

A LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS OF THE NEW YORK TIMES' COVERAGE OF
THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN: 1981-2010

by

SARAH THOMSON DUFRECHOU

JENNIFER GREER, COMMITTEE CHAIR
YORGO PASADEOS
MATTHEW BUNKER

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of Journalism
in the Graduate School of
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2012

Copyright Sarah Thomson Dufrechou 2012

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

A longitudinal content analysis was performed to examine *The New York Times*' coverage of the National Organization for Women during 1980 through 2010. Agenda setting and framing were studied as media effects of the coverage; prominence, tone, and issues pertaining to NOW were coded in this study to track change over time. It was found that prominence did change over the three decades in the study. Coverage of NOW decreased by nearly 80% from 1980 to 2010. The tone toward the organization remained positive, and NOW was seen as an advocate for women. However, in the 2000s, the tone grew increasingly neutral. Of the issues coded, women in politics showed a decline, while LGBT issues rose in frequency.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This project could not have been completed without the unwavering support of Dr. Jennifer Greer, who spent many hours editing and mentoring me. I would also like to thank the professors in the journalism department of the University of Alabama, especially those on my committee, Dr. Matthew Bunker and Dr. Yorgo Pasadeos, and for the help of Professor Mark Little. My husband, Stephen Dufrechou, provided much encouragement, as did my mother, Kristi Thomson, who told me daily that I could accomplish this degree. I dedicate this thesis to my father, Dr. H. Bailey Thomson, who introduced me to my first newsroom at age 5 at the Orlando Sentinel and who instilled a lifelong passion for reading, writing, and social justice.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
III. METHOD.....	29
IV. RESULTS.....	41
V. CONCLUSION.....	50
REFERENCES.....	65
APPENDIX A.....	69
APPENDIX B.....	71

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1, Prominence Changes by Decade.....	42
Table 2, Placement Changes by Decade.....	43
Table 3, Type of Story by Decade.....	44
Table 4, Tone Changes by Decade, Non-Neutral Stories Only.....	45
Table 5, Advocacy Frames by Decade.....	46
Table 6, Disruptive Frames by Decade.....	47
Table 7, Main Issue Covered in Stories by Decade, From Most to Least Common.....	48

CHAPTER I

Introduction

In 1981, *The New York Times* published 22 stories focusing on the National Organization for Women, according to a search in the *LexisNexis* news database. In 2009, that number dropped to just three stories about NOW in the newspaper.

What changed in just 30 years? Some would argue that American women in 2012 have more freedom than ever, with growing access to jobs, money, government services, and power that their foremothers could only imagine. In fact, the 2008 presidential election saw not one, but two women take political center stage on the presidential ticket for the country's two major parties. It would seem that feminists would celebrate this new era of equality for women. But why would coverage of one of the leading national women's organizations drop so dramatically in one of the nation's top news outlets?

Media coverage of NOW perhaps declined because of the public's lack of interest in feminist issues. To hypothesize, Americans may think the idea of "women's lib" is a concern of the past, only relevant to grizzled, gray-haired feminists in Birkenstocks. If women were indeed equal to men in all concerns, however, it would make sense that interest in modern feminism would increase, and not the reverse. But instead, the National Organization for Women appeared to have the least media coverage at the moment than at any point in the organization's nearly 50-year history. Perhaps NOW lost

some of its earlier luster. Women entering the 21st century may see NOW as outdated, irrelevant, or simply a dinosaur approaching extinction. However, the blame cannot be solely laid on society, American or otherwise. After the defeat of the ERA, NOW could have lost its way in this modern society where women have choices—many choices. With so much inclusion for a 2012 era NOW, such as LGBT issues, international women’s rights, and the fringe groups of more radical feminists, NOW may have struggled to find its own voice and identity apart from the many constituents that make up its membership. At any rate, NOW’s possible decline in this age may not be the single fault of a group, leader, or even the society in which it exists. Perhaps this is due to a sampling of all of these factors.

Today’s generation of American women are growing up in a decidedly post-feminist world. What occurred between the civil rights movements of the late 1960s and today? Clearly media coverage declined drastically for what was once a very relevant and important organization for American women. What other changes have taken place in the way the media covers the National Organization for Women?

This study examined the trend of declining of news coverage of the organization over time. Further, as NOW as an organization changed in scope and focus during those 40-plus years, did the content of the resulting coverage shift accordingly in tone, topic, and frame? This study sought to answer these questions through a content analysis of *The New York Times* coverage of the organization over time.

In an earlier study, Bernadette Barker-Plummer found that coverage of NOW did change over the organization’s earliest years. Her study, completed in 1997, traced *The New York Times* coverage of the group from 1966 to 1980. That study provides the

foundation and starting point of the current research. Maryann Barakso and Brian Schaffner (2006) also studied NOW in the media and found that coverage declined greatly in 1976 until 1990, despite the publicity surrounding the Equal Rights Amendment and the organization's role in fighting to get it adopted. Gaye Tuchman's 1979 study on women in the media stated that journalists did not consider women important enough to give equal time and space in the media.

Building on earlier research, this study sought to extend Barker-Plummer's work by examining more recent media coverage of the National Organization for Women through a longitudinal content analysis of *The New York Times*' content from 1981 to 2010. This study examined the news coverage of NOW over time through the lenses of media agenda-setting and framing. In terms of agenda setting, the study examined changes to amount of coverage of NOW and its placement within the publication over the years of interest. In terms of framing, the tone of the news coverage was analyzed, topics covered were tracked, and two media frames were examined—a “helping/advocacy” frame and a “disrupting/hurting” frame. By looking at this coverage in amount, tone, and frame over time, the goal was to see if a picture emerged as to what picture the nation's leading newspaper is sending to its readers about a key voice in women's issues.

Why should Americans care about news coverage of women's groups such as NOW? The reason is two-fold: first, media coverage showed whether the organization has been effective in publicizing its goals and objectives in a national outlet in recent years; and second, assuming that media content can both reflect and affect audience opinion, examining coverage provided a glimpse into societal views of feminism and its leading organization.

Although this study cannot measure changes in public opinion of NOW, tracking media coverage, especially coverage from the nation's leading newspaper, is one indication of the public's views of NOW and its goals. Studying these issues is especially important in a time when public acceptance and tolerance of feminism may be dwindling (Barker-Plummer, 2010, p. 145-146).

The following chapter presents relevant past literature and the theoretical perspectives that provide context for this research. Chapter 3 outlines the method used. Chapter 4 reports the findings of the research. The findings and their implications as well as future research directions are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

To provide the necessary background for the study, the literature review was organized into three sections—theoretical approaches, a history of modern American feminism and the National Organization for Women, and media coverage of women, both in general terms and feminist terms. This literature provided the context for the formal research questions posed at the end of the chapter.

First, this chapter presented a review of the two theoretical approaches used in the study: agenda-setting and framing. This section looked at the history of both approaches and why they were essential in media effects studies. Second, the chapter reviewed modern American feminism with a history of the women's movement. This section then covered the formation of NOW, founded by author Betty Friedan in 1966. This section examined what issues NOW focused on and how that changed over time as context for examining the topics and issues likely to be covered in news stories. The final section reviewed literature on media coverage women in general, feminism specifically, and NOW as an organization. Feminists were more than just news subjects—they were actively involved in the media and learned to use the press as a vehicle for propaganda.

Looking at how NOW has been covered in the past, and how organization leaders interacted with the media provided vital context to the study's questions.

Agenda Setting Theory

Cohen (1963, p. 13) was responsible for the generally accepted definition of agenda setting: “[The press] may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think *about*.” Agenda setting involved the transfer of salience, meaning that which is important in news media is important to the public—the determination and selection of the “object” is viewed through the lens of journalists, editors, and anchors, making their perception of news events essentially the public’s perspective (McCombs, 2005, p. 546).

In the seminal agenda setting empirical study in 1972, Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw examined agenda setting functions in regard to media coverage of the 1968 presidential election. McCombs and Shaw hypothesized that while many consumers get their information on political candidates and platforms from the mass media, “viewer attention” varies as well as the level in which the information is processed. More educated viewers would understand and absorb mass media messages differently from less educated viewers. McCombs and Shaw sought to show that these voters in 1968 did learn about the candidates and issues in direct proportion to the emphasis mass media placed on those campaign issues—or their agenda setting functions.

To establish this link, the authors measured what voters in Chapel Hill, N.C., saw as the main campaign issues in the presidential campaign and compared that with actual content in mass media available to them during the campaign (McCombs & Shaw, 1972, p. 177-178). The authors showed that media content was related to voter opinions of what

was important in the presidential campaign. The correlation between the media's emphasis on major issues and voters' independent opinions on the issues was $+0.967$ (p. 180). Although the authors stated that agenda-setting functions of the mass media could not be proven per se, the correlations between media content and public opinion of issue salience were incredibly strong. Still, the study set the stage for hundreds of media effects studies in the decades since exploring this supposed causal link.

For example, one recent study on the public's opinion of immigration reform, conducted by Johanna Dunaway, Regina P. Branton, and Marisa A. Abrajano (2006) further explored this agenda-setting theory. The authors examined how coverage of immigration in the media influenced the public as to the issues' importance. The authors performed a content analysis of newspaper coverage of immigration issues and matched that with Gallup public opinion data spanning from January to December 2006 (Dunaway, Branton, & Abrajano, 2006, p. 359). They argued that mass media set the public discourse on issues by giving salience to certain issues and events above others (Dunaway et al., 2006, p. 360). They found, consistent with agenda setting theory, that "amplified media coverage" of immigration was linked to a heightened public perception that immigration was a major issue in 2006. Furthermore, immigration mostly involved southern border states, which were more affected than non-border states. However, because of heightened media coverage, non-border states' citizens showed a dramatic increase in rating of issue importance compared to border-states' citizens. The authors concluded that that agenda setting operates differently for issues with varying levels of salience (2006, p. 375).

This study concerning the National Organization for Women did not necessarily

test the effects of agenda setting; however, agenda setting did provide evidence that media coverage of NOW is important to examine. If agenda setting can define an issue as either relevant or irrelevant, then it is important to understand the prominence this issue is given in media coverage. These findings can assist in studying feminism and NOW in their relation to their larger society, and perhaps answer questions concerning their role in shaping that society.

Agenda setting was a major theory when looking at media coverage and its effects. The public may seem unaware that it even exists, yet the major news topics and events that news audiences take in are all a result of agenda setting—deciding what will be important and given inches or air time in news vehicles.

Framing Theory

Related to agenda setting, media framing has been used to examine how media coverage is linked to attitudes about issues. While agenda setting is related to the amount of coverage and placement of coverage, framing is linked to the way content is arranged in a news story and what is included in the story (McLeod, Kosicki, & McLeod, 2002, p. 223). Framing differs significantly from agenda setting in that it is based on “the assumption that how an issue is characterized in news reports can have an influence on how it is understood by audiences” (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 11). Frames are equally as important as agenda setting, as they shape the “how” in audience understanding (McLeod et al. 2002, p. 223). Framing in the news is related to the way an issue is characterized by means of public understanding. Journalists present information that will in some way apply to underlying themes for their audiences. Frames can be used to communicate difficult, complex, or controversial issues, such as legal euthanasia or

human cloning, in a manner that audiences can understand (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007, p. 10-11). Framing also is a way to take a few elements of a story and assemble a news narrative to give audiences a media-personalized interpretation of the news item. Frames usually have four functions: problem definition, casual analysis, moral judgment, and remedy promotion (Entman, 2007, p. 164).

Journalists use framing to “[maintain] a useful tension or balance between structure and agency” (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, & Sasson, 1992, p. 384). The media frame events and experiences, yet so does the audience. These created frames are not invincible, however. They can be easily shattered, and the media (and audiences) can twist and contort them in such a way that the actual facts—and not the constructs—are drastically distorted. This flexibility in the framing process allows the media to “connect cognition and culture” (Gamson et al., 1992, p. 384). However, although the media use framing to present political events or social issues, the audience is not passive—viewers and readers have the capability to “decode” the reported news into their own personal frames and understanding. This is the beauty of framing; it is not wooden or rigid, but a fluid theory of reality (Gamson et al., 1992, p. 384). However, the audience’s perception is usually not measured as much as the media framing of certain issues, such as media frames of women’s issues—controversy versus status quo, for instance.

But more than that, the framing stage is where complex news items are broken down into more manageable “bites” that are easily digested by consumers. For example, in one study of a comparative analysis of United States and Chinese newspaper coverage of the fourth United Nations conference on women and the NCO forum, reporters used framing to choose “key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images

emphasized in a news narrative” (Akhavan-Majid & Ramaprasad, 1998, p. 132).

Types of Frames

Sei-Hill Kim, John P. Carvalho, and Andrew G. Davis (2010) studied how the news media framed poverty, including causes and solutions, between 1993 and 1997. They looked for personal-level causes and solutions included in stories, such as lack of education (cause) and making better choices (solution). They also looked at societal-level causes and solutions, including bad economy (cause) and reforming government aid programs (solution). Although the authors expected the media to focus on personal factors rather than larger societal causes, they found that the media coverage mentioned societal causes and solutions at a higher rate than individual causes (Kim et al., 2010, p. 576). They concluded that episodic framing, where journalists place emphasis on people rather than events or issues, is a “professional routine” for the American news media (Kim et al., 2010, p. 577).

Frames can also be used to discredit an individual or group, perhaps those that are political or controversial in nature. Feminism in particular, as shown later in this chapter, has received this type of treatment in the media. In their study, Laura Ashley and Beth Olsen used content analysis of *The New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek* to examine each publication’s coverage of the women’s movement—namely those women who organized to deter and promote the cause. They found that the strongest frame was the “de-legitimation” of feminists. The study found that the media were more concerned with trivial details—such as the women’s appearance—than actual issues, and that journalists did not take the political aspect of the women’s movement seriously—for example, using quotation marks around such words as “liberation” (Ashley & Olsen, 1998, p. 263).

When the news item involves a group of people involved in a social movement, such as civil rights (or, in this case, women's equality and liberation) media frames can have power in how these group members will be perceived by society. Media frames typically focus on "principles of selection, emphasis, exclusion and presentation" to present to consumers (Ashley & Olsen, 1998, p. 264). These consumers will participate in a second level of framing when they decipher meaning and, on a larger scale, engage in forming opinions about the news item. For example, reporting that feminists want to destroy families or that they are "man haters" feeds the fear that the nuclear family unit in America is rapidly disappearing—which may or may not be true, but its cause is not solely attribute to feminism, and feminists' goals are not to dismantle families (Ashley & Olsen, 1998, p. 264).

One popular frame in the media is the "helping/hurting" frame—frames concerning advocacy for issues—which will be the main frame used in this study. For example, in the previously mentioned study on poverty, such a frame would present the issue as either helping or hurting a group of people, individuals, or perhaps even the nation at large. Sean Aday (2006) examined the frame setting effects of media, focusing on this exact "advocacy versus objectivist" frame, or the helping/hurting frame. The author found that audiences reacted more positively to news items when they were framed as "advocacy" items (p. 767). Media stories that are presented as having two opposing sides, with one source's frame in a conflict with another source's frame, create an "ambiguous message." In constructing a story this way, journalists remain objective and leave the decision-making to the audience, Aday argued (p. 769). Advocacy frames are defined as being "largely one-sided, often solution-oriented, and/or reflecting consensus," wrote Aday,

and are usually used with coverage of foreign policy and war, coverage of social movements and minority groups, and civic or public journalism campaigns (p. 769). Objectivist frames contain “two-sided” narrative devices and/or a more objective journalistic approach. These are common among episodic news stories. Aday (2006) wrote, “Both of these definitions fit Entman’s definition of news framing as the narrative ramifications of journalists selecting (and ignoring) some information about an event or issue and making some of that more (or less) salient in a story” (p. 769).

In this study, only media frames were examined. The study did not look at second-level frames by the audience or how audience members relate to the frames. Media frames were studied because they were assumed, based on the literature above, to have effects on the way society views the National Organization for Women. For example, a “hurting” frame as discussed above could present NOW’s agenda in a negative light. Readers could see a protest for reproductive rights as an attack on traditional family values or a boycott of a certain business as harmful. “Helping” frames, such as those that focused on efforts to advance women’s rights, equality, or well being could lead to positive attitudes among the audience. These could include NOW’s efforts to fight for adequate and affordable childcare provided by an employer or access to state-funded obstetrical and gynecological services for impoverished women.

With the understanding of both agenda setting and framing as theoretical perspectives that justify the need for examining the content, this review now turns to what is known about feminism in the United States and how media have covered women and women’s organizations.

Modern American Feminism

The early years. To talk about modern American feminism, one must look first at the foremothers of women's rights, the campaigners of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The 1848 Seneca Falls convention, led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, appealed for women's suffrage as well as education, property and marriage rights, and health and dress reform (Friedan, 1997, p. 142). This was the first act of organizing by American women in history (Harris, 1998, p. 9). In 1916, women in the workforce began organizing unions for better pay and decent working conditions, and campaigns were wrought for the right to vote, often landing protesters in prison. The movement for accessible birth control made headlines as Margaret Sanger campaigned for family planning, especially for new immigrant families in urban areas (Faludi, 1991, p. 49). The feminist consciousness was blooming in the Jazz Age.

In 1920, women won the right to vote—the same as men—in the same year that the Miss America pageant was established. The bright dazzle of gender equality in the roaring twenties gave way to a dull flicker in the Great Depression—by 1930, fewer female professionals existed than in 1910, and the government forced thousands of women out of the work force. The few women who held on to their jobs were greeted with new federal wage codes that garnered lower pay for women, a practice that is still seen decades later (Faludi, 1991, p. 50).

When the United States entered World War II, women flocked to shipyards, factories, and office buildings to fill in for the men fighting overseas. This was considered a form of patriotism—"Rosie the Riveter" was introduced at this time, a stocky heroine, muscles bulging, a knowing and confident smirk proudly displayed

across her make-up free face. The wartime economy boomed with female workers—five to six million women were employed during the early 1940s with 2 million in heavy industry jobs; at war’s end, women represented 57 % of the workforce. Seventy-five percent of women polled at war’s end claimed they would keep their jobs, and 88 percent of 33,000 girls polled in a *Senior Scholastic* survey said they wanted careers, too (Faludi, 1991, p. 51).

Working women meant union participation, protests for equal pay and equal seniority, a rise in daycare, and the introduction of the Equal Rights Amendment (Faludi, 1991, p. 51). This proposed an exciting frontier for women as 1950 approached—equality, independence, economic freedom, and personal and professional fulfillment. However, at war’s close, two million women lost their jobs at industrial sites. Employers discriminated against married women and refused to hire them, and salaries were reduced for female employees. The federal government sought to extend unemployment benefits only to men, and daycares were shut down. The government also considered displacing women and giving their jobs to returning veterans a form of patriotism—it seemed as though Rosie the Riveter would have to hang up her coveralls after all (Faludi, 1991, p. 51).

After observing this phenomenon, and then the subsequent pattern of educated but unemployed women trying to find happiness at home with pot roasts and Girl Scout troops, writer Betty Friedan focused public attention on this and more in her book *The Feminine Mystique*. Friedan interviewed white housewives and surveyed their emotional and psychological distress over their “Occupation: Housewife” status. Although these women had been educated by the best universities in the country, married fine men, had

beautiful children, and all the sexual and financial stability they would need, these housewives were unhappy. A void, often filled by prescription drugs and alcohol, permeated their minds. Friedan (1997) asked: Why are these women so unhappy (p. 63)?

As Friedan was writing *The Feminine Mystique*, she realized she would need to include a final chapter on the solution to her “problem that has no name”—the oppression of modern women (Friedan, 1997, p. 513). Friedan wanted to suggest something that would allow women to operate at full mental, psychological, sexual, and emotional capacity.

The National Organization for Women. In 1965, after publishing *The Feminine Mystique* two years earlier, Friedan left for Washington, D.C., with interest in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that would ban sex and race discrimination. However, most congressmen had a good laugh at the women’s expense. Howard Smith, a congressman from Virginia, joked that Title VII would allow equal opportunity for men and women in the workplace—“So men can become Playboy bunnies,” he said (Friedan, 1997, p. 518). The author found an underground network of women working in government, the press, and in labor unions who felt helpless against not only the mockery of the bill but also insistence that it would be defeated (Friedan, 1997, p. 518).

A surge of interest focusing on the women’s movement began in the 1960s with the development of the National Organization for Women on June 30, 1966. Rev. Pauli Murray, the first African-American woman Episcopal priest, co-authored NOW’s original Statement of Purpose: “The purpose of NOW is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.” The organization’s goals

focused on eliminating “discrimination and harassment in the workplace, schools, the justice system, and all other sectors of society”; securing “abortion, birth control and reproductive rights for *all* women”; ending “all forms of violence against women”; eradicating “racism, sexism, and homophobia”; and promoting “equality and justice in our society.”

NOW achieved its goals through “direct mass actions (including marches, rallies, pickets, counter-demonstrations, non-violent civil disobedience) intensive lobbying, grassroots political organizing and litigation (including class-action lawsuits)” (National Organization for Women, n.d., FAQ). Feminist groups and other chapters of NOW formed nationwide, events that did not go unnoticed by the news media. Newspapers and television began covering the fight for equality. Women were not delegated to the “women’s pages” anymore; they were making news and history, and America took notice (Friedan, 1997, p. 523). In most Americans’ minds, women’s rights and “liberation” only began to increase in the 1960s, a period of many social, political, and economic upheavals. However the “incline” of women’s rights, suffragists had been working since the late 1800s to gain the vote, form temperance movements, and, in general, find liberty in a patriarchal society. As Faludi (1991) wrote:

Ignoring the many peaks and valleys traversed in the endless march toward liberty, this mental map of American women’s progress presents instead a great plain of “traditional” womanhood, upon which women have roamed helplessly and “naturally,” the eternally passive subjects until the 1970s women’s movement came along. This map is in itself harmful to women’s rights; it presents women’s struggle for liberty as if it were a one-time event,

a curious and even noxious by-product of a postmodern age. It is, as poet and essayist Adrienne Rich has described it, “the erasure of women’s political and historical past which makes each new generation of feminists appear as an abnormal excrescence on the face of time (p. 46).

Feminists in the 1960s and 1970s focused on private sphere issues, including “sexuality, reproduction, domestic labor and domestic violence” (McLaughlin, 2003, p. 1). In the decades since *The Feminine Mystique* was published in 1963, this dream has never seen fruition. Second-wave feminists, mostly interested in women’s liberation, have hoped that once men (and society) saw the value and truth behind their message, men would readily accept the cause for equality (Faludi, 1991, p. 59).

On March 22, 1972, within a year of Equal Rights for Women's establishment, Congress passed the ERA by a large majority, with states quickly following to ratify it. Over just a few years’ time, 35 states approved the ERA. However, ERA opponents like Phyllis Schlafly worked equally as hard to denounce the ERA and NOW’s idea of gender equality. Schlafly and her constituents installed alarm in the American public by stating that the ERA would undermine marriage, the military, and privacy. Other anti-feminist groups that were working to overturn the Supreme Court’s 1973 *Roe v. Wade* ruling soon turned their attention to defeating the ERA. By June 30, 1982, the states’ count remained at 35 in support of ratification—three states short of the three-fourths majority needed for the ERA to pass (Davis, 2008, p. 423).

Modern Issues

NOW post ERA. In 1980, a gender voting gap divided men and women into

polar opposite camps. Men were less likely to support equality for the sexes in government and business or the ERA. Men also preferred traditional family roles—meaning they wanted their women at home (Faludi, 1991, p. 61). During the 1970s, feminists garnered support for “Women’s Lib” and “the women’s movement.” By the 1980s and the Equal Rights Amendment’s failure to be ratified, however, men were quickly losing interest in women’s equality. Men proved to be more conservative than women in nearly every political agenda, from military to health care (Faludi, 1991, p. 60).

The year 1982 marked the high point of American second-wave feminism. Hundreds of thousands of women organized and mobilized with more than 100 feminist groups ripe with resources (Barakso & Schaffner, 2006, p. 22). Americans were becoming comfortable with the idea of feminism; more than 50% regarded feminism with positive feelings (Barakso & Schaffner, 2006, p. 23).

Third-wave feminist theory emerged soon after this period, gaining speed in the 1990s. Third wavers expanded their inclusion to women of color and lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgendered persons. These feminists challenge the status quo as well as structural norms from their second wave sisters (Dean, 2009, 336). Third-wave rhetoric in the mid-1980s focused on the intersections of feminism and racism (Kinser, 2004, p. 130). This movement includes pop culture references and debates, social margins, and a coming to terms with their second wave foremothers (Kinser, 2004, p. 147). According to NOW’s web site, the organization continued to fight for women’s issues well into the 2000s and has little intention of giving up. In the 1980s, after the ERA failed to pass, NOW focused on reproductive rights, women’s visibility in television and film, and equal

pay for women. Many protests and boycotts were staged in this decade, including a protest against Allstate Insurance for its employment discrimination in 1983 and a campaign to reinstate the television show *Cagney and Lacey*, which portrayed women police officers with strong female leads (also 1983). In 1984, NOW stood behind vice presidential hopeful Geraldine Ferraro. Later that year, it held its first Lesbian Rights Conference in Milwaukee, WI (National Organization for Women, n.d., Highlights).

However, not all feminists were open to the inclusion of lesbians to their ranks at NOW. Many open lesbians who joined NOW were met with outright hostility, hesitation, and ignorance (Pomerleau, 2010, p. 847). In fact, the organization's history with including lesbians was a rocky one—founder Betty Friedan warned against allowing lesbians to join NOW, calling them a “lavender menace” (Gilmore & Kaminski, 2007, p. 96). This would continue to be a point of contention until 1991 when NOW elected its first openly bisexual president, Patricia Ireland (Gilmore & Kaminski, 2007, p. 97). The latter half of the 1980s saw an increase in NOW's battle for abortion rights for women. In addition, fights for equality for women of color and lesbians and gays were added to NOW's concerns.

The 1990s saw more interest in protecting victims of domestic violence and sexual discrimination (National Organization for Women Web site timeline, n.d. Frequently). In 1996, NOW officially stated that the organization was in favor of same-sex marriage, and in 1998, NOW allies in Congress added sex, sexual orientation, and disability to the federal hate crimes legislation.

As George W. Bush was elected in 2000, NOW continued to push for ratification of a second proposed equal rights amendment. Later in that year, NOW activists

organized the U.S. event of the World March of Women as well as hosted the Women's International Symposium on Health. Although the political climate was conservative in nature, NOW leaders fought to put women's rights and issues first. In 2001, NOW declared a "state of emergency" and organized the "Emergency Action for Women's Lives" to protest President Bush's first few acts in office, including a cut in funding to international family planning organizations.

In following years, from 2001 until 2006, when the web site for NOW ended its timeline for the group, NOW organized summits, marches, and protests, all for the common interest of fighting to protect women's rights (National Organization for Women, n.d., Highlights).

Feminism and Media Coverage

Media coverage of women: prominence and type. The twentieth century spanned 100 years of women making progressive strides in every public arena—the military, law, in employment, religion, sports, education—as well as at home with new formations of gender relationships. However, this progress was largely ignored or even ridiculed by the media. For example, in 1971, the magazine *Editor & Publisher* used sexist language to describe an award-winning feature writer. In the article, the reporter described the female writer as having her "high-breasted figure... poured into a turquoise knit dress" and that her "well-shaped legs" were tucked under her. Two months later, an article on advertising technology called female newspaper employees "girls," even though the photograph accompanying showed adult women (Senat, 2004, p. 67).

At the height of coverage of women's issues, the media still did not devote much space or time to these specific issues. In their study of media treatment of male and

female political candidates, Kim Fridkin Kahn and Edie N. Goldenberg found that *The New York Times* relegated most articles to the particular “women’s pages,” often placing articles on the women’s movement next to recipes, nor were the articles entirely positive or as plentiful as other, male-centered civil rights organizations (Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991, p. 106). As the coverage moved from mostly negative to a more positive depiction, it actually decreased and became less prominent in news outlets (Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991, p. 107).

Men and women receive different media coverage in terms of prominence, even when the two genders hold the same position or status. In a study examining media coverage of male and female athletes during the 2004 Olympics, Jennifer Greer, Marie Hardin, and Casey Homan (2009) found that media coverage focused more on men’s events than women’s. This coverage even went so far to suggest that men’s events were more exciting than women’s, thus justifying the uneven coverage and television air time. The number of medals had little to do with airtime, and the authors cite the “power privilege” of men, which is represented in the media (Greer, Hardin, & Homan, 2009, p. 185).

In other media coverage of women, such as the news stories that come from political campaigns involving a female candidate, journalists have been shown to give different coverage of female politicians. These “gender differences” may result from journalists’ own stereotypes of female politicians. Sex characteristics, such as women’s emotions and men’s strength, are emphasized. Also, female politicians are relatively rare, thus garnering more attention in the news. Although this type of reporting involves politicians, it may be applied to women activists as well (Kahn, 1994, p. 155). In the

2008 presidential election, Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin were subject to personal attacks about their appearance, family life, and femininity, which remained absent among their male colleagues. Palin's sex appeal was repeatedly brought up in the news, whereas Clinton's pantsuit wardrobe and "cankles" overshadowed her policies (Carlin & Winfrey, 2009, p. 330).

In her study on women and organizational politics, Kate Mackenzie Davey (2008) found that men and women receive different treatment during their rise to power in politics. Men have more effective mentoring than women due to the fact that white male mentors are in more powerful positions, and many women find that cross gender mentoring comes with difficulties. Women, unlike men, are not offered the developmental experiences and must be far more proactive to achieve these opportunities. Women executives also reported "a lack of cultural fit, exclusion from informal networks, and difficulty getting developmental assignments, including geographical moves" (Davey, 2008, p. 654).

The underrepresentation of women in the media may describe women's real status in American society—as truly the weaker sex and wielding absolutely no power whatsoever. The media cover what is relevant and newsworthy, and the lack of coverage for women and their issues may mean that the media, as well as Americans, do not consider women important enough to give both space and time in the news (Tuchman, 1979, p. 533). As feminists fought for reproductive rights and publicized previously very private experiences of date rape, marital rape, and sexual harassment (Barker-Plummer, 2010, p. 145-146), these political acts caused controversy in the media as journalists reframed these issues, taking the political power away from women and framing them

instead as “he-said/she-said” concerns. In her critical commentary, “News and Feminism: A Historic Dialog,” Bernadette Barker-Plummer (2010) wrote that as time passed, sex discrimination and rape entered public discourse as actual political issues, but other feminist agendas, such as “problematizing of hegemonic masculinity and its articulation to violence,” were still ignored in media coverage. Feminism and its organizations experienced major swings in media coverage—“progressive publicity” and legitimating coverage, followed by ridicule and trampling down of feminist ideology (Barker-Plummer, 2010, p. 145-146).

Often the news media are culpable with portraying feminism in a negative frame, as Jennifer Young Abbott (2006) discovered in her analysis of feminist organizations and the religious right during the Promise Keepers rally in 1997. Abbott reported that the evening news presented the Promise Keepers’ “Stand in the Gap” rally as a conflict between the religious right and feminists over the true nature behind the men’s movement. “More specifically,” she wrote, “the coverage focused on the problem of whether Promise Keepers was a spiritual organization that helped women or a political group that sought to oppress women” (Abbott, 2006, p. 229).

Feminists did not mold their message into usable material for the news media, so their issues remained largely unreported (Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991, p. 106). The movement also failed to have “authoritative sources” and many of the activists were hostile toward the media, instead of using press coverage to their advantage. Journalists also tended to sensationalize events held by women activists, which garnered negative attention (Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991, p. 107).

Coverage of NOW: The issues

Amount and placement of coverage. As NOW became a legitimate movement that had political power, journalists took notice and many considered themselves as taking part in historical events that would change the century. NOW held the media's attention during the 1960s and 1970s for two reasons (Barker-Plummer, 2002, p. 189). First, it was able to access resources such as fundraising, labor, and information, which would be necessary for media mobilization. Second, NOW also developed media strategies that aided in its media communications. This gave the organization public attention and created a "public agenda for 'women's issues'" in the United States (Barker-Plummer, 2002, p. 189).

However, in 1976 newspaper coverage of women's movements declined greatly, reaching a low point in the early 1990s, wrote Barakso and Schaffner (2006, p. 30). Since then, news coverage of women's movement organizations has increased, but not by much. The decline in the late 1970s and early 1980s is consistent with the issue attention cycle needed for constant coverage of social movement groups. The decline coincides with women's groups organizing for the Equal Rights Amendment, which peaked between 1978 and 1982 (Barakso & Schaffner, 2006, p. 30-31). When that effort failed, coverage dropped off considerably.

Social movement groups rely on prominent news media coverage to promote their ideologies and progress to further their mission. Organizations like NOW depend on news coverage to advance equality for women—the news coverage creates a conversation in the public arena and gives voice to women's issues. Barker-Plummer (2002) wrote, "[Women's groups] seek to change public attitudes and understandings on

key social and cultural issues through the creation and communication of new information and new interpretive frameworks” (p. 188).

In her dissertation discussing media strategies and media representation of the National Organization for women from 1966 to 1980, Barker-Plummer (1997) related the success of NOW in the media by coding in four different dimensions: access, voice, placement, and control (identity and agenda). Access referred to the patterns of NOW’s appearance in the news, and Barker-Plummer wrote that it was the “minimal requirement for voice in the public sphere” (1997, p. 98). Voice referred to “whether NOW was allowed to speak for itself and in what circumstances” (1997, p. 98). Because the relationship between being simply cited and having control over one’s representation is problematic, wrote Barker-Plummer, the author also included codes on placement and control measures (1997, p. 99). Placement referred to the context of NOW’s stories and the “associated value” of different news sections; for example, front page news has more importance than other news sections (1997, p. 99). The fourth “level of success” that Barker-Plummer used was control. This referred to the legitimacy of a speaker in a news article and whether that speaker was able to introduce and define issues (Barker-Plummer, 1997, p. 99).

Barker-Plummer’s study of NOW’s agenda control was assessed by comparing NOW’s agenda at various times with *The New York Times*’ representation of that agenda and judging how much control NOW had over that agenda. Barker-Plummer also coded for how NOW was able to control its media representation (Barker-Plummer, 1997, p. 100). In her results, Barker-Plummer found that media coverage of NOW’s issues depended on the type of issue; for example, a traditional issue (such as employment

discrimination) received more coverage than a marginal issue. Topics considered to be “women’s” issues such as childcare or sexism were placed in women’s pages or female-targeted lifestyle pages. NOW’s legitimacy was often questioned (p. 263-272).

Barker-Plummer also defined NOW’s agendas during the period of 1966 to 1980 as the following: sex discrimination (Barker-Plummer, 1997, p. 134), abortion rights (1997, p. 136), child care (1997, p. 136), and sexual orientation (1997, p. 138).

Tone and type of coverage. Journalists did not necessarily see themselves as feminists or sympathize with the movement (in order to remain objective reporters) but feminist language and discourse did influence many of them (Barker-Plummer, 2010, p. 147). Journalists who worked closely with feminist groups noted that they became more “gender conscious,” and the media reflected this. New beats, centered on women and children, formed, sometimes created by these very journalists. Journalists working with feminists became absolutely essential to the “dialog of news” and second-wave feminism.

Not all journalists were sympathetic to feminism, and many were in fact hostile, calling feminists “man-hating, or absurd, and playing the movement for ‘laughs” (Barker-Plummer, 2010, p. 147). Harry Reasoner and Howard K. Smith drew much negative attention in the press by using derogatory language and comments to describe the women’s movement on broadcast news. Other news media had similar commentary and played down the political aspects of feminism (Barker-Plummer, 2010, p. 147).

Feminists were portrayed negatively in the press, and this concentration on “style rather than substance” discouraged NOW’s membership base, argued Kahn & Goldenberg. But by 1972, coverage changed. The authors also stated that early feminist description of a “frigid, silly lesbian” changed to a more appealing stereotype of

“independent, assertive career women” (Kahn & Goldenberg, 1991, p. 106). Journalists may have suppressed information concerning NOW and the women’s movement in order to “maintain the status quo,” which meant the public remained largely uninformed about the actual message of the movement, argued Kahn & Goldenberg (1991, p. 106). Men made most of the news decisions during that time and discouraged reporting on these women’s issues. Journalists tended to focus on events, rather than the “message” of the activists, wrote Kahn and Goldenberg (1991, p. 107).

The media tended to focus on “newsworthy” events, such as protests, rallies, boycotts, and scandals, and sought spokeswomen to represent NOW, wrote Kristan Poirot in her critical commentary of feminism’s second wave (Poirot, 2004, p. 211). She found that these spokeswomen often did not represent all of NOW’s constituents and their varied opinions. For example, more radical feminists in the organization wanted NOW to remain leaderless, but the media would seek out a “perceived leader” within the group for a quote or opinion, which undermined the radical feminists’ desire to remain leaderless. Another problem with media coverage was a matter of getting the paper to bed, which meant rallies that met late at night were often left out of media coverage completely simply because the journalists had deadlines (Poirot, 2004, p. 211). The author also stated that journalists also sought to get “good copy,” and many of the personal, positive stories did not meet the criteria of newsworthy events. This resulted in a skewed vision of NOW by the media, and what appeared in the news was rarely consistent with the actual agendas of NOW (Poirot, 2004, p. 211-212).

In its 1966 Statement of Purpose, NOW outlined its agenda clearly, including among its concerns gender equality; the ending of sex discrimination in churches,

politics, science, medicine, law, labor unions, education, religion, and “every other field of importance in American society (National Organization for Women, n.d., Statement of Purpose,); equality in the work place, including salary equality; increasing women’s presence in higher education; and the human dignity of women (National Organization for Women, Statement of Purpose, now.org).

Research Questions

Using the above literature as context, this study poses the following questions in an effort to analyze news media coverage of the National Organization for Women.

Agenda-setting question:

- RQ1: How did prominence (number of stories, length, placement, photos/graphics) that *The New York Times* gave to the National Organization of Women change between 1981 to 2010?

Framing questions:

- RQ2: In what type of story was the women's organization covered in the newspaper? (i.e., editorial, news article, column)? Did this change over time?
- RGQ 3: What was the overall tone of the newspaper stories toward the organization in the NOW-focused stories? Did this change over time?
- RQ 4: What major frame was included in NOW-focused stories? Did this change over time?
- RQ5: What issues were included in the NOW-focused stories? Did this change over time?

CHAPTER III

Method

This study focused on the changing presentation of information about women's organizations during the last half of the second-wave feminist movement. From the literature review, studies suggested that the heightened awareness of women's rights, women's liberation, and women's organizations of the 1960s declined after 1980, even producing negative feedback toward these causes (Barakso & Schaffner, 2006; Barker-Plummer, 2010). The 1990s saw an emergence of the third wave of feminism with Riot Grrl music and children of the baby boomer generation igniting a spark in reviving feminism. This study sought to examine national newspaper coverage of one leading women's organization in recent years. The coverage is assumed to be both reflective of and influential in shaping societal attitudes.

In this study, content analysis was used to analyze both the amount of content and the type, tone, frame, and issues in select stories about the National Organization for Women in *The New York Times* between 1981 and 2010.

Defense of the Method

Content analysis. Content analysis was selected for this study because the research questions posed involve the content of the news articles, not the attitudes or

effects of *The New York Times*' readers. Content analysis is objective, which means personal biases of the researcher cannot be included in the study. It also stands that a different researcher could perform this study and yield the same results. Content analysis is quantitative, aiding precision. Studies can show results numerically, which helps in summarizing results and comparing data from different years to show change over time (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 150-151).

As with any research method, content analysis has its limitations. The individual nature of studies, though they may be alike, will lead content analyses to yield different results. Content analysis often can be expensive and laborious (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006, p. 153-154). Complete objectivity is difficult to obtain in content analysis; during coding, researchers and coders will be somewhat subjective when specifying the unit of analysis.

Other methods were considered for the study, but they were not applied. A survey was out of the question. Because much of the research focused on change over time, one could not feasibly survey past reporters or editors of the paper to examine how coverage has evolved over 30 years. Even if this were possible, the reporters would not be able to give an accurate picture of how they covered NOW. There would also be too many reporters to interview, and some likely could not be reached or would not be living. For these reasons, content analysis of the content clearly is the best choice to examine media content.

Population and sample. In this study, the researcher chose *The New York Times* print edition as one leading news organization through which to examine coverage on the National Organization for Women. Barker-Plummer (1997) used *The New York Times* in

her dissertation, and this study did the same. *The New York Times* was chosen because it is considered to one of the leading elite agenda-setting newspapers. Many local newspapers follow *The New York Times*' agenda, these newspaper agendas influence other media, and collectively, all media coverage can influence media-centric audiences (Tan & Weaver, 2010, p. 421).

Any article from *The New York Times* that mentioned NOW was included in the population. The theoretical population and the available population of interest in this study are identical: All of *The New York Times*' articles concerning the National Organization for Women from 1981-2010. A list of these articles was collected from the *LexisNexis* news database, accessed through the University of Alabama's academic subscription to that service.

To find the sample for this study, the researcher developed a search strategy for the *LexisNexis* database to find relevant news articles from *The New York Times* for time period of interest. Barker-Plummer (1997) conducted her study on mass media coverage of the National Organization for women during the years 1966-1980. This current study picks up where Barker-Plummer left off, in 1981. The ERA failed to pass in 1982, an event that marked a turning point for the organization and, perhaps, media coverage of NOW. The 30-year span of this study's analysis is broken into three 10-year time frames—1981-1990, 1991-2000, and 2001-2010.

To identify the articles, the publication was limited in the database to *The New York Times*. Next, the following filters were used as search terms in the *LexisNexis* search options: "ORGANIZATION-NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN," "AND LENGTH>50," "AND NOT paid notices", "AND NOT editorial," "AND NOT letters,"

“AND NOT corrections,” “AND NOT ‘the calendar.’” (See Unit of Analysis section below for explanation of these filters.)

That search strategy resulted in the following number of articles per period: 1981-1990, 289 stories; 1991-2000, 153 stories; 2001-2010, 64 stories. In total 506 articles that fit the search criteria were retrieved. To draw a sample of these 506 articles, and to retrieve a relatively equally number of stories for each time period of interest, a systematic sampling scheme was employed. For the first time period, the researcher started at the top of the list of stories and pulled alternately every third or fourth story. For the second time period, the researcher pulled every other story. Because there were so few articles in the third era, a census was used – no sample was selected. In total, the first era sample, 1981-1990, contained 83 articles for study. The second era, 1991-2000, contained 77 articles. The third and final era, 2001-2010, contained 65 stories for study. The study, therefore, is based on a total of 225 of news articles, or 44.47% of the population.

Unit of analysis. Using *LexisNexis*, all of *The New York Times* news articles of more than 50 words featuring NOW (at least mentioned) were considered for the study. The articles did not necessarily need to include sole NOW coverage, but they did have to at least have a mention of the organization. Some articles were entirely devoted to NOW issues and leaders; other articles had just a brief mention of NOW. All articles retrieved with the search and sampling strategy above were included in the study.

Following the lead of other studies (e.g. Elmasry, 2009), this study did not concern itself with the opinions of staff or readers—only straight news reporting to study framing within the article. “Laugh Lines” simply repeated monologues from late night

television hosts and had nothing to do with the staff or editors of *The New York Times*, yet often the jokes spoke of the national opinion of NOW. Thus Laugh Lines that were 50 words or longer were included, as Table 3 shows. Corrections were not news items at all; merely, they were functions of the paper that informed readers of misreported events. These were not included, as their purpose served to correct facts that had been mistakenly reported. Brief death notices were usually less than 50 words and listed only the deceased; no real reporting was done, so they were not included. Obituaries and wedding announcements longer than 50 words, however, were studied to see whether the National Organization for Women was a prominent feature in the story, or only listed as an organization of which the deceased was a member. In the case of the obituary of Betty Friedan, the founder of NOW, for example, her obituary was included, as it was a feature story and included history and opinion of sources regarding NOW.

Agenda Setting and Framing Variables

This study examined coverage of the National Organization of Women in the context of agenda setting and framing. As such, a codesheet (Appendix A) and codebook (Appendix B) were prepared to measure the variables of interest. Prominence (word count, placement, graphics) was the main construct for agenda setting, while type, tone, frame, and issues were the constructs used to measure framing-related questions.

Prominence. Prominence of the coverage of NOW gave insight into how much emphasis was placed on the organization after the failure of the ratification of the ERA. Prominence was measured with four variables, each established measures in published literature (Hammer et al., 2007; Pollock et al., 2005; Roy et al., 2011).

The first measure of prominence was the total number of stories published that

meet the inclusion criteria described above. Additionally, the number of articles published in each era was examined to see if prominence increased or decreased over time. This was the method used by Barker-Plummer (1997).

The second measure was word count of story. *LexisNexis* provided an exact word count at the top of the electronic archived version of the stories. That number was used to indicate how much space was given to the stories. A second measure of word count provided the amount of the story devoted to NOW. Some stories were entirely about the NOW, its leaders, and its actions. However, other stories that were included may have mentioned NOW in a brief paragraph or photo caption only. Therefore, the portions of the story that talk about NOW directly, issues it was advancing, its actions, its leaders, or its members were counted by highlighting the words in Microsoft Word and including the word count of that section as determined by the software program. If an entire story was about NOW, coders were instructed to repeat the word count at the top of the story.

Additionally, the number of photos or graphics included in a story was an indication of prominence. Stories that were accompanied by graphics or photos have been shown to attract readers' attention more than text alone in print newspaper stories (Liebler & Bendix, 1996). Therefore, this study noted the number of photos and graphics as indicated in the notes at the bottom of the *LexisNexis* version of the story.

Finally, placement within a newspaper has been linked to prominence (Lee & Choi, 2009; Barker-Plummer, 1997). Placement on the page was not measured, however, because that information was not included in the *LexisNexis* database. In this study, the newspaper section in which the story appeared served as a measure of story placement. The first page of the newspaper or "Page 1A" was the highest placement in a newspaper.

Stories on the front page of any other section of the paper (“1B” or the first page of any other section, “Religion” or “Arts,” for example) would have the next highest prominence. Stories inside the A section (the front section of the paper) were coded as having the next to lowest prominence. Finally, stories inside any other (non A) section of the paper were coded as having the lowest prominence. All of these were noted using the page number code on the stories as listed on the top of the story the *LexisNexis* database. A final option exists if the page number is not known or not apparent in the database.

Type. The type of news article that appeared regarding the subject had a direct relation to framing. Framing was linked to the way content is arranged in a news story and what was included in the story (McLeod, Kosicki, & McLeod, 2002, p. 223). Feature stories on the National Organization for Women offered more personal glimpses into the political structure and were framed either as positive or negative, depending on how the subject was viewed (Barker-Plummer, 1997, p. 99). These examples of types of news articles were coded under appropriate headings and noted in the data. The types of stories included the following: editorial/opinion/letter to the editor/column, feature, news/straight reporting, weddings, obituaries, Laugh Lines, and event analyses.

To characterize these different news components, the following were defined:

Hard or straight news was classified as having a hard news lead and reporting facts. This news component differed from feature articles mainly with the news issues of timeliness and breaking news elements. If an article reported an event that had happened within the week, this was considered timely. If, however, an article spoke of an event or issue in the unforeseeable future, the article was considered more of a feature story.

Editorials and opinion pieces were classified as an opinion piece—that is, not necessarily

written by leader of NOW but written from an intelligent and informed point of view. These were non-editorial page items that were more characterized by opinion. Feature stories were classified as having a soft news lead and primarily focusing on profiles and placed in lifestyle or women's sections. Laugh Lines were defined by their titles in the story; they were clearly labeled. Event analyses reported on local or national events concerning NOW, such as protests or marches. Weddings and obituaries were also clearly labeled. (Refer to Appendix B for full coding rules and definitions).

Tone. Tone was an important variable when discussing public opinion of an organization (Sheafer, 2007; El-Khairy, 2009). Tone was coded in two parts. First, a story that has no one taking a stance toward the National Organization for Women or its actions (as expressed either by the writer or those quoted in the story) was coded as neutral. A neutral news item would most likely be straight news reporting of an event with no underlying tone toward the National Organization for Women. Only the part of the story about NOW was coded. For example, a quote on rape statistics featuring only numbers and not opinion by a NOW leader was considered neutral.

For stories not coded as neutral (meaning there is even one small positive or negative statement), coders checked one option for tone toward NOW. Only the tone toward NOW was considered, and other factors or events in the article that also had tone—but that were not NOW related—were discounted from this variable. The content was coded by having one of the following variations: all positive toward the organization and its actions, mixed, or all negative toward the organization.

An entirely positive statement in favor of NOW would be, for example, “The agenda of the National Organization for Women advanced equal opportunity in the

workplace and helped women fight sexual harassment.” If this type of statement was the only statement in the article with a tone, then the entire article was coded as positive. An entirely negative statement against NOW would be, “The National Organization for Women attacked traditional American family values with its fight for abortion rights.” If this type of statement was the only statement in the article with a tone, then the article was coded as negative. See Appendix B for more detail.

If there was any mention that was not all positive or all negative, the coders checked mixed. An example of such gray matter—or “mixed” viewpoints—was the article that appeared in *The New York Times* on July 3, 2005, concerning NOW’s agenda on abortion rights. The news item, written by E. Thomas Wood, discussed NOW’s mobilization at their annual convention to ensure reproductive rights after Justice Sandra Day O’Connor resigned from the Supreme Court. Within the article, mentions of counterdemonstrators against abortion and NOW appeared. This would be considered a mixed response, as the coverage of NOW’s annual convention was neither all positive nor all negative, but had elements of both positive and negative tones.

Frame. In this study, the helping/advocacy frames and the disruptive/hurting frames were measured, following the example set in the Aday (2006) study. These frames were constructed by examining phrases and meaning that showed NOW either helping or hurting women, business, society, and legislation/policy/law. The story was coded as being “good” for women, etc.,(helping) or “bad” for women, etc., (hurting). Both the helping and hurting frame scores will be totaled for one helping score (0-4) and one hurting score (0-4). To obtain the dominant frame, the issue with the highest score was considered.

Helping frames would include words or phrases that would be seen as being good for women, good for society, good for business, and/or good for legislation and policies. These actions would be in relevance to NOW—as in, certain actions or events in the article performed by or related to NOW members. Giving prominence to NOW’s issues would be considered a “helping” frame, since it is “advancing a cause.” These issues only concern the actions, views, and participation of NOW and its members. Any issue or event that was seen as “good for women” would be coded as 1. For example, NOW’s involvement in providing a hotline for domestic violence survivors after the breaking news of Nicole Brown Simpson’s death (Simpson was reported to be abused by her husband, O. J. Simpson) was considered a “helping” frame for women. NOW gave women resources with the hotline that also were considered “helping” for society as well.

Hurting frames included explicit and implicit statements that NOW was disruptive toward policy making/legislation, business, and society. Disruptive frames were also present if women in the organization were at odds with one another or other women. The article would not be considered hurting unless a statement in the article makes that particular point. For example, a source stating that NOW was destroying American families with a gay agenda or pro-abortion stance would be a hurting statement. Refer to Appendix B for more detail and examples of these phrases.

Issues. The relevance of NOW hinges on the issues that earn the organization’s focus. For this study, 13 issues were chosen from NOW’s literature, mostly centering on workplace equality, sexual and reproductive freedom, domestic life, and politics. These were selected specifically because these were prominent issues that NOW focused on since 1982. These were coded simply for presence in any form in the story under review.

Refer to the codebook (Appendix B) for more detail. The 13 issues are as follows: sexual freedom, workplace equality, lesbian/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) issues, sexual harassment, political equality/involvement, violence against women, child care, portrayal of women in entertainment, reproductive rights, women in leadership positions, women in male-dominated workplaces, challenges to traditional femininity, and body politics.

In the study, issues in the story were coded as either being the lead issue, mentioned, or not mentioned. For an item to be the lead issue in an article, it was the one mentioned first AND most prominently in the story. If more than one issue is included in the lead paragraphs, the one that is given the most space or words in the article was considered the lead issue. Each story can only have one lead issue. Lead issues were coded as “2.” All other issues mentioned in the article were considered a mention and coded as “1.” If an issue does not appear at all in the news article, it was coded as “0”.

Intercoder reliability. Two researchers tested the instrument with a small sample of five articles. Refinements were made to the codesheet and codebook, and examples were added to improve the validity of the instrument. A third coder examined a portion of articles in the sample to confirm the intercoder reliability of the instrument. After a training session by the lead researcher, the third coder coded 30 stories of the 204 stories used in the study, or 13.33% of the sample.

Intercoder reliability was measured using Cohen’s Kappa, which controls for the likelihood of matching by chance. Fleiss (1981) argued that kappas over .75 are excellent, .40 to .75 are good, and below .40 are poor. For all variables in this study, agreement was good ($k = 626$). Kappas ranged from 1.00 (indicating 100% agreement) to .099 (indicating very low agreement). Reliability was excellent (above .75) on all of the

agenda setting variables (placement, word count, word count of now-related paragraphs, number of photos/graphics). Agreement was good (.40 to .75) on variables measuring story type, whether a story was neutral, and the overall tone. Framing variables (good/bad for women, business, society, legislation), were more problematic (.18 to .35), so those results should be viewed with caution. Also, some issues mentioned in the story proved equally problematic. Therefore, a new variable was created that just identified each story by the major issue discussed. This variable (created by taking the 2s for the issue variables), proved reliable ($k = .78$) and is used below.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Demographics of the Sample

In this study, a total of 223 stories were pulled from the population using the method described in Chapter Three. Most of the stories were from the 1980s ($n = 82$, 36.8% of the sample); 77 stories (34.5%) were from the 1990s, and 64 stories (28.7%) were from the 2000s.

The length of the stories ranged from 58 words to 5,355 words ($m = 655.61$, $sd = 609.22$). The portions of the stories relating to NOW ranged from 6 words to 5,355 words ($m = 333.25\%$, $sd = 570.01\%$). The number of photographs or graphics, including illustrations, charts, and maps, ranged from 0 graphics used in one story to 9 graphics used in one story ($m = .61$, $sd = 1.05$).

Only nine stories out of the 223 stories coded appeared on the front page, A1 section (4%). Slightly less appeared on a front page inside section ($n = 2.2\%$). On the inside A section 71 stories were shown (31.8%), and on any inside page in the newspaper, the majority of the news items appeared ($n = 138$, 61.9%).

Research Question Analysis

Agenda setting question

The first research question examined changes in prominence of NOW coverage over time. Prominence was measured by number of stories for each time period, word

count, word count of those paragraphs that addressed NOW, number of photographs/graphics included with the story, and placement in the newspaper.

As Table 1 shows, the total number of stories declined significantly over the three decades studied. Between the 1980s and the 2000s, the number of stories about NOW dropped nearly 80%.

Table 1
Prominence Changes by Decade

Variable	1980s	1990s	2000s	Change
Number of stories	289	153	64	Decrease 77.9%
Avg. Word count	641.67	694.08	627.17	F = 0.24
Avg. Word count of NOW	431.05	318.35	225.72	F = 2.40 ⁺
Avg. Number of graphics	0.41	0.71	0.72	F = 2.158

⁺ $p < .1$

The next analyses, using a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), looked only at the sample used in this study. While the average word count did not significantly decrease, the portion devoted to coverage of NOW did. The mean difference of 205.33 words devoted to NOW between the 1980s and the 2000s was significantly different at the $p < .1$ level, the level of significance used in this study due to the small sample size. As Table 1 shows, no difference was found in the number of graphics over time.

Prominence also was examined by looking at placement during the decades. Using a Chi-Square Analysis comparing placement by decade, data show a decline in

placement in the newspaper as well over time. By the 2000s, only 3.1% of the stories appeared on the front page, and none appeared on section fronts. However, stories in that decade were almost twice as likely to be inside the A section than in previous decades. Prominence for the entire study period based on placement was actually fairly low with only 6.2% ($n = 14$) of the sample appearing on the front page or a section front.

Table 2

Placement Changes by Decade

Placement	1980s $n = 82$	1990s $n = 77$	2000s $n = 64$
Front page (A1)	5 (6.1%)	2 (2.6%)	2 (3.1%)
Other section front	1 (1.2%)	4 (5.2%)	0 (.0%)
Inside A section	24 (29.3%)	18 (23.4%)	29 (45.3%)
Inside page	52 (63.4%)	53 (68.8%)	33 (51.6%)

$\chi^2 = 13.49, df = 6, p < .04$

Framing questions

Most of the stories for all three decades were hard news ($n = 153, 68.6%$) Feature stories constituted the second greatest category ($n = 34, 15.2%$), and the remainder of the stories was as follows: editorial/opinion/letter to the editor/column ($n = 8, 3.6%$), event analyses/laugh lines ($n = 11, 4.9%$), obituaries ($n = 14, 6.3%$), and weddings ($n = 3, 1.3%$).

The second part of this research question examined change in story type over time. As shown in Table 3, hard news dominated throughout the period, but it became significantly less dominant over the three decades. In contrast, feature stories and obituaries increased. In 2000, 12.5% of the stories were obituaries as original founding members or activists with NOW began to pass away.

Table 3

Type of Story by Decade

Type	1980s <i>n</i> = 82	1990s <i>n</i> = 77	2000s <i>n</i> = 64
Hard news	70 (85.4%)	48 (62.3%)	35 (54.7%)
Feature	7 (8.5%)	16 (20.8%)	11 (17.2%)
Analysis	0 (.0%)	3 (3.9%)	5 (7.8%)
Laugh Lines/Events	2 (2.4%)	4 (5.2%)	5 (7.8%)
Obituary	2 (2.4%)	4 (5.2%)	8 (12.5%)
Weddings	1 (1.2%)	2 (2.6%)	0 (.0%)

$\chi^2 = 25.78, df = 10, p < .004$

Research question three explored the overall tone of the stories toward the organization, and whether the tone changed over time. The first way to measure tone was to look at whether a story was neutral or not. Of the sample, 77 stories (34.5% of the total sample) were neutral. Of the 146 stories that had a tone, 29 (19.9% of the stories with a tone) were all negative, 47 stories (32.2%) had a mixed tone, and 70 (47.9%) were all

positive. More of the stories became increasingly neutral toward NOW over the decades. In the 1980s, 17 stories (20.7%) were neutral toward the organization. That number increased to 26 (33.8%) in the 1990s, and finally to 34 (53.1%) in the 2000s ($X^2 = 16.72$, $df = 2$, $p < .001$). Conversely, the number of stories with a tone decreased in the 2000s as writers adopted a neutral position on the organization.

Of the 146 stories that were not neutral, the data show that tone did not change significantly over the decades. The tone of the stories remained fairly consistent and the majority of the stories were positive toward NOW (See Table 4).

Table 4

Tone Changes by Decade, Non-Neutral Stories Only

Placement	1980s	1990s	2000s
	$n = 65$	$n = 51$	$n = 30$
All negative	12 (18.5%)	12 (23.5%)	5 (16.7%)
Mixed	22 (33.8%)	14 (27.5%)	11 (36.7%)
All positive	31 (47.7%)	25 (49.0%)	14 (46.7%)

$X^2 = 1.19$, $df = 4$, $p < .89$

Research question four examined specific frames and the change over time. During the period of the 1980s through the 2000s, few changes were seen in positive or advocacy frames. Most often, the stories (about 70% or more across all three decades) did contain frame of NOW as being good for women (As Table 5 shows). About half the stories projected NOW as good for society. A third or fewer carried the good for business

or good for policy cue. The only significant change over time was in the business category, as it dipped significantly in the 1990s. Finally, the average advocacy frame score per story (one point for each frame present) was compared by decade. As Table 5 shows, no significant differences emerged.

Table 5

Advocacy Frames by Decade

Frame	1980s	1990s	2000s	Total	X^2
	<i>n</i> = 82	<i>n</i> = 77	<i>n</i> = 64	<i>n</i> = 223	
Good for women	59 (72.0%)	55 (71.4%)	47 (73.4%)	161 (72.2%)	.07
Good for society	53 (64.6%)	38 (49.4%)	34 (53.1%)	125 (56.1%)	4.08
Good for legislation	33 (40.2%)	23 (29.9%)	17 (26.6%)	73 (32.7%)	3.49
Good for business	23 (28.0%)	11 (14.3%)	17 (26.6%)	51 (22.9%)	4.96 ⁺
Avg. advocacy frame	2.02	1.62	1.77	1.81	<i>F</i> = 1.65

⁺*p* < .1

This research question also sought to examine change in a disruptive frame for the organization over time. In general, disruptive frames were much less likely to appear in stories, something that should be expected based on the positive tone of many stories. The most common disruptive frame was of hurting legislation, which appeared in about a quarter of the stories (See Table 6). This was followed by hurting women and hurting business (in about 15% of the stories each). Hurting society was almost absent, appearing

in less than 10% of stories overall. By decade, the only significant change noted was a negative impact on women (bad for women), which dropped from a quarter of stories in the 1980s to less than 5% in the 2000s. No other hurting frame showed a significant change, nor did the average disrupting score change across the three decades (See Table 6). Within this sample of stories, NOW was largely framed as an advocacy organization that helped women, and not an organization that disrupted society.

Table 6

Disruptive Frames by Decade

Frame	1980s	1990s	2000s	Total	X^2
	<i>n</i> = 82	<i>n</i> = 77	<i>n</i> = 64	<i>n</i> = 223	
Bad for women	18 (22.0%)	15 (19.5%)	3 (4.7%)	36 (16.1%)	8.88**
Bad for society	5 (6.1%)	6 (7.8%)	7 (10.9%)	18 (8.1%)	1.15
Bad for legislation	23 (28.0%)	20 (26.0%)	14 (21.9%)	57 (25.6%)	.73
Bad for business	10 (12.2%)	14 (18.2%)	8 (12.5%)	32 (14.3%)	1.41
Avg. disrupting frame	0.68	0.70	0.48	0.63	$F = 1.28$

** $p < .001$

The final research question focused on the various issues included in the stories about NOW and whether any dominant issue changed over time within the thirty-year span. As noted above, because of coding issues, a new variable was created for this question that examined the dominant issue covered in each story only. The focus of the story is detailed in Table 7

Table 7

Main Issue Covered in Stories by Decade, From Most to Least Common

Main Issue	1980s <i>n</i> = 82	1990s <i>n</i> = 77	2000s <i>n</i> = 64	Total <i>n</i> = 223
Women in leadership	28 (34.1%)	23 (29.9%)	24 (37.5%)	75 (33.6%)
Political involvement	36 (43.9%)	12 (15.6%)	6 (9.4%)	54 (24.2%)
Reproductive rights	6 (7.3%)	15 (19.5%)	10 (15.6%)	31 (13.9%)
Violence against women	2 (2.4%)	8 (10.4%)	6 (9.4%)	16 (7.2%)
Workplace equality	6 (7.3%)	2 (2.6%)	4 (6.3%)	12 (5.4%)
Portrayal in entertainment	3 (3.7%)	1 (1.3%)	6 (9.4%)	10 (4.5%)
Sexual harassment	0 (.0%)	7 (9.1%)	1 (1.6%)	8 (3.6%)
LGBT	0 (.0%)	2 (2.6%)	3 (4.7%)	5 (2.2%)
Child care	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.3%)	2 (3.1%)	4 (1.8%)
Body politics	0 (.0%)	3 (3.9%)	0 (.0%)	3 (1.3%)
Women in workplaces	0 (.0%)	3 (3.9%)	0 (.0%)	3 (1.3%)
Challenges to femininity	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	2 (3.1%)	2 (.9%)

$\chi^2 = 68.50, df = 22, p < .001$. Note: The Chi-Square statistic is problematic for this table because nearly 70% of the cells had an expected count of less than 5. The table is used mainly to show percentages and trends over time.

As Table 7 shows, women in leadership was the most common dominant issue in the NOW stories, present in about a third of the stories overall and with little change by decade. Although there was a slight increase by from the 1990s to the 2000s, this may

be due to many articles in the 2000s only including a brief quote or reaction from a NOW leader without focusing on the organization, its agenda, or its issues in the actual article. The next most common issue overall was political involvement, but that fell drastically as a factor in stories between the 1980s, when it accounted for nearly half of the stories, and the 2000s, when it was in less than 10% of stories. Interest in reproductive rights increased from the 1980s to the 1990s, and then fell in the 2000s. Violence against women issues gained prominence in the 1990s. Workplace equality as an issue was rarely present from the 1980s to the 2000s. This seemed to be an issue of higher importance in the 1960s and the 1970s. Portrayal of women in entertainment did increase somewhat from the 1980s to the 2000s, where it was the main issue in almost 10% of the sample. Sexual harassment showed a surge of interest in the 1990s ($n = 7$, 9.1%) but was rarely discussed in stories from the 1980s or 2000s. LGBT issues as the main focus did grow slightly, but still only made up 5% of the sample from the 2000s, which was surprising given the focus of this within the organization in recent years. The remaining issues—child care, body politics, women in male-dominated workplaces, and challenges to traditional femininity—had such little significance in the stories (in some decades, showing .0% mention) although they were included in NOW's agenda as being issues of importance to the organization.

Overall, Table 7 shows a picture that the issues focused on in NOW stories was more diverse in the 1990s and 1990s than in the 2000s. This was especially the case when the overwhelming focus on political involvement dropped off after the 1980s.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

This study examined *The New York Times* coverage in regard to agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972) and framing (McLeod, Kosicki, & McLeod, 2002) of the National Organization for Women. Change was found over time in terms of prominence, which may be linked to the diminishing role NOW has played in the U.S. women's agenda. Additionally some shifts were seen in tone, story type, frame, and issues. Although effects of these shifts were not examined in the study, these changes in coverage could be linked to new public opinion of the organization. Although agenda setting and framing may not be deliberate on the part of journalists, these cues in content may have an impact on how readers think of people, organizations, and events (Gamson et al., 1992), or in this particular case, the National Organization for Women, its activities, and its leaders and members. Likewise, changes in content may be construed as a reflection of changing societal views toward NOW and, more broadly, feminism over time. *The New York Times*, like all media, can both shape agendas and reflect public views and thoughts. Media messages are powerful tool when thinking about how society views groups such as the National Organization for Women.

This chapter first summarizes the findings in each area and discusses the implications of the results. Next, paths for future research that might improve on the

noted limitations of this study are discussed. Finally, it concludes with some ideas for further exploration of media attention of feminism and feminist organizations.

Summary of Findings

Agenda setting

Organizations such as the National Organization for Women depend on media messages to advance their agendas. If no one reads about their actions or protests, the effect of their cause would be little. Likewise, the public depends on news organizations for surveillance to help it learn about groups, their leaders, and their actions.. The results of this study suggest that both groups may have found those goals increasingly difficult over time. In sheer volume, the number of stories total in the population under study even mentioning NOW dropped a striking 80% from the 1980s to the 2010s. By the last decade of this study, only about six stories per year even mentioned the organization. And when the stories mentioned NOW, it was increasingly brief. Instead of being the focus of the whole story, the NOW often was relegated to a quick mention or token quote. Word count of those words devoted solely to NOW's leaders or agenda fell by nearly 50%.

No significant change in the number of graphics was noted, although in some articles from the later years of the study, the only mention of the organization was in the photo cutline—a politician posing with NOW leaders who were not mentioned anywhere in the accompanying story. Story placement did change over time, however. A story about NOW was twice as likely to appear on the paper's front page in the 1980s in the 2000s. In the 2000s, no stories appeared on section fronts. Still, consistent in each decade

was the fact that the majority of stories about NOW appeared on an inside page.

The implications of these findings suggest a number of things. In terms of agenda setting, the newspaper could influence public opinion about NOW, although that could not be measured. As new feminist groups emerged, NOW may not have been seen as the premiere feminist voice of America. This does not necessarily mean that feminism was not relevant, just that NOW was no longer the go-to resource for journalists writing about for modern American feminist opinion. In the 1960s, 1970s, and even up until the 1980s, NOW could be considered synonymous with American feminism's goals and agenda. As feminism progressed in those years, NOW stayed current, speaking for the movement. In the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, this perhaps is not the case, at least based on one newspaper's coverage of the group. Other groups have splintered off or formed independently as feminism has become broader and, in a sense, more modern. The gay and lesbian issues that NOW rejected in the 1960s are very much a part of feminism's goals in 2012. While NOW has certainly embraced those issues, other groups have taken up the causes with more vigor. Other women's organizations reject these "radical" views and feel NOW has gone too far.

Because there are so many other organizations speaking for women, journalists today don't need to look only to NOW for the female perspective on issues. Further, many women have become leaders in politics, business, entertainment, etc., and they can give their point of view freely outside of a feminist organization. Whatever the true reason behind NOW's shrinking news coverage in *The New York Times*, the fact is that as an organization, NOW lost prominence in this newspaper. In its tenure as a voice and vehicle for women, NOW often rallied behind causes that needed a boost from a national

organization, for example protecting women entering abortion clinics. If this organization is entering its final years in terms of prominence and relevance, the question is, who will fight those battles and march in protests? Or are the days of one singular national feminist presence gone in favor of many varied groups with a more defined membership base?

Media coverage can both reflect public opinion and shape it in a cyclical manner. In terms of amount of coverage, this cycle spiraled inward into a decline of copy devoted to NOW, a drop from nearly 300 stories in the 1980s to fewer than 70 in the 2000s. Women interviewed had quit their jobs, taken activist roles and organizer positions, and changed their lives in order to see the passage of the ERA in the early 1980s, and one newspaper's coverage over time reflected this. Stories appeared consistently about the ERA and the women who rallied for its ratification. After this failed to be passed by the necessary 35 states, coverage of NOW began to wane, a pattern that continued for three decades. Unlike feminist rallying in the 1940s with a war overseas and factory jobs to fill (Faludi, 1991), women in the 1990s and 2000s post-ERA had little to no "mission" or cause to fight. The 1980s politically held much appeal for women to band together—Geraldine Ferraro's nomination, threats to *Roe v. Wade*, women entering the professional world in droves, the ERA, and fighting sexual discrimination and harassment. As the decades passed, the singular mindset of the American woman may have dissipated and dissolved in such a way that there were too many different paths for a woman to pick—the choices to stay at home with her children, go to work, remain single, work in business or politics had largely been won in earlier years.

Based on some of the articles written on NOW in the 1990s (concerning Patricia Ireland's leadership), NOW has had both external and internal struggles that have led to

the decline of the organization by the 2000s.

The group first experienced a bit of negative press in March 1992 with a feature-length story on Patricia Ireland. NOW had struggled to find its bearings after 1982, and in the decade following that historic defeat for the organization, little had been accomplished, the article suggested. Jane Gross, the author of the article, asked:

Can a contrarian group like NOW, with its rabble-rousing leaders and its antagonistic rhetoric, carry the flag of women's rights into the next century? Can a complex woman like Ireland, with an activist's self-righteousness and an attorney's deliberate ways, find a new voice for NOW that stirs its longtime loyalists but resonates, too, for a broader range of women?

The author appears hopeful but is clearly questioning the relevance of a group at a crossroads. Later in the article she wrote:

Meanwhile, a growing chorus of women says hard-edged groups like NOW drag the movement down and alienate more people than they inspire. Some of that criticism comes from predictable quarters. Beverly LaHaye, the president of the right-wing anti-abortion group Concerned Women for America, claims that "NOW is a militant fringe whose priorities, such as lesbian rights, are alien to most women."

NOW's all-inclusive policy in the 1990s appeared to turn the average American woman off—the organization was too radical—yet for many feminists who would later emerge, particularly women of color, the group would not be radical enough. NOW faced a dilemma with building a membership base, appealing to new members, and appeasing its remaining constituents.

Framing

Framing variables examined in this story were type of story, tone, advocacy/disrupting frames, and dominant issues. Findings are summarized and discussed for all three variables.

Type. Hard news was the most popular type of story in the three decades, largely because of the way the search strategy was constructed. It should be noted, however, that over time, feature stories and obituaries increased in presence.

Feature stories pertaining to NOW increased from just less than 10% of stories in the 1980s to about 20% in the 1990s. More stories spotlighted new presidents and other leaders. For example, Patricia Ireland, NOW president from 1991 to 2001, was a popular subject for lengthy feature articles, and her choice of both husband and female companion came under constant scrutiny by the journalist and, perhaps, the reader. Ireland garnered several long features in the newspaper in the 1990s, with stories chronicling her rise from mere stewardess to national feminist leader. When she left her post, the next president did not earn the column inches in the paper, so to speak, and was not featured as regularly as Ireland. NOW leaders were often quoted or gave sound bites on political or social issues, but the fascination with the women behind NOW waned slightly. The number of feature stories written dropped to about 17% of stories in the 2000s.

Obituaries of NOW members constituted a significantly higher percentage of total stories about the organization in the 2000s. Women, including former presidents of NOW and activists in the organization's heyday of the 1960s and 1970s, were making the news in this time period simply by dying—a symbolic gesture that can hardly go unnoticed.

The great lionesses that caused senators and conservatives to tremble now lay serenely in caskets, remembered only for their former glory years.

Tone. The study looked at changes in tone toward NOW over the three decades. Stories were first coded as neutral or not, and then non-neutral stories were coded for tone—positive, negative, or neutral. Neutral stories increased from about a third of the sample in the 1980s to more than half in the 2000s. Of the stories that had a tone, nearly half were positive. Tone did not change significantly over time. Story tone (found to be mostly positive) remained more or less the same across the decades studied. Combined, however, these two variables paint a picture of a shift in tone. While coverage was mostly positive, by the 2000s, many of the stories coded in the study were noted as “neutral,” consisting of plain statements that failed to ignite passion one way or another. The organization wasn’t portrayed as an antagonistic group, therefore, perhaps not as a true “fighter” for women’s issues. This study found that the newspaper’s message was mostly neutral or positive, and it can be assumed based on past research (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007; Gamson et al., 1992) that readers felt that NOW was also seen in this neutral or positive light. For groups like NOW, members must see what the organization does as relevant to their daily lives. A bland, neutral to positive portrayal might lead readers to believe that the group wasn’t active or worth supporting. At the very least, these two variables combined could have made readers see the group as passive or irrelevant.

Frame. Findings for frame are in line with the conclusion that the coverage portrayed now as positive or even “bland” over the time period studied. Overwhelmingly, NOW was shown as an advocate rather than a group that disrupted the status-quo. NOW

was a group founded on fighting to change things, yet the advocacy frame was noted much more strongly than the hurting disrupting frame throughout the study.

During the period of the 1980s through the 2000s, the stories' frame on whether NOW was an advocate for women did not change significantly. The frame of NOW's advocacy contribution to society dropped slightly in the 1980s to the 2000s, as did both positive frames for legislation and business, but overall the organization was seen as a helping advocate for women. In the 1980s, the paper reported on the hundreds of thousands of women whose lives had changed because of their involvement with NOW—they left jobs to organize for the ERA, they found new identities as women with agendas, and many of these women interviewed felt that they had a sense of purpose that had been absent previously. The 1990s continued with this type of advocacy-oriented coverage, although the image of NOW as a life-changing force for women did not appear as often or as forcefully. Overall, the organization was portrayed as helping women more than as helping society, legislation or business.

In the 2000s, however, writers did not seem to report on positive issues or even negative contributions that the organization was making. Consistent with the finding that stories were more likely to be neutral over time, this study found NOW leaders in the 2000s usually called on for a sound bite or quote from the organization's point of view. This coverage was a far cry from earlier decades' descriptions of protests and marches, which would have been coded as having a hurting frame because they often disrupted daily life or business. Although NOW's Web site states examples of its activity in the 2000s during the Bush administration, little appears to be documented in the newspaper.

NOW's agenda is to upset the status quo; a neutral label with little disruption may not be what the organization wishes.

Issues. This study also examined the various issues covered in the new articles. "Women in leadership" was the most popular issue included in the article. However, in many stories, presidents or representative of NOW were merely quoted with no mention of any of the organization's passions for gender equality and reform. Thus the story was coded with "women in leadership" as the only mentioned issue, though the article might have been focused on a male political campaign or celebrity murder trial.

However, the most telling issue that actually lost prominence was "women in politics." After the failure of the ratification of the ERA in the 1980s, and especially after the 1990s, this issue's appearance in NOW-related articles declined, suggesting that NOW's voice in the American political process was greatly diminished. Even as women made great strides in politics as individuals (most notably Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin in 2008), the organization's voice in the nation's political debate subsided, as few of the stories featuring NOW stressed political issues.

Lesbian and gay issues gained prominence over the decades studied, but many of these coded issues were noted simply due to NOW President Patricia Ireland's ambiguous sexuality and not the organization's actual stand on LGBT issues. The violence against women issue, which would include rape, domestic violence, or physical attacks from anti-abortion protesters at a clinic, jumped up in stories in the 1990s, but this was largely due to the murder trial of O. J. Simpson and reports of his deceased wife Nicole Brown Simpson's battered state, as well as mentions of the RICO law (protecting women entering abortion clinics from physical attacks) that struggled to be passed. The

trial of Gina Foat also was noted as a spike in coverage of the issue “women and violence” in the 1990s. Foat was a West Coast chapter president of NOW charged with a brutal murder, and numerous articles devoted column inches to the trial, weaving her relationship with NOW so tightly that it seemed impossible to separate the feminist from the maniacal killer. In the end, Foat was acquitted; it was noted that her ex-husband had fabricated his testimonials in revenge. After months of hearing about this crazed feminist murderer, the announcement of her acquittal was a mere 122 words. These three instances explain the spike in this issue in the study during the 1990s. Only stories on the RICO law portrayed NOW as fighting to protect women from violence. The trial coverage of the two sensational California cases did not represent the true advocacy of NOW on this issue in the 1990s.

Workplace equality, a large draw for women activists in the 1980s, dropped as an issue in the 2000s. Perhaps women feel this battle is largely won, which contradicts many NOW member’s beliefs. The issues of child care, body politics, women in male-dominated workplaces, and challenges to traditional femininity had such little significance in the stories—in some decades, showing no mention whatsoever. These same issues were taken from the NOW web site as having high importance to the organization, yet *The New York Times* did not place the same significance and had little space devoted to such topics.

This study of issues suggest that NOW lost political power as an organization over the decades, and that possibly issues such as “workplace equality” may not have been seen as relevant in the 2000s. As NOW aged, so did its members, and many of the battles that were fought in the 1960s seemed to be won (in some regard) 40 years later.

New battles are emerging, but the question is if NOW is the organization to fight them.

Limitations. Content analysis is quantitative, which can help summarize data over time in publications. (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). Complete objectivity is difficult to obtain in content analysis; during coding, researchers and coders will be somewhat subjective when specifying the unit of analysis. For example, a coder well-versed in feminist theory or sensitive to the agenda of NOW might have a slight bias over another coder who had never heard of NOW and had no opinion of feminism or its implications. This was the case in this study, as intercoder reliability for some variables was problematic, largely due to the different backgrounds of the coders. Although the low intercoder reliability with issue coverage was remedied somewhat by coding only for the dominant issue in the story, the reliability was still low. Further, the low reliability on those variables cost some of the depth and detail in the study when they were collapsed into one variable as many stories covered multiple issues. Most problematic was the reliability on the frame variables (advocacy/disrupting) and the sub-variables (women, society, business, legislation) that were summed to form those frame variables. Because of these limitations, any conclusions for frame should be looked at with extreme caution.

Other limitations should be noted. No interviews with journalists, editors, or NOW members and leaders were conducted. Thus, we have no understanding of why coverage changed or looked the way it did. It is impossible, therefore, to understand or estimate the journalists' true perspective in writing the article. Further, the study did not look at attitudes of the readers of *The New York Times*. The articles may provide some help in deciding what American opinions toward NOW would be, but without survey data or interviews with readers, it is difficult to ascertain whether this coverage actually

had an agenda-setting or framing effect. Thus, any conclusion about how this coverage might have led to (or reflected) how the American public in the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s viewed NOW is purely speculative and based on past media effects research.

Racial equality was an issue that NOW embraced, yet this issue was not coded in the study. In the stories, NOW did work closely with race-related equal rights groups, appearing at numerous rallies for racial equality with the NAACP and the Rev. Jesse Jackson. While the stories coded did not include racial issues within the organization, such as the importance of equality within NOW for women of color, it should be noted that NOW placed much significance on equality for all genders and races.

The available population of stories and the sampling frame used also limited the study. To have a semblance of three numerically equal samples from each decade, the first two decades (1980s and 1990s) had to be drastically cut down to match the 65 stories available in the 2000s. Further, it should be noted again that the coverage was only from one newspaper, *The New York Times*. Although this newspaper has a large readership and is considered an agenda-setter for other U.S. media outlets, it still is only one tiny slice of all mediated information that the public receives about NOW. Further, *The New York Times*, despite its goal to be objective in presenting information, clearly tells stories with a distinct perspective. The paper has a history of being a champion for underrepresented groups and those being wronged in social trends. It also is planted firmly in the East Coast elite, meaning that its coverage likely would be dramatically different from a small-town daily newspaper in Alabama, for example. Therefore, this study looked at a small amount of coverage from a distinct point of view, which does limit its generalizability.

Suggestions for further research. This study focused on media perspectives of the National Organization for Women, which is a feminist organization, yet does not speak for all feminist groups. The organization within itself has struggled to remain unified as new factors in the feminist movement have appeared, such as the inclusion of women of color, international struggles for gender equality and education for women, international violence against women and girls, and LGBT issues. As feminism and its definitions continue to change in the new century, NOW will need to grow and change with its constituents to remain relevant. This study did not address these issues, but further research on NOW's adaptation to modern day American feminism would provide a clearer view on how feminism will affect men and women in 2012 and beyond.

Studies that could show how Americans—and not just *The New York Times*—view feminism would be most helpful in deciding NOW's next action for their newest and youngest subscribers. This study sheds light on how NOW is framed (as an advocate for women) and perhaps even that passion for feminism is waning (due to the high number of neutral stories on the organization and low word count featuring NOW), but a true and honest portrait of feminism and the National Organization for Women is still lacking. Interviews on college campuses and in high schools and middle schools could help shape that understanding and began to crack the most pressing question for women in America, *Is feminism still relevant?*

Conclusion.

The findings from this study show that media coverage of the National Organization for Women changed over time. This may suggest that the public may be less interested in feminism as a topic or at least the feminist agenda that NOW proposes to advance. The shrinking amount of copy devoted to the organization, the increase in feature stories, and the increase in neutrality provide a picture of what NOW is not—not fighting, not relevant, and not garnering national attention, at least as portrayed in *The New York Times*. NOW may have once held political power and relegated the singular voice for American feminism, but those days appear to be over.

The next generation of feminists is maturing in a post-feminist world and will become mothers, policy makers, and teachers to the next generation of men and women. Women who did not picket for equal pay for equal work or fight sex discrimination like those activists in the 1970s and 1980s may feel those days are over. Yet, the need for feminism seems more apparent than ever. The neo-conservative right in 2012 seeks to abolish contraceptives. Conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh labeled one woman a “slut” when she spoke against legislation that would make contraception unavailable. Female politicians are discussed not in regard to their platforms, but rather for their “cankles” or “MILF” status. Personhood is debated on the state level, with lawmakers seeking to determine whether a six-week-old unborn fetus has more rights than an American woman. Women’s magazines entice readers with 69 things to do to a naked man but don’t mention breaking the glass ceiling.

American women “don’t know that they don’t know” that feminism is indeed relevant. Fighting for rights and equality is a battle many are afraid to engage, preferring

to instead stay in the very pink and comfortable ignorance bubble that Betty Friedan described in 1963. In those 50 years since *The Feminine Mystique* was penned, not much has changed. Women may hold jobs and political offices, but public opinion of women and their specific place in society has not made the great strides activists in the 1980s had hoped for their daughters.

REFERENCES

- Abbott, J. Y. (2006). Religion and gender in the news: the case of promise keepers, feminists, and the 'Stand in the Gap' rally. Journal of Communication and Religion, 29, 224-261.
- Aday, S. (2006). The frame-setting effects of news: an experimental test of advocacy versus objectivist frames. Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 83(4), 767-784.
- Akhavan-Majid, R., & Ramaprasad, J. (1998). Framing and ideology: A comparative analysis of U.S. and Chinese newspaper coverage of the fourth United Nations conference on women and the NCO forum. Mass Communication and Society, 1(3/4), 131-152.
- Ashley, L., & Olson, B. (1998). Constructing reality: Print media's framing of the women's movement. Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 75, 263-277.
- Barakso, M., & Schaffner, B. F. (2006). Winning coverage: News media portrayals of the women's movement, 1969-2004. Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics, 11(4), 22-44.
- Barker-Plummer, B. (1997). News as a Political Resource? A Case Study of the Media Strategies and Media Representation of the National Organization for women, 1966-1980. The University of Pennsylvania.
- Barker-Plummer, B. (2010). News and feminism: a historic dialog. Journalism and Communication Monographs, 12(3/4), 145-203.
- Barker-Plummer, B. (2002). Producing public voice: Resource mobilization and media access in the National Organization for Women. Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 79(4), 188-205.
- Buschman, J. K., & Lenart, S. (1996). "I am not a feminist, but...": College women, feminism, and negative experiences. Political Psychology, 17(1), 59-75. \
- Carlin, D. B., & Winfrey, K. L. (2009). Have you come a long way baby? Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, and sexism in 2008 campaign coverage. Communication Studies (60)4, 326-343.
- Cohen, B. (1963). The Press and Foreign Policy. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Collins, P. H. (2000). Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the

- Politics of Empowerment. London: Routledge.
- Davey, K. M. (2008). Women's accounts of organizational politics as a gendering process. Gender, Work, and Organization, 15(6), 650-671.
- Davis, M. (2008). The Equal Rights Amendment: Then and now. Columbia Journal of Gender and the Law, 3, 419-459.
- Dean, J. (2009). Who's afraid of third wave feminism? International Feminist Journal of Politics, 11(3), 334-352.
- Dunaway, J., Branton, R. P., & Abrajano M. A. (2010). Agenda setting, public opinion, and the issue of immigration reform. Social Science Quarterly, 91(2), 359-378.
- El-Khairy, O. (2009). "Freedom's a lifestyle choice": US cultural diplomacy, empire's soundtrack, and Middle Eastern 'youth' in our contemporary global infowar. Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication, 2(1), 155-135.
- Elmasry, M. (2009). Death in the Middle East: An analysis of how The New York Times and Chicago Tribune framed killings in the second Palestinian Intifada. Journal of Middle East Media, 5(1), 1-46.
- Entman, R. M. (2007). Framing bias: Media in the distribution of power. Journal of Communication, 57(1), 163-173.
- Fleiss, J. L. (1981). Statistical Methods for Rates and Proportions (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley.
- Faludi, S. (1991). Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women. New York: Doubleday.
- Friedan, B. (1997). The Feminine Mystique. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Gamson, W. A., Croteau, D., Hoynes, W., & Sasson, T. (1992). Media images and the social construction of reality. Annual Review of Sociology, 18, p. 373-393.
- Gilmore, S. & Kaminski, E. (2007). A part and apart: lesbian and straight feminist activists negotiate identity in a second-wave organization. Journal of the History of Sexuality, 16(1), 95-113.
- Greer, J., Hardin, M., & Homan, C. (2009). "Naturally" less exciting? Visual production of men's and women's track and field coverage during the 2004 Olympics. Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 53(2), 173-189.
- Harris, J. C. (2008). Celebrating women's herstory: the story of Seneca Falls. Off Our Backs, 28(7), 9.

- Hammer, B., McNamara, B., & Nash, J. (2003). Nationwide newspaper coverage of abortion: A community structure approach. National Communication Association, 1-33.
- hooks, b. (1984). Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center. Cambridge: South End Press.
- Kahn, K. F. (1994). The distorted mirror: Press coverage of women's candidates for statewide office. Journal of Politics, 56(1), 154-174.
- Kahn, K. F., & Goldenberg, E. N. (1991). The media: Obstacle or ally of feminists? Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 515, 104-113.
- Kiousis, S. (2003). Job approval and favorability: The impact of media attention to the Monica Lewinsky scandal on public opinion of President Bill Clinton. Mass Communication and Society, 6(4), 435-51.
- Kim, S., Carvalho, J. P., & Davis, A. G. (2010). Talking about poverty: News framing of who is responsible for causing and fixing the problem. Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 87(3/4), 563-581.
- Lee, J. H., & Choi, Y. J. (2009). News values of sports events: An application of a newsworthiness model on the World Cup coverage of US and Korean media. Asian Journal of Communication, 19(3), 302-318.
- McCombs, M. (2005). A look at agenda-setting: Past, present, and future. Journalism Studies, 6(4), 543-57.
- McCombs, M., & Shaw, D. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. Public Opinion Quarterly, 36, 176-187.
- McLaughlin, J. (2003). Feminist Social and Political Theory: Contemporary Debates and Dialogues. Ebbw Vale (Wales): Creative Print & Design.
- McLeod, D. M., Kosicki, G., & McLeod, J. (2002). Resurveying the boundaries of political communication effects. Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research. Mahwah (N.J.): Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- National Organization for Women. (n.d.) Frequently asked questions. Retrieved from <http://www.now.org/organization/faq.html>.
- National Organization for Women. (n.d.) Highlights from NOW's Forty Fearless Years. Retrieved from <http://www.now.org/history/timeline.html>.
- Poirot, K. (2004). Mediating a movement, authorizing discourse: Kate Millet, sexual politics, and feminism's second wave. Women's Studies in Communication, 27(2), 204-235.

- Pollock, J. C., Piccillo, C., Leopardi, D., Gratale, S., & Cabot, K. (2005). Nationwide newspaper coverage of Islam post-September 11: A community structure approach. Communication Research Reports, 22(1), 15-27.
- Pomerleau, C. A. (2010). Empowering members, not overpowering them: the National Organization for Women, calls for lesbian inclusion, and California influence, 1960s-1980s. Journal of Homosexuality, 57(7), 842-861.
- Rosenfeld, R. A., & Ward, K. B. (1996). The contemporary U.S. women's movement: An empirical example of competition theory. Sociological Forum, 6(3), 471-500.
- Roy, S. C., Faulkner, G. E. J., Simone, E., & Finlay, S. (2011) A weighty matter? Reporting of obesity research in the Canadian press. Journal of Communication Research, 2(1), 29-41.
- Scheufele, D. A., & Tewksbury, D. (2007). Framing, agenda setting, and priming: The evolution of three media effects models. Journal of Communication, 57(1), 9-20.
- Senat, J. (2004). Editor & Publisher slow to change depiction of women. Newspaper Research Journal, (25)4, 67-81.
- Sheafer, T. (2007) How to evaluate it: The role of story-evaluative tone in agenda setting and priming. Journal of Communication, 57(1), 21-39.
- Tan, Y., & Weaver, D. H. (2010) Media bias, public opinion, and policy liberalism from 1956 to 2004: A second-level agenda-setting study. Mass Communication and Society, 13(4), 412-434.
- Tuchman, G. (1979). Women's depiction by the mass media. Signs, 4(3), 528-542.
- Wimmer, R. D., & Dominick, J. R. (2006). Mass Media Research: An Introduction—2nd ed. Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth.

Appendix A: Code sheet

1. Publication date

Day _____

Month _____

Year _____

2. Headline: _____ (First three words)

3. Placement of story (circle one):

- 1 Front Page (A1)
- 2 Front Page (Inside Section)
- 3 Inside Page (A Section)
- 4 Inside Page (B, C, D, etc., Inside Section)
- 5 Not known

4. Type of story (circle one)

- 1. Hard news story
- 2. Feature
- 3. Editorial/opinion/letter to the editor/column
- 4. Event Analyses/Laugh Lines
- 5. Obituaries
- 6. Weddings

5. Word count of story: _____
Number of words devoted to NOW _____

6. Number of photos/graphics with story: _____

7. Neutral ____yes ____no

8. Tone of the entire story in relation to NOW and its actions (for only the NOs above):
Circle 3 for entirely positive, 2 for mixed, and 1 for entirely negative.

3 2 1

9. "Helping/advocacy frame" (NOW's members or actions are seen as good for women)

Code as 0/1; 0 = not present, 1 = present

_____ good for women (including members)

_____ good for business/economy

_____ good for society (family structure, culture, etc.)

_____good for legislation/policy/legal process

Total advocacy frame _____(add all the 1's in this group together)

10. "Disruptive/hurting frame" (NOW's members or actions are seen as bad for women)

Code as 0/1; 0 = not present, 1 = present

_____bad for women (including members)

_____bad for business/economy

_____bad for society (family structure, culture, etc.)

_____bad for legislation/policy/legal process

Total disruption frame _____(add all the 1's in this group together)

11. Issues

2 = lead issue in article (only one of these per story)

1 = mentioned in article

0 = not mentioned in article

_____Sexual freedom

_____Workplace equality

_____Political equality/involvement

_____Lesbian/bisexual/transgender issues

_____Sexual harassment

_____Violence against women

_____Child care

_____Portrayal of women in entertainment

_____Women in leadership positions

_____Reproductive rights

_____Women in male-dominated workplaces

_____Challenges to traditional femininity

_____Body politics

Appendix B: Code Book

1. **Publication date:** Write in the publication's day, month and year. Each is a separate variable.
2. **Headline:** Write in the first three words of the story's headline.
3. **Placement of story:** Circle which category the story falls into by looking at the top left corner of the link from LexisNexis.

Placement on the page was not measured, however, because that information was not included in the *LexisNexis* database. In this study, the newspaper section in which the story appeared served as a measure of story placement. The first page of the newspaper or "Page 1A" was the highest placement in a newspaper. Stories on the front page of any other section of the paper ("1B" or the first page of any other section, "Religion" or "Arts," for example) would have the next highest prominence. Stories inside the A section (the front section of the paper) were coded as having the next to lowest prominence. Finally, stories inside any other (non A) section of the paper were coded as having the lowest prominence. All of these were noted using the page number code on the stories as listed on the top of the story the *LexisNexis* database. A final option exists if the page number is not known or not apparent in the database.

The last indication of prominence is whether a photo or graphic accompanies a story. Past studies have shown that readers' eyes are drawn to stories on a newspaper page that have an accompanying visual. Although the database does not capture the actual visual, *LexisNexis* does note the number of photos or graphics that appeared with the story. This number will be recorded on the code sheet.

4. **Type of story.** Check what type of news story that applies.

To characterize these different news components, the following are defined:

- **News/straight reporting.** This news item has a breaking news element and follows traditional journalistic process in reporting an event.
- **Feature.** Feature stories are characterized by a soft news lead, and typically are stories concerning human interest, such as profiles on community members.
- **Editorial/opinion/letter/column.** This news item is considered an opinion piece written from an intelligent and informed point of view, but not necessarily by a leader or activist of NOW. These are non-editorial page items that were more characterized by opinion.
- **Event analyses/Laugh Lines.** These items are clearly listed as calendar items or laugh lines. Event analyses reported on local or national events concerning NOW, such as protests or marches. Laugh Lines repeated comedy monologues from late night television shows.
- **Weddings.** These included wedding announcements over 50 words long.
- **Obituaries.** These included obituaries 50 words or longer and were clearly marked as obituaries in the newspaper.

5. **Word count of story.** Write in the number of words in the story by looking at the top left corner of the link from LexisNexis.

6. **Word count of NOW related paragraphs.** Coders will highlight paragraphs and sentences that relate to NOW only. These paragraphs, highlighted in Microsoft Word, will be calculated for total NOW related word count.

7. **Number of graphics.** Write in the number of photos/graphics with the story by looking at the bottom of the link from LexisNexis.
8. **Tone.** Rate the tone of the entire story in relation to NOW by circling the appropriate number. Decide whether the tone of the article is neutral or not, then circle the appropriate number for the resulting tone. Circle 5 for entirely positive, 4 for moderately positive, 3 for mixed, 2 for moderately negative, 1 for entirely negative, and 0 for neutral.

An entirely positive statement in favor of NOW would be, for example, “The agenda of the National Organization for Women advanced equal opportunity in the workplace and helped women fight sexual harassment.” If this type of statement is the only statement in the article with a tone, then the article would be coded as positive.

Again, an entirely negative statement against NOW would be, “The National Organization for Women attacked traditional American family values with its fight for abortion rights.” If this type of statement is the only statement in the article with a tone, then the article would be coded as negative.

9. **Helping/advocacy frame.** Read the story and note which of these frames are present. Code 0 for not present and 1 for present. Add all the 1’s in this group together.

Helping frames would include words or phrases that would be seen as being good for women, good for society, good for business, and/or good for legislation and policies. These actions would be in relevance to NOW—as in, certain actions or events in the article performed by or related to NOW members.

Giving prominence to NOW's issues would be considered a "helping" frame, since it is "advancing a cause." These issues only concern the actions, views, and participation of NOW and its members. For example, each of the categories below is listed on the codesheet and examples are given as to what would deserve a "1" for each:

- Good for women (including members): NOW promotes obstetric and gynecological care for lower-income women of color.
- Good for business/economy: NOW hosts workshop for women in business.
- Good for society (family structure, culture, etc.): NOW rallies for domestic violence victims' rights.
- Good for legislation/policy/legal process: NOW lobbies for a bill to pass in Congress that would allow for equal opportunity in the workplace.

10. **"Disruptive/hurting frame"**. Read the story and note which of these frames are present. Code 0 for not present and 1 for present. Add all the 1's in this group together.

Hurting frames would include phrases that would be seen as being harmful or disruptive for women, society, business, and/or legislation and policies. If an article includes an issue that the audience may perceive as divisive, this does not necessarily mean that it would be hurting frame. It would only have a hurting frame if someone in the article clearly states that it is hurting business. The article would not be considered negative unless someone in the article makes that particular point—for example, stating that NOW was destroying American families with a gay agenda or pro-abortion stance. Each of the categories below are listed on the codesheet and examples are given as to

what would deserve a “1” for each:

- Bad for women: NOW’s members are at odds with each other on allowing lesbians to be members.
- Bad for business/economy: NOW boycotts a company because of the CEO’s anti-gay stance.
- Bad for society (family structure, culture): NOW members and members of a conservative pro-life women’s group disagree on abortion rights.
- Bad for legislation/policy/legal process: NOW lobbies for a bill in Congress to fail.

10. **Issue.** Determine the major issue in the article. Write 2 for the major issue (only one of these per story), 1 for a mention in the story, and 0 if the issue is not mentioned at all. In the study, issues in the story are coded as either being the lead issue, mentioned or not mentioned. For an item to be the lead issue in an article, it is the one mentioned first AND most prominently in the story. If more than one issue is included in the lead paragraphs, the one that is given the most space or words in the article is considered the lead issue. Each story can only have one lead issue. Lead issues will be coded as “2.” All other issues mentioned in the article will be considered a mention and coded as “1.” If an issue does not appear at all in the news article, it will be coded as “0”.

- **Sexual freedom.** Defined as women’s ability to engage in sexual activity outside the confines of marriage or traditional hetero-normative, monogamous relationships. For example, young women engaging in pre-marital sexual activity.

- **Workplace equality.** Defined as equal pay, equal opportunity for promotions and compensation, and equal treatment from superiors as pertaining to coworkers. For example, women earning the same amount of money as a man for equal positions.
- **Body politics.** Defined as issues relating to physical appearance, such as breast implants or eating disorder.
- **Lesbian/bisexual/transgender issues.** Defined as political or social issues involving the LGBT community. For example, marriage equality.
- **Sexual harassment.** Defined as unwanted sexual advances or misuse of power in the workplace. For example, an employer threatening to terminate a female employee's job unless she engaged in sexual activity.
- **Violence against women.** Defined as issues and reform concerning victims of domestic violence, rape, or physical abuse toward women. For example, female victims of domestic violence being able to prosecute their batterers.
- **Child care.** Defined as rights and availability of child care for working women. For example, women having available and affordable child care so that they may work outside the home.
- **Portrayal of women in entertainment.** Defined as roles and portrayal of women in movies and television. For example, women only portrayed as prostitutes on a certain television show.
- **Women in leadership positions.** Defined as women in power in business. For example, female CEOs.
- **Women in male-dominated workplaces.** Defined as issues concerning

women who work in traditional male-dominated fields, such as business, science, or manual labor. For example, women as engineers or as heads of companies.

- **Challenges to traditional femininity.** Defined as any challenges or defenses of traditional feminine roles, including but not restricted to motherhood, heterosexual marriage, religious beliefs that uphold traditional femininity/motherhood/private sphere, and not working outside the home. For example, lesbian women identifying as “butch” women.