

A study sponsored by the Forum of Executive Women

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## **Gender differences in local media:**

**Coverage of male and female sources and business leaders in Philadelphia area newspapers.**

**Presented March 31, 2006**

Research by Temple University Department of  
Broadcasting, Telecommunications and Mass Media

# Genesis - FOEW Media Watch Study

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- Long-held belief by Forum Members that there is a gender bias against female leaders in local media
- In the past, Members have pointed to a single article as evidence of bias and have inconsistently given reporters and/or editors feedback
- This study was designed to gather objective data to either support or refute gender bias in our local newspapers and to establish a benchmark for possible future studies
- Media included: Philadelphia Inquirer, Daily News, Camden County Courier Post, Philadelphia Business Journal

# Research Process

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## METHODOLOGY

- Comprehensive study included all articles published over a 6 month period that referenced local business, non-profit, political and educational leaders
- In addition, Temple conducted a focus group with representatives from three of the four papers studied

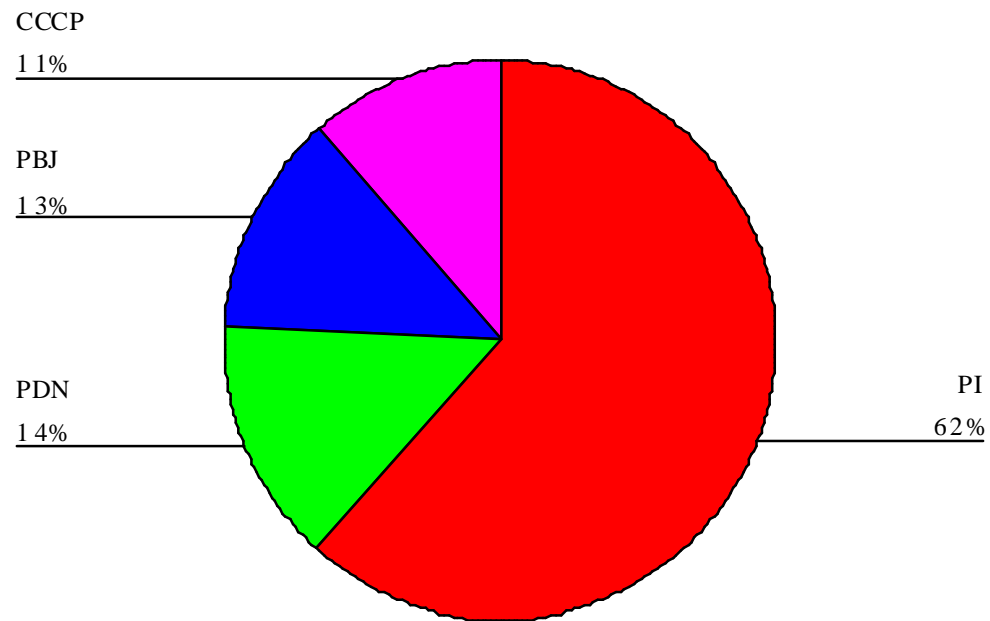
## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What differences exist in the frequency with which female and male professionals are covered in local media?
- What differences exist in the nature and tone of coverage female and male professionals receive in local media?

# 237 Articles from 1/27/05 - 7/25/05

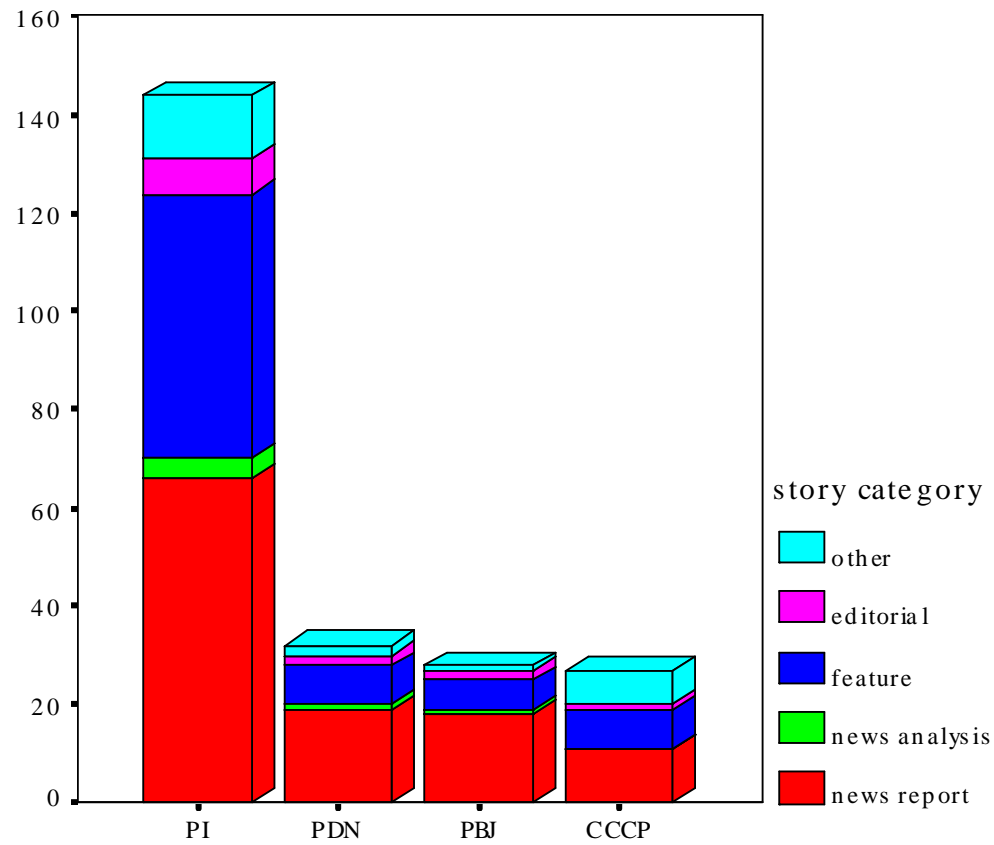
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Newspaper articles



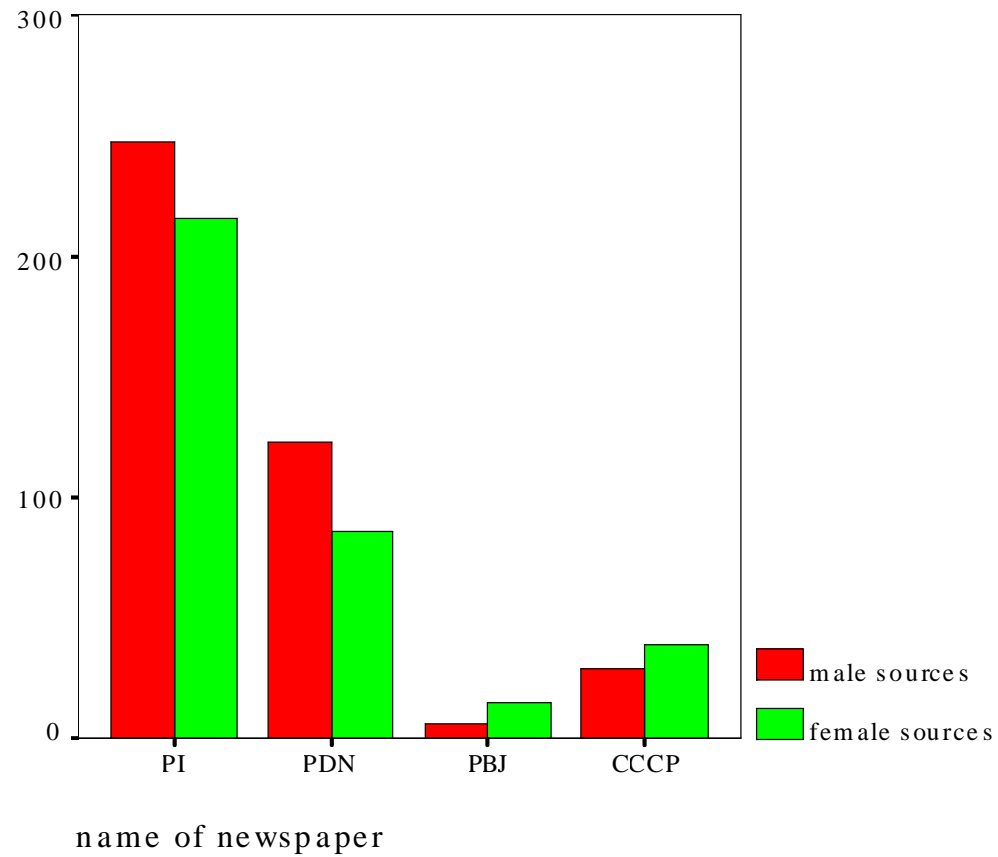
# Distribution of story categories in sample

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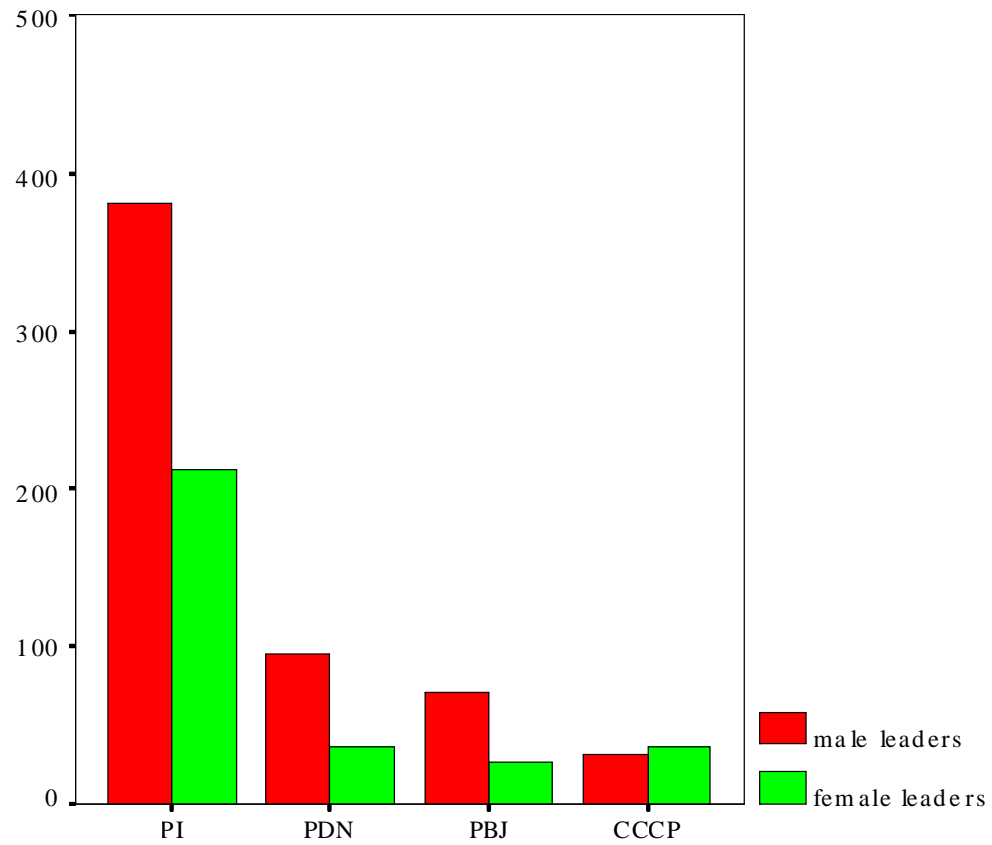
# Distribution of male/female sources

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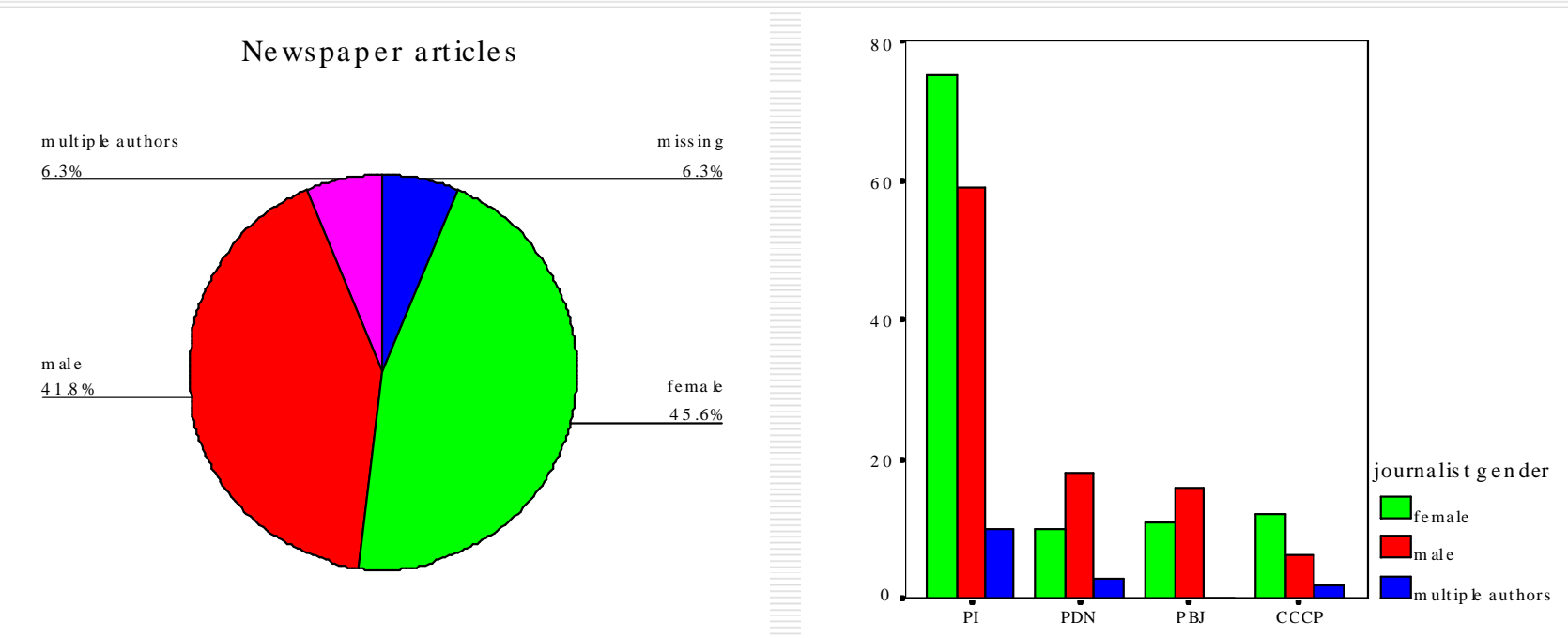


# Distribution of male/female leaders

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# Journalist gender



## Journalist Gender

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- ❑ Males author news analysis/reports, women author features
- ❑ Males author hard news/women soft news
- ❑ Male writers more likely to use male sources who are professionals and politicians while female writers are less likely to do so

## Temple Journalist Focus Group - Additional Issues

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- Some female sources are more likely to decline requests for interviews, decline to be quoted by name and failed to call back in a timely manner
- Question: Do gender guidelines currently exist for writing in local print outlets?

## Important findings: Differences in quality of coverage

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- References to appearance and/or clothing of female sources/leaders more frequent (but difference very small)
- Leader frame used less often on women, personal frame (personal traits and/or family) more prevalent for women (but difference very small)
- Mention of marriage/children more frequent for female sources/leaders (but difference very small)

# Summary Conclusions

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- Story type, news category, and newspaper orientation influence tone and nature of coverage
  - Male journalists, male sources, and male leaders most often correlate to hard news stories
  - Female journalists more likely to cover soft news, but not necessarily use female sources in features
  
- Gender differences persist, but less quantitative and more qualitative
  - In general, while females are more prominent in soft news, when featured in hard news, they were covered similarly to males with the exception of references to appearance, which were more frequent for females
  - Differences of a more subtle nature are also associated with story type/category