

The Gender Initiative

The New York Times



Why Launch a Gender Initiative?

Editorial --

→ Elevate gender as a news topic; use gender as a lens through which we view the world

Strategic --

→ Connect with new readers; broaden our reach; make The Times feel relevant to a broader audience, engage women specifically

Mission --

→ Amplify new voices; aim for gender parity in our news and opinion report

Above all else, Engagement --

→ Engage new audiences with our journalism by approaching our work in fresh, new ways



OK, But Like, What Is 'Gender' Anyway?

Gender is one of those slippery subjects, kind of a beat, kind of a way of seeing things

- It's identity, masculinity, femininity, sexuality
- It's power and hierarchy; it's how we relate one to another
- It's the private sphere and the public sphere
- It's the rise of women and the silencing of women
- It's new ways of looking at the world, new frameworks that have long been overlooked because they weren't the norm.
- It's the news! Front and center in so many stories since #MeToo

Hypothesis: This is an topic that traverses cultures, that engages new reader segments



'Gender' In the News

We identified gender as a topic of interest long before we broke Harvey or #MeToo ricocheted around the world, but the news cycle has kept it center stage...

→ 2016 | Election of Donald Trump ... leads to global women's marches in 2017 and beyond

→ 2017 | Sexual harassment / #MeToo ... moves beyond Hollywood to workplaces globally and raises the issue across the world

→ 2018 | Record numbers of women running for Congress in the U.S.

→ 2018 | This week alone #MeToo is atop the news ... Bill Cosby sentencing, Brett Kavanaugh shakeout



'Gender' Outside the News Cycle

Gender is also outside the news; something that defines the everyday...

- Overlooked, obituaries in The Times for notable women who never got them (Charlotte Bronte and Ida B. Wells)
- All In One Piece: One person's journey of top surgery
- Sex in the Gray Zone: 45 Stories of Sex and Consent on Campus
- New Rules Summit: Women, Leadership and a Playbook for Change → live journalism!
- Rites of Passage: Essays that explore notable life transitions and events, big and small
- Watch this space!



OVERLOOKED

Since 1851, obituaries in The New York Times have been dominated by white men. Now, we're adding the stories of other remarkable people.

'ALL IN ONE PIECE'

"I had no idea you would think I was more experienced."



Who's Reading What?

Broadly, we see differences in how men and women consume coverage, and what they consume --

→ Gravitate toward different topics and lines of coverage

→ Gravitate toward different approaches to storytelling and story formats (Narrative! Visuals!)

→ Building on the narrative idea... Articles about people, with personalities at their center, highlighting struggles, interpersonal relationships and social issues

Also --

→ Tendency to comment less (but it depends on the topic)

→ More likely to read stories shared on social platforms; less likely to turn pages on site



Can We Better Engage Women?

Based on what we know about women's engagement patterns...yes! We think these will reach new audiences while shifting entrenched perceptions of The Times that it's "not for me"

→ **Instagram** | for targeting younger, female audiences who might not think The Times is for them.

→ **Women x Facebook x Politics** | giving women a new space to talk politics, engage with our coverage and find common ground with people who have different political perspectives

→ **Newsletter** | providing an alternative perspective on the news, 'where women rule the headlines' hosted by our gender reporter



Whose Voices Do We Share?

*Looking critically at all aspects of our news report, what **choices** are we making that could turn people off?*

→ **sources** | whom do we choose to quote?

→ **subjects** | whose stories do we choose to tell?

→ **roles** | who is portrayed as in what ways? (expert vs. victim for example)

→ **visuals** | who is represented in our photography?

→ **bylines** | who is tapped to write, when there is a choice?

→ **live** | who sits on panels, who represents us in the media?



Case Study: Quoting More Women

Some thoughts...

- Women are out-quoted by men by a factor of 3 to 1
- Not quoting women perpetuates the idea that men are the best experts
- Quoting women provides fresh perspective and diversity of opinion rather than the same old ideas (especially from people who have been quoted multiple times)
- Awareness of the problem doesn't seem to move the needle; data, spreadsheets, goals and tools may be necessary for real change
- Quoting women is just the tip of the iceberg, but it's a start



Thanks!

→ New York Times newsletter, Gender Letter (sign up!)

→ Instagram, @nytgender (follow us!)

→ Facebook, Voting While Female (check it out!)

→ Francesca, @FrancescaDonner | francesca.donner@nytimes.com

