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# The Effects of American Television's Portrayal of the Vietnam War on Society

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# Thesis Statement

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- The intent of this paper is to look at the responses and results of each research question and explain the findings in the results portion of the paper.
- The article will look at and identify possible situations that the reporters were in at the time of war and will also verify that the possible situations where the reporters were may have had an effect on the possible results of the survey.

# Hypothesis/Research Questions:

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- R1: Do reporters feel that the network they were working for at the time of the war only portray one side of the conflict, negatively or positively?
- R2: Do the reporters feel that the television studio they work for at the time of the war, target only a pro-war or anti-war group?

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- R3: Do the reporters feel that their stories were censored by the owner or editor of the station?
  - R4: Do the reporters feel that their stories were ever censored by the government?
  - R5: Did the media coverage change from the beginning of the conflict to the end?

# Background Information

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- The Vietnam War was the first conflict and war to be fully covered on television.
- With television still in its beginnings during the Cold War, the audience and technology was limited in its effectiveness to play a major role in the public opinion of how the war was being handled.

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- The Vietnam War was fought between 1964 and 1975 in South Vietnam as well as areas of Laos and Cambodia, with bombing attacks over North Vietnam.
  - Fighting with the United States was the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), Australia, New Zealand, and South Korea.
  - Fighting on the other side was a coalition of forces including the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the National Liberation Front and a communist led South Vietnamese guerrilla movement (Ford).

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- American television turned to color in 1968, which is when NBC broadcasted entirely and nearly completely CBS, in color.
  - For the first time in October of 1968, color television sets outsold black and white, this becoming a televisual society (Culbert).
  - News broadcasts were now becoming half an hour long. Walter Cronkite, of CBS News, ran a 30 minute newscast already in September of 1963.
  - NBC's Huntley-Brinkley Report ran for 30 minutes, five nights a week also in September and also taking the lead in standings.
  - ABC, finally, ran for 30 minutes in January of 1967. ABC was continuously was in need for money to keep in balance with the other top two networks (Culbert).

# Focus Groups

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- The problem will be assessed with one study at the current time and additional studies being followed up through a duration of time to better handle the information received from the original study.
- The anticipation of additional information from the study will be further addressed in an expected study. Other studies will also be able to more aggressively find the results through different mediums including, print media, radio broadcast, and additional information also on television.

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- The study will be given to a variety of reporters that covered the Vietnam Conflict through television.
  - The main focus of this research article will be spent on television reporting.
  - It is in the author's intent to have the study focus on a variety of television studios of several different sizes, to provide a more diverse response to find similarities in the information found.

# Methodology

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- There will be approximately 100 reporters at the focus groups.
- The subjects will not only be from a variety of backgrounds, they will be from all different networks rather than subjects being biased from only one network or station.
- Will provide a broad range of broadcasting information, station size and location and also the frequency provided by their location.

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- The subjects that have been selected for this study include television reporters that covered assignments during the Vietnam era that may have directly affected the influence of their viewer's opinions.
  - Reporters are being defined as a person who is employed by a television station that has experience in high-pressure situations and can therefore respond better to the questions that are asked of them

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- The focus group will have ten people in each group, and each will be interviewed simultaneously.
  - Leading the group will be a moderator, with a relatively unstructured discussion about the focal topic.

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- Discussions are very focused within focus groups. Nearly all of the questions asked are also predetermined, along with the pattern of questions.
  - The questions are structured to further the goal of the research.
  - The moderator is free to move away from the questions if information presented by the participants is relevant.
  - The moderator will be a professional in the media field to allow them to be able to understand the background of information that is to be covered.

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