



# Conflict Framing & Media Bias in Coverage of Title IX: Gender Dynamics in Producing Sport News

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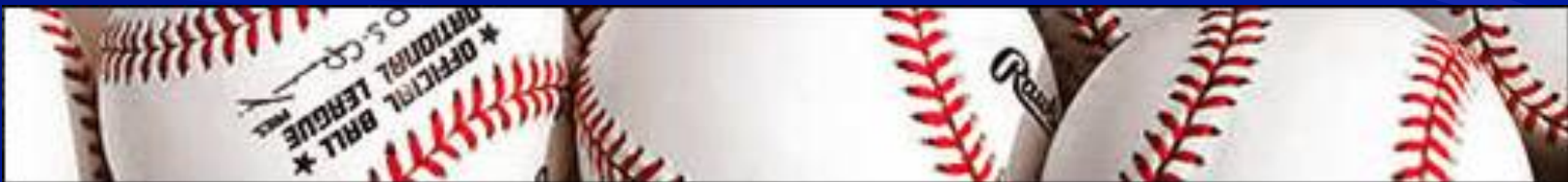
# Introduction & Past Research

Past research on reporting and commentary by journalist gender has produced mixed findings.



## The conflict over Title IX is interesting because:

- It has been called the “most visible gender controversy of the past 35 years” (Suggs, 2005).
- Sports are primarily a mass media-driven spectacle.



# What is Title IX?

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...”

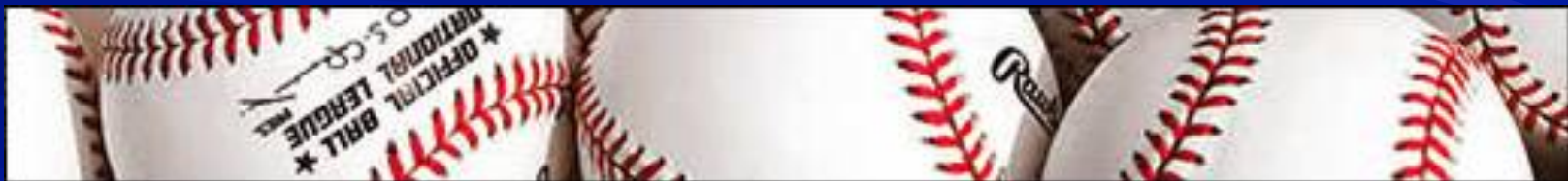




Experts say Title IX (1972) marks a significant moment in women's quest for equality.

Conflict erupted over effect on education-athletics establishment.

Two sides: advocacy & opposition

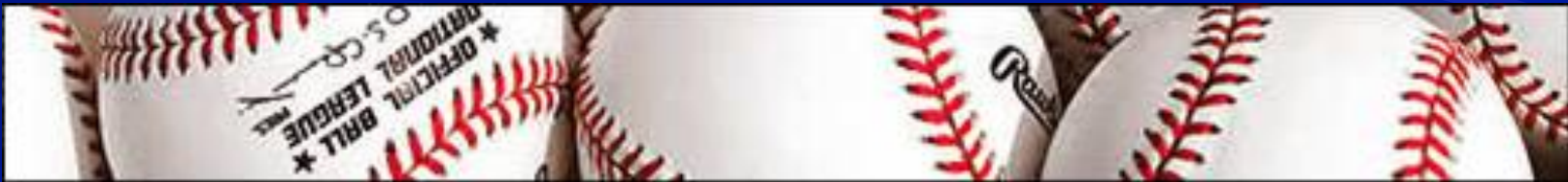


Looking at the volume and placement of articles about Title IX could allow for discerning to what extent female journalists have been given opportunities to present stories on and advocate for this important equality legislation.



If given the opportunity to advocate for women's advancement in the context of Title IX, do female journalists...

- Succumb to social control?
- Embrace a feminist disposition?



Past research on general news reporting has looked at differences in quality, quantity, style, and substance by journalist gender.

Generally negative for female journalists.





Missing from the research so far is an analysis of differences in the prominence of Title IX coverage and how reporting and commentary on Title IX, by journalist gender, might have changed over time.



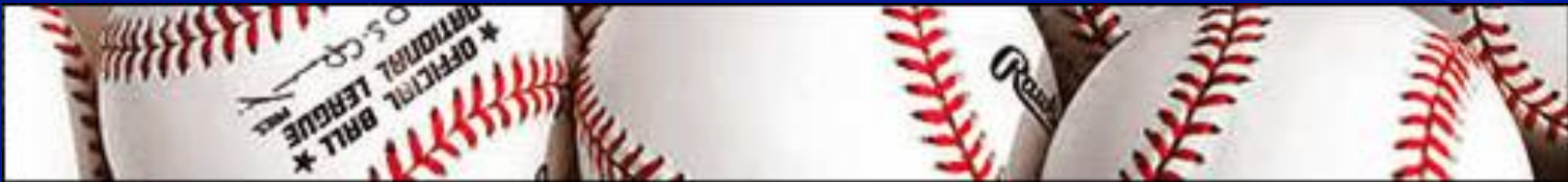


# Research Questions

RQ1: How has the volume of articles about Title IX in relation to women in sports differed between male and female journalists since the law's inception?



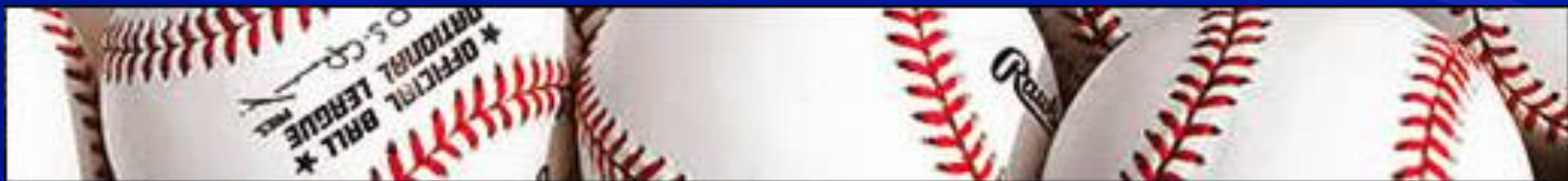
RQ2: How has the prominence of placement of articles about Title IX in relation to women in sports differed between male and female journalists since the law's inception?



RQ3: How has the portrayal of Title IX in relation to women in sports differed between male and female journalists since the law's inception?



RQ4: How has the portrayal of Title IX in relation to women in sports by male journalists changed over time?



RQ5: How has the portrayal of Title IX in relation to women in sports by female journalists changed over time?





# Method

## Dataset:

- *Washington Post*
- *New York Times*
- *Chicago Tribune*

Initially,  $n = 1,975$ .



Looked at articles >250 words in which Title IX was either central or important.

Coded for journalist gender and other objective traits.

Coded for advocacy, opposition, neutral frame and other subjective traits.



# Frames Identified

## Advocacy Frames:

- Equality
- Personal Opportunity
- Mandate
- Scapegoat

## Opposition Frames:

- Quota
- Zero-Sum
- Market
- Autonomy

## Neutral Frame



For Part 1 of the Analysis:

Eliminated articles w/no byline by which to determine journalist gender and also those with dual male-and-female journalist teams. None indeterminable.

Ultimately,  $n = 1,479$ .





For Part 2 of the Analysis:

Eliminated neutral-framed articles, articles with no author listed, and articles in which Title IX was not central or at least important.

Ultimately,  $n = 659$ .





## Delineated four time periods for analysis.

- 1974 – 1976: Tower Era
- 1977 – 1989: Grove City/Restoration Era
- 1990 – 2001: Cohen Era
- 2002 – 2007: Paige Era



# Findings: Part 1

Table 1: Number of articles by era and by newspaper journalist gender (n = 1,479)

Era	Male Journalist	Female Journalist
Tower (1974-1976)	51	51
Grove City/Restoration (1977-1989)	201	112
Cohen (1990-2001)	431	244
Paige (2002-2007)	237	152
Total	920	559

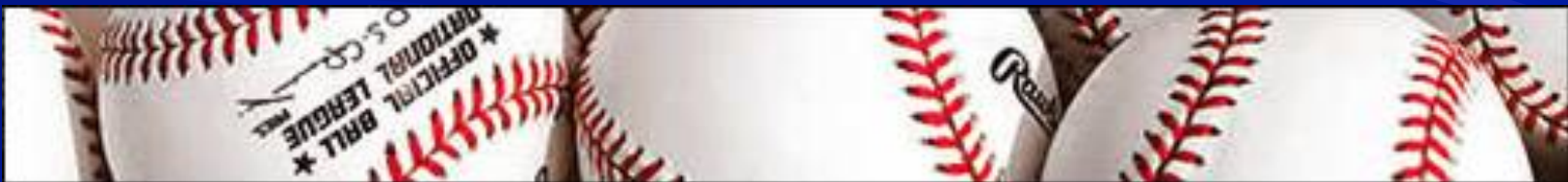


Table 2: Number of articles by prominence and by newspaper journalist gender (n = 1,479)

Prominence in Newspaper	Male Journalist	Female Journalist
Front page of newspaper	75	74
Other non-sports page	230	224
Front of sports section	170	96
Other sports page	445	165
Total	920	559



Table 3: Articles by era, journalist gender, and prominence (n = 1,479)

	Male Journalist	Female Journalist
Tower Era (1974-1976)		
Front page of newspaper	3	2
Other non-sports page	16	14
Front of sports section	11	16
Other sports page	21	19
Subtotal	51	51
Grove City/Restoration (1977-1989)		
Front page of newspaper	13	13
Other non-sports page	79	60
Front of sports section	33	11
Other sports page	76	28
Subtotal	201	112
Cohen (1990-2001)		
Front page of newspaper	37	38
Other non-sports page	79	92
Front of sports section	71	30
Other sports page	244	84
Subtotal	431	244
Paige (2002-2007)		
Front page of newspaper	22	21
Other non-sports page	56	58
Front of sports section	55	39
Other sports page	104	34
Subtotal	237	152
Total	920	559



# Findings: Part 2

## Distribution of advocacy and opposition frames by era and by newspaper journalist gender (n = 659)

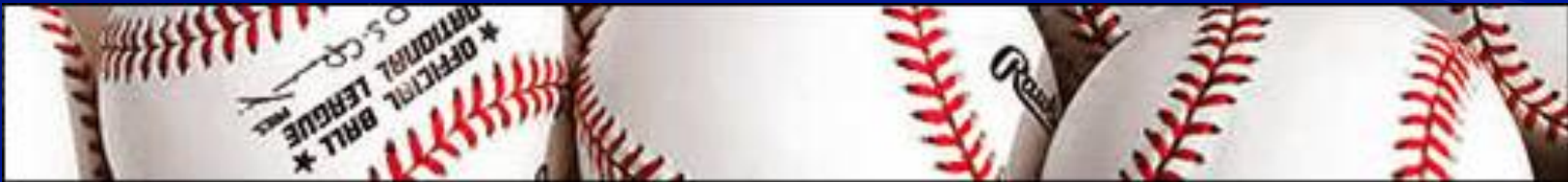
Era	Male Journalist	Female Journalist
Tower (pre-1977) advocacy frame	27	39
Tower opposition frame	24	26
Grove City/Restoration (1977-1989) advocacy frame	85	56
Grove City/Restoration opposition frame	53	11
Cohen (1990-2001) advocacy frame	138	92
Cohen opposition frame	67	13
Paige (2002-2007) advocacy frame	84	57
Paige opposition frame	46	20
Total advocacy	334	244
Total opposition	190	70
Grand total	524	314





# Discussion

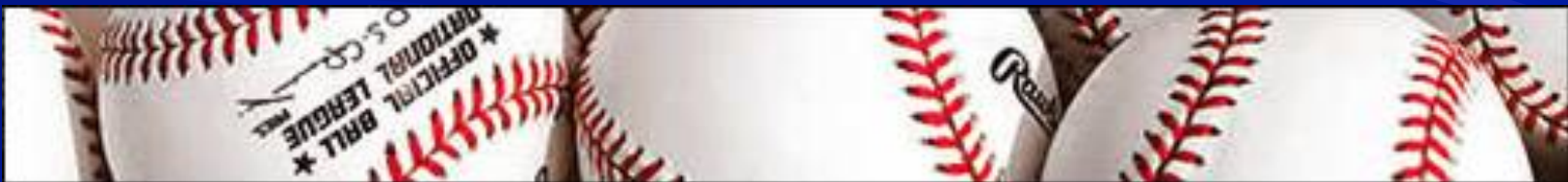
$H_0$ 1, that there would be no difference between male and female journalists' coverage of Title IX, in terms of volume of articles, was disconfirmed overall. Yet confirmed for Tower Era (1974 – 1976) and confirmed in part for other eras, in regard to non-sports-section articles.



Female journalists' volume of articles about Title IX in the Tower Era was consistent with social control theory.

Findings for the other eras is consistent with the idea that sports pages are a “male domain.” It might have been the case that female journalists embraced a feminist predisposition to advocate for women in the middle eras examined.

There is evidence to suggest in the final era examined that female journalists took a post-feminist stance.



$H_02$ , that there would be no difference between the prominence of male and female journalists' coverage of Title IX, was confirmed for non-sports-section articles but disconfirmed for sports-section articles, with articles by female journalists being proportionately more likely to appear on the front page of the newspapers' sports sections.



It appears that article-placement decision-makers, especially in the most recent years, had a tendency to push female journalists' articles into more prominent positions. It might be the case in the Paige Era (2002 – 2007) that female journalists adopted a post-feminist view of Title IX, thereby making their articles more palatable to a male hegemonic newsroom culture.





H<sub>o</sub>3, that male and female journalists would show equal propensity to use advocacy and opposition frames, was disconfirmed overall, yet the hypothesis held for two of the four individual eras examined (the earliest and most recent eras).

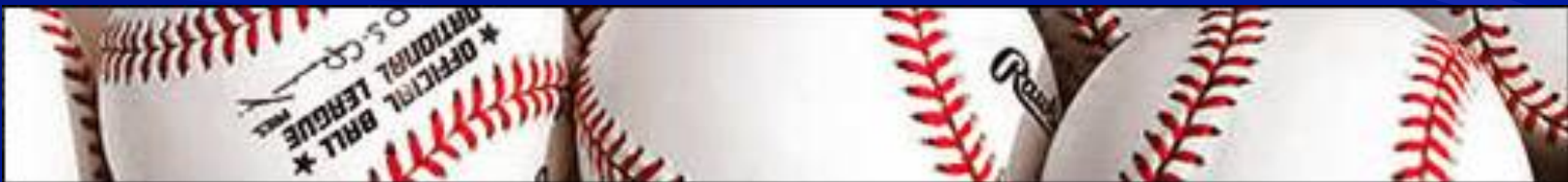




H<sub>0</sub>4, that male journalists' use of advocacy and opposition frames would show no significant change over time, was confirmed.



H<sub>0</sub>5, that female journalists' use of advocacy and opposition frames would show no significant change over time, was disconfirmed.



Female journalists' framing of Title IX in the Tower Era was consistent with social control theory.

Their framing during the middle eras was consistent with a feminist perspective.

Their framing during the Paige Era was consistent with a post-feminist stance.



# Overall Discussion

Female journalists' framing of Title IX and the quantity of prominence of their articles in the Tower Era was consistent with social control theory.

Their framing, and the quantity and prominence of their articles during the middle eras was consistent with a feminist perspective.

Their framing and the quantity and prominence of their articles during the Paige Era was consistent with a post-feminist stance.





# Areas for Further Research

Qualitative research: Interviews

Critical mass theory

Frame “matchup”

Media bias vis-à-vis legal & legislative records

Media bias & journalist gender





Thank you.

