Lake City Tribune	2
Vermont	Barre-Montpelier Times Argus	1
	Burlington Free Press	2
	Rutland Daily Herald	3
Virginia	Roanoke Times and World News	1
	Richmond Times Dispatch	2
	Norfolk Pilot	3
Wisconsin	Madison Capital Times	1
	Milwaukee Journal	2
Washington	Longview Daily News	1
	(Olympia) Olympian	2
	Seattle Times	3
	Yakima Herald Republic	4

APPENDIX C

THEMES OF ABORTION NEWS ARTICLES



## THEMES OF NEWS ARTICLES

JANUARY, 1986

1. Criminal Acts
2. Protests
3. Bombings
4. Murder
5. Control of One's Body
6. Women's Rights
7. Laws
8. Fetus/Human Being
9. Illegality
10. Services
11. Roe V. Wade
12. Parental Notification

## THEMES OF NEWS ARTICLES

FEBRUARY, 1986

1. Legislative Matter
2. Judicial Matter
3. Trespassing
4. Media - Films, Leaflets
5. Statistics
6. Teen Abortions
7. Roe v. Wade
8. Attribution to Authority Figure
9. Political Implication
10. Counselling
11. Psychological Effects of Abortion
12. Funding - Insurance

## THEMES OF NEWS ARTICLES

MARCH, 1986

1. Insurance Coverage
2. Statistics (Number of Abortions)
3. Ordinance/Bill/Legislative Action
4. Demonstration/Protest/March/Violence
5. Psychological Implications of Abortion
6. Adoption as Alternative

## THEMES OF NEWS ARTICLES

APRIL, 1986

1. Trespassing
2. Judicial Action
3. Legislative Action
4. Meetings
5. State Funding
6. Teen Abortions
7. Scientific Development
8. Balanced Presentation of Both Sides

## THEMES OF NEWS ARTICLES

MAY, 1986

1. Judicial Action
2. Legislative Action
3. Political Implication
4. Meetings
5. Ethical Aspect
6. Debate/Meeting
7. Media Campaign
8. Medicaid/Tax-Funded Abortions
9. Protests
10. Parental Notification/Teen Abortions
11. Post-Abortion Syndrome
12. Policy Shift

## THEMES OF NEWS ARTICLES

JUNE, 1986

1. Judicial Matter
2. Funding - State
3. Protest/Rally
4. March
5. Legislative Matter
6. Attribution to Authority Figure
7. Statistics - Violence, Abortions, Polls
8. Violence - Bombings, Arrests, Arson
9. Meeting - Convention
10. Political Implication
11. Psychological Effects of Abortion
12. Campaigns - Slide Shows, Videos, Booklets
13. Murder
14. Counselling

## THEMES OF NEWS ARTICLES

JULY, 1986

1. Protests, Demonstrations
2. Legislative Action
3. Attribution to Authority Figure
4. Political Implication
5. Statistics ~ Polls, Abortions
6. Medical Aspect, Scientific Aspect
7. Teen Abortions
8. Ethical Aspect

## THEMES OF NEWS ARTICLES

AUGUST, 1986

1. Abortion Funding
2. Protests/Arrests
3. Violence
4. Political Implications
5. Butchering Babies
6. Judicial Action
7. Attribution to Authority Figure



## THEMES OF NEWS ARTICLES

SEPTEMBER, 1986

1. State Funding for Abortions
2. Judicial Action
3. Aftermath of Abortion - Stress
4. Teen Abortions
5. Rally/Demonstration
6. Print Media - Advertisements
7. Meeting
8. Abortion Statistics
9. Attribution to Authority Figure
10. Adoption Alternative

## THEMES OF NEWS ARTICLES

OCTOBER, 1986

1. Teen Abortions
2. Protest. Meeting
3. State Funding
4. Legislative Action
5. Statistics - Polls
6. Medical Aspect
7. Bombing

## THEMES OF NEWS ARTICLES

NOVEMBER, 1986

1. State Funding
2. Ethical Issues
3. Legislative Action
4. Statistics/Polls
5. Political Implications
6. Teen Abortions

## THEMES OF NEWS ARTICLES

DECEMBER, 1986

1. State Funding
2. Attribution to Authority Figure
3. Traumatic Effects of Abortion
4. Media - Ads, Films
5. Medical Development
6. Legislative Action
7. Protests
8. Statistics
9. Bombing
10. Ethical Considerations
11. Judicial Action - Lawsuit

APPENDIX D

NEWSPAPERS BY CLASS, REGION, AND CIRCULATION

NEWSPAPERS BY CLASS, REGION, AND  
CIRCULATION SIZE

Class	Region	Newspaper	Circulation Size
1	9	Empire	7,800
1	8	Nevada Appeal	9,363
1	1	Times Argus	12,603
1	8	New Mexican	17,116
1	4	Post Tribune	17,555
1	9	Daily New Miner	17,664
1	5	Carroll County Times	18,552
1	1	Monitor	20,026
1	6	Star	23,116
1	1	Daily Herald	23,996
1	9	Daily News	24,396
1	7	Journal	24,645
1	5	Evening Post	25,306
1	9	Olympian	27,025
1	3	Herald Telegram	27,625
1	3	Capital Times	29,189
2	2	Times Herald	31,924
2	6	Messenger Inquirer	32,639
2	2	Daily Journal	34,395
2	5	Capital	37,933

Class	Region	Newspaper	Circulation Size
2	9	Herald Republic	39,992
2	2	Daily Record	40,085
2	9	Times	42,212
2	3	News	48,775
2	6	Journal Advertiser	51,174
2	1	Free Press	51,601
2	9	Statesman Journal	53,498
2	4	Forum	54,253
2	5	Evening Journal	54,456
2	8	Statesman	54,609
2	1	Sun	55,473
2	5	News Journal	56,461
3	8	Deseret News	62,012
3	5	News Press	63,151
3	4	Capital Journal	66,174
3	6	Clarion Ledger	67,352
3	3	State Journal	67,449
3	9	Register Guard	68,570
3	1	Morning Union	69,351
3	1	Union Leader	69,965
3	3	Register Star	71,798
3	3	Oakland Press	71,898
3	8	Daily Star	72,360
3	5	Times World News	76,893
3	7	Democrat	80,371

Class	Region	Newspaper	Circulation Size
3	9	Sun	80,484
3	7	Morning Advocate	82,169
3	9	Advertiser	82,690
3	1	Journal	87,762
3	2	Times Union	88,296
3	5	Times	88,571
4	8	Republic	102,691
4	8	Tribune	109,318
4	4	Pioneer Press	117,900
4	4	World Herald	118,753
5	6	Tennessean	122,431
5	3	Post	125,220
5	9	Press Enterprise	126,451
5	4	Eagle Beacon	126,807
5	2	Ashbury Park Press	130,672
5	2	Democrat Chronicle	131,809
5	5	Observer	132,000
5	3	Press	135,794
5	5	Times Dispatch	138,191
5	5	Pilot	142,702
6	2	Record	156,011
6	3	Beacon Journal	157,914
6	6	News	168,196
6	6	Courier Journal	170,699



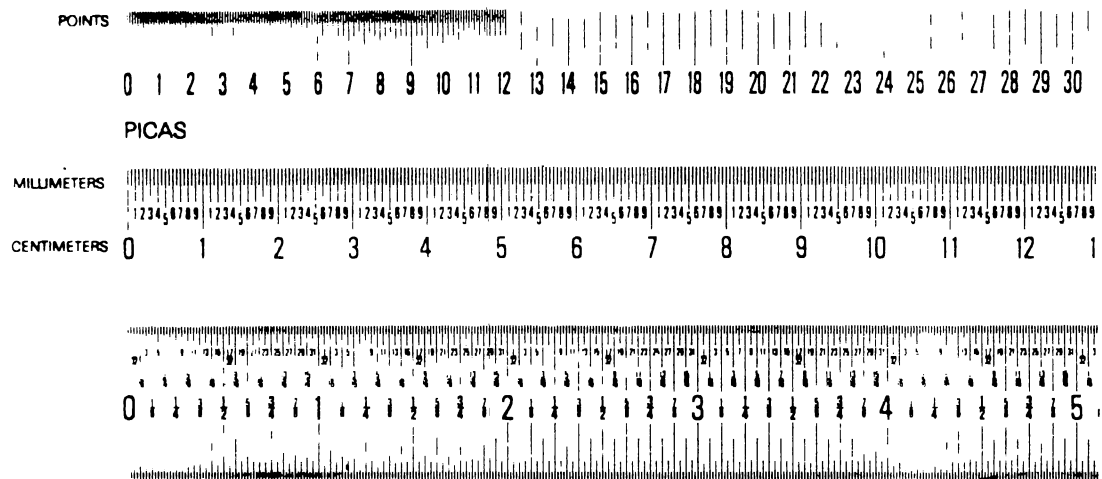
Class	Region	Newspaper	Circulation Size
7	5	Journal	182,717
7	3	Enquirer	189,664
7	5	Sun	206,032
8	8	Post	213,042
8	1	Courant	221,161
8	4	Star	225,543
8	9	Times	225,552
8	9	Bee	227,708
8	3	Star	229,233
8	7	Times Herald	231,224
8	4	Register	233,036
8	2	Herald American	233,753
8	2	Press	238,283
9	7	Daily Oklahoman	241,608
10	4	Times	275,584
10	4	Post Dispatch	277,527
10	3	Journal	293,800
11	9	Oregonian	303,720
11	8	Rocky Mountain News	317,930
11	1	Herald	355,253
11	4	Star Tribune	301,808
11	3	Plain Dealer	452,938
11	2	Inquirer	519,621
11	9	Chronicle	545,622
11	3	News	645,016

Class	Region	Newspaper	Circulation Size
11	5	Post	735,990
11	3	Tribune	762,842
11	2	Post	803,995
11	9	Times	1,054,123
11	2	Daily News	1,353,156

APPENDIX E

ILLUSTRATIONS OF POINT SIZES

## ILLUSTRATIONS OF POINT SIZES



6 points = 1 pica

6 picas = 1 inch

72 points = 1 inch

***Backers push  
amendment  
on abortion***

An 18-point headline

# Abortion clinic protesters still risking arrest

A 36-point headline

# **ABORTION CLINIC BOMBING TRIGGERS BEEFED UP POLICE PATROLS**

A 48-point headline

APPENDIX F

NEWSBANK CITY OF PUBLICATION LIST

# NewsBank City of Publication List

NewsBank, inc. uses publications from the following cities in its products.

**ALABAMA**  
Anniston  
Birmingham  
Decatur  
Florence  
Huntsville  
Mobile

**ALASKA**  
Anchorage  
Fairbanks  
Juneau  
Kenai  
Ketchikan  
Sitka

**ARIZONA**  
Chandler  
Kingman  
Mesa  
Phoenix  
Prescott  
Scottsdale  
Tempe  
Tucson  
Yuma

**ARKANSAS**  
El Dorado  
Fayetteville  
Fort Smith  
Jonesboro  
Little Rock  
Pine Bluff

**CALIFORNIA**  
Bakersfield  
Chico  
Costa Mesa  
Covina  
Fairfield  
Hayward  
Long Beach  
Los Angeles  
Merced  
Modesto  
Oakland  
Palo Alto  
Redding  
Riverside  
Sacramento  
Salinas  
San Bernardino  
San Diego  
San Francisco  
San Jose  
San Luis Obispo  
San Mateo  
San Rafael  
Santa Ana  
Santa Barbara  
Santa Cruz  
Santa Monica  
Stockton  
Thousand Oaks  
Torrance  
Vallejo

**CALIFORNIA (cont.)**  
Ventura  
Visalia

**COLORADO**  
Colorado Springs  
Denver  
Durango  
Fort Collins  
Grand Junction  
Greeley  
Pueblo

**CONNECTICUT**  
Bridgeport  
Bristol  
Danbury  
Hartford  
Manchester  
New Britain  
New Haven  
New London  
Norwalk  
Norwich  
Stamford  
Waterbury

**DELAWARE**  
Dover  
Wilmington

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

**FLORIDA**  
Clearwater  
Daytona Beach  
Fort Myers  
Fort Pierce  
Hollywood  
Jacksonville  
Miami  
Ocala  
Panama City  
Pensacola  
St. Petersburg  
Sarasota  
Tallahassee  
West Palm Beach

**GEORGIA**  
Albany  
Atlanta  
Columbus  
Lawrenceville  
Macon  
Rome

**HAWAII**  
Honolulu

**IDAHO**  
Boise  
Coeur d'Alene  
Lewiston

**ILLINOIS**  
Alton  
Aurora

**ILLINOIS (cont.)**  
Belleville  
Champaign/Urbana  
Chicago  
Danville  
Joliet  
Moline  
Quincy  
Rock Island  
Rockford  
Springfield  
Waukegan

**INDIANA**  
Anderson  
Bloomington  
Columbus  
Elkhart  
Evansville  
Fort Wayne  
Indianapolis  
Lafayette  
Marion  
Muncie  
South Bend

**IOWA**  
Ames  
Cedar Rapids  
Council Bluffs  
Des Moines  
Dubuque  
Fort Dodge  
Sioux City  
Waterloo

**KANSAS**  
Coffeyville  
Emporia  
Hutchinson  
Manhattan  
Ottawa  
Salina  
Topeka  
Wichita

**KENTUCKY**  
Ashland  
Bowling Green  
Covington  
Frankfort  
Louisville  
Owensboro  
Paducah

**LOUISIANA**  
Alexandria  
Baton Rouge  
Lake Charles  
New Orleans  
Shreveport

**MAINE**  
Augusta  
Bangor  
Kennebec

**MAINE (cont.)**  
Lewiston  
Portland  
Topsham

**MARYLAND**  
Annapolis  
Baltimore  
Salisbury  
Westminster

**MASSACHUSETTS**  
Boston  
Fall River  
Framingham  
Holyoke  
Hyannis  
Lawrence  
Lowell  
Lynn  
Northampton  
Pittsfield  
Springfield

**MICHIGAN**  
Ann Arbor  
Battle Creek  
Bay City  
Detroit  
Grand Rapids  
Jackson  
Kalamazoo  
Monroe  
Muskegon  
Pontiac  
Port Huron  
Royal Oak  
Saginaw  
Sturgis  
St. Joseph  
Traverse City

**MINNESOTA**  
Brainerd  
International Falls  
Mankato  
Minneapolis  
Rochester  
St. Cloud  
St. Paul

**MISSISSIPPI**  
Hattiesburg  
Jackson  
Meridian  
Tupelo

**MISSOURI**  
Columbia  
Independence  
Jefferson City  
Joplin  
Kansas City  
Springfield  
St. Joseph  
St. Louis

**MONTANA**

Billings  
Butte  
Great Falls  
Helena

**NEBRASKA**

Fremont  
Grand Island  
Lincoln  
North Platte  
Omaha  
Scottsbluff

**NEVADA**

Carson City  
Las Vegas  
Reno

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Concord  
Keene  
Manchester  
Nashua

**NEW JERSEY**

Asbury Park  
Atlantic City  
Cherry Hill  
Elizabeth  
Fairfield  
Hackensack  
Millville  
Newark  
Passaic  
Trenton  
Vineland  
Willingboro  
Woodbridge  
Woodbury

**NEW MEXICO**

Albuquerque  
Clovis  
Farmington  
Las Cruces  
Santa Fe

**NEW YORK**

Albany  
Buffalo  
Elmira  
Glens Falls  
Long Island  
Middletown  
New York  
Olean  
Plattsburgh  
Port Chester  
Poughkeepsie  
Rochester  
Staten Island  
Syracuse  
Troie  
Utica

**NORTH CAROLINA**

Asheville  
Charlotte  
Durham  
Gastonia  
Greensboro  
High Point  
Raleigh  
Salisbury  
Winston-Salem

**NORTH DAKOTA**

Bismarck  
Fargo  
Jamestown  
Minot

**OHIO**

Akron  
Canton  
Chillicothe  
Cincinnati  
Cleveland  
Columbus  
Dayton  
Elyria  
Findlay  
Fremont  
Hamilton  
Lima  
Lorain  
Marietta  
Martins Ferry  
Middletown  
Port Clinton  
Sandusky  
Springfield  
Toledo  
Warren

**OKLAHOMA**

Enid  
Lawton  
Muskogee  
Norman  
Oklahoma City  
Tulsa

**OREGON**

Coos Bay  
Eugene  
Klamath Falls  
Pendleton  
Portland  
Roseburg  
Salem

**PENNSYLVANIA**

Beaver  
Chambersburg  
Dover  
Easton  
Greensburg  
Harrisburg  
Hazleton

**PENNSYLVANIA (cont )**

Johnstown  
Lansdale  
Levittown  
Philadelphia  
Pittsburgh  
Pottsville  
Reading  
Scranton  
Sharon  
Washington  
Wilkes-Barre  
Williamsport  
York

**RHODE ISLAND**

Pawtucket  
Providence  
West Warwick  
Westerly

**SOUTH CAROLINA**

Aiken  
Anderson  
Charleston  
Columbia  
Greenville  
Myrtle Beach

**SOUTH DAKOTA**

Huron  
Pierre  
Rapid City  
Sioux Falls  
Vermillion  
Yankton

**TENNESSEE**

Chattanooga  
Clarksville  
Jackson  
Knoxville  
Memphis  
Nashville  
Oak Ridge

**TEXAS**

Amarillo  
Austin  
Beaumont  
Bryan  
Dallas  
El Paso  
Galveston  
Harlingen  
Houston  
McAllen  
Odessa  
Port Arthur  
San Angelo  
San Antonio  
Texarkana  
Tyler  
Victoria  
Waco  
Wichita Falls

**UTAH**

Ogden  
Provo  
Salt Lake City

**VERMONT**

Barre  
Brattleboro  
Burlington  
Manchester Center  
Rutland  
White River Junction

**VIRGINIA**

Fredericksburg  
Harrisonburg  
Lynchburg  
Norfolk  
Richmond  
Roanoke  
Winchester  
Woodbridge

**WASHINGTON**

Bellingham  
Bremerton  
Everett  
Longview  
Olympia  
Seattle  
Spokane  
Vancouver  
Wenatchee  
Yakima

**WEST VIRGINIA**

Beckley  
Charleston  
Huntington

**WISCONSIN**

Appleton  
Eau Claire  
Greer Bay  
Janesville  
Kenosha  
La Crosse  
Madison  
Milwaukee  
Sheboygan  
Superior  
Wausau

**WYOMING**

Casper  
Cheyenne  
Gillette  
Rawlins  
Riverton  
Rock Springs  
Sheridan



VITA

Perla Buhay Howard

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPER PORTRAYAL OF  
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DECEMBER 31, 1986

Major Field: Higher Education

Area of Specialization: Mass Communication

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