

Gender in local television news presentation:
An analysis of TV news markets in the U.S. Northwest

by

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Abstract

Traditionally, men have been the primary face and voice of live broadcasting. Limited research has compared Designated Market Areas by news content. This study compared and analyzed gender representations between large and small market news programs in the Northwest region of the United States. Hard news stories are those which audiences expect to be included in a newscast and are more likely time-sensitive. Soft stories, on the other hand, are those known to be not as crucial or time-sensitive as hard stories. The purpose of this study was to examine two major topics: (1) gender representation as news *anchors* and *reporters*, and (2) gender representation in types of stories covered. Data of gender representation was compared and analyzed between a large and small news market. Notable differences and similarities between both markets were revealed.

This study found female news *reporters* present 16% more hard stories than male *reporters* even when females were underrepresented as overall news talent compared to male news talent. Males represented 55% of news talent compared to females at 45% of news talent. Male *anchors* also presented more news stories as overall news talent, indicating visible gender inequality in the presentation of news stories.

Another important purpose of this study was to introduce a preliminary study by comparing and analyzing gender representation data by television market size. An important difference found regarding news *anchors*, was the large market sample more equally represented both males and females as *anchors*, whereas the small market sample did not. The data revealed a 56% disparity by exhibiting males 78% of the time and females only 22% of the time in the small news market. Both markets also displayed significant differences in the total count of news *anchors*, *reporters*, and news content.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Overview

Female television journalists have faced under-representation and discrimination in the television news work environment. In the beginning, females were discriminated based on their voice, appearance, and were not viewed as authoritative as males. Women found increased opportunities at local news stations because they were known to take whoever was available, but women were not featured on air as regularly as men. Networks were also slow to employ women as on-air *anchors* and *reporters*. (Hosley & Yamada, 1987)

Due to civil rights and women's movements in the 1970s, women became more apparent fixtures on the small screen (Lee, 2014). When broadcasters discovered that 50% percent of the viewing audience were female, and demanded more female appearance, news executives realized employing more females as *anchors* and *reporters* would generate ratings and increase viewers (Allen, 2003). In work establishments across the country, compared to white men, women are more evenly distributed than minorities and, on average, about half of an establishment's full-time employees are female (Reskin, McBrier, & Kmec, 1999). The equal distribution between males and females in work establishments, however, is not shown in the television news industry ("New Research" 2014).

When a person turns on the morning, noon hour, or evening newscast, some could notice females to be noticeably represented on the small news screen. However, even though female news talent is more noticeable on the small screen, they are not yet as equally represented compared to males ("New Research," 2014). Research has found the television news industry has not displayed visible, equal presentation between males and females (Cann & Mohr, 2001;

Chambers, Steiner & Fleming, 2004; Irvin, 2013; “New Research,” 2014; North, 2014; Cukier et al., 2016).

The incongruent representation of gender in television news could be due to many reasons, but one explanation found by the Women’s Media Center (“New Research,” 2014) offers evidence that females are often reporting or presenting stories that represent their stereotype. News stories that traditionally represent the female gender stereotype are known as soft stories, the less important amongst television news audiences. On the other hand, males more often present hard stories, the most important to the audience (Irvin, 2013).

Numerous studies have explored a variety of gender elements in television news programming. Research by Bettio, Verashchagina, Mairhuber, and Kanjuo-Mrčela (2009) found male and female *reporters* visually gender segregated when presenting television news stories based on gender stereotypes, this partition in news stories asserts that males are overrepresented as news talent by presenting more hard news stories. A study in the Northeast region of the United States found no significant difference between males and females in news talent appearances on news broadcasts. However, it should be noted that although there is no significant difference in number of appearances, female news talent has become more frequently been assigned news stories based on stereotype (Desmond & Danilewicz, 2010). Large and small news markets exhibit significant similarities and differences regarding the presentation of news stories (Buckalew 1969; Carroll, 1985; Harmon & White, 2001). No studies have yet been found regarding gender roles in television news that compare data by the size of a news market. This researcher conducted a preliminary study on overall gender representations by analyzing and comparing data between two different-sized news markets, (large and small). This research is

intended to better contribute to future scholars interested in expanding studies of gender equality in mass media.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, definitions for the following terms are used.

Audience Share: how many people are within the viewing audience in news media, in this study, particularly television viewership. Audience share gives television broadcasters an idea of who, and how many are viewing (Portilla, 2015).

Designated Market Area (DMA) (Market): is defined as the specific geographic area that contains the largest quarter-hour audience share for news stations where a mass population within the same area receive the similar television content (“Pathways,” 2016).

Glass ceiling: A metaphorical expression that symbolizes the struggle women endure when working in a male-dominated work environment in which they struggle to advance or reach equity in salary or status (Williams, 1992).

Hard news: Categorized as more important, time-sensitive news stories about current events or reports that are an ongoing concern. This type of news story can be more focused on issues of ongoing policy consideration, social disturbances, or controversies that concern the targeted audience (Jamieson & Campbell, 1992; Scott & Gobetz, 1992; Chambers, Steiner & Fleming, 2004; Irvin, 2013).

Newscast: A broadcast containing news-related topics presented through television or radio (Rosenstiel, Just, Belt, Pertilla, Dean, & Chinni, 2007).

Package: A pre-recorded, self-contained story report that is presented by a news reporter in a television newscast for an average duration of two minutes. This type of news presentation

often presents a news reporter or multiple interviews within the storyline or during live coverage (Irvin, 2013).

Soft news: Categorized as news feature stories that can be reported during any time of the news cycle and are not tied to a specific time or place. This type of news story can be categorized as any story that targets a topic of human interest, feature, or non-policy issue. (Scott & Gobetz, 1992; Chambers, Steiner & Fleming, 2004; Harris & Sanborn, 2013; Irvin, 2013).

Significance of the Study

Recent research has discovered evidence of increased parity between the males and females as news *anchors* and *reporters*. Arguments could be made that the progression of females appearing in television news could be an effect of federal policy (Thomas, 1990). Regardless of the cause, in order for television news programs to remain competitive in the broadcast journalism industry, females continue to be employed in what was once considered a male-oriented workplace (Williams, 1992; Conway, 2015).

Research shows males and females to be incongruent in the presenting of television news stories. Past research has discovered females to present soft stories and males to present hard stories, nevertheless, recent research is discovering evidence of decreased segregation in the television news industry. In other words, women are presenting more hard stories than soft stories and vice versa (Irvin, 2013; North, 2014).

According to a recent study conducted in the United States both females and males are presented fairly equal in the television news industry overall (Desmond & Danilewicz, 2010). However, representations of females and males were noticed to be segregated in the Northeast region of the U.S. in television news story presentations (Desmond & Danilewicz, 2010). Reasons for researching television news in this study, regardless of the existence of social media,

advances in technology, or other media forms, are based on Pew Research Center findings that television news is still the dominant and most preferred news source today (“Pathways,” 2016).

There are two types of gender segregation that are interpreted regarding gender representation in this study, vertical and horizontal (Bettio et al., 2009). Both types of concentrated angles of gender segregation as well as gender representation are adequate in the analysis of this research to discover if equality has been achieved and segregation of news stories between males and females has diminished. The goal of this study is to compare and analyze data by television market size to ascertain whether progress has been made in gender equality.

Thesis Arrangement

To better understand the organization of this thesis, chapters to follow provide the review of literature, methodology performed, results of the study, discussion of results, and conclusion. Chapter Two, the review of literature, gives a brief review of how mass communication lays the foundation of what the public audience views in the media, particularly news media. Chapter two also examines how that faulty foundation could interfere with a viewer’s perspective on how males and females are placed in society based on the stories each gender of news talent presents. This chapter provides a historical overview of women and men in the news media and the struggle women have experienced to get to the point of being equally represented in the television news industry today. To follow, an overview on research that has discovered how prominently the male gender has been observed in broadcast journalism compared to females within the past decade and how recent research in the U.S. has discovered near equal gender presentations in local television news. Nevertheless, additional literature discussed addresses the ongoing issue of gender segregation that is currently observed within the presentation of television news stories. By laying out the framework with stereotype theory and the concept of

gender segregation, the next section discusses how the media has incorrectly portrayed gender stereotypes by segregating both males and females into presenting news stories that best fit each gender's stereotype. The final section in Chapter Two discusses research comparing news content by television market size based on Designated Market Areas and how limited research has compared market size by news talent gender as well as the news stories each gender presents.

Chapter Three focuses primarily on the methodology to explore television newscasts in the Northwest region of the United States to answer research questions and hypotheses. Chapter Four presents the results of the content analysis, which discovered female news *reporters* to have presented more often than male news *reporters* and how hard or soft news was found to be equally presented between males and females as *reporters* or *anchors*. This chapter also compares and analyzes data by television market size, describing how one large and one small market displayed differences in the presentation of gender as news talent.

To conclude this thesis, Chapter Five consists of a summary and analysis of the findings. This chapter gives suggestions for future research on the issue of gender representations in the television news industry including qualitative studies to compare in-depth findings between large and small television news markets.

Chapter 2 – Review of Literature

Introduction

Traditionally, Americans have looked to local television news *anchors* and *reporters* to be informed about international/national occurrences, weather conditions, sports scores, or local events (Harris & Sanborn, 2013). Another primary purpose in the field of broadcast journalism is to provide the mass audience with vital information so viewers can effectively participate in self-governance (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001). An important factor regarding television news presentations is who presents the news to the audience, whether as an anchor or reporter (Allen, 2003). When females are employed to present the news, outward appearance is a factor. According to Nitz, Reichert, Aune, and Velde (2007) a majority of television news segments, 62%, predominantly contained young female journalists with high sex appeal, meaning the female journalists observed had a more physically attractive presence on camera by wearing clothes that better revealed their figures. Male journalists in this industry are not as often judged by outward appearance as females and are usually seen to be much older than the female counterparts (Engstrom & Ferri, 2000).

TV news *anchors* and *reporters* are employed by news executives to represent each television news station. Research has discovered the prominent face in the news industry as *anchors* and *reporters* today are males (Irvin, 2013; “New Research,” 2014; Cukier et al., 2016). Research has also found no statistical differences in the television news industry between on-screen camera appearances of male and female news *anchors* and *reporters* (Armstrong, Wood, and Nelson, 2006; Desmond & Danilewicz, 2010). Additionally, research has discovered differences between males and females regarding the presentation of news stories (Cann &

Mohr, 2001; Chambers, Steiner & Fleming, 2004; Desmond & Danilewicz, 2010; Irvin, 2013; North, 2014).

History of Women in News

Whether it was during live radio shows, daytime talk shows, sportscasts, or television news broadcasts, men were once seen as the prominent talent of mass media (Sanders & Rock, 1988). Since the beginning of broadcast journalism, the television news industry has struggled to present males and females equally on the small screen (Sanders & Rock, 1988). That was until the Civil Rights Act of 1964 took effect and women were then granted equal opportunities in the work environment (Dobbin & Sutton, 1998).

Feeling that the Federal Communications Commission was not adequately complying with the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the United Church of Christ (UCC) in 1966 challenged the FCC by protesting renewal of the broadcast license of a Mississippi television news station that underrepresented minorities in TV news programming (Lee, 2014; Reskin & Roos, 2009). A few years later, in 1969, the FCC implemented Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) rules, which mandated that stations demonstrate special efforts to hire minorities in both television and radio stations (Papper, 2013). Feminists later adopted the civil rights groups' actions and protested the FCC for not equally representing females in television news presentations. These movements caused the FCC in 1972 to freeze multiple TV and radio licenses until equal opportunities and presentation in television news improved for women. The television news industry then had to find a fitting use for women on the small screen. Because of the "equal-opportunity" regulatory actions enacted by the FCC, women migrated into what was once a male-oriented broadcast work environment, due to the threat of stations losing broadcast licenses. (Reskin & Roos, 2009)

The federal Affirmative Action policy caused broadcast corporations in America to scramble to become more competitive, successful, and able to attract qualified and talented contenders (Thomas, 1990). In the 1990s, Affirmative Action was difficult to achieve when companies noticed female applicants did not attain satisfactory education and qualifications, which the companies feared would affect productivity (Thomas, 1990).

Once women began appearing as *anchors* or *reporters* in the television news industry, news executives began to fear that newscasts would not receive acceptable ratings compared to the competition (Stone, 1974). Employing females to higher or more prominent positions in the television news industry was slow and few of the women who advanced at the network level were seen as improvements (Allen, 2003). Notable improvements began in the 1970s, after the FCC took initiative for television programs to employ more females in the TV news industry (Thomas, 1990). The arrival of the first female local news anchor, Jean Enersen in 1971, was employed as a main news anchor for a local news station in Seattle, WA (Allen, 2003). Stone (1973) studied both local radio and television broadcasts and found women occupied 10% of the staff. In 1974, Phyllis George was appointed as the first female sportscaster for the CBS Morning News (Perlmutter, 1975). Following George's debut, Patricia (Pat) Harper, became the first female to solo anchor on a local television news program in New York in 1975 ("WPIX's Pat Harper," 1985). A year later, Barbara Walters became the first female co-anchor on ABC's network evening news show (Thompson, 2009). It wasn't until thirty years after Barbara Walters' debut that a woman was named to solo anchor a network weekday newscast. In 2006, Katie Couric took over the news desk at CBS (Conway, 2015).

By the end of the 1970s, female news professionals made up 26% of newsroom management. This increase in female management in a once male-dominated profession is an effect of a gender switch, when more women than men were enrolled in higher education journalism and mass communication courses during the 1970s. (Creedon, 1989) However, Sanders (1992) research found during an examination of 60 network news programs of male news talent having appeared in 59 out of the 60 programs. By the end of the 1990s women made up 33% of the television newsroom (Stone, 1987; Stone, 1988). By the turn of the 21st century, women in the news profession only increased by seven percent (Papper & Gerhard, 1999).

In the years since Couric's 2006 news desk debut, doors have opened even wider for women in the TV news industry as they have become more prominent on the television screen as news talent. With more women coming into an occupation once traditionally reserved for men (Reskin & Roos, 2009) the television news work environment chose to marginalize women by having them mostly report news stories that only concerned feminine issues or subjects such as fashion, decorating, childcare, or entertainment (Sanders & Rock, 1988). This type of news was understood to be newsworthy in order to attract the female audience (Sanders & Rock, 1988).

Gender Segregation in the Work Environment

Williams, a sociologist who studies gender in the workplace, (1992) found that women who work in a highly male-oriented environment hit a "glass ceiling," which means a woman's career or salary does not advance as easily (p. 263-264). Men, on the other hand, ride on what Williams (1992) calls a "glass escalator." According to Engstrom and Ferri (2000) after interviewing male and female news *anchors* in the broadcast industry, female news *anchors* pointed out that if employers were aware the female had a family apart from their busy careers, employers would count it against them and they would not advance as easily as those without

families. Females also claimed to have not been hired if they even had mentioned they had a family or were married. In the news industry, *anchors* claimed their family life became more of a “dirty secret.” (Engstrom & Ferri, 2000, p.625)

During the past half-century of broadcast news, women have stepped in and claimed a spot in what was once known as a more masculine work environment. According to Chambers, Steiner, and Fleming (2004):

Women journalists present a paradox. Their presence as professional writers and presenters of news is now as a common place, yet they continue to be marked as ‘other’, as ‘different’ from their male colleagues. While maleness is rendered neutral and male journalists are treated largely as professionals, women journalists are signified as *gendered*: their work is routinely defined and judged by their femininity. We find women have not achieved equality either in several ‘serious’ fields of news such as politics and business or in the highly popular and lucrative area of sports news. Women are still concentrated in sectors considered to be ‘soft’ news, such as those with an emphasis in ‘human interest’ stories and features. In television—where spectacle counts—emphasis on the decorative value and even the sexualization of women journalists is overt. (p. 1)

According to Engstrom and Ferri (2000) female *anchors* also have different career barriers in the television news industry than males when it comes to presence. Physical appearance is a more important factor for females than male *anchors* and females are more often scrutinized by their appearance whether it is; hairstyle, makeup, clothes, or even complexion. Males on the other hand are not as often judged by outward appearance, they just have to look trustworthy. (Engstrom & Ferri, 2000)

Another barrier found between male and female *reporters* in the news industry is the evidence of gender segregation. This is observed through news stories presented by male or female *reporters* in television newscasts. Segregation is usually known as a separation between race but in this context it is the separation of gender (Bettio et al., 2009). Gender segregation in the work environment comes in two categories: vertical and horizontal. Vertical segregation describes the issue of career progression and opportunities for a particular gender within a company or sector. Horizontal segregation is the over or underrepresentation of a certain group in occupations or divisions not under any binding principle. (Bettio et al., 2009)

In the television news work environment, vertical segregation links to the noticeable trend of males presenting hard-hitting, time-sensitive news stories, and females presenting mostly soft stories. Horizontal segregation relates to the over-presentation of the male group as overall news talent, *anchors* and *reporters* (North, 2014), which could limit career opportunities for the female employees (Bettio et al., 2009). This segregation of news reporting is due to “the nature of the genre...[and] allows for a masculine or feminine style of journalism” (Branston, Allan, & Carter, 1998, p. 14). Feminine and masculine journalism exemplifies the issue of segregation in the broadcast news workplace (Branston et al., 1998). In other words, the division of soft and hard news content amongst male and female news talent.

Hard news content contains stories that are expected or demanded amongst an average television news audience. Jamieson and Campbell (1992) define hard news as: “any report of an event that happened or was disclosed within the previous 24 hours and treats an issue of ongoing concern (p.31).” Cann and Mohr (2001) observed 314 news stories finding males to be more prominent in presenting hard news stories. Armstrong, Wood, and Nelson (2006), discovered females in local newscasts to present hard news topics as often as males. Four years later in the

Northeast region of the United States, Desmond and Danilewicz (2010) discovered no significant relation between news stories and gender of *anchors* and *reporters* after analyzing a sample of 580 news stories in local television news programs. However, Irvin's (2013) study found hard stories presented in network newscasts more often by males than females, and females presented more soft news.

Chambers, Steiner & Fleming (2004) and Irvin (2013) found females presented mostly soft news stories, as well as in the majority of all news media outlets ("New Research," 2014). North (2014), on the other hand, found more white female journalists were more notably reporting hard news. According to a recent mass media magazine article published in *Vogue* by Irina Aleksander (2016), female political news journalists outnumbered men during the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Information provided through Aleksander's work in *Vogue* is non-academic and contains no statistical data to back up its claims. Academic research has yet to be conducted about the U.S. election of 2016 and gender of news journalists in television news coverage.

When both males and females are presenting television news within their gender stereotype, as found in majority of research, the stories can influence an individual's perception of gender roles in society (Lindsey, 2015). For example, when an individual views female news *reporters* presenting soft news, and male *reporters* presenting hard news, they may perceive males as dominant news talent compared to females, which could cause the individual to subconsciously stereotype males and females. According to Armstrong, Wood, and Nelson:

If women are seen on television reporting on soft (or fluff) news segments repeatedly, future journalists and audience members may be socialized to believe that female *reporters* do not have the qualifications or characteristics to act as pundits or news

analysts. Thus, female news professionals may not strive to report on those events or comment on such issues (2006, p. 81).

When female or male news *reporters* and *anchors* in the television news industry are being noticed in research to be constantly presenting news stories based on stereotype, it could provide the viewing audience a constant reminder on traditional stereotypes of males and females in society based on what news executives feel is most newsworthy content (Brown, Halpern, & L'Engle, 2005).

What is Newsworthy?

Mass communication plays an important role in society by initially informing a mass audience about past, current, or future events through the news media. In other words, the news media has the initial power to not only tell the public what to think, but what to think about and possesses the ability to change an individual's perception (McCombs & Shaw, 1977).

According to Scott and Gobetz (1992), what makes news content newsworthy has nothing to do with the journalistic responsibility to communicate the things that the public needs to know. A newscast can be built with newsworthy content that puts more emphasis on human or audience wants or interests, presenting what the audience wants to see regardless of how journalists feel about the importance of what is really happening (Scott & Gobetz, 1992).

Jamieson and Campbell (1992) identify five qualities that make a news story or an event most newsworthy: personalization, drama and conflict, action, novelty and deviance, and finally, links to ongoing themes. Most news stories that fit within determined newscast duration are intended to attract the audience share for each news market (Jamieson & Campbell, 1992).

According to Lind (2004), society is highly influenced by the media, "much of what we know about, care about and think is important comes from what we see in the media" (p. 1).

Because of the media, society has become more gender-conscious and arranged along gender lines (Lind, 2004). The role of mass media can influence the gender hierarchy present in society and impact structural cognitive thinking about gender roles in society (Brown, Halpern, & L'Engle, 2005). The audience is constantly fed visual evidence about socially acceptable gender roles in society through the small screen by over-representing males as TV news talent (Huston, 1992). Recent research in the U.S. has observed males to be over-represented as television news talent (Cann and Mohr, 2001; Chambers, Steiner & Fleming, 2004; Irvin, 2013; "New Research," 2014). This could lead audiences to perceive that men are better suited for broadcast journalism and females attain less social status than males simply because of their on-screen presence (Lind, 2004).

Gender Presentations

Television news *anchors* and *reporters* at the local and national level have been the trusted guests within domestic households in America for decades (Harris & Sanborn, 2013). When a member from the viewing audience tunes into the six o'clock morning news, news *anchors* or *reporters* are the first figures on the screen before their day begins, and when the day is over, these news personalities are welcomed back into the home again just in time for dinner. Audiences establish more of a relationship with television news *anchors* or *reporters* compared to other news mediums because there is a sense of solidarity (Harris & Sanborn, 2013). Since the beginning of mass media, males have established this traditional type of relationship as the once most common face and voice for live broadcasting (Sanders & Rock, 1988). Cann and Mohr (2001) found males to be over-represented as news *anchors* by presenting 62.7% of news content. However, Armstrong et al., (2006) discovered male and female news talent, *anchors* and *reporters*, were displayed virtually equally in local newscasts in Wisconsin, however, females

were not as apparent in network television newscasts. According to (Irvin, 2013; “New Research,” 2014; Cukier et al., 2016) males are still the common face on the television news screen as *anchors* and *reporters*.

Similar results were found when it came to gender presentations in network newscasts; Irvin’s (2013) research also found females to be notably under-represented as news *reporters* within the “Big Three” network newscasts in the U.S. (ABC, CBS, NBC). Television newscasts are under-representing females as on-air news talent. Women are under-represented in most news media outlets as well. The U.S. Women’s Media Center found women to be outnumbered by men in the news industry in all mediums by 27.3% (“New Research,” 2014). The examination of 20 popular U.S.-based TV networks, newspapers, newswires, and online news sites found that 63.4% of news talent was male, compared to 36.1% female; the remaining 0.5% was labeled “unknown”. Julie Burton, president of the Women’s Media Center, states:

There are, most certainly, a handful of notable exceptions to the trend of men dominating media and it is important to note a woman in the anchor seat is more than a symbol; she sends a message to viewers that women can lead a network broadcast — and that matters. Overall, this research is about much more than just one woman in an anchor seat, it is about making sure *who* defines the story, *who* tells the story, and *what* the story is about, represents women and men equally. Women are more than half of the population, but we don’t see or hear them in equal numbers to men. It is our hope – and our work – to see those numbers reach parity. (“New Research,” p.6, 2014) (Emphasis in original.)

Not only did the study find female journalists to be underrepresented, but they were also found to be more likely to produce and report stories targeting lifestyle, culture, and health,

compared to the men who were found more likely to cover politics, crime, sports, and technology (“New Research,” 2014).

Cukier, Jackson, Elmi, Roach, and Cyr (2016) coded for frequency of female presentation. Out of 2,031 individuals identified, females were less likely to appear on screen as overall news talent compared to males. Nevertheless, Desmond and Danilewicz (2010) found no substantial difference between males and females as *anchors* and *reporters* in the Northeast region of the U.S. However, female *reporters* continue to be viewed in presenting news stories that fit the female stereotype (Desmond & Danilewicz, 2010). What is labeled feminine or masculine, one could agree, could relate to the traditional stereotype of males and females. What is labeled feminine or masculine, one could agree, could relate to the traditional stereotype of males and females.

Stereotype Theory

Mass media constantly reinforces stereotypical mental images or exaggerated traditional beliefs that keep its audience convinced that whatever is believed for a particular group is emblematic for the represented group (Farley, 2000). According to Lindsey (2015), there are notable cultural gender lenses regarding the social structure or norms of gender stereotypes in society. These gender lenses depict beliefs that males and females are opposite beings, biologically and naturally, and that males are superior over females (Bem, 1993). These cultural lenses derive from centuries of human history where males were viewed as the more dominant being in society (Wright, 2009).

The social psychology theory of stereotyping presented by McGarty, Yzerbyt, and Spears (2002) can be better understood through three principles: 1) stereotypes are aids to explanation, 2) stereotypes are energy-saving devices, and 3) stereotypes are shared group beliefs. These

beliefs are based on cultural and social norms that a woman's place is in the home, and a man's is in the public sphere. Male domination has not yet disappeared in the 21st century, but its walls are beginning to crumble (Wright, 2009).

Nevertheless, the gender stereotypes still reside as women are often labeled in society as submissive, dependent on the opposite sex, and more involved or obligated to doing housework (Davis, 1990). According to Jackman (1994), the stereotypical traits of women also lean more towards being emotional, talkative, and born to serve male desires (p. 78). These stereotypes have both negative and positive effects: women are viewed as incompetent, but also sincere (Davis, 1990; Jackman, 1994; Inzlicht & Schmader, 2012).

According to North (2014), "the mainstream news media have long been charged by feminist and critical media scholars of largely excluding women from its sports coverage, and concomitantly highlighting the ongoing relative absence of female sports *reporters*" (pg. 1). Sports reporting in media has traditionally been connected to the male gender (Leiknisdóttir, 2004). Research performed in Iceland, by the Centre for Gender Equality (CGEI), found gender differences regarding presentation of sports. Not only did the research discover the male image viewed more prominently as an athletic participant compared to females, but male sports are the more preferred content to be seen in the news media compared to female sports (Leiknisdóttir, 2004).

Shor, van de Rijt, Miltsov, Kulkarni and Skiena (2015) focused on the underrepresentation of females in the news media. Their study suggests that gender imbalances within the news media are driven by gender imbalances in "socio-economic participation." In addition to the media displaying stereotypical depictions, Shor et al. (2015), claim:

Men are expected to be proactive, speak up, and take the initiative, whereas women are systematically relegated to reactive roles. These expectations legitimize and normalize men's overrepresentation in leadership positions and have an adverse effect on female leaders' ability to exercise power and achieve compliance. (p. 961)

A number of scholarly studies have analyzed gender roles as news *anchors* and *reporters* in television newscasts, however, no scholarly works have been found comparing and analyzing gender presentations by Designated Market Area.

Television Designated Market Area

According to Anderson (2011), the technology behind television news broadcasting led to the formation of 210 Designated Market Areas, large or small, in the United States. A large market represents a geographic area with a larger audience share population compared to a small market that has a smaller audience share population ("Pathways," 2016). Past research has compared Designated Market Areas by news content (Carroll, 1985; Harmon & White, 2001; Anderson, 2011).

According to Carroll (1985), small market television stations tend to depend on anticipated news stories and preplanned events for news content (p. 877). Carroll's findings also indicate that local news stations in a smaller Designated Market Areas (DMA) tend to present more soft news than larger television markets. According to Harmon (1989), large and small television news markets display significant similarities in the presentation of news stories. However, Harmon and White (2001) revealed large market newscasts broadcast stories from outside news sources obtained via satellite, wire copy, or video news releases (VNRs) more often than smaller markets. Findings indicated that both markets were likely to use VNRs, but small

market news programs tended to produce longer video segments compared to large markets (Harmon & White, 2001).

Different Designated Market Areas not only produce different types of news content but the two different sized markets also employ news talent with different levels of expertise (Engstrom & Ferri, 2000). According to a qualitative study conducted by Engstrom and Ferri (2000) research found many *anchors* or *reporters* initially make the decision to start in smaller news markets at the beginning of his or her career. The news *anchors* studied noted that in order to advance in the field of broadcast journalism, as *anchors* or *reporters*, male or female, must move up to a larger market. *Anchors* and *reporters*, female or male, in this study knew that to progress in the industry relocation is a requirement. An *anchor* or *reporter* must relocate to larger markets, where the better job is. (Engstrom & Ferri, 2000)

A more recent study conducted by Anderson (2011) compared news content distributed between three strategically selected DMA's within the state of Nebraska during sweeps week. Television networks create special programming during sweeps week with the intent to spike up Nielsen viewership ratings. Programmers are pressured to please the audience more during sweeps week because audience viewership also affects the advertisers' choice on where to market their companies or products. Anderson's (2011) findings discovered the size of each Designated Market Area was not an issue regarding the over-presentation of local news stories during sweeps week, however, different sized DMA's presented differences in news format. Each news market was most concerned with audience interests only within its own market (Anderson, 2011).

Summary

This study endeavored to discover if gender disparity within the content of news stories was evident, or had diminished, to find if hard and soft news stories was equally distributed between male and female news talent. Research has found males to be over-represented as both *anchors* and *reporters* in the television news industry and has also found males more prominent in presenting hard-hitting news stories than females (Cann & Mohr, 2001; Chambers, Steiner & Fleming, 2004; Desmond & Danilewicz, 2010; Irvin, 2013; North, 2014). Limited research has found distinct differences and similarities between large and small market television news stations regarding the news content published within each market (Carroll, 1985; Harmon & White, 2001; Anderson, 2011). Bridging the gap for future research, this study compared large and small market news productions to explore connections or variations between markets regarding gender representation as news *anchors* and *reporters* in the Northwest region of the U.S. The following chapter illustrates quantitative methodology in research. Two specific research questions were developed to guide this study and three hypotheses were formed based on findings significant to recent research in the United States.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

This study investigated gender representation in two television news markets in the Northwest region of the United States. The Northwest region has not been a highly-targeted region for this type of research. Desmond and Danilewicz's (2010) study analyzed gender roles in television news in the Northeast U.S. where research discovered no substantial difference between male and female news talent in the presentation of soft and hard news stories. However, the study revealed female news talent more often reported soft stories, whereas males more often reported hard stories (Desmond & Danilewicz, 2010). Besides comparing and analyzing data by television market size, this study was conducted in a different region of the country to aid in understanding gender representations in television news in the U.S.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

Two hypotheses were posed based on Chambers, Steiner, & Fleming (2004), Irvin (2013), and "New Research" (2014) findings where stereotypical links between gender and news stories were discovered.

H1: Male news reporters will present hard news stories more often than female news reporters.

H2: Female news reporters will present soft news stories more often than male news reporters.

One hypothesis was posed based on Armstrong, Wood, and Nelson (2006) and Desmond and Danilewicz's (2010) findings, where no significant difference between gender as *anchors* or *reporters* was found.

H3: There is no significant difference between gender as overall television news talent.

Prompted by the research of Harmon and White (2001) and Anderson (2011) where both reported similarities and differences between news market sizes, this study posed the following research question to ascertain gender role similarities and differences in large and small market presentations or dissimilarities of gender roles between large market and small market news presentations.

RQ1: Are there significant differences between large and small television news markets in terms of gender presentation?

Given information from Irvin's (2013) study which found that 55% of total news stories reported by females were hard news stories and North's (2014) large scale survey which provided evidence that female journalists reported more hard news such as sports, politics, crime, and business, this study posed the second research question in an effort to discover gender bias, a stereotype link between gender and news stories presented.

RQ2: Are female reporters presenting more hard stories versus soft stories?

Sampling

A content analysis was conducted to properly accumulate data addressing the hypotheses and research questions of this study. This study analyzed evening newscasts representing the "Big Three" broadcast networks: NBC, ABC, and CBS (Irvin, 2013). Based on 2016 Nielsen rankings, the coding sample consisted of six news programs representing one large market, Seattle-Tacoma, WA, 13 (KING, KOMO and KIRO), and one small market, Boise, ID, 111 (KTVB, KBOI and KIVI). According to the Nielsen map of TV media markets, the large market, Seattle-Tacoma, contains 1.8 million homes with TVs, 72.8% of those homes own cable. The small market, Boise, contains 259,000 homes with television sets where 24.7% own cable. (Nielsen Media Research, 2016)

News programs from six stations across both markets were recorded on an ordinary workweek (Monday-Friday). Thirty newscast samples were recorded over the course of five workdays with an equal representation of 15 newscasts per market. Qualifications in choosing a large and small market sample included: location in the Northwest region, live internet stream access during prime-time news hours, affiliations with ABC, CBS, or NBC networks, and classification of a large or small news market based on Designated Market Area (DMA) categories (“Local TV,” 2016).

Two different Designated Market Areas were recorded during a prime-time evening news period. Each newscast was scheduled to air for 30 minutes during prime-time and allows 22 minutes to present news stories, eight minutes are traditionally reserved for advertising (Rocha, 2004). Prime time news hours, according to a Pew Research study, sustain the largest viewership between the evening and nighttime hours (“How Americans,” 2013). Each station’s live stream broadcast, found on stations’ websites, were screen and audio recorded on individual personal computers. A workweek period, (June 20th-24th, 2016), was chosen to record the sample to assure diverse news topics were represented. This research avoided gathering newscast samples during the 2016 Olympic summer games in Rio (July-August), as well as during the period of the 2016 Presidential primary debates and election (August-November). Avoiding these events ensured a higher chance of gathering data that contained more diverse news topics on an average news week.

Coding Procedure

Two undergraduate students (one male and one female), compensated with academic credit through an enrolled research course, were utilized as coders for this study. Neither coder has worked in the television news industry. Both were unaware of the study’s hypotheses and

research questions although they were aware of the study's purpose. Each coder was taught how to properly code each newscast with the code sheet provided (see Appendix A). Each coder practiced coding sample prime-time newscasts from the Northwest region once a week for approximately two months, consisting of seven practice coding sessions. A small fraction of prime-time newscasts from the study's sample was used to calculate inter-coder reliability. Data collected from both coders was interpreted through a Microsoft Office Excel spreadsheet. No significant differences between coders was detected (p -value $> .05$ [.65]).

After inter-coder reliability was established, each newscast in the study's sample was coded for the following variables: size of market (large or small), station affiliation (ABC, CBS, NBC), quantity of *anchors*, gender of *anchors*, story rank in newscast, story topic/hard or soft, quantity of *reporters* and gender of *reporters* (see Appendix A). Rank of stories within each newscast was noted to identify the perceived measure of importance for each news story. Each news block in a newscast is a classification of the order of the news sequence. For example, "Block A" is labeled as the top of the newscast and "Block E" is labeled as the bottom. Each commercial break begins a new block for each newscast. Block "A" includes news stories appearing before the first commercial break, block "B" includes news stories appearing after the first commercial break, but before commercial break two and so on through block "E." Each newscast arranges stories to maintain consistency. By combining block and news story rank within each newscast, a clearer indication on story importance was identified and a smoother coding process was afforded.

The two coders analyzed each story topic to discover if a link existed between news *reporters* and news stories each reporter presented (***H1: Male news reporters will present hard news stories more often than female news reporters, H2: Female news reporters will present***

soft news stories more often than male news reporters.) Each news story (package) within a newscast was coded for both quantity and apparent gender of news *reporter*. A news package is a pre-recorded, self-contained story where the news *reporter* presents himself or herself in front of the camera within the storyline of the news package or during live coverage (Irvin, 2013). Each story, or package in the newscast was coded as one of the following 20 topics: Politics, Crime, Economics/Finance, Feature, Weather, Sports, Natural Disaster, Accident, Traffic Accident, Fitness, Health, Environment, Arts, Industry, Technology, Foreign Affairs, Child Development, Education, Judicial, and Military. Each coder labeled each news story with topics provided and coded each presentation of news story as either hard or soft.

Both coders also analyzed each newscast sample for the overall quantity of females and males presented as both *anchors* and *reporters* (***H3: There is no significant difference between gender as overall television news talent.***) This study included coding procedures to properly distinguish news talent within local newscasts as an *anchor* versus *reporter*.

This study focused on other coding parameters to assure ***RQ2 (Are female reporters presenting more hard stories versus soft stories?)*** was answered accurately and appropriately. To find which gender of *reporter* presented which type of news package, (soft or hard), *anchors* were counted separately from the *reporters*. Story topics excluded from coding were: weather reports, sports scores, statistics, and traffic updates. Traditionally, a sports anchor, weather anchor, or meteorologist is scheduled and promoted to present daily sports or weather reports during multiple newscasts throughout an average news day. According to (Cann & Mohr, 2001) these categories, weather reports, sports scores, statistics, and traffic updates, do not represent news topics that display any expectation of gender bias regarding assignments made to *reporters*. However, in a situation during a sports or weather segment when a news package was presented

by a *reporter* that was not the sports or weather anchor, the story was coded as a separate story. In a situation where a news story included two or three topics, the story was coded by the most dominant topic as determined by the assigned coder (Cann & Mohr, 2001).

In conjunction with each newscast being coded for station affiliate (ABC, CBS, NBC), a crucial element to this preliminary study was to precisely differentiate each newscast within the sample as either a large or a small news market (*RQ1: Are there significant differences between large and small television news markets in terms of gender presentation?*). Research has discovered large and small news markets to have similarities and variations regarding broadcast news content (Carroll, 1985; Harmon, 1989; Harmon & White, 2001; Anderson, 2011). Comparisons between a large and small market in this study will provide material for future research to possibly uncover gender differentiation between Designated Market Area.

This study's methodology endeavored to discover evidence of horizontal segregation in the presentation of gender as overall news talent to investigate if one gender is presented more prominently. By classifying each news story as hard or soft, evidence of vertical segregation in the distribution of TV news stories could be discovered as well. This study hopes to bridge the research gap of gender representation in local TV news by comparing and analyzing news talent and content by TV market size.

Chapter 4 – Results

The purpose of this study was to examine gender roles in television news programs in the Northwest region of the U.S. and to compare and analyze findings by television market size, (large and small). Specific markets studied include Seattle-Tacoma, WA, as the large market sample and Boise, ID, as the small market sample. The following research questions and hypotheses guided the data collection:

RQ1: Are there significant differences between large and small television news markets in terms of gender presentation?

RQ2: Are female reporters presenting more hard stories versus soft stories?

H1: Male news reporters will present hard news stories more often than female news reporters.

H2: Female news reporters will present soft news stories more often than male news reporters.

H3: There is no significant difference between gender as overall television news talent.

Microsoft Excel was utilized to execute the content analysis for this particular study. Microsoft Office Excel is commonly used by researchers in simple statistical research for relatively small amounts of data. Excel was also used in analyzing data statistics for its convenience, accessibility, and affordability. Also by using an Excel Spreadsheet, researchers have access to create dynamic graphs from data for visual convenience. (Worthington, 2016)

A bi-variate statistical t-test was used to compare differences between male and female appearances as *anchors* and *reporters* within each newscast. Independent sample t-tests were analyzed to appropriately address both hypotheses and research questions and to estimate if differences between variables were significant.

Overview of the Sample

A total of 26 of the 30 intended prime-time live web stream newscasts were successfully screen recorded and collected during a one workweek period (M-F) during the final week of June 2016. Each news program recorded originated from an affiliate of one of the top three networks in the U.S., (ABC, CBS, and NBC) and represented either a large or small market size within the DMAs studied. Four newscasts could not be included due to technical complications with stations' live stream systems. The missing samples for this study could not be retrieved for coding from each stations' archive. All four absent newscasts from the sample were news programs affiliated with NBC, two from KTVB, (small), and two from KING, (large). After accounting for technical complications, each television news market remained equally represented with 13 sample newscasts.

Gender Representation Results

Coders labeled 119 news stories and packages from a total of 397 samples of news content. This study found no significant difference in female news reporter presentations of hard news stories compared to male news *reporters*. Results are displayed in the following tables and figures in percentile value to better visualize and understand differences, regardless of significance of the results.

Table 4-1: Gender Representation of Reporters and News Stories

News Reporter Gender	Hard News Stories	Soft News Stories	News Stories Presented by Gender
Male	42 % (27)	47 % (26)	45 % (53)
Female	58 % (37)	53 % (29)	55 % (66)
N=119 Hard News p<.05 Soft News p>.05	54 % (64)	46 % (55)	119

Females were represented as news reporters 10% more often than males and presented five percent more hard stories than soft stories. Female news reporters were 16% more likely to present hard stories than male news reporters and six percent more likely to present soft stories than males.

RQ2 (Research Question 2: are female reporters presenting more hard stories versus soft stories?), was used as a guide in research to determine if females presented more hard stories than soft stories in this research. This data answered the second research question indicating that females in this sample are reporting more hard stories than soft stories.

Female *reporters* were also found to present 16% more hard news stories than male news *reporters*. This study's results display a significant difference between male and female *reporters* regarding the presentation of hard news stories, (p-value < .05 [.025]). This justifies that, **H1 (Hypothesis 1: Male news reporters will present hard news stories more often than female news reporters.)** is not supported. As indicated in Table 4-1, female news *reporters* also presented five percent more hard news stories than soft news stories.

Female news *reporters* also presented six percent more soft stories than males. This data illustrates that, **H2 (Hypothesis 2: Female news reporters will present soft news stories more often than male news reporters.)** is supported. According to Table 4-1, female news *reporters* were more likely to present soft news stories more often than male news *reporters*. The calculated t-test concurs that the difference is not significant (p-value >.05 [.33]).

To discover which gender was more noticeably represented within the 26 newscasts, each newscast was coded for apparent gender of news talent (*anchors* and *reporters*), and then combined to identify the total sum of overall news talent represented by each gender. This research found no significant difference between gender as overall news talent, therefore, **H3 (Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between gender as overall television news talent)** is supported.

The second hypothesis was supported because even though the overall difference between males and females was 10%, the T-Test calculated a value >.05 (.056), the difference is

not significant. Gender inequality in the television news industry, in this study, is evident after investigating not only the entire sample of news *reporters*, but news *anchors* as well. From 26 newscasts, 60 out of 89 news *anchors* were males. Although this study found female *reporters* 10% more likely to appear than males, males were more likely to be displayed as news *anchors* compared to females. Male *anchors* were viewed 67% of the time within the newscasts compared to females *anchors* who were viewed 33% of the time. The following section breaks down results by television market size.

Data Compared by Market Size

With 26 news programs, (13 from a large market and 13 from a small market), content was coded to ensure a successful and equal comparison of findings between the two market sizes. As a reminder, large news markets represent a larger population than small news markets in the United States. Seattle-Tacoma, WA, (based on 2016 data ranks 13th), represented the large news market sample and Boise, ID, (also based on 2016 data ranks 112th), represented the small news market sample (“Nielsen Media Research,” 2016).

In this study, this researcher uses *RQ1 (Are there significant differences between large and small television news markets in terms of gender presentation?)*, as a guide to discover differences between a large and small market gender presentation.

Table 4-2: Market Comparison of Reporters by Gender

Market Size	Female Reporter	Male Reporter	Total Reporters
Large	57% (40)	43% (30)	70
Small	53% (26)	47% (23)	49
N=119 P > .05 (.10)	55% (66)	45% (53)	119

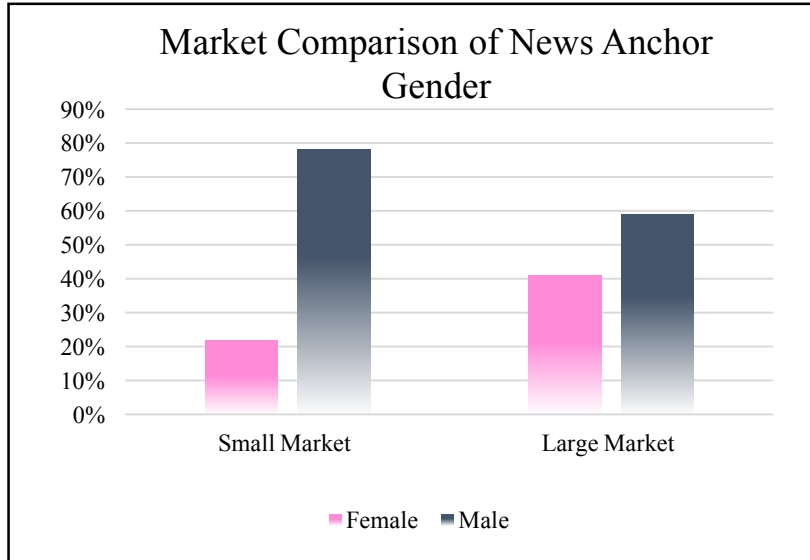
This table represents a comparison of gender representation as news reporters between a large and small news market. Data shows female news reporters presented more often than male reporters by 10%, but according to p-value above .05 [.10], the difference is not significant.

As indicated in Table 4-2, with a total count of 119 news *reporters* presenting news stories, overall, females were presented more often as news *reporters* than male *reporters* by 10%. The small and large market in this sample both presented females more often as news *reporters* than males. Both markets were shown to have displayed similarities presenting females more prominently as *reporters*, but the two markets also showed differences when it came to the quantity of news talent. As seen in Table 4-2, the large market showed more *reporters* within each newscast compared to the small market.

In the 13 large market newscasts studied, 70 *reporters* presented news stories, whereas in the 13 small market newscasts, there were only 49 *reporters* presenting news stories. However, as illustrated in Table 4-2, both markets also displayed similarities in the presentation of females and males as news *reporters*. The small market sample showed no significant difference between male and female *reporters*' appearance within each newscast in the small market ($P > .05$ [.43]). Similarly, the large market sample showed no significant difference between male and female appearance as news *reporters* (P-Value $> .05$ [.25]).

When it comes to the news *anchors*, both markets displayed significant differences. The small market sample, having numerically fewer news *reporters* (Table 4-2), also employed nine fewer news *anchors* (49 large and 40 small), but the difference is not significant. The most important difference between the two markets regarding news *anchors* is that the large market presented males and females equally as *anchors*, while the small market did not.

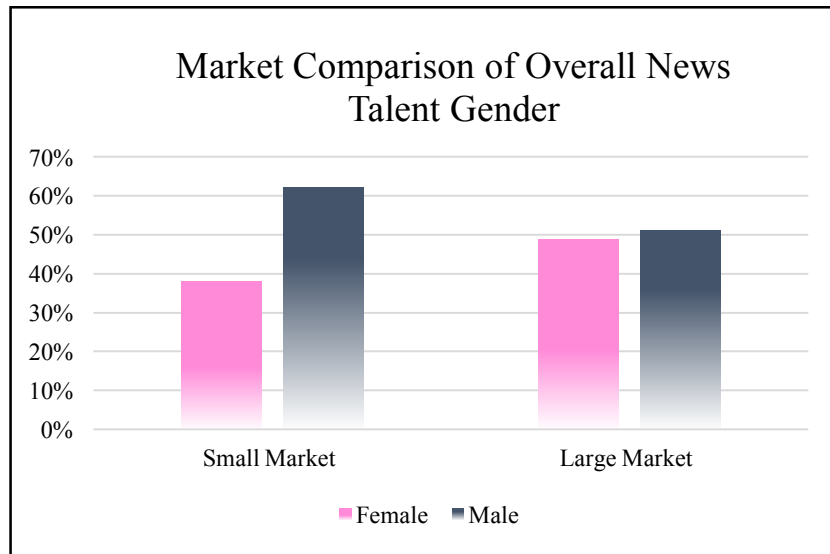
Figure 4-1



A visual presentation on how little the small market presented the female gender as news anchor compared to the large market sample. The difference between male and female news anchor presentation in the small market was displayed as 56%, with males at 78% and females at 22%. This is a significant difference with a calculated p-value $< .05$ [2.87E-07].

Figure 4-1 illustrates the small news market used in this sample presented males more often as news *anchors* than females by a difference of 56%. Males were employed as news *anchors* in the small market sample in 78% of news stories whereas females were presented 22% of the time. The large market was more in favor of males as well, employing them 14% more often than females. Of the 40 *anchors* coded for gender appearance in 13 newscasts from a small market, only nine were female. A notable difference between both markets regarding news *anchors* is the large market displayed females more often than the small market.

Figure 4-2



A bar graph displaying the large market having presented both males and females equally as news talent versus the small market presenting the male gender more often as news talent than females. P-Value is less than .05, [.0037] which means there is a significant difference between male and female news talent in a small market. The large market shows no significant difference with a p-value >.05, [.87].

Another notable difference between both markets is displayed in Figure 4-2. The large market in this sample revealed equal representations of males and females as overall news talent, *anchors* and *reporters*. Both male and female news talent were coded to be represented nearly equally, (51% male, 49% female, p-value > .05 [.87]). However, in the small market sample, the difference between gender was 24%, showing males 62% of the time and females 38% out of the total individual news talent sample of 208. This data illustrates a significant difference between male and female news talent in a small market (p-value < .05, [.0037]).

Summary

The results of this study show no significant difference between male and females as overall news talent in the Northwest region of the U.S. This research reveals that even though female news *reporters* are more often seen than male *reporters*, as illustrated in Table 4-1, males are still more frequently represented as television news *anchors*. Despite the difference in quantity of news stories and *reporters*, each news market presented female news *reporters* more often than male *reporters*. Females were found to present both hard and soft news stories more

often than males. Results also illustrate that males in the small market sample were the more prominently employed gender as overall news talent. This study found differences and similarities between a large and a small news market regarding gender representation. The large market in this sample presented both males and females equally as news talent, whereas the small market had a significant difference by presenting males as *anchors* more often than females. Both markets were similar in presenting more female *reporters* than male *reporters*. The following chapter summarizes findings, discusses limitations, and outlines the potential for future research.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

The purpose of this study was to conduct a preliminary study by investigating gender representations as news talent and to track evidence of segregation between female and male news *reporters* and *anchors* in delivering soft and hard news stories to the public. This was a preliminary study by comparing gender representation results between two different sized news markets for future research.

Summary of Results

Female news *reporters* presented both hard and soft news stories more often than males. The stereotypical link between gender and news stories presented in news media is focused merely on the observation that males are stereotypically linked to hard news stories and females are stereotypically linked to soft stories. The most recent research found in Australia (Cann & Mohr, 2001; North, 2014) discovered females to be presenting more hard news than soft news. This research found similar results in the Northwest region of the United States. Not only did females present more hard than soft news stories, females outnumbered males in presenting more hard news stories within television newscasts. In the Northeast region of the U.S. Desmond and Danilewicz (2010) discovered no substantial difference between male and female news talent in the presentation of soft and hard news stories. This study's results in the Northwest region also indicate no significant difference between female and male news *reporters* in presenting both soft and hard news stories. These results tell us gender vertical segregation is not evident in this research - males and females, based on this study's results, are now employed more frequently to present news stories that do not stereotypically match their gender. Female news *reporters* presenting both hard and soft stories more often than males could indicate that females are being trusted to present not only soft news but, also to present hard news. Conversely, males presenting

more soft stories than females could indicate that males are being trusted to present soft stories just as much as they are to present hard stories. A few examples of hard new stories reported by females included the nightclub shooting in Orlando, President Obama visiting Seattle, WA, house fires, geothermal leaks, and the effect of “Brexit” (Britain leaving the European Union). Most hard news topics presented by female news *reporters* concerned politics, crime, accidents, natural disasters, and international affairs. Some examples of soft stories presented by males included outdoor recreation, Alzheimer’s awareness, a gay pride parade, a camp for grieving military families, and a young lady with cancer going to her first prom. The majority of soft news topics represented by male news *reporters* concerned human interest, child development, features, or health-related stories.

Each news market, one large and one small, was analyzed to determine if gender representations differed between the two markets. After examining the overall data, the results failed to reveal a significant difference between males and females, but after analyzing data by market size, each market produced differing results. Out of 26 newscasts, (13 from each market), the large market equally represented males and females as overall news talent, whereas the small market employed males more often than females as news talent. In the case of news *reporters* and *anchors*, both the large and small market displayed females more often as *reporters* and males more often as *anchors*. The large market sample presented each gender equally as overall news talent, but, the small market displayed an underrepresentation of female news talent, displaying an unequal presentation of gender. These results do not represent every small or large market in the United States or in the Northwest region, but only those investigated in this study.

Results in this study reveal no significant difference between gender as overall news talent, however, notable evidence found gender prominence of news *reporters* sided more with

the female gender. With the calculation of overall news talent favoring the male gender by 10%, these results concur that even though females are more prominently displayed as *reporters*, male *anchors* are utilized at a higher percentage rate than female news *anchors* in both news markets. Past research has discovered males to be the most prominent gender shown as news talent in television news (Cann & Mohr, 2001; “New Research,” 2014; Cukier et al., 2016). However, research from 2010 in the Northeast region of the United States found no significant difference between males and females as news talent (Desmond & Danilewicz). The study conducted by this researcher also found no significant difference between males and females as overall news talent with the variance between male and female overall news talent at 10%. These results indicate that even after nearly half a century since women began appearing on television news presentations, gender equality has not yet been achieved in the United States.

Encountered Limitations

During the process of gathering data within a research study, a researcher will frequently encounter limitations (Simon & Goes, 2013). “Limitations are matters and occurrences that arise in a study which are out of the researcher’s control” (Simon & Goes, 2013, p. 1). This study encountered a number of differences in data collection.

While screen recording a live news stream on a personal computer, recording issues occurred when the live stream from two of the news stations failed. The planned sample for coding was 30 newscasts, but with the streaming complications, the sample gathered only 26 out of the 30 intended newscasts. Four newscasts could not be included due to technical complications with stations’ live stream systems; newscasts from stations’ archives could not be retrieved for coding.

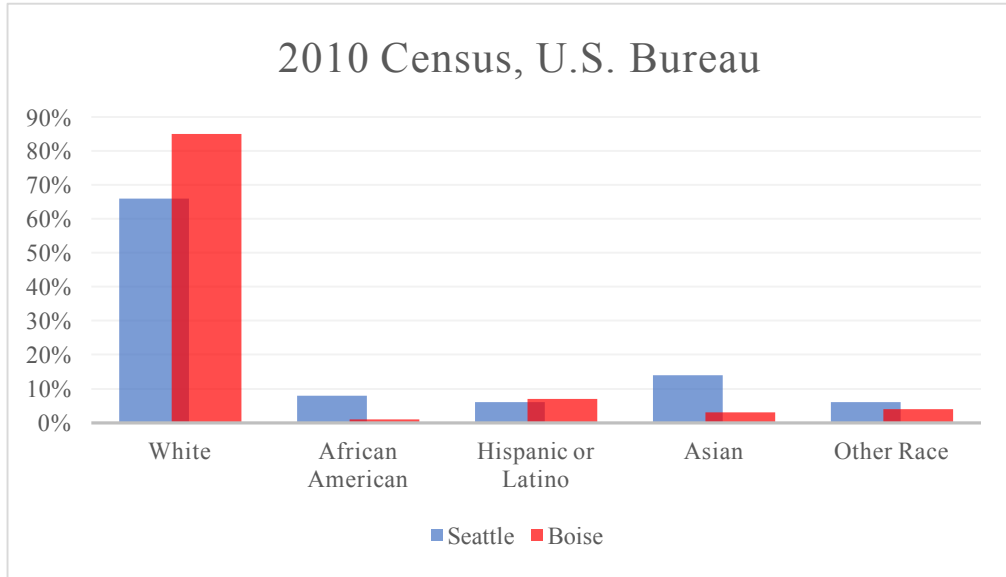
Another limitation is the data collected for this study's sample. Data was collected from only one region of the U.S. and from only one large and one small news market. There was not a large enough sample for research findings to more accurately represent small or large markets within the entire Northwest region. The findings within this study do not represent the entire television news industry in the Northwest region nor do the findings represent each individual market size in the country or the region.

As a quantitative study based entirely on what members of a television news audience view, each newscast in this study was coded for gender appearances as *anchors* and *reporters* in television news broadcasts. Additional limitations exist regarding insight to executive decisions within the newsroom regarding story assignments to gender of news talent, prime-time newscast story lineup, employment decisions in hiring news talent, or news material considered most newsworthy.

This research analyzed only gender representations in television newscasts. Racial differences between news *anchors* and *reporters* was not a variable for this research. Past research has found females of different race or ethnic backgrounds to struggle in employment more than white females in journalism and mass communication (Becker, Lauf, & Lowrey, 1999).

Large and small markets have many differences that have nothing to do with the news content or news talent displayed to its mass audience. One significant difference is the population size between each DMA. The large market, Seattle-Tacoma, is much larger than the small market in Boise. Each market also displays differences regarding audience diversity.

Figure 4-3



A bar graph illustrating racial diversity in the overall population of both Seattle, WA and Boise, ID. Based on 2010 U.S. Bureau of Census statistics, Seattle has a more diverse population than Boise, ID. Both cities have significant white population.

With a much larger audience, increased viewership means a more diverse audience as well. As illustrated in Figure 4-3, based on U.S. Bureau of Census (2010b) statistics, the city of Seattle has an overall population count of 608,660. Out of the entire population count, 66% are Caucasian, whereas 34% are made up of other racial groups. The second highest race based on 2010 census is Asian at 14%. The city of Boise does not have as vast or diverse of a population as Seattle. Boise has a population of 218,281 based on 2010 U.S. Bureau of Census statistics, out of the entire population 85% are white and 15% represent other racial groups. The second highest race based on 2010 census in Boise is Hispanic/Latino at seven percent. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010a)

A final limitation encountered in this study was the collecting of data from two states with very different political or social beliefs. The large market, in Washington state, is commonly known to be a blue state with an average audience traditionally democratic and more

liberal. The small market, in the state of Idaho, is commonly known to be a red state, with a more republican and conservative audience compared to its Northwest neighbor. Differences regarding gender representation of news talent, where the small market red state, presented male news talent more often than females and the large market blue state equally represented both males and females as news talent, could be due to political differences between both states. These results could have also been due to differences between a large and small Designated Market Area where both DMA's display significant differences regarding population and diversity. In order to find supplementary data to gather further answers, numerous qualitative or quantitative studies could be considered for future research.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study has provided noteworthy results from a relatively small sample of newscasts. However, further research is needed to better expand this study to find reasons why gender is not as equally represented in the television industry in the Northwest region. According to this study, males are still overrepresented as news talent. It has been almost 50 years since Jean Enersen, in 1971, initially appeared as the first female co-anchor on a television newscast (Thompson, 2009). After nearly 50 years, equality has not yet been fully achieved, but progress has been made regarding the issue of gender segregation in the presentation of television news stories. This research found that female *reporters* present more news stories than males, and present more hard and soft stories (combined) than males. This result can be utilized to research a larger sample in the Northwest region of the United States, or perhaps in another region where there are large market samples to compare equally with small news market samples.

This study compared gender representations displayed from a large and a small news market and found the small news market to underrepresent females in comparison to males. There is no other way to indicate why these results are constantly being found in research unless scholars choose to pursue and conduct additional research from inside television newsrooms. A study such as this could focus more on the theory of gatekeeping. Gatekeepers in news media are individuals who control what information is provided to the mass audience (Peiris, 2014). “Gatekeeping is the news’ process of deciding what events to let into its broadcast, deciding what news is or what will become news” (McKain, 2005, p. 416). By interviewing news executives within these two very different market sizes, research could help explain the hiring process when it comes to news talent and what qualities executives look for in potential news talent. Future studies could broaden the sample size of large and small news markets in the Northwest region and instead of researching what the audience is seeing, research what news executives are thinking - what the gatekeepers are deciding.

Scholars could also research Human Resources (HR) within both different sized television news markets. By conducting in-depth interviews, research could find if employment applications differ by gender between news markets. Both markets in this study employed males and females differently as news *anchors*. The large market displayed no significant difference between males and females as *anchors*. Research could find if it is due to males and females equally applying for employment in the large market. The small market displayed a significant difference between genders overall. Males could be the only ones applying for employment in broadcast journalism in the Boise market. One could assert that small news markets do not have as many news talent applicants to choose from as large markets, based on population size or increase in large markets audience viewership compared to small markets.

Past research has found racial and gender discrepancies amongst journalism and mass communication job employment (Becker, Lauf, & Lowrey, 1999). Future research could conduct a similar quantitative study to find if both race and gender display significant differences between television news markets. Based on visualizations during the coding process in this study, the small news market was noticed to have displayed white males and white females more often than other genders of different racial or ethnic representation. No data supports this claim. It is however a notable visualization that scholars could take into consideration for future research.

An expert or non-expert source is “any person in the report who provided an interview or sound bite and who was identified either through fonted or verbal identification” (Liebler & Smith, 1997, p. 61). Future research could also explore which gender is represented more as expert and non-expert sources within television news stories and why. Using Cann and Mohr’s (2001) definitions of source expertise: an expert source is identified when the source’s occupation is displayed within the story, which also shows relevance to the story. A non-expert source is an interviewed source representing a more public response such as a bystander, victim, witness, or relative who also has relevance to the story topic. Future research could explore which gender is more prominent or most relevant as an expert or non-expert source within television news stories. Also, studies could conduct in-depth interviews with individual news *reporters* to reveal their selection process of subject experts within their assigned news stories.

Conclusion

Women have come a long way in mass media to get the chance to be known, heard, and seen on the television news screen. Decades ago, female talent was not considered a credible enough figure to present news stories to the public audience nor were they seen to be capable of

presenting a relevant voice or face on the small screen. But times have changed; this research supports that.

This study found notable differences and similarities between a large and a small news market regarding gender representation. One noteworthy difference found between markets is the presentation of a certain gender as news talent. The small market sample presented a significant difference of males as news *anchors* over females. Females were less likely to be seen in small market newscasts as overall news talent. On the other hand, the large market displayed males and females equally. Observing similarities, both markets presented more female *reporters* than male *reporters* within 119 news stories, and both news markets overrepresented males as overall news talent.

This study found female news *reporters* are more often presenting hard news stories, which have traditionally and stereotypically been presented by males. Females are also overrepresented as news *reporters* in both sizes of television news markets studied. This research found female *reporters* are presenting more hard and soft stories than males, but are underrepresented as overall news talent. Male *anchors* were discovered to present more hard and soft stories as overall news talent, revealing that gender is not an overarching issue when it comes to the presentation of news stories. A noticeable issue in the news industry used to be vertical gender segregation, where females only presented or represented soft news stories while males presented hard stories. This research discovered that vertical gender segregation is a progressively decreasing concern in broadcast journalism than it was in earlier decades. However, in this study, horizontal segregation, the over-representation of a particular gender, still exists with females overrepresented as news *reporters* and males overrepresented as news

anchors. Nevertheless, the stereotypical line drawn between males and females in this particular field of mass media has arguably been traversed.

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Appendix A - Code Sheet

EXCLUDED FROM CODING: Daily weather updates, sports scores, statistics and traffic updates

NOTE: If story topic appears to have two-three-four topics, choose most dominant topic.

Coder # _____

Sample # _____

Market Size: (Large, Small)

Station Affiliate: (ABC,NBC,CBS)

Anchor # _____

Female # _____

Male # _____

News Block/Story Number _____

Story Topic: (Crime, politics, sports, international affairs, human interest/feature, technology, economics/finance, environment, weather, arts, industry, child development, education, judicial, military, health, fitness, accident, traffic accident, natural disaster)

Hard or Soft _____

Anchor Gender Voice Over: (Male, Female, Other, no voice over)

Reporter Gender: (Male, Female, Other, no reporter)

Expert Source # _____

Expert Source Gender: (Male, Female, Male/Female, Male/Male, Female/Female, Male/Male/Male, Female/Female/Female, Male/Female/Male, Female/Male/Female, Female/Female/Female/Female, Male/Male/Male/Male, Female/Female/Male/Male, Female/Male/Male/Male, Male/Female/Female/Female, other, no expert source)

Non-Expert Source # _____

Non-Expert Source Gender (Male, Female, Male/Female, Male/Male, Female/Female, Male/Male/Male, Female/Female/Female, Male/Female/Male, Female/Male/Female, Female/Female/Female/Female, Male/Male/Male/Male, Female/Female/Male/Male, Female/Male/Male/Male, Male/Female/Female/Female, other, no non-expert source)
