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Critics and News Executives Split Over Sexism in Clinton Coverage

By KATHARINE Q. SEELYE and JULIE BOSMAN. 13 June 2008

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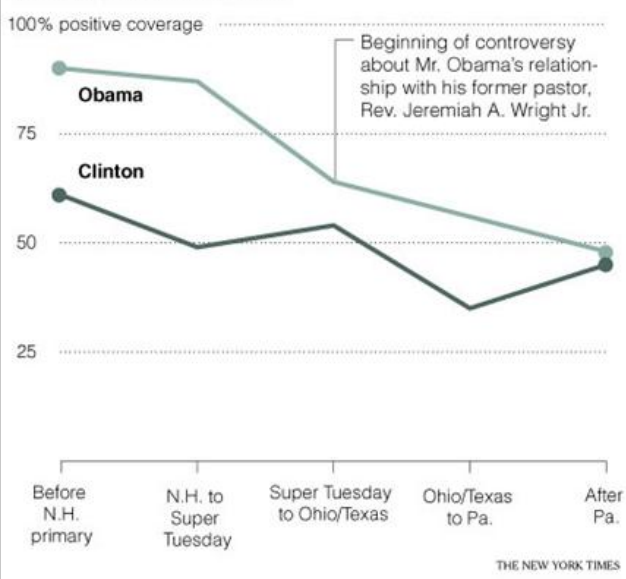
Angered by what they consider sexist news coverage of Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's bid for the Democratic presidential nomination, many women and erstwhile Clinton supporters are proposing boycotts of the cable networks, putting up videos on a "Media Hall of Shame," starting a national conversation about sexism and pushing Mrs. Clinton's rival, Senator Barack Obama, to address the matter.

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Starting in mid-December, 90 percent of comments about Mr. Obama on the three broadcast networks were positive, and 61 percent about Mrs. Clinton were positive, according to a study by Robert Lichter, a communications professor at George Mason University. But as Mr. Obama became the front-runner, things evened out. The study said that by the time Mrs. Clinton suspended her campaign on June 7, they were getting about the same amount of positive coverage, with Mr. Obama at 48 percent and Mrs. Clinton at 45 percent.

Comparing News Coverage

Robert Lichter, a professor at George Mason University, has calculated the percentage of positive statements made about Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton by reporters and nonpartisan sources on ABC, CBS and NBC evening news shows from Dec. 15 to June 7.



Jeff Greenfield, a political correspondent for CBS News, said that charges of sexism often came through a political prism. "Throughout this campaign, people's perception of the press has been in line with what they wanted to happen politically," Mr. Greenfield said. "If my person lost, the press did a bad job."

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GRAPH: COMPARING NEWS COVERAGE: Robert Lichter, a professor at George Mason University, has calculated the percentage of positive statements made about Senators Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton by reporters and nonpartisan sources on ABC, CBS and NBC evening news shows from Dec. 15 to June 7. (pg. A24); Graph showing the positive comparisons made between Obama and Clinton.