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Fairness and balance in affirmative action reporting: How four prestige newspapers cover the issue

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How four prestige newspapers cover the issue.

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FAIRNESS AND BALANCE IN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION REPORTING;

How four prestige newspapers cover the issue.

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University of Nebraska, 1999

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The purpose of this study was to examine whether or not newspaper reporting on affirmative action is fair and balanced. This was performed through an examination of four prestige newspapers. A purposive sample of 25 news articles on affirmative action was chosen from each newspaper beginning in June of 1998. A similar examination of 25 articles from 1978 also was conducted.

A content analysis was done to determine if an article favored either affirmative action proponents or affirmative action opponents. The articles were coded for: 1) Number of sources cited (paraphrased or quoted) for each side of the issue; 2) Number of words attributed to each side by quote or paraphrase; 3a) Partisan source assertions for each side appearing in the first paragraph; 3b) Partisan source assertions for each side appearing in the second through fifth paragraph; and 3c) Partisan source assertions for each side appearing in the first half of the story.

A story was determined to be unfair and imbalanced in favor of one side if that side was favored in two of the three measures. Overall, affirmative action reporting in the sample from 1998 was unfair and imbalanced in favor of affirmative action proponents. Of the 100 stories coded, 62 percent favored pro-affirmative action sources in a majority of the three measures. Affirmative action opponents were favored in 33 percent of stories, while five percent were coded as balanced. Of the 18 stories that were one-sided, 15 favored affirmative action proponents. Of the 82 two-sided stories, 56.1 percent favored proponents in a majority of the three measures. Opponents were favored in a majority of the three measures in 36.5 percent of the two-sided stories, while 7.3 percent of the two-sided stories were balanced. The difference was even more pronounced in the 1978 sample.

The findings are in accord with previous research that indicates the press covers issue conflicts unequally when fairness and balance are defined as even-handed and equal treatment of sources. The author calls for communication scholars to conduct more studies linking affirmative action and the media.

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A Dialogue or Monologue

The scene was like something from the end of a *Perry Mason* episode when Raymond Burr has the guilty party sweating nervously on the stand as he fires off accusations in rapid succession. Only instead of the fictitious attorney who never lost a case, it was Bill Clinton on the attack. And instead of a criminal, the "guilty" party was conservative author Abigail Thernstrom. Standing over Thernstrom, who was seated on a stage before an audience, Clinton with a blur of questions livened what until then had been a rather ho-hum town hall meeting on race relations.

"Do you favor the affirmative action program that produced Colin Powell?" Clinton asked Thernstrom. Apparently caught off guard by the abruptness of his question, Thernstrom hesitated, then began to answer. Clinton, however, interrupted her in mid-sentence: "Yes or no?"

Again, Thernstrom attempted an answer. But Clinton cut her off once more. "Yes or no? Yes or no?" Flustered, Thernstrom managed only a feeble response.

The encounter took place in December 1997 during a meeting in Akron, Ohio, between Clinton's Race Initiative Advisory Board and others invited to discuss race relations in the United States. The seven-person board, chaired by historian John Hope Franklin, was part of Clinton's *One America in the 21st Century: The President's Initiative on Race*. The board was charged with, among other things, promoting a "national dialogue" on race issues.

The exchange between President Clinton and Thernstrom, though, did not appear to be much of a dialogue. Given the nature of their discussion, newspapers, magazines and television news programs devoted it lead attention. More heated exchanges occurred at other town hall meetings hosted by the Race Advisory Board. A similar session in Denver in March 1998 concluded with a shouting match between the board and Native Americans who, in protest of the exclusion of a Native American representative on the advisory board, refused to let Chairman Franklin speak.[1] In an April 1998 town hall meeting that included sports figures, Latinos protested the exclusion of a member of their race on the panel, holding demonstrations prior to, during and after the meeting.[2]

The loudest and most consistent protests, though, came from those who oppose affirmative action, the topic that perhaps elicited the most discussion at the board's town hall meetings. Affirmative action opponents charged that President Clinton's national "dialogue" was more of a "monologue" that favored proponents of affirmative action and left them shut out of the debate. They may have had a point. Franklin, the board's

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[1]Tina Griego, "Dozens Leave Meeting During Protest," Rocky Mountain News 24 March 1998, 1.
[2]Pauline Arrillaga, "Latinos Upset Over White House Town Meeting," Associated Press 13 April 1998.

chairman, said publicly that he was not interested in what opponents of affirmative action had to say.[3] He also said affirmative action critics like Ward Connerly, a University of California Regent instrumental in getting that state's Proposition 209 passed, had "nothing to contribute" to a discussion on race.[4]

It is unclear whether or not Clinton's Race Advisory Board fostered a national dialogue that improved U.S. race relations. Charges of the board directing a "monologue," however, prompted the researcher's interest in the status of the affirmative action debate elsewhere. More specifically, in newspapers. Simply put, does affirmative action reporting in newspapers present a dialogue with more or less equal give and take between proponents and opponents, or is there a monologue that favors one side? In other words, is affirmative action reporting, in general, fair and balanced? Clinton's race initiative prompted at least one journalist to consider the link between affirmative action and the media:

> The White House-sponsored dialogue on race has been a flop up to now in part because too many people, black and white, don't know what they're talking about. That includes the media, especially in our treatment of affirmative action. We have created the impression that without "preferences" blacks would be shut out of the higher education system. And we have created the corollary impression that "minority preferences" are rampant, imperiling the educational future of far more qualified whites. But in all the uproar and despite countless words written and broadcast on the issue, the information offered the public on affirmation action is limited.[5]

While Harwood's criticism doesn't talk of fairness and balance in affirmative action reporting, he does raise a point heard elsewhere — that the affirmative action debate often is hampered by muddled meanings. This point, which is developed more

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[3]Thomas Sowell, "It's Really a Monologue on Race," Omaha World-Herald 13 December 1997, 17.
[4]Karen Breslau, "A Polite Kind of Race War: Inside the Struggle to Make a Clinton Idea Work," Newsweek 131:4 (January 26, 1998): 29.
[5]Richard Harwood, "Debating Without Facts," The Washington Post 12 January 1998, A17.

fully in the ensuing literature review, is somewhat surprising given the attention devoted to affirmative action and the importance accorded it in the political and social arenas of debate. In *The Affirmative Action Debate,* a collection of 29 essays from voices on all sides of the issue, editor George E. Curry calls affirmative action "the nation's sharpest political divide," and adds that, "No issue is more controversial; no policy affects more citizens; no program has more potential to divide our nation or bring it together."[6]

If that is the case, what are newspapers — in the spirit of social responsibility — doing to help bridge the affirmative action divide?

Regardless of whether a dialogue or monologue best describes affirmative action reporting, newspapers have not received passing marks from many for helping to define the parameters of debate. "In a very real sense," Darien A. McWhirter writes, "the division has been between what public officials felt the society needed and what people actually wanted, not between whites and minorities or men and women. The media have only contributed to this confusion by failing to present in any detail what was really going on."[7] Richard F. Tomasson refers to one media analysis that reveals newspapers rarely specify what they have in mind when printing affirmative action opinion or news. He writes, "It is small wonder then that . . . the majority claim little knowledge of the definition and the workings of affirmative action."[8] Norman Solomon and Jeff Cohen note, "With political winds howling against affirmative action, many supporters seem to be backpedaling and running for cover. Opponents, meanwhile,

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[6]George E. Curry, The Affirmative Action Debate (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1996), front cover.
[7]Darien A. McWhirter, The End of Affirmative Action: Where Do We Go From Here? (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1996), xix.
[8]Richard F. Tomasson, Faye J. Crosby and Sharon D. Herzberger, Affirmative Action: The Pros and Cons of Policy and Practice (Washington, D.C.: The American University Press, 1996), 9.

keep raging against 'reverse discrimination.' In the midst of the gathering storm, American journalism is doing little to provide clarity."[9]

It seems fair to say, then, that newspapers have failed in at least one regard when it comes to affirmative action reporting — defining what it is they are reporting on. When they are judged by other standards — fairness and balance — do newspapers fare any better? This study attempts to answer that question.

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[9]Norman Solomon and Jeff Cohen, Wizards of Media Oz: Behind the Curtain of Mainstream News (Monroe, Me.: Common Courage Press, 1997), 92.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Affirmative Action's Piecemeal Development;

Fairness and Balance as Journalistic Standards;

Use of Sources

Affirmative Action

An historical overview

"Affirmative action" is a two-word phrase that doesn't always add up to the same meaning for everyone. As McWhirter notes, "It is a term that has had many definitions and has provoked very intense feelings. Affirmative action has become such a vague term that it is used in dozens of different contexts to either praise or attack, depending on the speaker and the audience."[10] Likewise, Ronald Turner writes, "It has different meanings and definitions which flow, and are derived, from an individual's

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[10]McWhirter, The End of Affirmative Action, 6.

view of the legitimacy of the use of race-conscious or sex-conscious preferential remedies for unlawful discrimination. Alternative terminology used to define or describe affirmative action include 'reverse discrimination,' 'affirmative discrimination,' or 'quotas.'"[11]

Perhaps a bit of background on the subject is in order before advancing (see McWhirter's timeline Appendix A).

Discussions of affirmative action may best be understood within the context of the larger civil rights movement in the United States in the last half of the 20th century. In the 1940s, black Americans had begun migrating to the urban North, a population shift that changed the look of society and precipitated an increase in violent and non-violent clashes between blacks and whites. Racially-motivated violence — especially white-on-black violence — and other forms of conflict between the races had a long history in the United States. But by the late 1950s black Americans began asserting their rights more forcefully and more publicly. Throughout the 1960s clashes between blacks and whites grew more intense and more frequent, and the civil rights movement took firm root.

Initially, one of the more significant (and often overlooked) government civil rights actions was President Truman's 1948 Executive Order to desegregate the military. Change came more dramatically and rapidly, however, with the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in 1954's *Brown v. Board of Education* that overturned the "separate but equal" doctrine of *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The civil rights debate was radically altered when that decision was followed by a string of events and occurrences, including the Montgomery bus boycott, the Little Rock school crisis, sit-ins, Freedom Rides and the marches on Birmingham and Washington. The tone perhaps was best provided in Martin Luther

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[11]Ronald Turner, The Past and Future of Affirmative Action: A Guide and Analysis for Human Resource Professionals and Corporate Counsel (Westport, Conn.: Quorum Books, 1990), xv.

King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech in which he talked of his vision of a color-blind society.

By the mid-1960s, a much different civil rights atmosphere existed than just 20 years earlier — one that was more explosive and violent as well as conducive to change. Segregation and Jim Crowism were ending, voting rights were being established and blatant, overt racism no longer was being tolerated. Many politicians began casting civil rights votes in sincere efforts to amend egregious past wrongs against black Americans and other minorities. But not all were so purely motivated. Outside the South at least, many politicians operated in fear of being charged a racist if they were not in support of the various civil rights bills being advanced, including those having to do with affirmative action. "Ironically, affirmative action had initially been conceived as a moderate means to rectify racial inequality," Peter B. Levy writes. "In the long run, affirmative action proved even more politically explosive than busing."[12]

A more focused look at the history of affirmative action illustrates how the policy's piecemeal development over the past 50-plus years in government, business and higher education contributed to the difficulty defining affirmative action.[13] As a government policy, its history often is dated to 1941 when A. Philip Randolph, then president of the powerful Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, convinced President Roosevelt to create the Fair Employment Practices Commission to increase black employment by defense contractors.[14] Since then, every president from Truman to Carter — whether Republican or Democrat — enacted a policy that fell under the exegesis of affirmative action.

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[12]Peter B. Levy, The Civil Rights Movement (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998), 34.
[13]See Affirmative Action Timeline, Appendix A.
[14]Curry, The Affirmative Action Debate, xiv.

The actual words first were seen in 1961 when President Kennedy signed Executive Order 10925 requiring federal contractors to take "affirmative action" to hire more minority employees. Next came Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act which provided that courts "may order such affirmative action as may be appropriate." That was followed by perhaps the most important affirmative action policy signed by a president, Lyndon Johnson's Executive Order 11246, which provided that government contracting agencies shall include in every government contract an agreement that the contractor will "(1) not discriminate against any employee or applicant because of race, color, religion, or national origin, and (2) take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed and treated during employment without regard to their protected status."[15]

Skeptics of this time were being assured that affirmative action policies then being passed would remain limited. William F. Buckley writes that "When the civil rights bills were passed in the mid-sixties, their principal sponsor, Senator Hubert Humphrey, promised in one melodramatic session that he would 'physically eat' the bill he was promoting if ever anyone attempted to use his bill in order to prefer a member of one race at the expense of another."[16]

But by the early 1970s, as Terry Eastland notes, affirmative action was being extended to cover additional minority groups and in some contexts women.[17] By that decade's end it also was receiving the support of the U.S. Supreme Court, which in a series of cases upheld affirmative action by state universities (*Regents of the University of*

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[15]Turner, The Past and Future of Affirmative Action 6.
[16]William F. Buckley Jr., Happy Days Were Here Again: Reflections of a Libertarian Journalist (New York: Random House, 1993), 48.
[17]Terry Eastland, Ending Affirmative Action: The Case for Colorblind Justice (New York: Basic Books, 1996), 7.

California vs. Bakke), private employers (*Steelworkers v. Weber*) and the federal government (*Fullilove v. Klutznick*).[18]

But as affirmative action expanded, the bi-partisan support it had received began to dissipate. In the 1980s, anti-affirmative arguments started taking root in a much more vocal, organized manner. ". . . by the 1980s," Levy writes, "conservatives were effectively arguing that affirmative action was not only a bad policy but that it violated the very principles King had espoused."[19] And affirmative action opponents began to be heard. By the 1990s, they were scoring victories that turned the tide against affirmative action. President Bush vetoed the Civil Rights Act of 1990, saying "the bill actually employs a maze of highly legalistic language to introduce the destructive force of quotas into our nation's employment system.[20] The House of Representatives also rejected the bill, 273-158. One year later, in November 1991, Bush signed a modified civil rights bill, saying, "Unlike last year's bill . . . this bill will not encourage quotas or racial preferences because this bill will not create lawsuits on the basis of numbers alone. I oppose quotas because they incite tensions between the races, between the sexes, between people who get trapped in a numbers game."[21]

Other actions against affirmative action also were made outside the White House. In 1995, in an ironic move given the *Bakke* case, the University of California Regents ended its affirmative action programs that gave preferences based on race.[22] That same year, the Supreme Court voted 5-4 in *Adarand v. Pena* that the appropriate standard for federal, state and local governments is "strict scrutiny" under which a race-

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[18]McWhirter, The End of Affirmative Action, 41-42.
[19]Levy, The Civil Rights Movement, 34.
[20]"Message to the Senate Returning Without Approval the Civil Rights Act of 1990," The George Bush Presidential Library; Presidential Papers (http://csdl.tamu.edu/bushlib/papers/) 22 October, 1990.
[21]"Remarks on the Civil Rights Act of 1991," The George Bush Presidential Library; Presidential Papers (http://csdl.tamu.edu/bushlib/papers/) 21 November, 1991.
[22]McWhirter, The End of Affirmative Action, 45.

based action passes constitutional muster, and that such action must be narrowly tailored to serve a "compelling governmental interest."[23] One year later the court refused to hear a federal court decision on the subject, thereby leaving intact a ruling that banned the University of Texas Law School from considering race in admissions decisions.[24] Later, in November 1996, California voters passed Proposition 209, the so-called "California Civil Rights Initiative" (CCRI) that outlawed all preferences by that state's government.

The debate continues today. Affirmative action proponents scored a victory in May 1998 when Congress voted 249-171 against a proposal to ban college admissions preferences based on ethnicity, gender or race. That followed a 225-194 vote in the House and a 58-37 vote in the Senate against an amendment to remove contract set-asides for women and minorities from a transportation spending bill.[25]

Changing justifications, definitions

Such piecemeal development can be attributed in part to the changing justifications for affirmative action. Originally, as McWhirter notes, affirmation action was meant "to compensate for specific instances of race and gender discrimination in the past by particular organizations."[26] Richard Tomasson, though, points out that the reasoning has expanded over the years to include diversity, "the idea that desirable and powerful positions in society, indeed, all areas of society, should reflect the ethnic and gender composition of the population. Diversity has become the euphemism for

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[23]George Will, "Ruling Settles Nothing on Affirmative Action," Omaha World-Herald 27 June, 1995, 23.
[24]"Affirmative Action Ruling is Upheld," Associated Press 2 July 1996, 6.
[25]Robert Greene, "House Rejects Ban on Affirmative Action in Admissions," Associated Press 6 May 1998.
[26]McWhirter, The End of Affirmative Action, 6-7.

affirmative action."[27] Barbara R. Bergmann adds a third justification for affirmative action: "to reduce the poverty of certain groups marked out by race or gender."[28]

Despite this long policy life, a definition remains elusive. McWhirter notes:

> You would look in vain for a definition of affirmative action in the statutes of the federal government or the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court. The feeling seems to have been that the concept, if we defined it, would lose some of its magical qualities. Politicians have used it in the most cynical ways imaginable to achieve reelection, allowing the context of their statements to convey the appropriate message. Social scientists have generally avoided it, which makes affirmative action unique in the world of American social policy.[29]

Tomasson points out that confusion is compounded by three branches of federal government, as well as state and local governments, separately pursuing affirmative action policies. Each government entity tends to treat it somewhat differently, resulting in a tangled web of laws and regulations.[30] Along these lines, Thomas Sowell notes that, "The conflicting tendencies and pressures of these various institutions have shifted the meaning of affirmative action and produced inconsistent concepts as well. There is no way to determine the meaning of 'affirmative action.'"[31]

But that hasn't stopped people from trying to offer one. For instance, Tomasson says:

> It is past time for a definition of affirmative action. A one-sentence definition of it and a one-sentence justification for it, which might temporarily satisfy both proponents and opponents, is this: Affirmative action is the protective or preferential treatment of persons in employment, the admission to selective schools and universities, and the granting of other social goods and

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[27]Tomasson, et al, Affirmative Action: The Pros and Cons of Policy and Practice, 123-124.
[28]Barbara R. Bergmann, In Defense of Affirmative Action (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1996), 9-10.
[29]McWhirter, The End of Affirmative Action , 8.
[30]Tomasson, et al, Affirmative Action: The Pros and Cons of Policy and Practice, 8.
[31]Thomas Sowell, Affirmative Action Reconsidered: Was it Necessary in Academia? (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1975), 3.

> resources (e.g., government contracts and licenses, set-asides) by giving positive consideration to specified races and ethnicities and to one gender or the other.[32]

Yet in the same book, co-authors Faye J. Crosby and Sharon D. Herzberger refer to the definition that occurs in official materials published by the Department of Labor as occurring "whenever an organization goes out of its way (i.e., exerts an effort) to help realize the goal of true equality among people."[33] McWhirter says affirmative action means three things: affirmative recruitment, affirmative fairness and affirmative preference.[34] Bergmann refers to it as "planning and acting to end the absence of certain kinds of people — those who belong to groups that have been subordinated or left out — from certain jobs and schools."[35] Norman Solomon and Jeff Cohen say affirmative action often is misreported as a "quota" system, and "involves special efforts in hiring and college admissions — at times with numerical targets — to compensate for patterns of bias against women and racial minorities."[36] George E. Curry cites the Civil Rights Commission's definition of affirmative action as a term "encompassing any measure, beyond simple termination of a discriminatory practice, which permits the consideration of race, national origin, sex or disability, along with other criteria, and which is adopted to provide opportunities to a class of qualified individuals who have either historically or actually been denied those opportunities, and to prevent the recurrence of discrimination in the future."[37] President Clinton, in a speech at the National Archives in July 1995, called affirmative action "an effort to develop a systematic approach to open the doors of education, employment and business development opportunities to

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[32]Tomasson, et al, Affirmative Action: The Pros and Cons of Policy and Practice, 123.
[33]Ibid., 12.
[34]McWhirter, The End of Affirmative Action , 4-5.
[35]Bergman, In Defense of Affirmative Action, 7.
[36]Solomon and Cohen, Wizards of Media Oz, 92.
[37]Curry, The Affirmative Action Debate, xiv.

qualified individuals who happen to be members of groups that have experienced long-standing and persistent discrimination."[38]

"Given the variety of definitions of affirmative action," Turner writes, "it is no surprise to find people supporting some instance of it yet rejecting other instances."[39]

Communication Research of Affirmative Action

Given this often contentious nature of affirmative action, then, it is surprising to find that the topic has received scant attention from communication researchers. In a search through the past 20 years of *Communication Abstracts*, for instance, a mere 11 studies on affirmative action were found. Thirteen of the years searched in that span had no articles at all cited. Computer searches of electronic databases fared little better. A query of the *FirstSearch* database seeking articles that deal with affirmative action in social science journals turned up 378 "hits." Of these, just two deal with affirmative action *and* the media, and none of the articles came from the communication field. Similar results came with searches of other electronic databases such as *EBSCOhost* and *ERIC*.

To at least one author, McWhirter, the dearth of scholarly research on affirmative action is no surprise:

> It is incredible to realize how little social scientists in the United States have studied the impact of affirmative action programs. Presumably most social scientists figured it was a no-win situation, given the general attitude in the country that anyone who questioned affirmative action must also be a racist or a sexist. Since social scientists could not know what their research would demonstrate, many of them apparently decided it would be better to leave well enough alone.[40]

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[38]The White House, Office of the Press Secretary , Remarks By William Jefferson Clinton On Affirmative Action, National Archives, July 19, 1995. One America website, http://www.whitehouse.gov/Initiatives/OneAmerica/19970610-1444.html
[39]Turner, The Past and Future of Affirmative Action, 6.
[40]McWhirter, The End of Affirmative Action, 61.

Communication researchers certainly seem to have left the subject untouched. Of the 11 articles found through *Communication Abstracts*, just one has as its specific focus the media's treatment of affirmative action. The others — while involving some communication interest — study affirmative action in a variety of different contexts, such as minority representation among the faculty of university journalism departments, minority representations in the newsroom or legal aspects of the policy.

Examinations of Affirmative Action and Communication Outside Academia

Professional organizations, non-scholarly journals and trade publications have dealt with the media's treatment of affirmative action more often than communication scholars. For instance, in a 1995 report the *National Association of Black Journalists* (NABJ) "deplored" what they saw as the use by newspapers of "the language of anti-affirmative action forces." This includes the use of phrases such as "racial preferences" and "preferential treatment" in lieu of "affirmative action." The report followed two studies by the association's Media Monitoring Committee. The first study was an analysis of articles in 15 newspapers following the U.S. Supreme Court's 1995 decision in *Adarand v. Pena*. The other reviewed articles in 18 newspapers after President Clinton's speech on affirmative action that same summer. Most of the papers, the committee reported, used affirmative action and alternative terms interchangeably. The association argued that since polls indicate public support for "affirmative action" but opposition for "preferential treatment," that "using the terms interchangeably, under the guise of objective reporting, unfairly characterizes affirmative action.[41]

The NABJ's report came three years after pollster Louis Harris opined against just such practices. Harris had polled 1,250 adults in 1991. When asked if they supported

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[41]"NABJ Deplores Prejudicial Language On Affirmative Action," National Association of Black Journalists (August 1995).

"affirmative action," 70 percent responded affirmatively. When asked if they supported "racial preferences," 48 percent were opposed. Because of this, Harris wrote, using "racial preference" as a substitute for "affirmative action," suggests to readers "not that an attempt is being made to right past wrongs, but that an injustice is taking place."[42]

Faye J. Crosby and Diana I. Cordova criticized the media along similar lines. In their survey of the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *USA Today*, the authors found that in 176 articles during a three-month period in 1995, fewer than 6 percent offered a definition of affirmative action when that issue was being discussed. This lack of context, they contend, comes amid "impassioned statements of sentiments," opposing and supporting affirmative action.[43] As noted earlier, several authors have berated the media for this same fault — failing to define affirmative action.[44]

The criticism of the media's handling of affirmative action does not end there. Ishmael Reed weighed in with an opinion piece spurred by California's Proposition 209, the so-called California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI). Reed charges that the media:

- Achieves ratings and power by making scapegoats of African Americans and occasionally Latinos for the ills of society;
- Uses the anti-affirmative action trend to exhort whites in their drive for power;
- Is a forum for white male writers who argue that affirmative action programs have balkanized American campuses;
- Promotes the myth that affirmative action harms the aspirations of non-black minorities; and,

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[42]Lou Harris, "Unequal Terms," Columbia Journalism Review 30 (January/February 1992): 20.
[43]Faye J. Crosby and Diana I. Cordova, "Words Worth of Wisdom: Toward and Understanding of Affirmative Action," Journal of Social Issues 52 (Winter 1996): 33-49.
[44]See page 4.

• Misinforms the public regarding affirmative action as a result of its owners — "corporations who have been in trouble with the law more often than the average mugger."[45]

Two years earlier, in another non-scholarly publication, Reed claimed local television polarizes whites and blacks by racializing issues such as welfare, affirmative action and crime. He writes, "The typical beneficiary of affirmative action programs for professional jobs is a white woman. Yet when reporting about such issues, local television news will usually air tape of blacks."[46]

Trade publications also have had their say on the matter. *Seattle Times* Publisher Frank A. Blethen suggests the media's handling of the affirmative action debate has produced "one of the goofiest, most unenlightened and one-sided discussions imaginable" and urges editorial writers to weigh in "with courage and aggressiveness" in favor of racial equality. Newspapers, Blethen says, must decide between perpetuating inequity and its consequences or aggressively practicing affirmative action and creating a "level playing field and a fair and just society."[47]

Similar non-scholarly publications also have reviewed affirmative action's treatment in the media. *Quill* discussed the 1995 war of words between *The Washington Post* (which has one of the nation's most integrated newsrooms) and *The New Republic* (which at the time had no full-time blacks on staff).[48] *Editor and Publisher* has reported on the topic several times, including: the fallout after the *Hartford Courant* was persuaded to disavow an anti-affirmative action column published by a university professor; the views of black journalists regarding affirmative action; and the

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[45]Ishmael Reed, "African Americans Outpropagandized Again," The Black Scholar 25 (Summer 1995): 43-47.
[46]Ishmael Reed, "It's Racist," American Journalism Review 15 (September 1993): 22-23.
[47]Frank A. Blethen, "A Call for Courage on the Editorial Page," The American Editor 793 (April 1998): 9.
[48]"Affirmative Action Challenged," Quill 83 (November/December 1995): 19-21.

aforementioned report of the National Association of Black Journalists.[49] Elsewhere, the *St. Louis Journalism Review* reported on affirmative action's role in a radio station's hiring of sports announcers.[50] In the popular press, *U.S. News and World Report* linked affirmative action and the media when examining a slanted report NBC *Dateline* ran against two men trying to get California's Proposition 209 on the ballot.[51]

Affirmative Action Research by Communication Scholars

Dissatisfaction with the media's handling of affirmative action makes the relative silence of communication scholars all the more puzzling. Similarly contentious issues such as abortion, gay rights, women's rights, war protests, etc. have received thorough examinations from communication researchers. McWhirter's theory that researchers are inhibited by the fear of being labeled racist may have some merit. That thought is one of the conclusions made by Frederick Lynch, who authored the only communication-linked article of pertinence to this study.

> Opponents of affirmative action — or even those who would raise the issue for discussion — have not only had to deal with collective guilt and embarrassment: They have also had to calculate the chances of being labeled a racist. It is difficult to determine whether the fear of being labeled racist has been more important than cognitive dissonance in silencing discussion of affirmative action. But as Michael Novak has observed, "Race became for the left what communism has been for the right: If you disagree with me you must be racist."[52]

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[49]Allan Wolper, "Caught up in a Controversy," Editor and Publisher 129 (April 1996): 14; Sean J. McCleneghan, "Black Journalists Peer Into the Future," Editor and Publisher 129 (November 1996): 56; Debra Gersh Hernandez, "Unequal Terms," Editor and Publisher 128 (September 1996): 28.

[50]Dan Hellinger, "White People's Affirmative Action," St. Louis Journalism Review 27 (July/August 1997): 5.

[51]John Leo, "Prime Time 'Gotcha' Journalism," U.S. News & World Report 120 (February 1996): 29.

[52]Frederick R. Lynch, "Affirmative Action, the Media, and the Public," American Behavioral Scientist 28 (August 1985): 807-827

Lynch's 1985 treatment of the topic, the only scholarly article found that deals with both affirmative action and the media, is informative and well-researched (however, he cites no other research from the communication discipline on the subject). Lynch makes the case that from the 1960s through the early 1980s, public awareness and discussion of affirmative action was suppressed. Thus, his definition of the topic as a "look-away" issue — "a topic that people have preferred to look away from or ignore, a sort of semiconscious mass self-censorship." And he found the media to be highly self-censoring. The numbers he cites appear to back his assertion. Lynch says that until the landmark *Bakke* case in 1978, three major news weeklies — *Time, Newsweek* and *U.S. News & World Report* — averaged just one article per year on affirmative action. The three major television networks, meanwhile, devoted a mere 12 to 15 minutes per year to the topic. Though citing no statistics, he does not believe daily newspapers were much different. With the emergence of *Bakke*, Lynch found the number of affirmative action stories in both the news weeklies and in television news to skyrocket in the two years preceding and following the case's decision. However, reporting tailed off after that. What's more, he notes, most of the stories were "after-the-fact" reports with little debate of the issues.[53]

Lynch offers several reasons why there was such limited reporting on such an important social issue:

• Through 1985 there were few well-organized groups or personalities that openly or even covertly opposed affirmative action;

• Many affirmative action plans were done quietly, thereby limiting any pre-program discussions;

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[53]Ibid.

• Opposition to affirmative action on the surface appears to run counter to the reformist and progressive values of the national media, and reporters and editors might consciously or unconsciously avoid the issue;

• Possible feelings of guilt or fear of being labeled a racist.[54]

He ends with a plea for more studies:

> We need much more research about how and why some social issues, having been repressed or neglected, are suddenly or gradually opened up for debate while other issues remain in the closet or only half-way out. We need more case studies on the evolution of social issues to probe what combination of sociocultural and historical processes might be involved in liberating or repressing debate on important topics.[55]

Fairness and Balance

A lengthy evolution

A discussion of fairness and balance as journalistic standards can begin as far back as 1702, when the idea is seen in the writings of *London Daily Courant* publisher Elizabeth Mallett, who emphasized fairness and truth as standards for that paper's editor. But as Hazel Dicken-Garcia points out, "fair" then did not carry today's implication of balance. Rather, fair seemed to mean "good" or "accurate.[56] Dicken-Garcia also points out that the earliest press criticism implied a small set of journalistic standards similar to those of today, and that fairness was one of them.[57] Impartiality also was a primary journalistic issue at this time with a core meaning somewhat similar to that of "objectivity," a term press critics began to use in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Again, an era's definitions must be considered. For instance, a New York printer in 1799 praised several editors for

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[54]Ibid.
[55]Ibid.
[56]Hazel Dicken-Garcia, Journalistic Standards in Nineteenth-Century America (Madison, Wisc.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989, 11-12.
[57]Ibid, 16.

efforts at impartiality during a period of tension between England and France and America. The printer defined impartiality in part as publishing letters as they are received, regardless of which country they support or attack.[58]

But this idea of impartiality often was ridiculed as evasive, impossible to achieve, "elusive" and even a "folly."[59] This was understandable given how since the late 1600s the press in America and Britain were guided by Libertarianism, which held that media should be free from all government control to pursue the truth and to act as a check on the government. Fairness and balance were not as valued under such thinking. In fact, most newspapers were partisan — acceptable under the Libertarian approach that in a free marketplace of ideas, varying viewpoints would compete and truth eventually would emerge.[60] "Balance," as meant by today's ideas of objectivity, was sacrificed if it meant an attack on the opposition. The reader was to decide for himself who was to be believed. By the mid-1800s, however, partisanism began to wane.[61] Slowly, the press adopted a new role, and one of the implications of that role was a responsibility to be fair, or to present "all sides" of issues. Combined with the decline in the partisan press, providing all sides of issues became important "to facilitating the individual's knowledge as a citizen."[62]

By the late 1800s, Libertarianism also was beginning to fade in appeal. The theory was workable enough as long as there were adequate outlets for society's various voices, many of them partisan. And through the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there were. In 1923, the year the American Society of Newspaper Editors began, 500 cities had two

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[58]Ibid, 98-99.
[59]Ibid, 99.
[60]Gene Goodwin and Ron F. Smith, Groping for Ethics in Journalism (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1994), 16.
[61]Dicken-Garcia, Journalistic Standards, 97.
[62]Ibid, 109.

or more competing dailies (including 100 that had three or more).[63] But economic influences and changes in ownership altered the newspaper industry. By 1991, only 44 cities had more than one daily and in another 27, competition was kept alive only through joint operating agreements. The trend was noted long before then, however, as the free marketplace began to shrink considerably by the early 20th century.[64] The idea of fairness and balance as journalistic tenets was simmering.

Social Responsibility Gives Fairness and Balance a Boost

Helping bring them to a boil was *Time's* Henry Luce. Disturbed by the concentration of ownership trend, Luce financed the 1947 U.S. Commission on the Freedom of the Press. Led by Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago, the commission was an assemblage of mostly social science professors, philosophers, legal scholars, political scientists and even a poet (though no one with a media background) charged with studying the changing media. After two years the commission issued its report, *A Free and Responsible Press*. A responsible press, the commission said, should, among other things:

> 1) Provide a "full, truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning"; 2) Serve as a "forum for the exchange of comment and criticism" and be "common carriers of the public expression"; and 3) Give a "representative picture of constituent groups in society" as well as present and clarify the "goals and values of society."[65]

The commission's report sparked discussion about a free media's obligations to society, about its duties to report truthfully, accurately, fairly and objectively and about

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[63]Paul Alfred Pratte, Gods Within the Machine: A History of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1923-1993 (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 1995), 103.
[64]Ibid.
[65]Goodwin, Groping for Ethics, 15-16.

codes of ethics and professional standards. In a follow-up to the report, University of Illinois Professor Theodore Peterson gave the name "Social Responsibility" to the commission's ideals. "Freedom carries concomitant obligations," Peterson wrote, "and the press, which enjoys a privileged position under our government, is obliged to be responsible to society for carrying out certain essential functions of mass communications in contemporary society."[66]

Such thinking generated plenty of discussion, as Denis McQuail has noted:

> A long-standing theme of debate, although a less politically sensitive one, which has surfaced in many discussions of the social role of the press, concerned the general quality of the news about events of the day and of the world as supplied to the average citizen, who depends on the media in order to reach informed choices and judgments. The press is often accused of sensationalism and superficiality, of omission, inaccuracy and even falsification and lying. The need for objective and balanced reporting and for diversity of opinion has been a recurrent issue.[67]

Social Responsibility theory is not without its critics. Scott Lloyd claims the commission's report is inconsistent with the American social system.[68]

John Merrill, who has argued that journalists are essentially unethical and that ethical codes are useless,[69] lambastes Social Responsibility, saying that not only does it place restrictions on the press, but it asks that the press do things it has not been doing.[70] He writes:

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[66]Ibid.
[67]Denis McQuail, Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction (3rd Edition) (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications Ltd.), 137.
[68]Scott Lloyd, "A Criticism of Social Responsibility Theory: An Ethical Perspective," Journal of Mass Media Ethics 6 (Winter 1991): 199-209.
[69]Everette E. Dennis, John C. Merrill, Media Debates: Issues in Mass Communication (White Plains, N.Y.: Longman Publishing Group, 1991), 151-154.
[70]John C. Merrill and Ralph L. Lowenstein, Media, Messages, and Men (White Plains, N.Y.: Longman Publishing Group, 1979), 196-197.

> Unless duties and responsibilities for the media are spelled out by law (and they are not in the United States), the whole concept of a socially responsible press has little or no meaning. Is it not simply the kind of press that "supports my kind of truth"? Implicit in the recent Western preoccupation with "social responsibility" (or "social-libertarianism") is the argument that some group (obviously a governmental one, ultimately) can and must define or decide what is socially responsible. Also implicit is the belief that publishers and journalists acting freely cannot determine what is socially responsible nearly as well as some "outside" or "impartial" group. If such a group decides that the press is not socially responsible, not even the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution can protect the publishers' freedom of action.[71]

The idea of objectivity that social responsibility spurred also has come under fire from critics. Robert Udick asserts the commission established a great paradox: the objective reporting standards called for are incompatible with social responsibility.[72] Merrill says objectivity is impossible to attain, claiming that a journalist in no way can be detached, unprejudiced, unopinionated, unbiased and omniscient. "The journalist must select, organize, and manipulate facts; that is the nature of journalism. From beginning to end, journalism is a subjective enterprise.[73]

Criticism of objectivity deserves fuller treatment here considering fairness and balance are at the heart of this research. Radio broadcaster, newspaper journalist and author Elmer Davis took issue with the concept of objectivity not long after the Hutchins Commission issued its report. He discussed it as early as 1954 in a book concerned foremost with Senator Joseph McCarthy's riding roughshod with charges of communism, and newspapers' handling of those charges. "Objectivity often leans over backward so far that it makes the news business merely a transmission belt for pretentious phonies," Davis wrote.[74] The reference clearly was to McCarthy. As Davis

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[71]Ibid, 170.
[72]Robert Udick, "The Hutchins Paradox: Objectivity Versus Diversity," Mass Comm Review 20 (3/4 1993): 148-157.
[73]Dennis and Merrill, Media Debates, 110-116.
[74]Elmer Davis, But We Were Born Free (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1954), 148.

noted, ". . . if a Senator says it, it is news."[75] And McCarthy was saying plenty — much of it unfair and imbalanced. The press at the time, however, reported McCarthy's various accusations "objectively," which meant without challenge or correction. Davis saw this notion of objectivity hampering reporters' responsibility "to tell the public what really happened."[76] He argued:

> Publish everything that is said on both sides of a controversial issue and let the reader make up his mind. A noble theory; but suppose that men who talk on one side (or on both) are known to be lying to serve their own personal interest; or suppose they don't know what they are talking about. To call attention to these facts, except on the editorial page, would not, according to most newspaper practice, be objective. Yet in the complex news of today how many readers have enough personal knowledge to distinguish fact from fiction, ignorance from knowledge, interest from impartiality?[77] "The good newspaper, the good news broadcaster, must walk a tightrope between two great gulfs — on one side the false objectivity that takes everything at face value and lets the public be imposed on by the charlatan with the most brazen front; on the other, the "interpretive" reporting which fails to draw the line between objective and subjective, between a reasonably well-established fact and what the reporter or editor wishes were the fact. To say that is easy; to do it is hard. No wonder that too many fall back on the incontrovertible objective fact that the Honorable John P. Hoozis said, colon quote — and never mind whether he was lying or not.[78]

More than 40 years later, the problems of defining objectivity and deciding if it is achievable and desirable are still with us. Objectivity in reporting and interpreting, Mike W. Martin indicates, implies being truthful, unbiased, fair and balanced, "though this may vary according to whether objectivity is ascribed to individual journalists, news reports, commentaries, news organizations, general media coverage of an event, or trends in the entire media." There are different senses of objectivity, Martin adds,

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[75]Ibid., 25.
[76]Ibid., 148.
[77]Ibid., 159.
[78]Ibid., 175-176.

depending on the intended contrast, including partisanship, unbalanced partisanship, value judgments and cognitive distortion. [79]

> Thus, objectivity might mean: (1) being non partisan, in the sense of not advocating a position on controversial issues; (2) maintaining balanced partisanship, as when a newspaper provides a fair representation of opposing partisan viewpoints, either in general or regarding particular issues; (3) maintaining value neutrality, in the sense of stating facts without making value judgments; or (4) not distorting facts and understanding.[80]

In line with these critiques of objectivity are criticisms of the Hutchins Commission's call for diversity. Lack of diversity, says Denis McQuail, can be established only by the impossible task of identifying sources, references, events, types of content, etc., which are missing or underrepresented in stories.[81] While some may chase this elusive goal of diversity reflecting social reality, others are charged with being completely biased, of reinforcing the status quo, of determining what is to be debated and allowed in debate. Such is the thinking of agenda-setting theory, which holds that a correlation exists between the order of importance given in the media to issues and the order of significance attached to the same issues by the public and politicians.[82] By extension, says Frederick Fico, if particular points of view on a single issue are given more attention than others, their public salience will increase and thereby alter the public debate resolving the issue.[83]

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[79]Elliot D. Cohen and Deni Elliott, Journalism Ethics: Contemporary Ethical Issues (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 1997), 54-56.
[80]Ibid., 54-55.
[81]McQuail, Mass Communication Theory, 253.
[82]Ibid., 357.
[83]Frederick Fico and Stan Soffin, "Fairness and Balance of Selected Newspaper Coverage of Controversial National, State, and Local Issues," Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly 72 (Autumn 1995): 621-633.

Fairness and Balance Emerge as Professional Standards

Despite such concerns, fairness and, to a lesser but still viable degree, balance, have emerged as generally accepted journalistic standards. They are at the heart of neutrality, which studies indicate journalists and editors in the United States clearly prefer.[84] One can see them emerge as early as 1894 when the Associated Press reorganized and urged its reporters to present balanced accounts "of all sides of an issue in news stories written as dispassionately as possible by reporters-observers who spurn activist involvement in the news and avoid injecting partisan views into their copy."[85]

It is an ideal most seem to agree with today, even though the media is not constitutionally-bound to be fair and balanced. If this was not clear before, it was made so in 1974 when the U.S. Supreme Court rejected a 1913 Florida law granting a political candidate the right to equal space to reply to criticism and attacks on his record by a newspaper.[86]

By and large, however, journalists, professional organizations and newspapers have voluntarily submitted themselves to standards of fairness and balance, present in many codes of ethics. At the American Society of Newspaper Editor's first meeting in 1923 the group issued its *Canons of Journalism*, of which one article stated, "Partisanship, in editorial comment which knowingly departs from the truth, does violence to the best spirit of American journalism; in the news columns it is subversive of a fundamental principle of the profession."[87] The idea is just as important to ASNE members today. When the code was replaced in 1975 by the *ASNE Statement of Principles*, it included Article IV-Truth and Accuracy, which states that "Every effort must be made to assure

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[84]McQuail, Mass Communication Theory, 195.
[85]Conrad C. Fink, Media Ethics: In the Newsroom and Beyond (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1988), 8.
[86]Michael Emery and Edwin Emery, The Press and America: An Interpretive History of the Mass Media (New York: Oxford, 1988), 589.
[87]Pratte, Gods Within the Machine, 206.

that the news content is accurate, free from bias and in context, and that all sides are presented fairly."[88]

Similar guidelines are found in the Society of Professional Journalists' (SPJ) Code of Ethics. SPJ, founded in 1909, is the largest journalism organization in the world and a frequent forum for the profession's ethical debates. Among the code's assertions pertinent to this discussion are that journalists should:

- Diligently seek out subjects of news stories to give them the opportunity to respond to allegations of wrongdoing;
- Tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular to do so;
- Support the open exchange of views, even views they find repugnant;
- Give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid.[89]

Readers also value fairness and balance, as surveys on press credibility indicate. In a recent survey of editors and readers, both groups ranked impartiality (defined as fairness in gathering, reporting the news), as the second most important of nine organizational standards, just behind integrity (a newspaper's keen sense of professional ethics).[90]

And when the media errs in matters of fairness and balance, plenty of organizations outside the industry are there to remind them of their responsibilities. For instance there is *Accuracy in Media*, whose mission is to "battle 'media distortion and abuse'"; the *Media Research Center*, whose purpose is to "promote balance in the 'liberal media'"; the Center

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[88]Ibid., 210.
[89]Society of Professional Journalists Web Page (http://spj.org/spjhome.htm), Code of Ethics.
[90]George Albert Gladney, "How Editors and Readers Rank and Rate the Importance of Eighteen Traditional Standards of Newspaper Excellence," Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly 73 (Summer 1996): 319-331.

for Media and Public Affairs, which attempts to "provide content analysis of coverage by major outlets"; Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting, which criticizes the media "for distorting and neglecting issues important to minorities, women and public interest groups and exposes media owners' ties to what FAIR says is an increasingly conservative corporate elite"; and the Institute for Media Analysis, set up "to battle errors, 'disinformation' and sins of omission, particularly by the *New York Times*."[91]

Journalists often are quick to defend themselves against charges of unfairness or imbalance. The ASNE's *The American Editor*, for instance, offered five reasons "why the press isn't slanted," the basics of which are:

- Owners wouldn't allow it;
- Advertising dollars would shrink in a politically-biased paper that offended consumers;
- American journalists are guided by professionalism, not politics, and professional standards are enforced;
- American journalism is admired internationally for its comparative impartiality and fact-based reporting; and
- Partisan journalism died in the 19th century.[92]

Many debates on fairness and balance turn on definitions of the rather subjective and ambiguous concepts. Like the struggle to define affirmative action, different people call fairness and balance different things. Researcher Frederick Fico defines fairness as the simple inclusion of the *other side* in stories about conflict, while balance concerns how evenly sides to a conflict are treated relative to one another — i.e., amount of space and prominence of coverage.[93]

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[91]"Watchdog Watch," American Journalism Review 15 (April 1993): 32-34.
[92]Everette E. Dennis, "Liberal Reporters, Yes; Liberal Slant, No!" The American Editor 782 (January-February 1997): 4-9.
[93] Frederick Fico and William Cote, "Fairness and Balance in Election Reporting," Newspaper Research Journal 18 (Summer/Fall 1997): 50-63.

Westerstahl talks of impartiality, which he says consists of balance/non-partisanship and neutral presentation.[94] Denis McQuail offers his definition:

> The issue of what counts as impartiality in news seems relatively simple but can also be complex in practice, not least because there is little chance of achieving a value-free assessment of value freedom. Impartiality is appreciated mainly because many events involve conflict and are open to alternative interpretations and evaluations (this is most obviously true of political news, but much the same could be said of sports). Most generally, the normal standard of impartiality calls for balance in the choice and use of sources, so as to reflect different points of view, and also neutrality in the presentation of news — separating facts from opinion, avoiding value judgments or emotive language or pictures.[95]

Communication Research of Fairness and Balance

As difficult as fairness and balance are to define, they may be even more difficult to achieve, something strongly suggested by specific research on the subject. Given the ambiguity of the concepts, it is no surprise that scant research exists on the topic, an assertion also made by communication's fairness and balance "guru," Frederick Fico. A professor of journalism at the Michigan State University, Fico's research in this field has appeared numerous times in various scholarly publications since the early 1980s. By himself and with associates, Fico has examined fairness and balance in newspaper coverage of (among other things): a governor's race; controversial national, state and local issues; wars; public policy issues; and community controversies. The papers he has examined range from prestige newspapers — the best of the best — to small-town weeklies.

Fico's standard approach is a content analysis of articles. He typically measures stories for at least three attributes: 1) Number of quoted sources for each side of an issue;

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[94]Jorgen Westerstahl, "Objective News Reporting: General Premises" Communication Research 10 (July 1983): 403-424.
[95]McQuail, Mass Communication Theory, 254-255.

2) Amount of space given to assertions of sources; and 3) Prominence (i.e., source position in the article, references in cutlines and headlines, etc.). Overall, Fico has found that his studies consistently reach the conclusion of similar research: The press covers controversy unequally in terms of fairness and balance.[96] It is important to note Fico's assertion that most studies of fairness and balance in general make two assumptions: 1) Journalists strive to fulfill some ethical standard of fairness as reflected in codes of ethics and professional values; and 2) Arguably equal treatment of opponents serves to deflect or rebut criticism by partisans.[97]

Fico's most recently published study is typical of his approach and of his results. With Cote, Fico found that of 214 stories covering the 1994 Michigan Governor's race, just 14 percent were both fair (define as inclusion of both candidates or their sources) and balanced (approximately equal space given to both sides). Though just 20 percent of the stories were at the other end of the extreme — completely one-sided or unfair — the bulk of the articles fell on the side of unfairness and imbalance. For instance, of the two candidates in the campaign, one dominated Fico's five measures of fairness and balance in 58 percent of all stories compared to 28 percent for his opponent. When stories were one-sided, 79 percent of the time they favored that same candidate.[98]

Fico's most recent published effort went slightly beyond his previous studies, finding that stories based on interviews tended to be more balanced than those based on events, albeit slightly. This is an important point to consider when assessing the fairness and balance of a newspaper article. In interviews, a reporter has some control and can dictate, to some degree, the course of conversation. Subjects can be asked to expound on points, to state their opinions more concisely. Other subjects who have different

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[96]Fico, "Fairness and Balance in Election Reporting," 60-61.
[97]Ibid., 52.
[98]Ibid.

opinions also can be interviewed for a more balanced story. But when covering an event the reporter's role is diminished and the reporter must rely more on a simple re-telling of the facts. If the other "side" of an issue is absent from an event or is unavailable to the reporter, it is less likely that that side will be represented in the story. This can result in an unbalanced story and may open the reporter to a charge of bias.

Most intriguing and telling from Fico's study, though, were results from post-study interviews of the reporters who wrote the articles under review. Despite the quantitative evidence presented, reporters claimed campaign coverage was fair and balanced. Three different notions of fairness in campaign reporting emerged from these interviews: 1) There is fairness in information-gathering procedures, for instance, giving candidates equal opportunity to obtain coverage (though this doesn't necessarily equate to equal treatment in the story); 2) Fairness means equally probing candidate statements for substantiation; 3) Fairness means giving an attacked party the opportunity to respond or both candidates the opportunity to take stands.[99]

Fico stresses the point that these follow-up interviews illuminate problems associated with fairness and balance research. While equal treatment of sources in stories can be defined and measured, and departures from fairness and balance pointed out, such studies rarely indicate *why* a story may include such breaches. Reasons may be as obvious as the biases a reporter brings to the story or as complex as the many procedures that produced the story. Again, for instance, unequal citing of sources may not be due to bias, but instead attributable to the fact that one side simply was more accessible or made itself more visible to a news reporter. An example would be a political candidate who campaigns heavily in a particular area ignored by his opponent. One would expect newspaper reporting in such an instance to favor the candidate

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[99]Ibid.

campaigning in terms of numbers of sources quoted and words cited. And as the reporters Fico interviewed noted, fairness to them often meant giving sources the *opportunity* to an equal hearing. But even if this opportunity were taken advantage of, it didn't necessarily equate to equal space in a story. This will be discussed further in the literature review on use of sources.

Other Fico studies are summarized below:

• Examining 259 stories on 18 national, state and local issues appearing in 18 newspapers, Fico and Soffin found only 7 percent of the stories were balanced, while more than 50 percent had at least four of the six story measures dominated by one side. The Gulf War debate was the most imbalanced national issue with stories favoring anti-war sources. Other Bush Administration issues, while less imbalanced than the Gulf War debate, favored the President's critics. Among state and local issues, abortion reporting tended from extremely one-sided to very nearly balanced with stories by and large favoring pro-choice sources. Of eight other local issues, five were as or more imbalanced than the sample average.[100]

• Along with Ku and Soffin, Fico found a significant imbalance favoring anti-war advocates in a study of nine prestige newspapers and the nine largest daily newspapers in Michigan. More than two-thirds of the 134 stories analyzed were found to be one-sided. Seventy percent of the time, one-sided stories favored the anti-war advocates. In stories quoting both sides, anti-war advocates still were favored with more space. The authors also noted one of the novelties about unfair and imbalanced stories: The side receiving favorable treatment doesn't always correlate with the side favored by public opinion.[101]

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[100] Fico and Soffin, "Fairness and Balance of Selected Newspaper Coverage of Controversial National, State, and Local Issues."

[101] Frederick Fico, Linlin Ku and Stan Soffin, "Fairness, Balance of Newspaper Coverage of U.S. in Gulf War," Newspaper Research Journal 15 (Winter 1994): 30-43.

• Fico and Soffin studied 42 stories on local conflict as they appeared in two community newspapers. While few of the stories taken individually were fair or balanced, both sides got equal treatment overall. Thus, a claim of fairness and balance would have merit only for those readers who read the stories over the life of the issue.[102]

• In a comparison of nine prestige newspapers and a sample of large circulation newspapers, prestige newspapers were found to cover both sides of community controversy and present balanced stories more often than their less prestigious counterparts. The authors hypothesize the reason for this being the better resources and higher expectations of the prestige press.[103]

• In an examination of three groups, one composed of five prestige papers, another of 12 high-circulation papers and a third of four prestige papers which also were in the high-circulation group, 66 percent of all stories quoted both sides of a controversy. However, in 28 percent of the cases, no opposing source was quoted and no explanation was provided as to why the article was one-sided.[104]

Others who have examined Fairness and Balance

Fico's work covers both areas he points to as drawing most of the interest of other fairness and balance researchers — issue conflicts and election reporting.

Nearly all studies of issue reporting, Fico has noted, have found significant lapses in fairness and balance when these two qualities are defined as equal treatment of opponents that is measurable in a story or number of stories.[105] Sandra Dickson made

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[102]Frederick Fico and Stan Soffin, "Covering Local Conflict: Fairness in Reporting a Public Policy Issue," Newspaper Research Journal 15 (Fall 1994): 64-76.
[103]Stephen Lacy, Frederick Fico, and Todd F. Simon, "Fairness and Balance in the Prestige Press," Journalism Quarterly 68 (Fall 1991): 363-370.
[104]Todd F. Simon, Frederick Fico, and Stephen Lacy, "Covering Conflict and Controversy: Measuring Balance, Fairness, Defamation," Journalism Quarterly (Summer 1989): 427-434
[105]Fico and Cote, "Fairness and Balance in Election Reporting,"

this conclusion after her analysis of press coverage of the U.S. Invasion of Panama. Her content analysis showed negative sources outnumbered positive ones and that Washington political elites and Latin American officials received the most coverage as opposed to Panamanian supporters of Manuel Noriega, various interest groups or public opinion polls.[106]

> This reliance on government sources and themes lends credence to the notion that a subtle ideological bias pervades the mainstream press and that the press often "serves to sustain" the U.S. government line in foreign policy crises. As Entman points out, "The least expensive way to satisfy mass audience demands is to rely upon legitimate political elites for most information.[107]

In another study of the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* treatment of the U.S. policy toward Nicaragua, Dickson found the majority of sources quoted in stories were government officials supporting the official view.[108]

Studies of election reporting are a bit more encouraging for the media, though there are some instances of unfairness and imbalance. Fico frequently points to Guido Stempel and his associates as the leaders in this area, referring to their series of content studies of elections between 1960 and 1988 that found roughly equal treatment of Republican and Democratic presidential candidates in terms of space, issue coverage and display.[109] Like Stempel, Philip Coffey made a similar conclusion after his fairness and balance study of newspaper coverage by eight Colorado dailies in the 1974 general election.[110] Similar results also have been published. Kenney and Simpson found

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[106]Sandra H. Dickson, "Understanding Media Bias: The Press and the U.S. Invasion of Panama," Journalism Quarterly 71 (Winter 1994): 809-819.
[107]Ibid., 810.
[108]Sandra H. Dickson, "Press and U.S. Policy Toward Nicaragua, 1983-1987: A Study of the New York Times and Washington Post," Journalism Quarterly 69 (Fall 1992): 562-571.
[109]Fico and Cote, "Fairness and Balance in Election Reporting,"
[110]Philip J. Coffey, "Quantitative Measure of Bias Reporting of Political News," Journalism Quarterly 52 (Fall 1975): 551-553.

balanced and neutral coverage of the 1988 presidential campaign in the Washington Post, though the Washington Times was somewhat biased in favor of Republicans. The authors determined balance by comparing the prominence given Republican and Democratic events and by calculating the number of news stories and pictures favoring one party or the other.[111]

Stovall, meanwhile, studied what happens to election reporting when a third party enters the fray as John Anderson did in 1980. In examining 50 daily newspapers from across the United States Stovall found that while Anderson generated as many events as fellow candidates Reagan and Carter, newspapers were 50 percent more likely to run stories on the latter two.[112]

Research on Use of Sources

Another potentially helpful literature review is a focus on source use, which also comes under examination in this study. Fico has weighed in on this topic as well.

With Atwater, Fico compared the source reliance and use of print and broadcast reporters in stories written on the Michigan statehouse and found a significant and positive correlation between the two groups of reporters. However, there were differences. Newspaper reporters cited more interview and documentary sources than their broadcast counterparts and were more likely to present more diverse perspectives on state government. TV reporters, meanwhile, relied more for information on official news conferences and regularly scheduled events.[113]

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[111]Keith Kenney and Chris Simpson, "Was Coverage of the 1988 Presidential Race by Washington's Two Major Dailies Biased?" Journalism Quarterly 70 (Summer 1993): 345-355.
[112]James Glen Stovall, "The Third-Party Challenge of 1980: News Coverage of the Presidential Candidates," Journalism Quarterly 62 (Summer 1985): 266-271.
[113]Tony Atwater and Frederick Fico, "Source Reliance and Use in Reporting State Government: A Study of Print and Broadcast Practices," Newspaper Research Journal 8 (Fall 1986): 53-61.

In another study, comparing Michigan statehouse reporters and their counterparts in Indiana, Fico suggests that various concerns imparted from editors to reporters can be important for influencing the number and type of sources reporters rely on. For Indiana statehouse reporters studied, for instance, the more they perceived editorial concern for stories stressing interpretation, audience understanding and research, the more they relied on a diversity of sources. On the other hand, however, the more Michigan reporters perceived the same editorial concerns the less they seemed to rely on the sources. This difference may be attributable, Fico says, to the part-time nature of the Indiana legislature as opposed to the full-time nature of the Michigan legislature and the resulting access to sources.[114] Also, the orientation or role of journalists, i.e., beat reporter, part-time reporter, etc., also may influence use of sources.

Another Fico study of source use, with Angela Powers, was based on a survey of 121 journalists from the top 21 circulation newspapers. Three variables emerged as being most influential on a reporter's use of source: source credibility, source accessibility and time pressure. The three least influential variables were pressure from advertisers, a source's gender and the newspaper's policy on the issue. Thus, the personal judgments of journalists, not organizational pressures, were believed to have the most influence on source selection. This was not to discount the influence of organizations, which still had substantial pull, as did professional background (more experienced reporters used fewer official and government sources).[115]

Once again, we should point out that fairness and balance measured by an equal number of sources and story space often reflects the types of sources a reporter seeks for a story. And the sources a reporter relies on often depends on many things, such as the

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[114]Frederick Fico, "Influence of Perceived Editorial Concern And Role Concept on Source Reliance," Journalism Quarterly 63 (Fall 1986): 322-331.
[115]Frederick Fico and Angela Powers, "Influences on Use of Sources at Large U.S. Newspapers," Newspaper Research Journal. 15 (Fall 1994): 87-97.

variables of credibility, accessibility and time constraints listed above. Fico points to other research that shows even more influences on a reporter's choice of sources. That includes a study indicating "reporters viewed liberals as more credible sources than conservatives," and a study that suggests "journalists fail to seek out and select sources who may refute their ideas."[116]

Other source research reviewed includes a content analysis of the *CBS Evening News, Newsweek, The New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal.* Dominic L. Lasorsa and Stephen D. Reese found that in 167 staff-written stories reporting on the 1987 stock market crash, print media favored Wall Street sources and used more sources in general, while CBS favored government sources. The authors make the claim (heard often before) that news media favor high prestige sources and that use of different sources results in distinctly different slants to the stories.[117]

> Since sources with different organizational affiliations said different things about the causes and effects of the crash, and since the media varied in their use of these sources, it is reasonable to ask whether audiences received a different picture of the causes and effects of the crash, depending upon the medium they relied on.[118]

The use of official or government sources came under scrutiny in Kathleen A. Hansen's examination of 60 newspaper stories that win or are submitted to win a Pulitzer or other journalism award. Of those stories, Hansen found reporters are less likely to rely on official or government sources. Only four of 10 sources used in these

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[116]Ibid., 88.
[117]Dominic L. Lasorsa and Stephen D. Reese, "News Source Use in the Crash of 1987: A Study of Four National Media," Journalism Quarterly 67 (Spring 1990): 60-71.
[118]Ibid., 69.

stories were of such ilk. Previous findings indicated that regular news stories may be dominated by official and government voices in eight out of 10 instances.[119]

In research pertinent to the present study, Dan Berkowitz and Douglas W. Beach failed to find support for their hypothesis that non-routine and conflict-based news would contain a greater diversity of sources. In a content analysis of 237 stories appearing in a week of the three largest Iowa daily newspapers, the authors found that only in proximate news stories (those in the readership area) was there a change in the mix of news sources. For non-proximate stories the same mix of sources appeared regardless of the news being routine or conflict-based. The authors suggest that journalists have a more diverse pool of sources in their own community, but turn to the most visible source when the story originates elsewhere.[120]

Shannon Rossi Martin published similar results, finding that of the news organizations she studied, the one closest to the event community carried a wider variety and greater range of sources and that those organizations farthest from the event community tended to cite only high level and official sources.[121]

This would come as no surprise to W. Lance Bennett, who states that the first and most extensively researched rule of political reporting is the imperative to build a story line whenever possible upon official or at least authoritative viewpoints. The reliance on officials, Bennett says, is firmly rooted in three types of journalism norms: 1) Professional virtues of objectivity and balance; 2) Political obligation to provide some degree of democratic accountability to citizens; and, 3) The economics of the news

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[119]Kathleen A. Hansen, "Source Diversity and Newspaper Enterprise Journalism," Journalism Quarterly 68 (Summer 1991): 474-482,
[120]Dan Berkowitz and Douglas W. Beach, "News Sources and News Context: The Effect of Routine News, Conflict and Proximity," Journalism Quarterly 70 (Spring 1993): 4-12.
[121]Shannon Rossi Martin, "Proximity of Event as Factor in Selection of News Sources," Journalism Quarterly 65 (Winter 1988): 986-989.

business itself. As a result, he notes, the "get an official reaction" rule is formally institutionalized. Other rules Bennett offers include:

• Sources and viewpoints are "indexed", or admitted to the news gates according to the magnitude and content of conflicts among key government decision makers or other players with the power to affect the development of a story;

• In pursuing a complex developing story, journalists follow the trail of power;

• Journalists observe, narrate, and, when necessary, adjudicate the themes and customs of the political culture when representing areas of politics through familiar cultural metaphors and rituals; and,

• Events that contain credible images challenging existing policies or official definitions may become news icons, giving journalists license to move challenging or politically marginalized ideas into the center of news coverage.[122]

Michael B. Salwen, meanwhile, examined quotes used in newspaper coverage of Hurricane Andrew and showed that individuals not affiliated with government or business were quoted most often. These sources were seen as providing the media with human interest quotations. This was not in line with research cited above that showed government and official voices typically receiving the most play. Furthermore, most of the sources praised themselves and blamed others. Local papers examined showed a greater diversity of sources than newspapers that include a national scope.[123]

Finally, research pertinent to this study should include Rhonda Gibson and Dolf Zillmann's study of the impact of quotation in news reports on issue perception. In their survey, respondents either read a print version or listened to a radio version of two news reports. One of the reports contained one-sided direct personal testimony (quotes) that

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[122]W. Lance Bennett, "An Introduction to Journalism Norms and Representations of Politics," Political Communication 13 (Spring 1996): 373-384.
[123]Michael B. Salwen, "News of Hurricane Andrew: The Agenda of Sources and the Sources' Agendas," Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly 66 (Winter 1995): 826-840.

challenged the safety of amusement parts. The other report included either indirect testimony (in the way of paraphrases) or no testimony at all. The authors found that newspaper readers of the one-sided reports perceived the overall safety of the parks to be less adequate than did readers of reports without quotes. However, this effect did not emerge for radio listeners.[124]

[124]Rhonda Gibson and Dolf Zillmann, "The Impact of Quotation in News Reports on Issue Perception," Journalism Quarterly 70 (Winter 1993): 793-800.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To Determine Degree of Fairness and Balance in Affirmative Action Reporting

Throughout the history of the press, fairness in reporting slowly has acquired an almost sacred importance. Balance between and among sources also has risen in importance. Acceptance of these concepts as journalistic standards accelerated with the report issued in 1947 by the U.S. Commission on the Freedom of the Press and its call for newspapers to voluntarily acknowledge a "social responsibility" to society. Among the tenets of this social responsibility are the somewhat general — and ambiguous — terms of fairness and balance.

Though the number of communication studies of fairness and balance in newspapers is somewhat meager, a few general conclusions can be made from their findings. In short, most of these studies (which tend to focus on issue conflict and/or election reporting) indicate that newspapers cover controversy unequally in their treatment of opposing "sides." Typically, one side in a conflict tends to have more sources quoted, more assertions quoted, and more assertions placed prominently within an article. Furthermore, research on the use of sources tends to reveal that newspaper reporters often rely on sources that are "official" or governmental, are close in proximity and are easily accessible.

Communication research linking the issues of fairness and balance with affirmative action reporting is nonexistent. In fact, there is a dearth of communication studies on affirmative action in any context. The lone scholarly study found to discuss affirmative action's treatment in the media concluded that from the time the policy emerged on the national scene in the 1960s up until the mid-1980s, the press gave it scant attention. And when the press did cover affirmative action, it usually was "after-the-fact" reporting that offered information but little debate. While newspapers since the mid-1980s have reported on affirmative action to a greater degree, communication scholars remain silent on the issue.

The specific research context of the following research questions and hypotheses is newspaper articles on affirmative action. Affirmative action — however it is defined — can be defended or attacked by advocates or critics in a newspaper story. The positions of these supporters and critics are inserted into newspaper articles by journalists, many of whom typically are given wide latitude to decide how to cover news, which sources to include in their stories, what quotes to use, and where in the article to place these sources and their quotes. From a normative perspective, articles should have a relative

balance between the contentions of both sides, especially if both sides are equally accessible and visible (something to consider in post-findings discussions/conclusions).

The purpose of this study is to examine whether or not newspaper reporting on affirmative action is fair and balanced.

This purpose leads first to two research questions which the author explores mostly for informational and discussion purposes:

RQ1: What types of sources from both sides of the affirmative action issue are cited?

RQ2: What types of arguments/claims from both sides of the affirmative action issue are being reported?

To explore whether newspaper reporting of affirmative action is fair and balanced, four hypotheses are stated based on guidance from the most recent research cited in the literature review:

H1: Recent newspaper reporting on affirmative action will include more proponents than opponents as sources.

H2: Recent newspaper reporting on affirmative action will give more space to proponents than to opponents.

H3: When both sides of the issue are cited, recent newspaper reporting on affirmative action will more often give earlier and higher story placement to proponents than to opponents.

H4: Affirmative action reporting of 20 years ago will reflect the first three hypotheses, but with an even greater disparity favoring affirmative action proponents.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN

Coding of Sources, Quotes and Story Placement of Quotes

The content analysis

Newspaper Selection

A purposive sample of five newspapers was chosen: The *Atlanta Journal & Constitution*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New York Times* and the *Omaha World-Herald*. The first four newspapers were selected to represent affirmative action reporting in four different regions of the United States: the South, the Midwest, the West Coast and the East Coast. Each of the four papers has been defined previously as a "prestige" newspaper which possesses one or both of two qualities that is suggested to be a predictor of high-quality performance: 1) They are prosperous organizations with adequate resources to hire a large enough staff that can report multiple perspectives on an issue; and 2) The reputations of these newspapers for quality is considered to

motivate editors and reporters to uphold that reputation by consistently meeting ethical and professional standards such as fairness and balance. A previous study that included these four newspapers indicated that they were more likely than non-prestige papers to be fair and balanced when covering a community controversy.[125] The *Omaha World-Herald*, though not a prestige paper, was selected because it is a newspaper with wide market penetration (compared to other dailies in United States) and it represents the home base of the researcher. Also, it regularly carries both pro- and anti-affirmative action columnists on its commentary pages. The *World-Herald's* editorial slant seems to lean toward the latter, and it would be of interest to note if there is any corresponding slant in its news section.

Article selection

The specific focus of the study is newspaper articles that report on affirmative action. These articles had to meet four criteria to be considered for the study: 1) Have affirmative action as a primary focus; 2) Quote or paraphrase at least one source, whether it be an affirmative action proponent or an affirmative action opponent; 3) Be at least 500 words long (ample space to allow for inclusion of more than one source and discussions of both sides); and, 4) Are staff written (to determine that particular paper's approach to covering affirmative action).

Only "straight" news stories dealing with affirmative action were studied because it is suggested that such articles offer supporters for both sides of an issue a way to present their views, and reporters widely accept a greater obligation to report those views in straight news. Thus, these types of stories offer the most motivation to reporters to produce fair and balanced news stories not only to meet some standard, but to avoid the

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[125]Stephen Lacy, Frederick Fico, and Todd F. Simon, "Fairness and Balance in the Prestige Press." Journalism Quarterly 68 (Fall 1991): 363-370.

risk of offending sources who may have to be relied upon later. Stories on affirmative action that appear in the sports, editorial, commentary, lifestyle or other non-"straight" news section were not included in the content analysis.

To answer the first three hypotheses, 25 non-random samples from each newspaper were selected beginning in June 1998 (the 1-year anniversary of Clinton's race initiative, though this date is not of importance to the study) and working back until the sample number was reached. This time period was selected to examine the current treatment of affirmative action by newspapers, in accord with the thinking that prompted this study to see if there is a "dialogue" in newspapers. To answer the fourth hypothesis, 25 non-random samples from the *New York Times* and the *Omaha World-Herald* were selected beginning in January 1978 and working back until the sample number was reached. This second time period was chosen because it was a landmark year of sorts in the ever-evolving affirmative action debate.[126] A comparison of 1998 reporting with that from 1978 was hoped to yield insight into any changes in affirmative action reporting over two decades. The *Times* and *World-Herald* were selected for the 1978 period due mainly to accessibility to records of those two papers.

As indicated by a recent overview of content analyses in communication research, non-random samples such as the one offered in this study are the norm in this field. Nearly 80 percent of the articles studied in the overview used convenience or purposive samples, often for logistical or conceptual reasons specific to a particular study.[127] Guido Stempel III has noted that a sample size of 25 articles is sufficient. His examination of various studies' sample sizes indicated that for the five sample sizes

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[126]In 1996 California voters passed Proposition 209, the so-called "Civil Rights Initiative," that outlawed nearly all preferential practices of state government. Also, a federal court ruled that the affirmative action admissions policy of the University of Texas Law School was unconstitutional.
[127]Daniel Riffe and Alan Freitag, "A Content Analysis of Content Analyses: Twenty-Five Years of Journalism Quarterly," Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly 74 (Autumn 1997): 515-524.

tested — 6, 12, 18, 24, and 48 — all do an adequate job, and that increasing the sample size beyond 12 "does not produce marked differences in the results." Indeed, he suggested that increasing the sample size "may be a poor investment of the researcher's time."[128]

In answering the first three hypotheses, articles for each newspaper were located through a search of the *Lexis-Nexis* computer database in the University of Nebraska at Omaha library. The search began by seeking those articles with "affirmative action" appearing in the headline and which were published in June 1998 or before. Of the stories found, the first 25 in each newspaper that matched the four criteria listed above (affirmative action is the primary focus; at least one source from either side is quoted or paraphrased; it is at least 500 words long; and it is staff written) were chosen, loaded to a disk and saved as a word processing document. When opened as such, this allowed for a precise count of article length in words and for an accurate word count of quotes and paraphrases. To answer the fourth hypothesis, a manual search of *Omaha World-Herald* and *New York Times* microfilm records were made to reach the sample size.

Typical stories located through the sample-selection process indicated above include:

• An *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* article that examined a showdown between Republicans and Democrats over a GOP-proposed bill in the statehouse that would ban race- and gender-based contracts and hiring in government across Georgia;[129]

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[128]Guido H. Stempel III, "Sample Size for Classifying Subject Matter in Dailies," Journalism Quarterly 29 (Summer 1952): 333-334.

[129]Kathy Pruitt, "'98 Georgia Legislature; Senate kills affirmative action bill; Issue dead for this session: Democrats lead effort to reject 'fatally flawed' legislation to outlaw preference programs," Atlanta Journal and Constitution 6 March 1998, A-1.

• A *New York Times* article that reported on a settlement between a school board and a teacher who claimed her constitutional rights were violated by the board's affirmative action policy that resulted in her firing;[130]

• A story in the *Los Angeles Times* that discussed plans by Republicans to air election-time commercials in support of Proposition 209.[131]

Source Definition

An affirmative action proponent was defined as one who explicitly supports the affirmative action policy or issue being referred to in the news story. Such a source, for example, might defend the affirmative action admissions policy of a university on the grounds that it produces a more racially diverse student body and that this diversity would benefit the university and society. An affirmative action opponent was defined as one who explicitly does not support the policy or issue being referred to in the news story. For instance, such a source might oppose a state government's race-based policy for hiring contractors on the grounds that it is a form of reverse discrimination against whites. Neutral sources — those who support neither side of the issue or whose quotes or paraphrases are vague or ambiguous as to their advocacy — were not coded.

What these various sources say were not analyzed beyond the coding needed to answer Research Question 2, which deals with the types of arguments being offered by proponents and opponents. The emphasis in answering the hypotheses was on how reporters and editors play opponents' assertions relative to one another in a story or a series of stories.

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[130] Abby Goodnough, "Affirmative Action Settlement: The Decision; Prospect of a Costly Loss Led Board to Drop Case," The New York Times 22 November 1997, B-4.
[131] Bettina Boxall and Dave Lesher, "California Elections; Ads Against Prop. 209 To Debut; Politics: TV Spot Emphasizes Ex-Klansman's Support for Initiative to End Government Affirmative Action Programs. Radio Commercials Feature Celebrities," 29 October 1996, A-3.

Story Analysis

Fairness and balance of affirmative action reporting was assessed on a story-by-story basis. After recording the newspaper, date and word length of each story onto a coding sheet (see Appendix B), the articles were coded for the following measures:

1) The number of sources cited (paraphrased or quoted) for each side of the issue;
2) The number of words attributed to each side by quote or paraphrase;
3a) Partisan source assertions for each side appearing in the first paragraph;
3b) Partisan source assertions for each side appearing in the second through fifth paragraph; and
3c) Partisan source assertions for each side appearing in the first half of the story.

The first measure is one of fairness — whether or not one side has more sources quoted or paraphrased than the other. The second measure is one of balance — the number of words allotted each side regardless of the number of sources cited. The final three measures rate placement, or the prominence, of space given to source assertions. The assumption here is that stories that "front load" the sources of one side are unfair and imbalanced in that a reader may never get to the other side of an issue if it is "buried" deep in the story. Most readers begin a story at the start and read sequentially, but not all may finish to the end.

Fairness and Balance by Story

A story was determined to be unfair and imbalanced in favor of one side if that side was favored in two of the three measures (measures 3a, 3b and 3c being collapsed into one measure and any favoritism of placement being determined by a side holding a majority of those three measures). For instance, if more affirmative action opponents than proponents were cited, and if those affirmative action opponents received more space in words, and if the assertions of those opponents were more prominently placed in the story, then the story was deemed in favor of affirmative action opponents. If, in

another example, proponents dominated the first and third measures and opponents dominated the second, that story was deemed in favor of proponents. If neither side dominated more measures than the other, the story was determined to be balanced. If a measure was not relevant (for instance, no sources cited in a first paragraph lead or in the first half of a story), the measure was not figured into that particular story's balance index.

Admittedly, there are some shortcomings to rating the fairness and balance of a story in this manner. For one, the three measures may not be equal in importance. There are those who would argue that number of sources or word space should be given more weight than placement when determining fairness and balance. Yet some account must be made of the prominence accorded assertions in a story. Collapsing measures 3a, 3b and 3c into one measure is one way of bringing the concept of placement up to "par" with the other two measures.

Another potential shortcoming is a situation in which the fairness and balance of a story are determined by a slight advantage in one measure. For example, number of sources, amount of space and two of the three placement measures may be equal, leaving just one placement measure (for instance, first-graph cite) to determine the story's unfairness and imbalance.

Also, one side may be favored in number of sources cited or word space, but the difference may be small. For instance, proponents would be favored in the first measure if they hold a 5 to 4 advantage in number of sources. Or opponents would be favored in the second measure if they are accorded a 100 to 90 edge in words. Yet these advantages might not appear to be statisctically ignificant. Thus, number of sources and word space were additionally coded with the following scales, made available with the findings. While the degree of advantage a side has in a measure is not evident in a simple account

of the unfairness or imbalance of a story, these scales will provide some indication of the degree to which a side is favored. For number of sources, coding was as follows:

Strongly Favors Proponents	Favors Proponents	Slightly Favors Proponents	Neutral	Slightly Favors Opponents	Favors Opponents	Strongly Favors Opponents
3 or more	2 more sources	1 more source	even	1 more source	2 more sources	3 or more

Coding of words per side was made with the following scale, percentages reflecting number of words favoring one side:

Strongly Favors Proponents	Favors Proponents	Slightly Favors Proponents	Neutral	Slightly Favors Opponents	Favors Opponents	Strongly Favors Opponents
30% or more	20% or more	10% or more	10% or less	10% or more	20% or more	30% or more

Tallies by newspaper and overall were made denoting where the stories fall along these scales.

Fairness and Balance Overall and by Newspaper

The overall fairness and balance of affirmative action reporting as treated by each newspaper and the newspapers as a whole was determined by counting the number of stories favoring affirmative action proponents, affirmative action opponents and those that are balanced.

Research Question Coding

To answer Research Question 1, stories were coded for the type of sources cited, established in the following four categories:

- Government: Federal, state, local.
- Education: University official, professor, administrator, etc.

- Affiliated Individual: Business, interest group, other.
- Unaffiliated Individual or unspecified.

To answer Research Question 2, categories of the types of arguments cited for both sides were noted during a preliminary reading of the articles. Statements were assigned into one of three categories: Value, Fact or Policy Statements. It should be stressed that this approach to answering Research Question 2 is more qualitative in nature.

Because this study deals with a non-random sample of affirmative action stories appearing in a purposive sample of newspapers, few generalizations can be made beyond the papers under review. This analysis will approximate the way that newspaper editors, reporters or readers could evaluate fairness and balance in news articles.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

A Pattern of Imbalance

Results and Findings — Overview

A total of 100 stories were examined in the four prestige newspapers beginning in June 1998. Another 25 newspapers were coded from the *New York Times* from 1978. A total of 659 sources were coded as were nearly 34,000 words appearing as quotes or paraphrases.

Unfortunately, of the 28 stories in the *Omaha World-Herald* that were located by searching for headlines containing the words "affirmative action," just two were written by *World-Herald* staff and also met the other criteria (see page 46). Thus, that paper was excluded from the both the recent sample and the 1978 sample. The lack of affirmative action articles no doubt was attributable to at least two things: 1) The absence of an

ongoing controversy involving affirmative action in the *World-Herald's* coverage area; and, 2) The lack of resources (i.e., more reporters, bigger budget, etc.) that prestige papers have and which allow them to cover stories beyond their local/state circulation area. The 26 stories appearing in the *World-Herald* that did not match the criteria for selection were either written by other newspapers/news services or were editorials. This matter is given further attention in the discussion and conclusion chapters.

Overall, affirmative action reporting in the sample from 1998 and before was unfair and imbalanced in favor of affirmative action proponents. As table 1 indicates, of the 100 stories coded 62 percent favored pro-affirmative action sources in a majority of the three measures (number of sources, word space, and placement). Affirmative action opponents were favored in 33 percent of stories, while five percent were coded as balanced.

TABLE 1
Percentage of stories favoring affirmative action proponents and affirmative action opponents in the 1998 sample of newspapers.

	1998 Newspapers		
	Only 1 side used	**Two-sided**	**All Stories**
Aff. Action Proponent	83.3%	56.1%	62%
Aff. Action Opponent	16.6%	36.5%	33%
Balanced	0%	7.3%	5%
Story N	18	82	100

This sample of 100 stories is composed of two types of articles: One-sided stories that by definition must be imbalanced, and two-sided stories that favor either side or are balanced. There were 18 stories that were one-sided; that is, they included quotes from only one side of the debate. Affirmative action proponents were favored in 15 of these

stories while opponents were favored in three. Of the 82 two-sided stories, 56.1 percent favored proponents in a majority of the three measures. Opponents were favored in a majority of the three measures in 36.5 percent of the two-sided stories, while 7.3 percent of the two-sided stories were balanced.

When the newspapers are examined individually, proponents were found to be favored most often and to a greater degree in the *Chicago Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times* (table B.1). They also were favored in the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*. The lone exception was the New York Times, which favored opponents in 48 percent of articles and proponents in 44 percent. This is somewhat misleading, however, given that proponents overall dominated four of the five measures under review (table B.5). Further discussion of that follows in the ensuing chapter.

TABLE 2
Percentage of stories favoring affirmative action proponent sources and affirmative action opponent sources, 1978 New York Times.

	1978 *New York Times*		
	Only 1 side used	**Two-sided**	**All Stories**
Aff. Action Proponent	88.9%	62.5%	72%
Aff. Action Opponent	11.1%	31.3%	24%
Balanced	0%	6.2%	4%
Story N	9	16	25

The difference between affirmative action proponents and opponents was even more pronounced in the 1978 sample (table 2) with 72 percent of all stories favoring affirmative action proponents. Affirmative action opponents were favored in the three measures in 24 percent of all 1978 stories and 5 percent were balanced. Nine stories were one-sided in 1978 and eight of these were in favor of proponents. Of the older

sample's two-sided articles, 62.5 percent favored proponents, 31.3 percent opponents and 6.2 percent were balanced.

Research Questions Explored

Research Question 1 — What types of sources from both sides of the affirmative action issue are cited?

Research Question 1 asked about the types of sources cited from both sides of the controversy. In the 1998 sample there were 323 pro-affirmative action sources cited in the 100 articles. More often than not these sources either were affiliated individuals or government employees, as is indicated in table 3.

TABLE 3
Types of sources cited in stories, 1998 Newspapers.

	1998 Newspapers				
	Government	**Education**	**Affiliated**	**Unaffiliated**	**Source N**
Pro AA	31.6%	19.5%	33.9%	14.9%	323
Anti AA	37.1%	4.4%	30.6%	27.7%	208

Affiliated individuals accounted for the greatest share, 33.9 percent, of the pro-affirmative action sources. For instance, NAACP Chairman of the Board Julian Bond was quoted in an *Atlanta Journal & Constitution* article that discussed President Clinton's race initiative, while Ramona Ripston, executive director of the ACLU of Southern California, was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* in an article on the Supreme Court's refusal to block Proposition 209.[132] Government sources, meanwhile, made up 31.6

[132]Scott Shepard, "Time is Winding Down on America's Dialogue on Race; Clinton's year-old initiative may have spurred discussion nationwide, but affirmative action battles have provided the actual fireworks," Atlanta Journal and Constitution 14 June 1998, 8A; David G. Savage, "High Court Refuses to Block Prop. 209; Justices Turn Down Request That They Halt Enforcement of Affirmative Action Ban Immediately," Los Angeles Times 5 September 1997, A3.

percent of the affirmative action proponent sources. President Clinton was cited most frequently, but the list also included city councilmen, state legislators, congressmen, governors, spokesmen, etc. Sources from the field of education constituted 19.5 percent of pro-affirmative action sources. For example, Larry Faulkner, provost of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, was cited in a *Chicago Tribune* article on how colleges are relying less on affirmative action.[133] Reporters from the 1998 and before sample relied least upon unaffiliated individuals when citing affirmative action proponents, using them 14.9 percent of the time. An example would be Edward Blum, identified as a Houston businessman who was sought for his reaction in a *New York Times* article on an anti-affirmative action proposition.[134]

This source reliance varied from the 208 anti-affirmative action sources cited in the 1998 sample. The most striking difference is in the use of education sources, which were cited just 4.4 percent of the time as an affirmative action opponent. This was considerably different from the nearly 20 percent of affirmative action proponents who had education ties. Of the nine anti-affirmative action education sources cited, only one, a UCLA law school dean quoted by the *Los Angeles Times*, was an authority figure. Of the remaining eight education sources cited as an affirmative action opponent (three in the *Los Angeles Times*, two in each the *Atlanta Journal & Constitution* and *New York Times* and one in the *Chicago Tribune)*, all were law professors. For instance, the *New York Times'* quoted University of Texas Law professor Lino Graglia who favored the ban of affirmative action at his university.[135]

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[133]Rogers Worthington, "Affirmative Action Scaled Down as a College Mixer," Chicago Tribune 9, September 1996, 1.
[134]Sam Howe Verhovek, "The 1997 Elections: Affirmative Action: Referendum in Houston Shows Complexity of Preferences Issue," New York Times 6 November 1997, A1.
[135]Peter Applebome, "Affirmative Action Ban Changes a Law School," New York Times 2 July 1997, A14.

Reporters in the 1998 and before sample relied more frequently on government sources for affirmative action opponents, that group constituting 37.1 percent of opponents. California Governor Pete Wilson, who was at the forefront of his state's passage of Proposition 209 (an anti-affirmative action measure), was cited most frequently. Yet the same types of government sources relied upon for proponents also were relied upon for opponents. At 30.6 percent of 208 sources, affiliated individuals made up the second-largest bloc of affirmative action opponents cited. Ward Connerly, who headed the California Civil Rights Initiative, was a frequent source with all of the papers, but the list also included such affiliated individuals as David Bositis, a researcher for the Joint Center, the nation's leading think tank on minority issues, who was cited by the *Atlanta Journal & Constitution.*[136] Unaffiliated individuals were used 27.7 percent of the time for affirmative action opponents, such as high school student Maria Carmona, whom the *Los Angeles Time* quoted in favor of the end to admissions preferences at the University of California.[137]

TABLE 4
Types of sources cited in stories, 1978 New York Times.

	1978 *New York Times*				
	Government	**Education**	**Affiliated**	**Unaffiliated**	**Source N**
Pro AA	36.2%	20.8%	38.4%	4.3%	90
Anti AA	3.1%	21.9%	21.9%	24.3%	38

For the most part, pro-affirmative action source reliance varied little from the 1998 sample to the 1978 sample. Slightly more government sources (36.2 percent in the 1978

[136]Scott Shepard, "Affirmative Action a Big Loser in Poll Crossing Racial Lines," Atlanta Journal and Constitution 18 June 1997, 8A.
[137]Fred Alvarez, "Post-Affirmative Action, It's a New Era for Grads; While Experts Try to Gauge Effects of New Policy, Many College Applicants Don't Let it Get in Their Way," Los Angeles Times 31 May 1998, B1.

sample, 31.6 percent in 1998) and affiliated individuals were used (38.4 percent to 33.9 percent) compared with 20 years later (table 4). The biggest difference was in the use of unaffiliated sources, which made up just 4.3 percent of the 90 affirmative action proponents cited in the 1978 count, but who constituted 14.9 percent in 1998.

An even bigger difference between the two samples was found in the use of government and education sources as affirmative action opponents. It should be stressed that the 1978 sample included only 38 opponent sources overall. But far less government sources were used in 1978 (3.1 percent) than in 1998 (37.1), while far more education sources (21.9 percent) were used in 1978 than 20 years later (4.4 percent).

Source breakdown by individual papers can be found in table B.10. The figures are roughly similar to the overall findings, with a few exceptions. The *Atlanta Journal & Constitution* relied far more often on government sources for both proponents and opponents, a reflection of the ongoing debate in the Georgia legislature over various anti-affirmative action bills. And the *New York Times* sample from 1998 included a greater proportion of education sources as proponents and affiliated sources as opponents than the overall sample.

Research Question 2 — What types of arguments/claims from both sides of the affirmative action issue are being reported?

Research Question 2, meanwhile, asked about the types of arguments/claims from both sides of the controversy being reported. It is important to stress the qualitative nature of the question and of the coding. Arguments or claims for both sides of the debate were sorted into three different categories: Value, Fact, and Policy. Value Statements were defined as "one's position" or "judgment." An example of a pro-affirmative action Value Statement comes from Peter Nguyen, president of UCLA Law School's Student Bar Association. He was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* as saying "It's

really depressing that one of the big things that UC was known for before — its diversity — has been taken away."[138] Another example is the *New York Times* quoting Fred Jordan, chairman of the California Business Council for Equal Opportunity, as calling Ward Connerly a "houseboy" and "paid assassin" who is "waltzing with our enemy, trying to disenfranchise us. He doesn't want to be called black. He's a man with no conscience. His hypocrisy is unprecedented."[139]

Fact statements were defined as "data" or "matters of record." These included pro-affirmative action statements such as the *New York Times'* use of a study in favor of affirmative action that said doctors "admitted with special consideration for factors like race or ethnic origin had remarkably similar postgraduate records and careers to those admitted on academic merit alone."[140] Or an anti-affirmative action statement like the *Chicago Tribune's* lead cite that supporters of an anti-affirmative action amendment "said Tuesday they had gathered enough signatures to put the measure on the November ballot."[141] Though devoid of value, such a fact statement can be seen to favor opponents in that it lends a certain credibility to their opposition by attempting to show that there are many others who have joined their cause through signing the petition.

Policy statements were defined as "conceptual" or "different ways of talking about an issue." Examples would be the *Chicago Tribune's* quote of Ward Connerly that "When people hear the term 'affirmative action,' they think of it as some benign term that

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[138]Danny Feingold, "Test Tube for a Changing Political Climate; Education: Fewer Black and Latino Students are Enrolling in UC Law Schools in the First Post-Affirmative Action Year, Some Say to the Detriment of Society," Los Angeles Times 6 October 1997, E1.
[139]B. Drummond Ayres Jr., "Fighting Affirmative Action, He Finds His Race an Issue," New York Times 18 April 1996, A1.
[140]Ethan Bronner, "Study of Doctors Sees Little Effect of Affirmative Action on Careers," New York Times 8 October 1997, A1.
[141]Karen Brandon, "Embattled Women Join Fight to Save Affirmative Action; California Vote Seen as Test for National Policy," Chicago Tribune 31 March 1996, 3C.

means we are helping people."[142] Or pro-affirmative action source Donald Regusters who was quoted saying "While some obstacles are being put in the way of local . . . set-aside programs through court rulings, often requiring different justifications for the programs, it is harder for Congress to act against them [set-aside programs]."[143]

TABLE 5
Percentages of types of statements made by pro- and anti-affirmative action sources in 1998 newspaper sample.

	1998 Newspapers			
	Value	**Fact**	**Policy**	**N**
Aff. Action Proponent	54.5%	9.2%	36.2%	517
Overall	33.7%	5.7%	22.3%	835
Aff. Action Opponent	60.6%	7.8%	31.4%	318
Overall	23.1%	2.9%	11.9%	835

Overall in the 1998 sample for both pro- and anti-affirmative action sources, value statements were cited most frequently (table 5). Of 517 different statements cited for affirmative action proponents, 54.5 percent were statements of value, 9.2 percent were statements of fact and 36.2 percent were policy statements. An example of all three statements in one story can be seen in a *Los Angeles Times* article: Value — "Giving preference to ethnicity and other special qualities yields powerful effects on the diversity of the student population," UC Davis medical professors; Fact — "Affirmative Action students admitted to UC Davis Medical School with below-standard grades and test scores had to play catch-up during their first years in school, but turned out to be just as

[142]Vincent J. Schodolski, "California Closer to Affirmative Action Vote; Measure's Foes Say Proposal Could Legalize Discrimination Against Women," Chicago Tribune 21 February 1996, 10.
[143]Ernest Holsendolph, "Affirmative Action Flourishes Locally; But Federal Programs are at Greater Risk," Atlanta Journal and Constitution 15 September 1996, 7D.

competent doctors as regularly admitted students, according to a study released today."; Policy — "More attention should be paid to the type of person, one's level of dedication and human sensitivity," Dr. Randall Morgan.[144]

Affirmative action opponents relied even more often on value statements. Of the 318 cites coded, 60.6 percent were value, 7.8 percent fact and 31.4 percent policy. An example of all three from Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom in a *New York Times* article: Value — "I said to Steve on a number of occasions, 'You have to get beyond your anger about that situation before you touch this subject."; Fact — "Mr. Thernstrom recalled that in the early 1960s, he supported a bill in the Massachusetts legislature to eliminate all references to race . . . "; Policy — "When it comes to race, they say, the issue is not how much they have changed, but how much the left has shifted from color-blindness to color-consciousness."[145]

Looking at the 835 combined statements as a whole, 33.7 percent were Value statements by proponents, compared to 23.1 percent for opponents. Proponents also had an edge in Fact statements overall (5.7 percent to 2.9 percent) and Policy statements (22.2 percent to 11.9 percent).

The individual papers varied little from these overall findings, though anti-affirmative action sources in the *Atlanta Journal & Constitution* and *New York Times* more frequently relied on Value statements and less on Policy statements (tables B.11-B.14).

The breakdown of source statements in the 1978 sample was similar to findings in the 1998 and before sample, as can be seen in table 6. Of 142 pro-affirmative action statements, 56.3 percent were coded as value, 9.1 percent as fact and 34.5 percent as policy. Anti-affirmative action sources in 1978 relied even more often on value

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[144]Kenneth R. Weiss, "Education/An Exploration of Ideas, Issues and Trends in Education; Tracing Affirmative Action; Study at UC Davis Says Program Produced Good Doctors, but Report Draws Fire," Los Angeles Times 8 October 1997, B2.
[145]Steven A. Holmes, "Affirmative Action's Unlikely Foes," New York Times 10 January 1998, A8.

statements. Of 49 statements coded, 73.4 percent were value, 4 percent were fact and 22.4 percent were policy.

TABLE 6
Percentages of types of statements made by pro- and anti-affirmative action sources in 1978 New York Times.

	1978 - *New York Times*			
	Value	**Fact**	**Policy**	**N**
Aff. Action Proponent	56.3%	9.1%	34.5%	142
Overall	41.8%	6.8%	25.6%	191
Aff. Action Opponent	73.4%	4%	22.4%	49
Overall	18.8%	1%	5.7%	191

Support found for hypotheses

The overall evidence gathered from coding seems to suggest support for each of the hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 — Recent newspaper reporting on affirmative action will include more proponents than opponents as sources.

Hypothesis 1 expected that recent newspaper reporting on affirmative action would include more proponents than opponents as sources. Several figures support such a contention. Of 531 total sources coded from both sides in the 1998 and before sample, 60.8 percent (323) were affirmative action proponents (table 7). The total number of sources, words and average word space for each newspaper can be found in tables B.6-B.9.

Furthermore, of the 100 stories coded in the 1998 sample, 18 were one-sided (table 1, page 55), that is, only pro- or anti-affirmative action sources were used. Of these, 15

were one-sided in favor of affirmative action proponents. For example, a *Chicago Tribune* article on a federal appeals court ruling that banned affirmative action admissions policies at the University of Texas Law School quoted seven pro-affirmative action sources without citing a single affirmative action opponent.[146] Furthermore, no reason was stated for the exclusion of opponents. Among individual papers, the *Atlanta Journal & Constitution* had the most one-sided stories, six in favor of proponents, three in favor of opponents. The *Los Angeles Times* had five one-sided stories, the *Chicago Tribune* three and the *New York Times* just one, that in favor of opponents.

The first hypothesis receives further support when comparing the numbers from Measure 1, which compared number of sources (table 8). Overall in the 1998 sample, pro-affirmative action sources outnumbered their counterparts in 61 percent of

TABLE 7
Number of sources, words, and average words per source for affirmative action proponents and opponents in 1998 newspapers.

	Sources and words — 1998 Newspapers					
	AAP Sources	**AAP Words**	**Avg. Words Per Source**	**AAO Sources**	**AAO Word**	**Avg. Words per Per Source**
1998	323	16,287	50.4	208	10,531	50.6
1978	90	5,404	60	38	1,399	36.8

all stories. Twenty percent of the stories had a greater number of anti-affirmative action sources while 19 percent were balanced. Measure counts in each of the four papers can be found in tables B.2-B.5. The least balanced paper in the sample in terms of sources was the *Chicago Tribune* (table B.3), which quoted more proponents in 72 percent of the stories while favoring opponents just 12 percent of the time. The *Los Angeles Times* (table B.4) had similar figures, favoring proponents 68 percent of the time and opponents 20

[146]Sabrina L. Miller, "Colleges Defending Affirmative Action Admissions; Texas Ruling, California Action Raise Concerns at Illinois Schools," Chicago Tribune 3 April 1996, 1N.

percent. The *New York Times* (table B.5) came closest to balance, favoring proponents 52 percent of the time and opponents 28 percent.

TABLE 8
Percentages of measures favoring affirmative action proponent sources and affirmative action opponent sources in 1998 sample.

	1998 Newspapers				
	No. of Sources	**No. of Words**	**Cites in Lead**	**Cites in Graf 2-5**	**Cites in Front half**
Aff. Action Proponent	61%	67%	68.5%	49.3%	49.4%
Aff. Action Opponent	20%	32%	25.7%	28.7%	28.4%
Balanced	19%	1%	8.5%	21.9%	22.1%
Story N	100	100	35	73	95

And source favoritism wasn't always a matter of one side having simply one more source quoted. Of the 61 stories in which more proponents than opponents were cited, the difference in 21 of the articles was at least three or more sources (table 9). Seventeen stories had two more proponents than opponents cited, while 23 had one more. When a greater number of affirmative action opponents were cited (which occurred 21 times), more often than not it was by a single source, that occurring 12 times. In only three stories were three or more affirmative action opponents than proponents cited. Again, the *Chicago Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times* were furthest from source balance. The former had seven of 25 stories with a proponent edge of three or more sources, while nine of the latter's 25 stories coded had a similar disparity.

TABLE 9
Degree of source favoritism, by newspaper.

	Strongly Imbalanced Pro	Imbalanced for Pro	Slightly Imbalanced Pro	Neutral	Slightly Imbalanced Opp	Imbalanced for Opp	Strongly Imbalanced Opp
	3 or more	2 more	1 more	even	1 more	2 more	3 or more
Atlanta Journal & Constitution	3	5	7	6	3	0	1
Chicago Tribune	7	6	5	4	1	2	0
Los Angeles Times	9	2	6	3	3	1	1
New York Times 1998	2	4	5	5	5	3	1
1998 TOTALS	**21**	**17**	**23**	**18**	**12**	**6**	**3**
New York Times 1978	10	5	2	3	3	1	1

Hypothesis 2 — Recent newspaper reporting on affirmative action will give more space to proponents than to opponents.

Hypothesis 2 expected that recent newspaper reporting on affirmative action would give more space — in terms of words — to proponents. Words coded included those that directly dealt with the affirmative action debate as well as those that might be defined as tangential or neutral. The important thing to keep in mind is that a proponent or opponent is being attributed space, no matter what they are saying. The disparity is similar to the difference found between numbers of sources between the two sides. Of 26,818 words coded in all 1998 stories, 16,287 (60.7) were the words of affirmative action proponents (table 7). The substance of these words was not under examination in this hypothesis. As indicated in Research Question 2, citations and quotes varied from Value

Statements to Fact Statements to Policy Statements. What matters most is that the words of one side — whatever they are — are being presented.

As table 8 indicates by Measure No. 2, number of words, proponents were given more space in 67 percent of the stories. Affirmative action opponents received more space in 32 percent of the stories, and just 1 percent of the stories were balanced. Again, measure counts in each of the four papers can be found in tables B.2-B.5.

The *Chicago Tribune* was found to have the greatest spread in number of words devoted to each side. Proponents were favored in word space 84 percent of the time and opponents in 16 percent of the stories. The *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* came closest to true parity, favoring proponents 56 percent of the time and opponents 40 percent with 4 percent of the stories being balanced.

TABLE 10
Degree of word space favoritism, by newspaper.

	Strongly Imbalanced Pro	Imbalanced for Pro	Slightly Imbalanced Pro	Neutral	Slightly Imbalanced Opp	Imbalanced for Opp	Strongly Imbalanced Opp
	30%+	20%+	10%+	10%+ or-	10%+	20%+	30%+
Atlanta Journal & Constitution	11	1	1	2	1	2	7
Chicago Tribune	17	0	2	2	0	0	4
Los Angeles Times	17	0	0	1	0	2	5
New York Times 1998	9	2	3	1	0	1	9
1998 TOTALS	**54**	**3**	**6**	**6**	**1**	**5**	**25**
New York Times 1978	19	0	0	3	0	0	3

Again, it is helpful to examine just how great the disparity was, for a difference of only a few words is relatively insignificant. Table 10 indicates the difference in word count between the two sides as a percentage. More often than not — for both sides — when a proponent or opponent received more space it was with a difference of at least 30 percent more words. In fact, of the 67 stories in which proponents received more word space, 54 of the stories allotted them 30 percent more words than opponents. Of the 32 stories in which opponents had more space, the difference was 30 percent or more in 25 stories. The *Chicago Tribune* and *Los Angeles Times* also were tops in this category. Both papers devoted 30 percent or more word space to proponents in 17 of 25 stories. For instance, a *Chicago Tribune* article on contract guidelines for affirmative action attributed 176 words to five proponent sources and 25 words to one opponent source.[147]

One interesting figure of note is that average words per source was remarkably close (table 7) between the two sides. Counting all sources from the 1998 sample, when proponents were cited they received an average of 50.4 words, while opponents were allotted 50.6 words. The difference in total words, then comes from more frequent cites of proponents and more cites of proponents overall.

Hypothesis 3 — When both sides of the issue are cited, recent newspaper reporting on affirmative action will more often give earlier and higher story placement to proponents than to opponents.

Hypothesis 3 expected that when both sides of the issue were cited, recent newspaper reporting on affirmative action would more often give earlier and higher story placement to proponents than to opponents. Support for the hypotheses is found in Measure 3, which tracks cites in leads, grafs two through five and in the first half of a

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[147]Jan Crawford Greenburg, "Contract Guidelines Could 'Men' Affirmative Action," Chicago Tribune 23 May 1996, 1N.

story. The measure was deemed in favor of one side if that side was favored in a majority of these three placement measures.

In all 100 stories from 1998 (table 8), affirmative action proponents were cited more often in leads (68.5 percent of the stories to 25.7 percent), cites in the second through fifth grafs (49.3 percent to 28.7 percent) and cites in the front half of a story (49.4 percent to 28.4 percent). An example of all three measures being dominated by proponents can be found in a *Los Angeles Times* story that focused on the efforts of women and minority business owners fighting Proposition 209.[148] The story contained a lead cite of the two groups' pledge to expand their efforts. John Mack, president of the Los Angeles Urban League, was quoted in the third paragraph of the story saying "We can't let the demagogues control this issue." And four affirmative action proponents were cited in the first half of the story to just one opponent.

These measures of placement tended to gravitate more toward balance as the story advanced. In the 35 stories which cited a source in the lead, 8.5 percent were balanced (both sources cited). Cites in grafs two through five were balanced 21.9 percent of the time, while first-half cites were balanced 22.1 percent of the time.

As was seen with measures of the number of sources and of word space, the papers varied from each other in the placement measures (tables B.2-B.5). Again, the Chicago and Los Angeles newspapers showed the greatest difference between proponents and opponents. The *Los Angeles Times* favored proponents in 80 percent of the leads, 63.6 percent of grafs two through five and 64 percent of first-half placement. The *Chicago Tribune* favored proponents in 81.8 percent of leads, 41.1 percent of the first two through five grafs, and in 72 percent of first-half placement.

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[148]Sam Fulwood III, "Affirmative Action Bill Exposes GOP Split; Congress: Republican Lawmaker Breaks from Colleagues, Moves to Shelve Measure that Would Have Ended Federal Preference Programs," Los Angeles Times 7 November 1997, A23.

The Atlanta and New York papers were more balanced in terms of placement measures. The *Atlanta Journal and Constitution,* though favoring proponents in lead placement, actually had a balance between two through five graf placement and favored opponents in terms of front half cites. The latter also was true of the *New York Times,* which gave opponents more first-half story space in 52.1 percent of stories.

Hypothesis 4 — Affirmative action reporting of 20 years ago will reflect the first three hypotheses, but with an even greater disparity favoring affirmative action proponents.

Finally, Hypothesis 4 expected that affirmative action reporting of 20 years ago would reflect the first three hypotheses, but with an even greater favoring of affirmative action proponents. Once again, this was affirmed.

Again, it is important to note that no samples from the *Omaha World-Herald* in 1978 and before met the requirements for the sample, leaving the 25 stories from the *New York Times* from that period. Of the stories coded in the latter, 72 percent favored affirmative action proponents (table 2, page 56). This compares to 61 percent of stories from 1998. Also, affirmative action opponents were favored in 24 percent of the 1978 sample, less than the 33 percent in the 1998 sample. And just four percent of 1978 stories were balanced.

The *New York Times* also had a greater degree of one-sided stories favoring proponents, 88.9 percent of its nine stories with just one side quoted in favor of proponents. The 1998 and before sample had 83.3 percent of one-sided stories in favor of proponents.

The 1978 *New York Times* also favored proponents more frequently in the measures than did the 1998 sample (table 12). That includes number of sources (68 percent of stories in 1978 to 61 percent in 1998), number of words (80 percent to 67 percent), cites in the lead (81.8 percent to 68.5 percent) and cites in the front half of stories (70.8 percent to

49.4 percent). The only difference between the two samples was in cites in grafs two through five. In the 1978 sample, 42.1 percent of the stories had more proponents placed in the first half of a story. In 1998 that figure was 49.3 percent.

TABLE 11
Percentages of measures favoring affirmative action proponent sources and affirmative action opponent sources, 1978 New York Times

	1978 *New York Times*				
	No. of Sources	**No. of Words**	**Cites in Lead**	**Cites in Graf 2-5**	**Cites in Front half**
Aff. Action Proponent	68%	80%	81.8%	42.1%	70.8%
Aff. Action Opponent	20%	16%	18.1%	26.3%	16.6%
Balanced	12%	4%	0%	31.5%	12.5%
Story N	25	25	11	19	24

A total of 128 sources were coded in 1978, of which 70.3 percent (90) were affirmative action proponents (table B.9). This compares to 1998's count of 60.8 percent of sources as proponents.

Word space disparity also was greater in 1978. Proponents received 5,404 words, nearly three times as opponents' 1,399 words. This broke down to a per-source average word count of 60 for proponents, 36.8 for opponents.

Looking more specifically at these disparities we see that, again, they are even greater in the 1978 sample (table 12). Of the 17 stories that had more proponents than opponents cited, the difference in 10 of the stories was three or more. Five of the stories had two more sources listed, and two of them one source. The same goes for word count (table 10). Of the 20 sources which had more words devoted to affirmative action proponents, 19 of them had a difference of 30 percent or greater.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The Favoring of Affirmative Action Proponents

The question was asked in the introduction of this thesis whether affirmative action reporting in newspapers presents a dialogue with more or less equal give and take between proponents and opponents. Based on concepts of fairness (inclusion of both sides in a story when possible) and balance (according each side approximately the same number of sources and amount of word space, as well as equal prominence of quote placement), the evidence presented here suggests that while a dialogue occurs in specific stories, when looking at affirmative action reporting as a whole there is not.

The overwhelming majority of stories (83.3 percent) that quoted sources from just one side of the debate favored affirmative action proponents (table 1, page 55). And of those stories that included quotes from both sides, 62 percent favored proponents with

an edge in source count, word space and prominence of story placement. When studying the papers as a whole, proponents are favored in nearly every measure of fairness and balance in affirmative action articles.

Such findings are in accord with other research suggesting that newspapers cover controversy unequally in their treatment of opposing sides. Similar results have been found in studies of newspaper reporting on contentious issues such as abortion, gay rights, war protests, elections, etc. This study of affirmative action reporting also is in accord with other studies that indicate reporters often rely on sources that are official or governmental in nature and are easily accessible.

The ethics code of the American Society of Newspaper Editors states that "every effort must be made to assure that the news content is accurate, free from bias and in context, and that *all sides are presented fairly*. Given these findings, it is difficult to claim that all sides are being presented fairly in affirmative action reporting. While this quantitative study does not offer any reasons *why* these newspapers being examined favor affirmative action proponents in articles, it does show *how* proponents are favored: Through greater number of sources, more words and more prominent placement of assertions in a story. Acknowledgment must be made that affirmative action reporting over the last 20 years appears to be drawing closer to balance. Stories from the 1978 sample were in favor of proponents more often and too a greater degree than stories in 1998 (tables 1 and 2). But the difference in reporting between the two periods is slight and, whether intentional or not, such favoring of one side would certainly seem to have some influence on an important social debate.

Newspaper Climate

Before discussing the findings more thoroughly it may be useful to discuss the affirmative action environment in each paper's readership area during the time period

sampled. The *Atlanta Journal and Constitution, Los Angeles Times* and *New York Times* each had active, highly visible affirmative action controversies taking place in their respective circulation areas throughout the time period sampled. The *Chicago Tribune* did not.

The Georgia state legislature debated and voted on several anti-affirmative action bills from 1996 to 1998. Atlanta also was the venue for a federal lawsuit filed against the city school district's affirmative action program. California was the scene of two nationally prominent affirmative action battles that drew coverage from the other three papers coded as well as the home-state *Los Angeles Times*. First was the vote by the University of California Regents to cease affirmative action policies in the admissions practices of all its universities. And in 1996 citizens of that state voted in Proposition 209 which banned affirmative action in all state government dealings. The *New York Times*' local affirmative action controversy involved a 9-year-old suit against the Piscataway Board of Education. The board was being sued for firing a white teacher in favor of keeping on staff a black teacher who had less tenure with the school district. The case was scheduled to go before the U.S. Supreme Court and many thought it would result in the most significant affirmative action ruling by the court since the *Bakke* case. However, it was settled out of court.

Again, it should be pointed out that 12 of the 25 articles examined from the *New York Times* in 1998 actually favored opponents, while 11 favored proponents and two were balanced (table B.1). However, when the measures are taken individually, proponents were favored in four of them — number of sources, number of words, first-graf citations and citations in grafs two through five. The difference, then, is a matter of degree. Stories favored proponents and opponents a relatively equal number of times. However, when proponents were favored it typically was to a greater degree than when opponents were favored.

The *New York Times* of 1978, of course, had plenty of fodder in the affirmative action debate, foremost being the *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* Supreme Court case that changed the affirmative action landscape for the next two decades. But throughout 1978 the paper also covered stories regarding: A judge who reversed a New York City Board of Education procedure of assigning teachers to schools by race; Federal Labor Department regulations that curtailed requirements to hire blacks and other minorities on federally financed construction jobs in New York; the gain of black policemen in Detroit after an affirmative action plan was put into place; and, another Supreme Court case, *United Steelworkers v. Weber*, which resulted in even stronger support of affirmative action than the justices provided in *Bakke*.

No prominent or ongoing local affirmative action controversy existed in the *Chicago Tribune's* circulation area to warrant extensive coverage by that paper during the period sampled. While the *Chicago Tribune* did file several stories with a local affirmative action slant, it relied more on events happening elsewhere — especially California and New York — to report on affirmative action.

Story Orientation

What affect did these various newspaper climates have on the types of stories filed by the newspapers? Of the 100 stories coded in the 1998 sample, 62 could be defined as "Event" stories, or those articles written in reaction to an outside impetus such as a court decision, a press release, a meeting or a march. The remaining 38 stories were deemed to be "Enterprise" Stories, the type that involved initiative by the newspaper to report on some issue, person, etc., in a more in-depth manner and which are less likely to have time and place constraints. Appendix D provides a breakdown of story type by newspaper.

A breakdown of the *Chicago Tribune* story orientation resulted in 13 Enterprise stories and 12 Event stories. The *Atlanta Journal & Constitution* had 14 Enterprise stories and 11 Event stories. This is most interesting with regard to the *Tribune.* Throughout the 1998 period sampled the paper lacked an ongoing affirmative action controversy in its readership area. Thus, it had to look elsewhere for stories — only three of the 25 stories coded involved a local aspect. Perhaps this spurred the paper to look for the stories behind the stories going on elsewhere. Without something of local significance on which to report, *The Tribune's* stories often denoted how events elsewhere related to the "bigger picture," thereby giving such stories meaning for its own readers. Of the *Atlanta Journal & Constitution* articles coded, 16 involved a local slant, something to be expected given the affirmative action debate in the state legislature. But not all of these were spurred by day-to-day action or occurrences in the legislature. The paper also provided broad overviews of what was happening in the legislature with stories giving context and meaning.

The *Los Angeles Times* had just four Enterprise stories and the *New York Times* seven. This is understandable considering the previously mentioned active cases involving affirmative action in the respective readership areas. Articles in the *Los Angeles Times* focused frequently on events surrounding Proposition 209, including meetings, press releases, poll results, surveys, votes, and court decisions. In fact, nine stories coded involved Event stories about Prop. 209. Overall, the *Los Angeles Times* reported 16 stories relative to its readership area and nine of a national scope. Stories in the *New York Times* also focused on events, but these more often were of a national scope. Of its 25 stories coded, only six involved a local slant. Nineteen other stories involved happenings outside the paper's readership area, covering things such as Proposition 209, the vote in Houston on a similar measure, etc.

One item of note is the number of times Event stories were spurred by some act, speech or other news-generating occurrence by President Clinton or his administration. Of the 100 stories coded in the 1998 sample, 19 involved reports on such news. For instance, Clinton's speech at the National Archives pledging his support for affirmative action drew coverage in two of the papers, as did his similar speech at the University of San Diego commencement. The administration's opposition to such actions as Proposition 209 or the Piscataway lawsuit also generated news. Federal and Supreme Court decisions generated stories as well, with 16 articles oriented as such. Typically, these stories reported on breaking court decisions or opinions involving affirmative action.

The difference in nature between Enterprise and Event stories is bound to make a difference in the types of sources quoted. Event news is more often of a breaking nature, affording reporters less time to get reaction from different sources who may be opposed to each other. Or, they may simply be unavailable. Thus, source imbalance in such a story cannot always be said to be due to some bias on the part of the reporter. For instance, if a reporter is covering a Jesse Jackson-led march against Proposition 209, there aren't likely to be many proposition supporters in the crowd. A couple of more examples to make the point clear. *Los Angeles Times* reporter Jim Newton covered a meeting of more than 1,000 women and minority business owners and their supporters who gathered to pledge an expansion of their efforts in the face of a U.S. Supreme Court ruling to let Proposition 209 stand.[149] Newton's story focused primarily on the meeting participants, quoting five affirmative action proponents and attributing them a total of 253 words. No specific anti-affirmative action source was used, though Newton did

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[149]Jim Newton, "Prop. 209 Ruling Dominates Gathering; Economics: Women and Minority Business Owner Pledge to Renew Efforts After Court's Decision to Let State's Anti-Affirmative Action Law Stand," Los Angeles Times 7 November 1997, B1.

refer briefly to the general stance of Proposition 209 proponents, according their arguments 26 words. In other event-driven news, however, it appears better source balance could be achieved with a little effort. In the *Chicago Tribune,* Jan Crawford Greenburg reported on the Clinton administration's release of federal guidelines for race-based contracting.[150] Sources included the White House, as well as four other affirmative action proponents, accorded a total of 176 words. Just one opponent, a white man who filed a reverse discrimination suit, was quoted. It would appear from Greenburg's choice of proponent sources — Chicago officials, Assistant U.S. Attorney General Deval Patrick, Associate Attorney Gen. John Schmidt, President Clinton and a local Chicago resident — that there was ample time to piece the story together. So why wasn't there time to contact more affirmative action opponents?

Enterprise, or issue-oriented news, by contrast, often allows a reporter more time to research, interview and write a story. Accordingly, the reporter should have a greater chance to include various perspectives and actively seek sources. Such reporting is not as passive as covering an event, speech, court decision, etc. Source imbalance in such stories is less forgivable. Of the Enterprise stories coded, however, there were those that were balanced and those that were not. Among the former is Steven Holmes' article in the *New York Times.*[151] Holmes examined the trend during the mid-1990s against affirmative action. Even though the topic was a positive for opponents, Holmes quoted three sources for each side. Word difference only slightly favored proponents (251 to 213). Among the imbalanced Enterprise stories, however, was a report filed by Sabrina L. Miller of the *Chicago Tribune.*[152] Miller examined how recent affirmative action

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[150]Jan Crawford Greenburg, "Contract Guidelines Could 'Mend' Affirmative Action," Chicago Tribune 23 May 1996, 1.
[151]Steve A. Holmes, "The Nation; Rethinking Affirmative Action," New York Times 5 April 1998, 5.
[152]Sabrina L. Miller, "Colleges Defending Affirmative Action Admissions; Texas Ruling, California Action Raise Concerns at Illinois Schools," Chicago Tribune 3 April 1996, 1.

rulings would affect Illinois schools. There was nothing time-sensitive to the story, and it was clear the reporter was trying to provide an in-depth overview of the issues involved. In support of affirmative action, she quoted seven sources, quoting them 288 words. No opponents were contacted for the story.

Omaha World-Herald

Absence of a local, ongoing affirmative action controversy on which to report is one reason why the *Omaha World-Herald* lacked enough articles to qualify for the sample. And, without the staff and resources of a larger newspaper like the *Chicago Tribune* with which to cover nationally-significant issues such as Proposition 209 or the Piscataway case in New Jersey, the *Omaha World-Herald* had to rely on copy from other newspapers and wire services. A prerequisite of this study was to examine staff-written stories, thereby determining each particular paper's approach to reporting the issue. And, as can be seen in the various tables in Appendix B, the results can vary widely from paper to paper. But of the 28 stories in the *Omaha World-Herald* that were located by searching for headlines containing the words "affirmative action," just two were written by *World-Herald* staff and also met the other criteria.

Of these two stories the first examined affirmative action on campuses in the Midwest, including Nebraska. The story was in favor of proponents in terms of sources (6 to 4), words (311 to 168) and first-half cites (2 to 1). The second story was a general overview of affirmative action as a policy. Again, proponents were favored in number of sources (6 to 4), words (318 to 164), first-paragraph cites (1 to 0) and first-half cites (5 to 3). Of the 26 remaining stories from the period sampled, seven were editorials and the rest were not written by staff of the *World-Herald*. Because of this, the *World-Herald* was dropped from the proposed sample for both time periods under review.

The *Omaha World-Herald*, though not a prestige newspaper, is not without its resources, either. And yet, lacking significant affirmative action events in its readership area on which to report, it did not assign its staff to cover such controversies elsewhere. The debate drew local coverage in only a couple of instances, and nothing that could be considered in-depth over time. Certainly this is the case for the majority of newspapers in the United States. And, like the *World-Herald*, most of these non-prestige newspapers have to rely on the copy of other newspapers or news services for affirmative action reporting. This in turn would suggest that the parameters of the affirmative action debate are being set and defined by a smaller group of newspapers similar to the kind under review here. In an age of ever-increasing concentration of newspaper ownership and limited competition, this should give cause for concern, especially if the reporting, as the results here indicate, favors one side of a debate.

It should be noted that there was an ongoing affirmative action controversy within the *World-Herald's* coverage area in late 1979 and throughout 1980, but reports of it fell outside the 1978 sample period and thus were not included in this study. That controversy began with a lawsuit filed by the Brotherhood of Midwest Guardians, a group of black police officers, against the Omaha Police Department alleging hiring and promotion discrimination. The Brotherhood of Midwest Guardians filed the suit in late 1979. The U.S. Justice Department's Civil Rights Division then began an investigation of the Omaha Police Department in July 1980 and also threatened to file suit. But on Oct. 23 of that same year the City of Omaha agreed in a U.S. District Court consent decree to hire enough black police officers to represent at least 9.5 percent of the force, a percentage roughly equal to Omaha's black population.

Though a complete search of all *World-Herald* articles regarding the lawsuit and Justice Department investigation was not conducted, a few were examined to explore the nature of the stories. The ones found were driven more by events rather than being

in-depth enterprise reporting. That is, no stories were found that examined affirmative action per se as a policy. The concept was mentioned in each of the stories, but its philosophical merits or drawbacks received little play. Thus, it is difficult to say that in these stories there were clear-cut affirmative action proponents and opponents. Proponents, then, would be seen as someone quoted in favor of the Justice Department investigation or the Midwest Guardians. An affirmative action opponent would be someone defending the city or police department. Three stories were coded; results were similar to the general findings of the 1998 and 1978 samples. One article favored proponents in sources (2 to 0), words (310 to 0) and placement. Another article favored proponents in sources (2 to 1) and two placement categories, though attributed words were even between sides. The final story coded quoted just one source, deemed an affirmative action proponent.

Affirmative Action Climate - Then and Now

It may be of some help to put the findings of this study alongside the 1985 study of Frederick Lynch, the only communication-linked research of affirmative action and the media found for the literature review. Lynch in 1985 defined affirmative action as a "look-away" issue that was relatively ignored by major television networks, newspapers and magazines.[153] Certainly that is not the case today with hundreds of articles on affirmative action appearing in each of the four newspapers under study alone. Thus, it can be said with some degree of comfort that overall, affirmative action is better reported on today than at any time in the issue's public life.

Lynch also asserted that most of the stories were "after-the-fact" reports with little debate of the issues. Again, this seems to have changed for the better. No longer

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[153]Frederick R. Lynch, "Affirmative Action, the Media, and the Public," American Behavioral Scientist 28 (August 1985): 807-827.

do articles on affirmative action appear only after a momentous Supreme Court decision, a new law enacted by Congress or a vote by a school board. While such breaking news still provides the impetus for much affirmative action reporting, a considerable amount of the debate is reported on before and during, as well as after affirmative action-related occurrences. For example, the *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* provided a broad overview of President Clinton's Race Initiative, an article that was not spurred by a grand happening but one that gave a feel for the issues involved in affirmative action.[154] Likewise, the *Los Angeles Times* reported on how college applicants were being affected by new admissions polices absent affirmative action.[155]

Lynch offered several reasons why affirmative action reporting from the late 1960s through the mid-1980s was limited in both numbers of articles and scope of discussion. First, he said, there were few well-organized groups or personalities that openly or even covertly opposed affirmative action. Again, one finds something entirely different more than a decade later. Today, such anti-affirmative organizations like California's American Civil Rights Institute and the American Civil Liberties Institute are not only well-organized but highly visible and active. The ACRI, for instance, was formed by organizers of Proposition 209, and its members publicized the organization's start with many of the media. Twenty years ago, as Lynch indicated, both sides of the affirmative action debate were not very active. However, almost any reporter seeking an anti-affirmative action source today would not have to look very far to find one; most are just a phone call or e-mail away.

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[154]Scott Shepard, "Time is Winding Down on America's Dialogue on Race; Clinton's Year-Old Initiative May Have Spurred Discussion Nationwide, but Recent Affirmative Action Battels Have Provided the Actual Fireworks," Atlanta Journal and Constitution 14 June 1994, 8A.
[155]Fred Alvarez, "Post-Affirmative Action, It's a New Era for Grads; While Experts Try to Gauge Effects of New Policy, Many College Applicants Don't Let it Get in Their Way," Los Angeles Times 31 May 1998, B1.

The rise of such groups makes the one-sided nature of many affirmative action articles all the more difficult to comprehend. In 15 of the 18 stories that had only one side of the debate quoted, proponents were favored. Adding at least one affirmative action opponent to these stories most likely would not have been a difficult task. Yet not only was this not done, but in none of the 18 one-sided stories was there a reason given as to why "the other side" went without mention.

Lynch also asserted that many affirmative action plans were done quietly, thereby limiting any pre-program discussions. Again, one finds this no longer to be the case — for both sides of the debate. The more publicity the better. Word gets out quickly when Jesse Jackson organizes a pro-affirmative action march or a university discusses its new admissions policy. Likewise, the press releases come fast and furious when a group such as the one backing the California Civil Rights Initiative puts out the latest survey numbers supporting it side. Newspapers, of course, thrive on such easy access; little digging is required to write such stories.

Lynch also asserted that opposition to affirmative action on the surface appears to run counter to the reformist and progressive values of the national media, and reporters and editors might consciously or unconsciously avoid the issue. On the surface, affirmative action would appear to fall along progressive lines. Yet there is no sense today, given the hundreds of articles found for this study alone, that reporters and editors are avoiding the issue.

Finally, Lynch asserted that possible feelings of guilt or being labeled a racist inhibited many from speaking out against affirmative action. There's no doubt that such charges are still being levied — from both sides of the aisle. But if anything it seems to have become an expected part of the debate, one of the rules of the affirmative action debate game, so to speak. Reporters whose stories were under study here contacted a variety of people willing to speak out against affirmative action, ranging from the

governor of Louisiana to the Governor of California, housewives and businessmen, professors, students, lawyers and various elected officials. As the anti-affirmative action movement has grown more visible there is an increased sense of "safety in numbers," perhaps thereby making a charge of racism less feared.

Discussion of Sources — Official Voices

The findings with regard to source reliance come as little surprise given the expectations spurred by the literature review. Affiliated individuals (33.9 percent of sources) or those with ties to the government (31.6 percent) made up the bulk of affirmative action proponents quoted by the newspapers as a whole (table 3, page 57). The same could be said for affirmative action opponents, who most likely were to be government sources (37.1 percent) or affiliated individuals (30.6 percent).

Overall, then, it can be said that reporters typically relied on "official" voices — the NAACP executive director; the Proposition 209 spokesperson; the university chancellor or president; the congressional representative, state senator, mayor or governor. Individuals without such "official" ties or titles after their names were least likely to be quoted by reporters. This was especially true of proponents, of whom just 14.9 percent were unaffiliated sources.

Such finding of reliance on official voices is similar to findings by Lasorsa and Reese, who asserted that news media favor high prestige sources[156] and of Berkowitz and Beach, who expected but did not discover a great diversity of sources in conflict-based stories.[157] Why is this? Bennett notes possible reasons can be traced to the roots of journalism norms. Specifically, virtues of objectivity and balance, political obligation

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[156]Dominic L. Lasorsa and Stephen D. Reese, "News Source Use in the Crash of 1987: A Study of Four National Media," Journalism Quarterly 67 (Spring 1990): 60-71.
[157]Dan Berkowitz and Douglas W. Beach, "News Sources and News Context: The Effect of Routine News, Conflict and Proximity," Journalism Quarterly 70 (Spring 1993): 4-12.

to provide some degree of democratic accountability to citizens, and the economics of news business itself.[158]

Use of unaffiliated individuals changed somewhat, however, for affirmative action opponent sources (27.7 percent). Why the difference? If many pro-affirmative action voices can be found in government and among individuals affiliated with various organizations, why aren't unaffiliated individual proponents being reported at a rate similar to unaffiliated individual opponents? The reasons no doubt are numerous and beyond the scope of this study. However, some discussion is merited. A simple explanation could be that there are more unaffiliated individuals against affirmative action than there are in support of it. Various survey numbers could be found to be back such an assertion. But just as many survey numbers — depending on how the survey was worded — also could be used to refute such an assertion. And even if there were more unaffiliated opponents than there were unaffiliated proponents, certainly there are enough of the latter to be quoted in similar proportion with the former. Perhaps an explanation lies in affirmative action's institutionalization. If it is coming under attack, who better for a reporter to turn to for a quote than someone from the government, an individual affiliated with a pro-affirmative action agency or an educator who deals frequently with the policy in the admissions office. And while criticism of affirmative action from within these ranks certainly can be found, it is more likely that non-official voices will speak out against it, and thus it could be expected that there would be more unaffiliated opponents than proponents quoted.

Nevertheless, less frequent use of "official" voices for both proponents and opponents wouldn't necessarily make for less comprehensive, evocative affirmative

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[158]W. Lance Bennett, "An Introduction to Journalism Norms and Representations of Politics," Political Communication 13 (Spring 1996): 373-384.

action stories. In fact, as Hansen found, Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper stories were less likely to rely on official or government sources.[159]

Government Sources

Reliance on government sources varied little between proponents and opponents in the 1998 sample. Thus, the arguments from both sides of that particular arena would seem to be relatively balanced. This is counter to the findings of Dickson's study of reporting on the U.S. Invasion of Panama in which there was indication that reporters relied mostly on government sources for only one side of the debate.[160] This, Dickson said, may lend credence to notions that a subtle ideological bias pervades the mainstream press and that the press often serves to sustain the U.S. Government. But as far as affirmative action reporting in the 1998 sample, it would be hard to claim an ideological bias in the press considering government sources on both sides of the debate were being quoted.

More intriguing is the difference between reliance on government sources for affirmative action opponents in the sample years. In 1998 government representatives constituted 37.1 percent of opponent sources. In 1978 that figure was just 3.1 percent. Clearly, government officials in 1978 were not speaking out against affirmative action. Explanation for why they weren't could be as simple as saying there simply were few government sources opposed to the policy. Affirmative action at the time was still a relatively new and unshaped policy which had not yet elicited the organized and oft-repeated arguments against it which can be heard today. Many government officials may truly have felt affirmative action was needed to redress past injustices. An increase

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[159]Kathleen A. Hansen, "Source Diversity and Newspaper Enterprise Journalism," Journalism Quarterly 68 (Summer 1991): 474-482.

[160]Sandra H. Dickson, "Press and U.S. Policy Toward Nicaragua, 1983-1987: A Study of the New York Times and Washington Post," Journalism Quarterly 69 (Fall 1992): 562-571.

in anti-affirmative action government sources by 1998 might indicate that they felt such past injustices had been addressed, that they felt affirmative action had outlived its usefulness or that it was a failed policy. Or perhaps, as Lynch suggested, government sources in 1978 were hesitant to stand against affirmative action for fear of being labeled a racist, and that once such a charge lost some of its weight, they began speaking out on the policy.

Education Sources

Also intriguing was the difference in the use of education sources between opponents and proponents in 1998 and between opponents in 1998 and 1978. Of affirmative action proponents quoted in the 1998 sample, 19.5 percent were related to the field of education. This should not come as a surprise considering where affirmative action was coming under attack during this time. For instance, the University of California Regents created a nationwide stir when it ended affirmative action in the admissions policies of its universities. And the case involving the Piscataway Board of Education drew similar debate. It was only natural for reporters to get the reaction of educators to such occurrences.

Yet educators made up just 4.4 percent of affirmative action opponents in 1998. And just one of these sources was someone of authority, a law school dean. Does this mean there is only a handful of affirmative action opponents on campuses and school boards? That there are opponents out there, only they are not visible or active? That reporters were lazy in digging up anti-affirmative action education sources? That reporters avoided quoting these sources out of bias? To cite a reason for this disparity is to tread on dangerous ground. But though it could be claimed that many university figures in general are pro-affirmative action, undoubtedly there are many opponent

sources who are educators and who are available to reporters. With a little extra effort, perhaps.

How else, after all, can there be an explanation for the difference in educators as anti-affirmative action sources between 1998 and 1978. As mentioned before, the 1998 sample of opponent sources included just 4.4 percent as educators. But in 1978 that figure was considerably higher at 21.9 percent. What happened to these anti-affirmative action sources in the 20 years between? Did the majority of them change their minds? Was their a changing of the guard? Or did reporters simply stop seeking them out?

Another point which should be mentioned regarding the types of sources cited is the excessive reliance of reporters on generic terms such as "proponents" and "opponents." For example, an *Atlanta Journal and Constitution* story on an affirmative action battle in the legislature read, "Opponents slap at the GOP legislation as a race-bating ploy and an attempt to create a liability for Democrats . . ."[161] A *Chicago Tribune* story referred to "defenders" of affirmative action who "said the nation has not advanced sufficiently in its fight against racism to scale back gains won during the civil rights ear."[162] The *Los Angeles Times* pointed to "several critics of affirmative action" who "said they would never have thought to make an example of Chavis if the pro-preference forces hadn't made him their 'poster boy."[163] And the *New York Times* relied on, "opponents say the practice has denied college and graduate school admission, financial aid and university jobs to whites who have better qualifications."[164]

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[161]Kathy Pruitt, "The Affirmative Action battle; GOP left with just one big issue in '98 session," Atlanta Journal and Constitution 8 February 1998, 4D.
[162]Howard Witt, "U. of California Ends Affirmative Action Plan," Chicago Tribune 21 July 1995, 1N.
[163]Julie Marquis, "Doctor Becomes Symbol in Affirmative Action Debate," Los Angeles Times 2 September 1997, A1.
[164]William H. Honan, "Moves to End Affirmative Action Gain Support Nationwide," New York Times 31 March 1996, 30.

Catch-all terms included "opponents," "supporters," "critics," "proponents," "civil rights leaders," "Republicans," "College administrators," "activists," "surveys," and more. Use of such terms certainly is unavoidable at times. Yet there was a sense of overkill. It tends to over-simplify what can be a complex debate and reduce the matter to an either/or affair — either you are in favor or are against affirmative action — with little middle ground. It is a technique that makes the writing easier for the reporter but that can trivialize the contentions of either side. It also allows for little accountability. If it is written that "proponents say affirmative action critics are racist" or "opponents say affirmative action supporters are racist," who is to be held accountable for such words?

Source Arguments

It's of little surprise that the type of argument being quoted for both sides is one of value or judgment (tables 5, 6, pages 62-63). Like other contentious issues, the debate is long on personal feelings, stances and opinions and short on hard data, facts and matters of record. The breakdown of the types of arguments cited by each side is relatively similar comparing sample years, but one notable finding was that affirmative action opponents were more likely to rely on value arguments in 1978 (73.4 percent of quotes) than in 1998 (60.6 percent). They also were less likely to use arguments of policy, or different ways of discussing an issue, in 1978 (22.4 percent) than in 1998 (31.4 percent). Perhaps this is a reflection of the unorganized nature of affirmative action opposition 20 years ago. As arguments against the policy became more thought-out and available, value quotes subsided while policy quotes rose.

Overall Fairness and Balance

Among the concepts discussed in the literature review was the difficulty of achieving objectivity. Indeed, Merrill surmised that objectivity is impossible to attain,

that "The journalist must select, organize and manipulate facts; . . . from beginning to end, journalism is a subjective enterprise."[165] But do the overall numbers here suggest affirmative action reporting is manipulation gone too far? Or manipulation at all?

Why were there so many more affirmative action proponent sources than opponents? Why were proponents given so much more word space? Why were proponents favored in so many more measures?

Answers may lie in many places. As Fico has mentioned, perceived editorial concern can be important for influencing the number and type of sources on which reporters rely and that source credibility, source accessibility and time pressure influence a reporter's use of sources.[166] Consideration also should be given to Fico's idea that biased reporters fail to seek out sources who refute their own ideas.[167]

Once more it must be stressed that this study does not attempt to give the *why* of numbers that may suggest unfair or imbalanced affirmative action reporting. The coding is made and the numbers tabulated and conclusions can be drawn as to their significance.

It would be hard to make the argument that the numbers cited here would not have an impact on the affirmative action debate. Fico pointed out that if particular points of view on a single issue are given more attention than others, their public salience will increase and thereby alter the public debate resolving the issue.[168]

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[165]Everette E. Dennis, John C. Merrill, Media Debates: Issues in Mass Communication (White Plains, N.Y.: Longman Publishing Group, 1991), 110-116.
[166]Frederick Fico, "Influence of Perceived Editorial Concern And Role Concept on Source Reliance," Journalism Quarterly 63 (Fall 1986): 322-331.
[167]Frederick Fico and Angela Powers, "Influences on Use of Sources at Large U.S. Newspapers," Newspaper Research Journal. 15 (Fall 1994): 87-97.
[168]Frederick Fico and Stan Soffin, "Fairness and Balance of Selected Newspaper Coverage of Controversial National, State, and Local Issues," Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly 72 (Autumn 1995): 621-633.

This is where time comes into play. One story in favor of proponents detailing how a university has carried out a successful affirmative action policy in its admissions department or another story in favor of opponents who are suing a school board for its affirmative action policy does not mean that newspaper is unfair or imbalanced when it comes to affirmative action reporting. Nor does it mean a paper is less than objective if it favors one side over the other with x-more number of sources or x-more words quoted or x-more prominently placed assertions.

However, if a pattern is detected *over time* that favors one side in a public controversy and to a degree more than slight, consideration must be made that such reporting is unfair and imbalanced. It is the contention here that affirmative action reporting is unfair and imbalanced in favor of proponents.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Falling Short of Fairness and Balance

Given the findings presented here it is difficult to say that the prestige newspapers under review are living up to the standard set forth by the Hutchins Commission of a responsible press that *gives a representative picture of constituent groups in society.*

It would be an equal stretch to say that they are meeting the standards set more than 100 years ago when the Associated Press urged reporters to present balanced accounts *"of all sides of an issue."*[169] Or that they are fulfilling Article IV in the American Society of Newspaper Editors' code of ethics, which states that "every effort must be

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[169]Michael Emery and Edwin Emery, The Press and America: An Interpretive History of the Mass Media (New York: Oxford, 1988), 589.

made to assure that the news content is accurate, free from bias and in context, and that *all sides are presented fairly."*[170] Or that they are meeting the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics which stresses that journalists should "tell the story of the diversity and magnitude of the human experience boldly, even when it is unpopular to do so," and *"give voice to the voiceless; official and unofficial sources of information can be equally valid."*[171] And they are not meeting the expectations of their own readers who rank fairness as one of the most important organizational standards in newspapers.[172]

It is disappointing to see a profession which so values impartiality to favor one side of an important social debate. To fall needlessly short of fairness and balance. Race has been defined by many, including President Clinton, as perhaps *the* most important social debate facing the United States as it enters a new millennium. And under the umbrella of race relations, affirmative action may be the most crucial and heated debate. It is without doubt that newspaper coverage of affirmative action, especially by the leading newspapers in the country, will have an impact on how the affirmative action argument progresses. Both sides certainly are represented in the debate taking place on their pages. But there exists a consistent pattern of favoritism, whether intentional or not. Proponents are favored to a greater degree in terms of number of sources, number of words cited and prominence of where assertions are placed within articles. While there may not be a monologue in the strictest sense of the word, affirmative action reporting doesn't seem to be much of a dialogue, either.

Does this mean that these newspapers are biased against affirmative action opponents, or that they are liberal? In terms of the current political climate, support of

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[170]Paul Alfred Pratte, Gods Within the Machine: A History of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 1923-1993 (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 1995), 103.
[171]Society of Professional Journalists Web Page (http://spj.org/spjhome.htm), Code of Ethics.
[172]George Albert Gladney, "How Editors and Readers Rank and Rate the Importance of Eighteen Traditional Standards of Newspaper Excellence," Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly 73 (Summer 1996): 319-331.

affirmative action generally falls into the liberal camp. Thus, the findings shown here would appear to provide support for those who claim there exists a liberal slant in the press. Granted, this study and others like it are not proof enough for some of a liberal slant in the media. In his *The American Editor* article, Everette E. Dennis dismisses such a stream of quantitative reports indicating a slant in newspapers as "mere hogwash."[173] Perhaps so.

But what conclusions can be drawn from this study other than that the newspapers under review clearly favor affirmative action proponents in their reporting, and that such a pattern can be defined as a "slant," however one wants to label that term? While the measures used in this study may not be perfect as far as tools used to assess fairness and balance, surely they are adequate to the task. And surely reporters and editors (not to mention their readers) could benefit by applying such measures to their own stories prior to, during and after publication.

Polling Problem

One of the more perplexing aspects that arises from a finding of unfairness and imbalance by these newspapers' affirmative action reporting is the discord between such articles and public opinion. For instance, in the most recent Gallup Poll that asked Americans an affirmative-action related question, an overwhelming 83 percent said they were against racial preferences in education and hiring while just 14 percent were for such practices (the question was worded very much like California Proposition 209).[174] The public seems fairly consistent when asked about affirmative action in this manner. Twenty years ago in another Gallup Poll, 81 percent of respondents said that ability

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[173]Everette E. Dennis, "Liberal Reporters, Yes; Liberal Slant No!" The American Editor, 782 (January-February 1997): 4-9.
[174]Lydia Saad, "Issues Referendum Reveals Populist Leanings," The Gallup Poll Monthly 368 (May 1996): 2-6.

should be the main consideration in job hiring and school placement while just 11 percent were in favor of race consideration.[175]

It should be kept in mind that survey support for affirmative action varies with the wording of the polling question. In general, if the term "preferences" is used, support drops; if only the words "affirmative action" are used, it rises. The wording of such polls, then, makes all the difference in the world. One may support an affirmation of the right of every individual to receive an equal opportunity to be hired, or maybe even some form of special recognition, but still be adamantly opposed to hard quotas. Yet both may go by the name "affirmative action," so saying one is in favor of or against the concept is no easy decision. Case in point: While California voters passed Proposition 209 erasing affirmative action in most state government business, voters in Houston rejected a similar but differently worded proposition one year later.

As pointed out in the literature review, this is one of the greatest problems in the affirmative action debate (pages 11-14). Affirmative action is defined in numerous ways and means many things to many different people. And the various and countless policies themselves, even though many of them may go by "affirmative action," also differ in substance. Some involve hard quotas, or an exact number of minorities that are needed in a program. This was true, for instance, at the University of Texas Law School, which had such a policy struck down by the Supreme Court, and in the New Jersey Piscataway case involving teachers. In other instances, however, there are no "hard" quotas, but "soft" ones that serve as a general guideline. Still other policies talk only of

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[175] "Vast Majority Against 'Affirmative Action' for jobs and college openings; ability should be the key factor." The Gallup Poll Monthly 151 (November 1978): 6-9. The Question was worded as such: "Some people say that to make up for past discrimination, women and members of minority groups should be given preferential treatment in getting jobs and places in college. Others say that ability, as determined by test scores, should be the main consideration. Which point of view comes closest to how you feel on the matter?"

diversity and equal opportunity. And, as also indicated in the literature review (pages 14-20), the media has been of little help with regard to defining the issue.

Still, no matter what the wording of a poll or how affirmative action is defined, it seems clear that public support for it is nowhere near the level of support for affirmative action that these newspapers exhibit in their reporting. Just because some polls may indicate greater opposition to affirmative action than you would guess by looking at articles reporting the issue doesn't mean that there are a bevy of undiscovered sources just waiting for a call from a reporter. But it does mean there are many readers who do not relate to the one-sidedness of the writing.

This difference between reporting and public opinion is nothing new. Frederick Fico noted that despite an overwhelming support by the public for the Gulf War, anti-war advocates dominated news stories under his study. Nor is the dissonance necessarily a bad thing for newspapers. If 95 percent of the public favored racial genocide, for instance, one could not say newspapers were in the wrong if their articles were anti-genocide in nature. But affirmative action is a much more muddled issue with lots of gray areas and little black and white (no pun intended). So why do newspapers: a). Risk offending many of their readers by offering them reports out of sync with their beliefs?; and, b) Risk their credibility by claiming to be fair and balanced and then covering an issue in a way that favors one side over the other?

As ownership of media becomes concentrated in fewer and fewer hands, it becomes more important for newspapers to present an impartial view of society. This is not occurring with affirmative action reporting. There is a definite lean to it that could unfairly tip the debate one way over the other.

Limitations

The research here and other studies of fairness and balance in newspaper reporting can be improved upon. For one thing, more thought should be given to exactly how fairness and balance are measured. What is most important, if anything, among measures such as number of sources, word space or prominence of story placement? Should other considerations be given to a quantitative examination of fairness and balance in reporting? If so what are they? These are questions anyone interested in fair writing should consider. Another potential shortcoming, mentioned previously, is a situation in which the fairness and balance of a story were determined by a slight advantage in one measure. Also, one side may be favored in number of sources cited or word space, but the difference may be small. Such advantages would not appear to be significant. It is hoped that the scales indicating the degree of differences alleviates some of this shortcoming.

For this study specifically, one improvement might be that the sample of newspapers from the 1998 period could be expanded to include more prestige newspapers, as well as an equal number of non-prestige newspapers. This might provide findings that one could apply in general to newspapers as a whole. The inclusion of non-prestige newspapers may provide insight into whether or not resources and reputation, or lack thereof, result in different affirmative action reporting. The sample of newspapers also might be expanded for the 1978 period for similar reasons.

And, despite the many numbers presented here in table after table, there was no test of statistical significance performed to see if the differences between affirmative action opponents and proponents in reporting truly were differences of significance. Such further analysis of this data could have resulted in a firmer belief or conviction in the unfairness of this reporting. On the other hand, it may have led to a tempering of

some statements and conclusions. Also, because just one individual performed all the coding, a reliability test also would have added credence to this study.

Also, it would have been of interest to examine each newspaper's editorial position on affirmative action to see if it was in tune with its reporting. And perhaps any reader opinion surveys on affirmative action conducted by each newspaper could be put beside the quantitative findings as well.

Fico has made the claim that more fairness and balance research needs to be conducted by communication scholars. A similar plea is made here. It is intriguing to see how newspapers report on some of our most contentious issues of the day.

There should be an even greater call, however, for more communication studies of affirmative action, whether based on fairness and balance or not. As noted, affirmative action may be one of the most important social issues facing the United States at the dawn of a new century. And yet researchers in the communication field have paid little attention as to how the various media treat this issue and what impact that treatment may have on the debate. If, as some contend, the United States is becoming increasingly Balkanized, are newspapers exacerbating the problem or helping to solve it? Any study that would help better understand the media's role in affirmative action would be of much worth.

Suggestions for Reporters

Several suggestions should be made to reporters regarding the writing of affirmative action stories.

First, the nature of affirmative action reporting needs to be kept in mind here. Event stories, which dominated the sample coded here, are more likely to result in source imbalance because of various constrictions, such as time, and unavailability of sources. Sources participating in an event covered by a reporter have a greater

opportunity to be included in and to shape stories than those not immediately available or participating. Enterprise stories, however, allow for greater inclusion of a diversity of sources. With this in mind, and knowing the tendency of affirmative action stories to be event-oriented, reporters should take extra caution with stories generated by outside occurrences to include the perspectives of as many sides of the affirmative action debate as possible.

The most obvious suggestion for journalists, given the findings of this study, would be for them to make a conscious effort to balance the number of sources, the amount of word space, and the placing of assertions in the their articles between affirmative action opponents and proponents — as well as between sides in stories on other controversial topics. This does not mean each measure must be equal in each story. Nor does it even mean that both sides have to be represented at all. But reporters should keep in mind the fairness and balance in their affirmative action stories *over time*. Granted, this is difficult for most reporters to achieve. Newspapers typically assign reporters to "beats," such as education, government, health care, etc., and generally do not have "affirmative action reporters" who devote their time solely to that topic. Affirmative action is an issue that arises in all sorts of beats, and a reporter often may not be keeping a close eye on how he treats the subject over time. Rather, this responsibility of ensuring fairness and balance over time falls more on the shoulders of editors, who are responsible for assigning and reviewing stories and who likely have a better understanding and value of journalistic standards. Nevertheless, the issues of fairness and balance in use of sources, quotes, etc., are something every reporter should be aware of at all times.

Also, attention should be paid to the over-use of such generic terms as "opponents," "proponents," "critics," "supporters" and the like. This muddies the debate, does not establish clear boundaries and is generally unaccountable. It might also

be advised that reporters should look harder for additional education sources as affirmative action opponents. They do exist. If affirmative action stories dealing with higher education include only the voices of opponents, over time this would give the impression that opposition to it on campus is nonexistent. While it's likely that affirmative action is supported by a majority of campus figures, especially those in administration, certainly there are anti-affirmative action sources who could contribute to a more balanced view. It won't be easy; affirmative action opponents aren't walking around campus with signs around their neck stating their views. But they can be found with a little digging.

In a similar vein, reporters also should avoid the urge to always get the official response from various affiliated individuals of both sides, whether they be in government, education or associated with an organization. Less use of official voices would give a greater feel for the affirmative action debate at the level of "everyday people" who may not have all the arguments down pat but who are affected by the issue nonetheless. And in those instances when the other side of the debate is not included in a story, reporters should explain to readers why they were not in the story. To forge ahead with one side of a story without mention of the other side is sloppy journalism.

It also would be of interest, given the findings here, to see a poll of newspaper writers on their affirmative action stances. David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit have done much work in the area of journalist attitudes, writing their first book on the topic in 1986 and updating it with similar works in 1991 and 1996.[176] Their research also has appeared in communication journals. While they describe the general political leanings of journalists, no specific mention of their support or opposition to affirmative action was found in their work, nor in any other research of communicators. Certainly it

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[176]See The American Journalist in the 1990s; U.S. News People at the End of an Era (Mahwah, N.J. : L. Erlbaum, 1996) for their latest book.

would be helpful to know where reporters stand on the issue, not only for readers, but for the reporters themselves. At the very least, this could be of assistance in making reporters aware of their various inclinations and to avoid infusing their stories with their own beliefs.

Acknowledgments

An acknowledgment must be made of Frederick Fico's importance to this study. He is the foremost researcher of fairness and balance issues in the field of communication, and his previous work is credited with a great deal of influence on guiding the research here. Also, a special thanks to Professor Warren Francke, whose thoughtful and often provoking input went far beyond the pointing out of typographical errors. He is a tireless worker whose concern for his students and their work should be emulated by many of his colleagues. Finally, deep appreciation also is extended to Professors Robert Carlson and William Clute, both of whose unique perspectives were vital to this project.

APPENDIX A

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION TIMELINE

AFFIRMATIVE-ACTION TIMELINE

1941 A. Philip Randolph convinced President Roosevelt to create the Fair Employment Practices Commission to increase black employment by defense contractors.

1948 President Truman signed Executive Order 9980, creating the Fair Employment Board within the Civil Service Commission to increase minority employment in the federal government.

1961 President Kennedy signed Executive Order 10925 requiring federal contractors to take "affirmative action" to hire more minority employees.

1964 President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and appointed Vice President Humphrey to head the Council of Equal Opportunity.

1965 President Johnson gave a speech at Howard University calling for "equality as a result," and signed Executive Order 11246, putting the Labor Department in charge of affirmative action by federal contractors.

1970 President Nixon and Secretary of Labor George P. Shultz created the Philadelphia Plan to integrate building trades in Philadelphia.

1972 President Nixon signed the Civil Rights Act of 1972. A proposed amendment calling for the end of affirmative action was defeated in the Senate.

1977 President Carter signed the Public Works Employment Act, requiring 10 percent of federal funds given to state and local governments for public works to be spent on Minority Business Enterprises. Bert Lance signed Circular A-46, creating a list of those ethnic groups eligible for affirmative action.

1978 The Supreme Court approved of affirmative action by state universities in the case of *Regents of the University of California vs. Bakke.*

1979 The Supreme Court approved of affirmative action by private employers in the case of *Steelworkers v. Weber.*

1980 The Supreme Court approved of affirmative action by the federal government in the case of *Fullilove v. Klutznick.*

1985 President Reagan considered amending or rescinding Executive Order 11246, but he did not.

1990 President Bush vetoed the Civil Rights Act of 1990, calling it a quota bill.

1991 President Bush signed the Civil Rights Act of 1991.

1995 The Regents of the University of California ended affirmative action programs that gave preferences based on race. President Clinton said he would "mend" but not "end" affirmative action.

[177]

[177]Darien McWhirter, The End of Affirmative Action (New York: Carol Publishing Group, 1996), 31.

APPENDIX B

TABLES

Tracking the Numbers

TABLE B.1
Percentages of stories favoring affirmative action proponent sources and affirmative action opponent sources by newspaper, 1998.

	1998 Newspapers			
	Aff. Action Proponent	Aff. Action Opponent	Balanced	Story N
Atlanta Journal & Constitution	56%	36%	8%	25
Chicago Tribune	80%	20%	0%	25
Los Angeles Times	68%	28%	4%	25
New York Times	44%	48%	8%	25

TABLE B.2
Percentages of measures favoring affirmative action proponent sources and affirmative action opponent sources, Atlanta Journal and Constitution.

	Atlanta Journal and Constitution				
	No. of Sources	No. of Words	Cites in Lead	Cites in Graf 2-5	Cites in Front half
Aff. Action Proponent	52%	56%	50%	35.3%	27.2%
Aff. Action Opponent	20%	40%	33.3%	35.3%	40.9%
Balanced	28%	4%	16.6%	29.4%	31.8%
Story N	25	25	6	17	22

TABLE B.3
Percentages of measures favoring affirmative action proponent sources and affirmative action opponent sources, Chicago Tribune.

	Chicago Tribune				
	No. of Sources	**No. of Words**	**Cites in Lead**	**Cites in Graf 2-5**	**Cites in Front half**
Aff. Action Proponent	72%	84%	81.8%	41.1%	72%
Aff. Action Opponent	12%	16%	18.2%	35.2%	4%
Balanced	16%	0%	0%	23.5%	24%
Story N	25	25	11	17	25

TABLE B.4
Percentages of measures favoring affirmative action proponent sources and affirmative action opponent sources, Los Angeles Times.

	Los Angeles Times				
	No. of Sources	**No. of Words**	**Cites in Lead**	**Cites in Graf 2-5**	**Cites in Front half**
Aff. Action Proponent	68%	68%	80%	63.6%	64%
Aff. Action Opponent	20%	32%	20%	22.7%	20%
Balanced	12%	0%	0%	13.6%	16%
Story N	25	25	10	22	25

TABLE B.5
Percentages of measures favoring affirmative action proponent sources and affirmative action opponent sources, 1998 New York Times.

	1998 *New York Times*				
	No. of Sources	**No. of Words**	**Cites in Lead**	**Cites in Graf 2-5**	**Cites in Front half**
Aff. Action Proponent	52%	60%	50%	52.9%	30.4%
Aff. Action Opponent	28%	40%	37.5%	23.5%	52.1%
Balanced	20%	0%	12.5%	23.5%	17.3%
Story N	25	25	8	17	23

TABLE B.6
Number of sources, words, and average words per source for affirmative action proponents and opponents in the Atlanta Journal and Constitution.

	Atlanta Journal and Constitution				
AAP Sources	**AAP Words**	**Avg. Words Per Source**	**AAO Sources**	**AAO Word**	**Avg. Words per Per Source**
52	2,106	40.5	34	1,534	45.1

TABLE B.7
Number of sources, words, and average words per source for affirmative action proponents and opponents in the Chicago Tribune.

	Chicago Tribune				
AAP Sources	**AAP Words**	**Avg. Words Per Source**	**AAO Sources**	**AAO Word**	**Avg. Words per Per Source**
97	4,503	46.4	48	2,346	48.8

TABLE B.8
Number of sources, words, and average words per source for affirmative action proponents and opponents in the Los Angeles Times.

	Los Angeles Times					
	AAP Sources	**AAP Words**	**Avg. Words Per Source**	**AAO Sources**	**AAO Word**	**Avg. Words per Per Source**
	94	5,040	53.6	58	2,603	44.8

TABLE B.9
Number of sources, words, and average words per source for affirmative action proponents and opponents in the New York Times.

	1998 *New York Times*					
	AAP Sources	**AAP Words**	**Avg. Words Per Source**	**AAO Sources**	**AAO Word**	**Avg. Words per Per Source**
1998	80	4,638	57.9	68	4,048	59.5
1978	90	5,404	60	38	1,399	36.8

TABLE B.10
Percentages of types of sources cited in coded stories by newspaper.

	Government	Overall Education	Affiliated	Unaffiliated	Source N
Atlanta Journal And Constitution					
Pro AA	50%	11.5%	28.8%	9.6%	52
Anti AA	48.5%	5.7%	20%	25.7%	34
Chicago Tribune					
Pro AA	33.3%	22.5%	24.7%	19.3%	97
Anti AA	41.3%	2.1%	28.2%	28.2%	48
Los Angeles Times					
Pro AA	36.7%	18.3%	31%	13.7%	94
Anti AA	42.1%	7%	26.3%	24.5%	58
New York Times - 1998					
Pro AA	25.9%	30%	22.2%	20.9%	80
Anti AA	23.4%	3.1%	42.1%	31.2%	68
New York Times - 1978					
Pro AA	36.2%	20.8%	38.4%	4.3%	90
Anti AA	3.1%	21.9%	21.9%	24.3%	38

TABLE B.11
Percentages of types of statements made by pro- and anti-affirmative action sources in Atlanta Journal and Constitution.

	Atlanta Journal and Constitution Value	Fact	Policy	N
Aff. Action Proponent	56.5%	10.1%	33.3%	69
Aff. Action Opponent	67.2%	1.8%	30.9%	55

TABLE B.12
Percentages of types of statements made by pro- and anti-affirmative action sources in Chicago Tribune.

	Chicago Tribune			
	Value	**Fact**	**Policy**	**N**
Aff. Action Proponent	53.5%	9.5%	37%	168
Aff. Action Opponent	52.7%	8.1%	39.1%	74

TABLE B.13
Percentages of types of statements made by pro- and anti-affirmative action sources in Los Angeles Times.

	Los Angeles Times			
	Value	**Fact**	**Policy**	**N**
Aff. Action Proponent	50.3%	11.1%	38.5%	153
Aff. Action Opponent	54.2%	9.6%	36.1%	83

TABLE B.14
Percentages of types of statements made by pro- and anti-affirmative action sources in 1998 New York Times.

	1998, *New York Times*			
	Value	**Fact**	**Policy**	**N**
Aff. Action Proponent	59.8%	6.2%	33.8%	127
Aff. Action Opponent	67.9%	9.4%	22.6%	106

APPENDIX C

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION ARGUMENTS

Fact, Value and Policy Statements from Both Sides

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROPONENT STATEMENTS

VALUE:

C.1: Anthony Turner of Omaha, a junior at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, said he might not have been able to attend college if not for his Davis Scholarship, which covers his tuition (Defined earlier in article as a minority scholarship that is part of university affirmative action).[178]

C.2: Iowa State President Martin Jischke said the Texas decision causes uncertainty but will not shake his commitment to diversity.[179]

C.3: "Despite popular thinking to the contrary, the battle to preserve affirmative action is being won, not lost," said Julian Bond, chairman of the board of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.[180]

C.4: "In this climate of meanness, these attempts to turn us back are leading us back to segregation," said Rep. Tyrone Brooks.[181]

FACT:

C.5: Most also agree that some forms of affirmative action for women are still needed. "Women are making gains, but still earning only 67 cents to every dollar men earn, for example," said Sen. Mary Margaret Oliver.[182]

C.6: Two out of three Georgia voters approve of affirmative action programs that promote diversity at the state's public colleges and universities, according to a survey released Tuesday by a Democratic pollster.[183]

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[178]Rick Ruggles, "Affirmative Action Under Fire on Campus," Omaha World-Herald 7 April, 1996, 1B.
[179]Ruggles, 1B
[180]Scott Shepard, "Time is Winding Down," 8A.
[181]David Pendered, "Anti-Affirmative Action Advocates See '98 as Theirs," Atlanta Journal and Constitution 15 January 1998, 4C.
[182]Martha Ezzard, "Party and Obstacle; Talk of Affirmative Action Divides Women Legislators," Atlanta Journal and Constitution 9 March 1998, 6A.
[183]David Pendered, "Poll: Diversity programs at colleges a plus; Affirmative Action Debate Raised," Atlanta Journal and Constitution 29 October 1997, 2B.

C.7: In 1957, University of California law student Marvine Peguese notes, nine black students ushered by federal troops entered Little Rock High School. Forty years later, he observes, one black student, at most, will enter California's prestigious law school on its Berkeley campus.[184]

C.8: Bakewell said the group's current tack is to try to draft a new ballot measure to take back some of the ground lost with the passage of Proposition 209.[185]

POLICY:

C.9: Harvey Perlman, dean of the UNL College of Law, said that diverse perspectives are essential to the study of American law because racial issues pervade the discipline.[186]

C.10: Democrats say race still can be used as a factor. They say only Georgia's colleges and transportation agencies have affirmative action programs, the elimination of which would jeopardize millions of dollars in federal funding.[187]

C.11: "Companies actively support affirmative action because it benefits them, and it is preventive, proactive and inclusive," Halcolm Holliman, the Chicago-based regional director for the Office of Federal Contract Compliance.[188]

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OPPONENT STATEMENTS

VALUE:

C.12: On the White House plans to scale back affirmative action programs: "I think that, by and large, the administration is engaged in an effort to preserve as much of the status quo as possible," Clint Bolick, vice president for litigation at the Institute for Justice.[189]

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[184]Karen Brandon, "In California, Minority Enrollments Falling at Leading Law Schools; Dropoff Tied to State Universities' Elimination of Affirmative Action," Chicago Tribune 6 July 1997, 8.
[185]Karen Robinson-Jacobs, "Clergy Urges Support for March Highlighting Arrray of Social Causes; Affirmative Action: Organizers Hope That Momentum Will Fuel Effort To Take Back Ground Lost to Proposition 209," Los Angeles Times 31 January 1998, B4.
[186]Ruggles, 1B.
[187]Kathey Pruitt, "Panel Kills Bill to End Prefences; But GOP Plans to STart Attempt at County-by-County Prohibition Agaisnt Affirmative Action in the House today," Atlanta Journal and Constitution, 3 February 1998, 1B.
[188]Lisa Holton, "Affirmative Action Reaction; Will New Attacks on Affirmative Action Slow Down the Pace of Diversity in Chicago Workplaces?" Chicago Tribune 8 February 1998, 1.
[189]Steve A. Holmes, "Administration Cuts Affirmative Action While Defending It," New York Times 16 March 1998, A17.

C.13: The School Board, he said, did exactly what affirmative action groups propose that they do, "and this blows a huge hole" in those groups' credibility." (Douglas Cox, a Washington lawyer who wrote a brief in support of Sharon Taxman in the Piscataway, N.J. case.)[190]

C. 14: Bob Caldwell, a third-year UNL law student from Kearney, opposes affirmative action. "I think it's ridiculous when administrators say they're against discrimination and in the same breath, they'll award scholarship based on the color of a person's skin."[191]

FACT:

C.15: During the commission debate, Commissioner Carl Anderson complained that the Michigan report includes 20 statements supporting affirmative action and just one against.[192]

C.16: In what he called a historic event, Gov. Pete Wilson on Wednesday abolished an affirmative action program that has funneled billions of dollars in state contracts to companies owned by minorities and women.[193]

POLICY:

C.17: Critics have long argued that any form of preference is automatically discriminatory since those not eligible for such special treatment are passed over for positions.[194]

C.18: "Until recently, people were genuinely afraid of being branded with an 'R' (for racist) on the forehead for opposing these programs." (Ward Connerly speaking against affirmative action.[195]

C21: Chavez, while opposing affirmative action, suggested that the goal of a more racially diverse police force could be achieved through a variety of measures. "You engage in outreach. You do not create training programs. You do go into high schools an try and recruit people."[196]

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[190]Barry Bearak, "Affirmative Action Settlement: the Reaction; Settlement Ends High Court Case on Preferences: Rights Groups Ducked a Fight, Opponents Say," New York Times 22 November 1997, A1.

[191]Ruggles 1B

[192]Naftali Bendavid, "Affirmative Action Debate; Rights Panel Accused of Blocking Reports," Chicago Tribune 1 April 1998, 1.

[193]Jennifer Warren, "Wilson Abolishes Affirmative ACtion in State Contracts," Los Angeles Times 12 March 1998, A1.

[194]V. Dion Haynes, "Ban on Set-Asides Begins in California; Contested Anti-Affirmative Action Initiative Survives Courts; Some Businesses Feel Pinch," Chicago Tribune 28 August 1997, 3.

[195]Karen Brandon, "Preference Policis LIve Despite Attacks on Them; Affirmative Action Still an Explosive Issue," Chicago Tribune 15 January 1996, 3.

[196]Jonathan Peterson, "Clinton Adds Voices of Critics to Race Dialogue; Relations: The President Has an Amiable Meeting with Opponents of Affirmative Action, but no one Walks Out a Convert," Los Angeles Times 20 December 1997, A18.

APPENDIX D

STORY CLIMATE

Examination of the Orientation of Coded Articles

Atlanta Journal and Constitution

Enterprise Stories

1. Review of successes and failures of President Clinton's Initiative on Race.
2. How affirmative action divides some women legislators.
3. Examination of how anti-affirmative action efforts failed in Georgia legislature.
4. Republican efforts to mount another anti-affirmative action ban in legislature.
5. Republican efforts in anti-affirmative action ban.
6. Overview of upcoming anti-affirmative action vote in state legislature.
7. Examination of how Georgia lawmakers on both sides of the aisle view affirmative action.
8. Look at how everyday people discuss race, especially affirmative action.
9. Examination of impact anti-affirmative action rulings have had on Texas, California university system.
10. Look at what affirmative action has done for increase in minority businesses in Georgia.
11. Overview of plans by Georgia state universities to overhaul affirmative action guidelines.
12. Review of how affirmative action has come under fire all around the country.
13. Preview of anticipated Clinton speech at National Archives.
14. Effect of lawsuit against DeKalb police department charging reverse discrimination.

Event Stories

1. Atlanta school board decides to settle federal lawsuits.
2. Georgia senate kills anti-affirmative action bill.
3. Local Georgian files another anti-affirmative action lawsuit.
4. Georgia house committee kills anti-affirmative action plan.
5. President Clinton holds town hall meeting on race.
6. Newt Gingrich criticizes John Hope Franklin, race advisory panel.
7. Poll released showing Georgians favor affirmative action.
8. Another poll on affirmative action is released.
9. New Louisiana governor begins term by signing anti-affirmative action bill.
10. NAACP issues report on affirmative action at meeting.
11. Clinton gives affirmative action support in National Archives speech.

Chicago Tribune

Enterprise Stories

1. Feature on trouble surrounding Civil Rights Commission report.
2. How affirmative action has impacted workplace diversity in Chicago.
3. Examination of possible consequences on day Prop. 209 goes into effect.
4. A look at what Prop. 209 could do to minority enrollments in Calif. U. system.
5. Overview of Prop. 209 seven days after it passes.
6. Preview of issues surrounding upcoming Prop. 209 vote.
7. Look at all the controversy surrounding Prop. 209.
8. An overview of affirmative action on various college campuses, including those in Illinois.
9. A review of Supreme Court's refusal to ban implementation of anti-affirmative action measures at Calif. U.
10. Examination of Illinois University in light of recent federal court rulings against affirmative action.
11. Look at how women's groups are fighting Prop. 209.
12. Overview of how preference policies are still healthy despite various attacks.
13. Look at how Calif. U. will deal with ban on affirmative action in admissions policies.

Event Stories

1. Report on Clinton meeting with affirmative action critics.
2. Examination of Piscataway case settlement.
3. Supreme Court gives OK to Prop. 209.
4. Clinton announces formation of race panel.
5. Clinton administration asks Supreme Court to avoid strict judgment in Piscataway case.
6. Clinton administration challenges Prop. 209 legality.
7. Federal judge blocks enforcement of Prop. 209.
8. Passage of Prop. 209 prompts civil rights lawsuit.
9. Clinton administration urges Supreme Court to allow affirmative action in admissions policies of Texas U. law schools.
10. Prop. 209 supporters announce they have enough signatures to put on ballot.
11. California U. president ends opposition to Prop. 209.
12. President Clinton endorses affirmative action in National Archives speech.

Los Angeles Times

Enterprise Stories

1. Overview of anti-affirmative action admissions policies at work in Calif. U. system.
2. Overview of anti-affirmative action in Calif. U. system.
3. Feature on the career of Dr. Patrick Chavis, originally involved in *Bakke* case.
4. Review of the UC San Diego Medical School class that has no black students.

Event Stories

1. Gov. Wilson abolishes affirmative action in state contracting.
2. Anti-affirmative action march planned.
3. Clinton speaks with affirmative action critics.
4. Supreme Court considers hearing affirmative action case.
5. Settlement in Piscataway case.
6. Women, businessmen hold anti-Prop. 209 meeting.

7. House panel kills anti-affirmative action bill.
8. Supreme Court rejects appeal to federal court OK to Prop. 209.
9. Jesse Jackson holds an anti-Prop. 209 march.
10. Study released on impact of anti-affirmative action admission policies in medical schools.
11. Supreme Court refused to grant injunction blocking Prop. 209.
12. Jesse Jackson holds anti-Prop. 209 rally.
13. Clinton administration asks Supreme Court to avoid strict judgment in Piscataway case.
14. Department of Education Civil Rights division announces investigation of Calif. U. law schools for its anti-affirmative action policies.
15. Clinton administration says anti-affirmative action policies at Calif. U. violate civil rights.
16. Supreme Court announces it will hear Piscataway case.
17. Clinton addresses Latino national convention and promises support for affirmative action.
18. President Clinton endorses affirmative action in National Archives speech.
19. White House says it is opposed to Prop. 209.
20. Federal appeals court upholds Prop. 209.
21. Federal appeals court expected to uphold Prop. 209.

New York Times, 1998

Enterprise Stories

1. A broad look at how affirmative action opponents are winning various battles.
2. Examination of Clinton administrations treatment of affirmative action in past two years.
3. Profile of Stephen and Abigail Thernstrom.
4. An overview of Houston vote on anti-affirmative action measure.
5. Feature on effect anti-affirmative action admissions policy has had on Texas law schools.
6. Profile of N.J. Gov. Whitman's pro-affirmative action stance in light of her party's anti-affirmative action trend.
7. Examination of proposed Prop. 209.

Event Stories

1. Settlement in Piscataway case.
2. Overview and timeline of Piscataway case.
4. Race advisory panel meeting held - John Hope Franklin dismisses anti-affirmative action voices.
5. Federal judge voids anti-affirmative action bill for state contracts.
6. Houston voters deny proposition similar to Prop. 209.
7. Houston voters deny anti-affirmative action measure.
8. Sen. Hatch will OK Bill Lee nomination if Clinton Admin. stays out of Piscataway case.
9. Report issued on successes of affirmative action at San Diego medical school.
10. Supreme Court announces it will hear Piscataway case.
11. Clinton gives address at San Diego commencement supporting affirmative action.
12. U.S. Education Dept. says University of Texas may lose money because of its anti-affirmative action policies.
13. Harvard professor releases analysis of affirmative action benefits.
14. Federal judge bans enforcement of Prop. 209.

15. Federal judge bans enforcement of Prop. 209.
16. Supreme Court refuses to hear appeal to federal court ruling upholding anti-affirmative action policies at Texas law school.
17. Professors association issues reporting criticizing Calif. U. ban of affirmative action.
18. Prop. 209 supporters announce formation of American Civil Rights Institute.

New York Times, 1978

Enterprise Stories

1. Overview of New York Schools' assignment of teachers by race.
2. Examination of dispute between U. of Berkeley and Civil Rights Dept.
3. Reflection of federal officials on upcoming Bakke case.
4. Overview of impact Bakke case will have at colleges.
5. Feature on Alan Bakke.
6. Feature of how minority leaders reviewed Bakke case.
7. Examination of gains made by black officers in Detroit police department under affirmative action policies.
8. Preview of Supreme Court case involving Kaiser Aluminum.
9. Feature of how teachers assigned by race in New York schools.

Event Stories

1. Federal judge considers ending affirmative action in New York Schools.
2. City officials oppose federal labor department guidelines for hiring minorities.
3. New York City Board of Education decides to end assignment of teachers by race.
4. Study released showing minorities and women have fewer city jobs.
5. Supreme Court decides Bakke case.
6. Reaction to Bakke decision by educators at University of California at Davis.
7. Reaction to Bakke case by Attorney General Griffin Bell.
8. Reaction of educators around the country to Bakke decision.
9. Reaction to Bakke decision by federal officials.
10. Supreme Court backs affirmative action in AT&T case.
11. National Education Association holds convention and pledges support to affirmative action.
12. NAACP holds convention and pledges support to affirmative action.
13. NAACP announces lobby effort on behalf of affirmative action.
14. Justice Department urges approval of Detroit Police Dept. quotas.
15. Government expands minority status.
16. Suburban Institute asks federal government to investigate Union Carbine for anti-affirmative action policy.

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