PAID FAMILY LEAVE & THE MEDIA:

A NARRATIVE POLICY FRAMEWORK

by

NICHOLE A. HORN

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Abstract

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Nichole Horn, Ph.D.

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2020

Supervising Professor: Rod Hissong, Ph.D.

This study seeks to understand how paid family leave laws influence traditional gender roles and stereotypes. The mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative, a prominent concept within feminist circles, assumes particular gendered roles that include women's responsibility for unpaid labor within the home. The implications of these gendered roles leave women in an economically disadvantaged position. Given the media's influence in policy making and function to echo current social values, this study utilizes the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) to investigate how the media frames these policies, and whether that framing helps to dismantle traditional gender narratives. This study finds that as these policies are debated, passed, and finally utilized by individuals the media increasingly presents the issue of paid family leave in a fashion that challenges traditional gender roles assumed by the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. This research contributes to the literature on state level paid family leave, a relatively new phenomenon in the U.S. and often-overlooked subject in policy studies, as well as, extends the use of the NPF. Feminists and gender advocates will find the degendering of unpaid labor in media coverage an advancement of the feminist cause. Gender equality advocates should use these findings as evidence for the continued push for paid family leave policies in additional U.S. states.

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Introduction

Are men and women all that different from one another? The only biological differences between the two are those of reproductive hormones and organs (Naftolin & Butz, 1981), however, the differences between the two appear to be much more. Until the 20th century, most women were confined to work within the home, and many nations did not provide adequate education to prepare girls for work outside the home (Wollstoncroft, 1792). The consensus was there was no need to educate girls and boys similarly because girls' lives would not require them to possess such knowledge, unlike young boys who were expected to work and engage in politics in the public sphere (Elshtain, 1981). Traditionally, women were expected to become wives and mothers, as the laws of coverture treated them more as property rather than humans with agency (Wollstoncroft, 1792; Elshtain, 1981). Even after coverture laws were abandoned, the traditional viewpoint remained and is still present in our modern society.

This research takes the position that the overarching narrative of women is analogous to that of mother. This is not to say that all women will become mothers, but that women are groomed to become mothers. Many feminist authors claim that young girls are taught the necessary skills and qualities to one day be a successful mother (Butler, 1990). Young girls are given baby dolls to 'care' for and then replicate the behaviors of actual mothers. Adolescent girls are taught how to behave in a 'ladylike' fashion so they too can one-day land a husband and have a family. Judith Butler (1990) argues girls are taught how to act, dress, make up their face, etc. in order to market themselves to men in order to find a partner. Object relations theorists, in the name of psychoanalysis, contend that girls and boys develop their gender identity during the first

few years of life as a reaction to the relationship with their primary caregiver, often their mother (Chodorow, 1978). In this vein, boys and girls will go through different processes of individuation, leaving boys to distance themselves from the mother and girls to internalize the role (Appelrouth & Edles, 2007). These feminist perspectives argue that both girls and boys are groomed for specific roles within society. How individuals understand and interact with the world around them has much to do with what that unique society deems acceptable behavior. Individuals' behaviors are regulated, and their experience constituted, by societal expectations and norms. To conform to societal expectations people will engage in self-regulation to avoid punishment. By conforming one's behavior along these lines of societal norms grants legitimacy to them. Conversely, those who engage in behaviors challenging these cultural norms are, in essence, testing the validity of said norms. Gender norms and expectations are deeply rooted in Western society. While there are vast differences between the laws, cultural norms, and customs of nation states, what many share is a traditional Western perspective of what constitutes appropriate male and female behavior.

During the 20th century, many women in the United States moved into the paid labor force. Their entrance into the labor force and experience since has not been the same of men who have always occupied the space. Since women are expected to provide care for children, the home, and their husbands their work life balance is malfunctioning in term of gender equality. These two obligations, paid labor and unpaid labor, compete for time and energy, leaving women the inability to specialize in any type of labor. Many mothers work part-time to negotiate their time constraints or exit the workforce altogether to care for new children. While there is nothing wrong

with these choices, what is problematic (at least for feminists) is that these choices leave women in an inferior economic positon. Several studies have identified a higher rate of women interrupting their careers in order to serve as the primary childcare provider in the home (Bianchi, 2000; Hochschild, 1989). Even highly educated, career focused women are taking time outs from their careers at rates three times their male counterparts and regularly cite "family responsibilities" as their reasoning (Stone & Lovejoy, 2004). Working part-time or having less work experience limits women's ability to generate the same level of economic security enjoyed by their male counterparts. This research also notes that the 'choice' for women to engage in such behavior is also faulty. While many women feel they have elected to limit their workforce exposure to care for their families, this 'choice' does not acknowledge how traditional gender norms influence or dictate such behavior (Williams, 2000).

This research will argue that societal gender expectations, or gender narratives, in the United States are limiting, constraining, and insidious. Michel Foucault's (1977) position on power claims it is omnipresent. Laws limit individuals' behaviors and societal expectations guild conduct. From this perspective, individuals conform to expectations for fear of punishment. The fear of being arrested, the fear of being mistaken as a man if you are a woman, the fear of being perceived as a bad mother. While power is pervasive Foucault offers an interpretation on the use of power as not one which simply allows power to be exerted for the purpose of control but also where power can be used to subvert culturally accepted standards that may cause harm or oppress some categories of people. While women are taught to be mothers (and men breadwinners), and society expects that of them, doing the opposite helps to dismantle the stereotype, traditional gender roles, or narrative of women. In the name of fairness,

gender roles are limiting to men as well. The male breadwinner narrative that men are expected to follow prioritizes masculinity and the position to be the sole income of a household. Traditional gender narratives must be dismantled for true gender equality to be realized.

This research posits that a breakdown of gender norms is necessary for women to be freed from their primary role within the home, and the responsivities aligned with that role. The duties of the homemaker are unpaid which insinuates that women are responsible for unpaid labor. This relationship between women and unpaid labor suggests men's work is legitimate because it is paid. Many studies have found that women take on a larger percentage of household and childcare duties over men (Bianchi et al, 2000; Fuwa & Cohen, 2007; Craig & Mullan, 2011). In order to combat the expectation that only women are responsible for the unpaid labor of the household, I argue, a societal change must occur. As a Western society, which claims to have found gender equality, the breakdown of labor (particularly unpaid) between men and women is quite the opposite. How do we go about legitimizing unpaid childcare and household labor as appropriate for men? Remember, men have gender expectations that also regulates their behavior. I expound that providing compensation for what is traditionally perceived as unpaid labor will begin to challenge and eventually dismantle the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative which is a derivative of traditional gender expectations.

This research does not suggest a necessary governmental policy requiring mothers or women to be financially compensated for childcare or household labor. The goal of this author is not to provide compensation yet maintain the status quo, but rather challenge the status quo. Paid family leave policies provide an opportunity to contest

traditional gender norms by legitimizing family care as actual or legitimate labor. It is

expected this would contribute to men and women feeling equally responsible for what

is now unpaid family labor or women's work. While many men might enjoy the full

time responsibility of caring for their children, the stay at home dad, it is not a

legitimate option for men as it is a violation of the gender norms they are required to

uphold. The violation occurs on two fronts, (1) childcare is a mother's responsibility,

and (2) men are to engage in paid labor in order to fulfill the father breadwinner frame.

One must also acknowledge men enjoy an economic boost by becoming fathers, known

as the fatherhood premium, as they are able to devote more time to their jobs versus

their female partners (Glauber, 2008; Killewald & Garcia-Manglano, 2016). By

contrast, mothers suffer a motherhood penalty as employers subconsciously

discriminate against them by viewing them as less committed to their jobs, given their

added unpaid responsibilities (Bernard & Correll, 2010). By enacting paid family leave

laws the line of men's and women's work, as well as paid and unpaid labor begin to

blur. The blurring is precisely what must happen for a breakdown of gender

expectations to be realized.

 The United States lags behind other Western nations in regards to mandated

family friendly policy. Addati, Cassirer, and Gilchrist (2014) find that of the 185

countries included in their sample, only Papua New Guinea and the United States do

not offer any paid family leave. How is this possible? This research asserts that the

lack of paid parental leave policies in the U.S. inhibits gender equality from being

achieved as traditional gender expectations are being maintained by the status quo.

While at a national level the United States does mandate unpaid family leave through

the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), there has been movement toward gender

equality at the state level. Eight states, California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington have all passed paid family leave policies. Employees in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Washington will not enjoy these benefits for several years as the policies were very recently passed, and these states are only in the first phase of implementing the taxes that will cover the monetary benefits. The paid family leave policies do vary slightly across these eight states, but generally they offer both men and women a paid opportunity to step away from work to care for family while maintaining a portion of their income. One would assume that as more and more states pass similar laws the federal government may feel compelled to enact a national level paid leave policy.

Simply passing paid family leave policies is not enough to demolish traditional gender norms, but it is a start. For gender equality to be successful, gender narratives must shift. This is much easier said than done. Winning hearts and minds is much more difficult than passing federal policies. We have laws that criminalize racial discrimination, but racists are still found throughout the U.S. To breakdown gender narratives, society as a whole must possess the attitudes necessary for gender equality. There are a number of institutions that help to shape the opinion and behavior of individuals and possibly bring about social change. Yinger (1983), while focusing on ethnicity, identifies factors that can impede social change, such as power structures, religious institutions, cultural values, or economic or political competition. Movements seeking social change have utilized the media to deliver their message to the masses through extensive coverage; however, this must work in tandem with favorable framing for the movement to be viewed favorably by the public (Gamson & Wolfsfeld, 1993). This research is interested in how the media portrays paid family leave policy. The way

in which the media frames paid family leave policies has the ability to influence

individual attitudes that in turn influence societal expectations (Anastasio, Rose, &

Chaptman, 1999; Brettschneider, 2005). It is completely possible for the media to

report on paid family leave policies but still maintain the narrative that women are

responsible for childcare and vis a vi household labor. When the media covers paid

family leave policy by framing it as a benefit to working mothers, the narrative of

women is supported or reinforced, and gender equality is no further closer than it is

now. However, if the media frames paid leave in a fashion that promotes a new benefit

for fathers, then this research asserts this act as a challenge to the established gender

norms.

This research project is interpretive by nature, meaning one cannot simply

evaluate media coverage objectively through content analysis. As a feminist researcher,

my views do indeed act as a lens for which to conduct this study. Some positivist

scholars may balk at the research technique of content analysis as unscientific, however

many qualitative researchers believe no research is purely devoid of bias (Breuer &

Roth, 2003; Roulston & Shelton, 2015). Social scientists should not strive for

objectivity, but rather acknowledge their subjectivity as I do (Peshkin, 1988). Alan

Peshkin (1988) argues the failure to recognize one's subjectivity and develop a project

that does not account for those subjectivities is truly what bias is. Confronting my own

positionality, while utilizing my standpoint as a woman, creates a research project that

is honest and rich (Devault, 1990; Smith, 1987; Collins, 1998).

This project conducts content analysis on newspaper articles from states where

paid family leave policy has been enacted and utilized to evaluate how the media

frames said policies. It is expected that gender norms will be challenged throughout the

reporting of paid family leave policies and I assert that this type of coverage filters through to individual level attitudes to produce a change in gender narratives. This research project applies the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) in the evaluation of newspaper articles. The utilization of the NPF adds to the existing literature as little research in policy studies has utilized it and none have done so in the context of family friendly policy. In addition, little research has been conducted on paid family leave policy at the state level in the U.S. because it is relatively new. While California passed paid family leave in 2002, residents in Connecticut, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Washington cannot access their benefits for several years. Not only is this research current and innovative in its technique, but also relevant to all individuals as everyone is constituted by gender narratives.

Literature Review

Family Friendly Policy

Terms such as family friendly or family responsive policy are often discussed in feminist circles due to the challenges of work and life balance experienced by many employees, specifically women and mothers (Lewis & Cooper, 1987; Higgins, Duxbury, & Lee, 1994; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Davis & Kalleberg, 2006; Sholar, 2016). The definitions of what these policies are (Berry Lound, 1990), demonstrate the need of employees to address the stress associated with work and family obligations (Lewis & Taylor, 1996; Thomas & Ganster, 1995), to the need of organizations to retain employees and reduce absenteeism (Lewis, Watts, & Camp, 1996). Scholars since the 1990s have been interested in family friendly policies. However, individuals who are not familiar with the feminist narrative, do not have children, or even those uninterested in public policy discussions may be unaware of what is even meant by family friendly or family responsive policy. Glass and Fujimoto (1995, p. 382) define family friendly policies as "any benefit, working condition, or personnel policy that has been shown empirically to decrease job-family conflicts among employed parents." Family friendly or family responsive policies include measures such as maternity or parental leave, both paid and unpaid, flexible work schedules, and even subsidized childcare, to name a few. Family responsive policy includes provisions to cover parental leave or childcare as well as the ability to take time off work to care for other family members, such as elderly parents or sick spouses (Barry Lound, 1990; Davis & Kalleberg 2006).

While Americans may perceive family responsive policy as a modern development, the first family responsive policy was passed in Switzerland in 1877. At that time, the Swiss government approved the first maternity leave policy, granting women eight weeks of unpaid job protected leave at the birth of a child (Sholar, 2016). Six years later, Germany enacted a paid maternity leave law (Gauthier, 1996). By World War II, most developed nations had implemented laws to allow female workers paid maternity leave (Gauthier, 1996).

The United States lags behind other industrialized nations in regards to government mandated family responsive policy. Sweden provides 480 days of paid leave for parents after the birth or adoption of a child, and to promote greater involvement by the "minority" parent 90 of those days are reserved for the father. Parents in Iceland are each granted three months of paid maternity or paternity leave, as well as three additional months to be shared by the parents (Sholar, 2016). In their study for the International Labour Organization, Addati, Cassirer, and Gilchrist (2014) found that of the 185 countries included in their sample, only Papua New Guinea and the United States do not offer any paid family leave policy for parents. The United States did pass a federal law mandating job protected leave for the care of a new child or other family member in 1993, more than 100 years after the first law in Switzerland.

History of Federal Leave Policy in the U.S.

The first federal law in the United States addressing gender equality in the workplace was the Equal Pay Act in 1963. This law forbids discrimination in regards to wages, meaning men and women must be paid the same wage for the same job (Evens and Nelson, 1989). The following year, Title VII of the Civil

Rights Act was passed, which forbids discrimination in employment on the basis of sex. Unfortunately, benefits were often denied to pregnant women, but since not all women are pregnant discrimination of this fashion was permitted. Several years later, in 1972, the amended guidelines of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission allow women to use temporary disability benefits to recover from events resulting from pregnancy. This was a big win for U.S. women workers as it was the first time actual benefits distributed to women to recover from pregnancy were required. These benefits were expanded even further in 1978 when the Pregnancy Discrimination Act was passed by congress. This law disallows discrimination in regards to hiring or benefits for women who are pregnant. The Pregnancy Discrimination Act also requires employers (with 15 employees minimum and who offer health benefits) to provide health benefits to pregnant women that also cover the costs associated with pregnancy and childbirth (Sholar, 2016). These laws, however, failed to provide job protection for women after the birth (or adoption) of a child. In 1984, the Family Employment Security Act (FESA), the first version of FMLA, was written but never officially introduced into Congress. FESA would allow any employee who could not attend work, temporarily, to take 26 weeks of job protected and unpaid leave. Seniority and benefits would be held during the leave time of the employee. The authors intended the law to apply to all employees and for reasons other than pregnancy, such as personal serious illness or a spouse's disability.

Kovach's (1987) analysis of earlier versions of the Family and Medical Leave Act remind us that Patricia (Pat) Schroeder, a Democratic House Representative from Colorado, introduced the Parental and Disability Leave Act in 1985. Eventually this act became known as the Family and Medical Leave Act. If

passed at that time the law would have required employers with at least fifteen employees to grant unpaid leave to an employee for the adoption or birth of a child, to care for a parent or child with serious medical issue, or their own serious illness or temporary disability. The Parental and Disability Leave Act died in Congress in 1985 and again when it was reintroduced in 1986 (Wisensale, 1997). Pat Schroeder reintroduced the bill in 1987 under the name of Family and Medical Leave Act to solicit additional support from congressional representatives supporting the agendas of elderly Americans (Wisensale, 1997). Interestingly, a Republican counterpart of Schroeder's introduced a competing bill on parental leave that would have greatly restricted which employers were included in the policy regulation and the length of the leave granted (Wisensale, 1997). Neither of these bills passed through the congressional votes in 1987. The Family and Medical Leave Act was again introduced in 1990 and 1992, but these times it was approved by both congressional chambers only to be vetoed by then President George Bush (Elison, 1997). Crampton and Mishra (1995) claim it was Bush's ideology that prevented him from signing the Family and Medical Leave Act into law. President Bill Clinton signed the Family and Medical Leave Act into law in 1993 after mild bipartisan support for it in Congress (Elison, 1997). It was the first piece of major legislation signed into law by President Clinton (Koenig, 1993). The Family and Medical Leave Act allows qualified employees 12 weeks of unpaid and job protected leave to care for a new child, sick parent, child or spouse, or own illness. FMLA was the most recent federal policy passed regarding job protection for employees needing to care for their family, a quarter of a century ago.

U.S. and Unpaid Leave Policy

One may wonder why the federal government needed to further address family responsive policy. Bureau of Labor Statistics surveys demonstrated the passage of FMLA increased employee family leave availability. Prior to the passage of FMLA in 1993, less than 40% of full-time workers in medium and large firms were offered paid or unpaid parental leave (Reich, 1993), and 20% of comparable workers in small firms (Reich & Abraham, 1994). After FMLA was established, parental leave availability increased to 84% of employees of medium or large firms and less than 50% of small firm employees (Reich, 1993; Reich & Abraham, 1994). These BLS surveys indicate the majority of the covered employees were offered the 12 weeks of unpaid leave outlined under FMLA. While FMLA has been U.S. law for 25 years, due to the strict eligibility requirements for firms and workers, only about 60% of overall employees in the United States have the ability to utilize the benefits of FMLA (Gornick, Ray, & Schmitt, 2008; Heymann & Earle, 2010; Adema, Clarke, & Frey, 2016). First, not all firms are covered; only those with 50 or more employees are required to abide by FMLA standards. Additionally, employees must have worked for a firm for a minimum of 12 months (prior to the leave) for a total of 1,250 hours a year before they are eligible for FMLA benefits. While the implementation of FMLA increased access to unpaid leave for many Americans, it left others without relief.

Several studies have concluded that unaffordability explains why covered employees decline unpaid leave granted under FMLA protections (Lerner, 2015; Heymann, 2005). According to survey data from the 1996 U.S. Commission on Family and Medical Leave, the main motivation for two-thirds of employees who are eligible for leave but did not utilize the unpaid leave was because they could not

afford the loss of wages (Kerr, 2015). Simply, many families could not afford to add

one mouth and subtract one income, which is why many feminists find it necessary

to advocate for paid family leave policies (Palazzari, 2007; Kornfeld; Lapp & Lapp,

2016). Even if FMLA provided paid family leave benefits some workers would still

not qualify for said benefit because either they had not worked enough hours in the

previous year to qualify or the small firm that employs them is exempt from

providing said family leave benefit. It would certainly benefit a greater number of

American workers if the eligibility requirements for FMLA benefits were scaled

back.

State Expansion of Family Responsive Policy

While the federal government has been asleep at the wheel in regards to paid

parental or family leave, some states have expanded benefits for parents and

families. Beginning in 2002, there have been eight states, and even some municipal

cities, who have passed paid family leave policies. The states that have been

successful in passing paid family leave include California, Connecticut,

Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington.

Table 1.1 outlines the status, accepted reasons to take leave for an employee, the

Table 1.1 U.S. states with paid family leave laws

State	Status	Reasons for Leave	Duration of Leave	Wage Replacement
CA	Adopted 2002; effective 2004	1.care for a child after birth, adoption, or foster care placement; 2.care for seriously ill child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, or parent-in-law; 3.care for own disability, including pregnancy	6 weeks for family care	60-70% of employee's weekly earnings; percentage determined by salary (higher percentage given to lower income employees)
CT	Adopted 2019; begins 2021; fully implemented 2022	1.care for a child after birth, adoption, or foster care placement; 2.care for a family member with a serious health condition; 3.care for own serious illness; 4.handle situations related to family violence;	12 weeks for family care	In 2022, 60% of employee's weekly earnings, not to exceed 60 times the minimum wage

		5.donate an organ or bone marrow; 6.deal with situation related to military deployment of family member		
MA	Adopted 2018; begins 2019; fully implemented in 2021	1.bond with a newborn or adopted child within 12 months of birth/adoption; 2.care for family member with serious health condition; 3.care for own serious medical condition; 4.deal with active duty family member	12 weeks for family care	In 2021, up to 80% for lower wage earners, percentage declines as salary increases, benefits not to exceed $850/weekly
NJ	Adopted 2008, effective 2009	1.care for a child after birth, adoption, or foster care placement; 2.care for seriously ill child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, or civil union partner; 3.care for own disability, including pregnancy	6 weeks for family care	66% of employee's weekly earnings, up to $650 per week
NY	Adopted 2016; begin 2018; fully implemented 2021	1.care for a child after birth, adoption, or foster care placement; 2.care for seriously ill child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, grandparent, grandchild, or parent-in-law; 3.address certain military family needs	In 2018: 8 weeks; in 2019/2020: 10 weeks; 2021 and on: 12 weeks	In 2018, 50% employee's weekly earnings, up to cap equal to 50% of statewide average weekly wage (capped at $648 at 2015 levels); by 2021, rate increases to 67% (capped at $868)
OR	Adopted 2019; begins 2021; fully implemented in 2023	1.care for new child; 2.care for own serious health condition; 3.care for family member's serious health condition	12 weeks for family care	TBD
RI	Adopted 2013; effective 2014	1.care for a child after birth, adoption, or foster care placement; 2.care for seriously ill child, parent, spouse, domestic partner, grandparent, or parent-in-law; 3.care for own disability, including pregnancy	4 weeks for family care; 32 weeks for own disability	4.62% of employee's wages paid in highest quarter of base period; minimum is $84 per week; maximum is $795 per week
WA	Adopted 2017; begins 2019; fully implemented 2020	1.care after birth or adoption of child; 2.care for family member's serious illness or medical event; 3.care for military-connected events; 4.care for own serious illness or medical event	12 weeks of family care	Percentage of employee's earnings; not to exceed $1,000/week

duration of available leave, and the available level of wage replacement while on

leave in these states. Compared to many European countries, paid family leave

policies in these eight states still have room for growth. New Jersey currently offers

66% wage replacement for employees but once Massachusetts' law takes full effect

in 2021 it will offer the most generous benefits at up to 80% for low-income

employees. Are the eight states where paid family legislation has been successful

unique? What factors contributed to the successful passage and implementation of family responsive policies in these states? While this question has not been address specifically, research regarding the passage of parental leave laws has. Williamson and Carnes (2013) find that states with a higher percentage of Democratic members in the state legislature as well as those states with a higher percentage of female legislators offer more substantial parental leave policies, in general, than states with a higher membership of Republican lawmakers and fewer female legislators (Williamson & Carnes, 2013). Williamson and Carnes find that states with large evangelical Christian populations tend to offer less substantial parental leave policies. This is not surprising, as evangelical Christians tend to possess conservative or traditional values in regards to gender roles within the home. This mother homemaker/father breadwinner viewpoint renders family leave policy unnecessary in their perception. While the research of Williamson and Carnes does not directly investigate paid family leave policies, their research supports previous claims that Democratic and female lawmakers are motivated by their supporters who are likely more liberal and therefore likely more supportive of family responsive policy (Jones, 1994; Williamson & Carnes, 2013; Erikson, Wright, & MeIver, 1993; Hill & Leighley, 1996; Mayhew, 1974).

      While state laws do tend to reflect the needs and desires of the population of the state, due to our democratic system, it seems impractical to believe women (or families) from the 42 states that do not have paid family leave laws are without the need of them. As feminists would claim, the lack of paid family leave laws is a problem for not just women but also all individuals with families (Slaughter, 2015; Petts, Knoester, & Waldfogel, 2019).

The Woman Problem

What does it mean to be woman? This seems like such a simple question to answer. Possessing the correct biological parts, a vagina, breasts, and uterus, determines if one is a woman. If one agrees with this assumption then what about individuals who are a-sexed? Or women without breasts, even after a mastectomy? Once a woman has a hysterectomy then she is no longer a woman? If we, as a society, use the biological determination for the establishment of womanhood we neglect to differentiate between sex and gender. Simone de Beauvoir in her groundbreaking book, The Second Sex, instructed us long ago "one is not a born, but rather becomes a woman (Beauvoir, 1953, p. 283.) According to Beauvoir there appears to be nothing essential of womanhood, it is not innate, nor determined by biology. Women, and men, are created and molded by society, not simply born this way. Judith Butler's theory on gender performativity suggests that gender is a performance. Women demonstrate their womanhood or femininity, through the way they dress, style their hair, walk, talk, act, etc. (Butler, 1990). Society dictates appropriate behavior for men and women and individuals are taught how to 'do gender' correctly (Butler, 1999; Witt & Wood, 2010).

This perspective implies that individuals are simply social dupes without any agency. However, pairing Butler's theory on gender performance with Foucault's position on discipline allows for agency to coexist with construction. In his work, Discipline and Punish, Foucault (1977) theorizes that modern techniques of discipline in the criminal justice system are discrete, not overt corporal punishment. The goal of these gentler techniques is not to cause bodily harm, but to gain psychological control over the behavior of another individual (Foucault, 1977). In line with Foucault's theory on disciplinary power, all individuals in society

constitute their own identities, based on social classifications, through disciplinary coercion. Identities, such as good citizen, healthy person, or homosexual, have latent meaning and content guiding individual behavior to conform (Green, 2010). Actors, utilizing agency but also engaged in disciplinary coercion, locate identity through this process Green (2010) refers to as subjectification. Young children who identify as a good student engage in subjectification by following the rules and earning good grades, as the just police officer wields his power fairly and in accordance with the law.

Societal meanings attached to these identity categories are significant because they reflect values of respected social institutions as well as provides cues on interaction with others. Until 1973, homosexuality was classified as a mental illness by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), which could be treated by conversion therapy. The A.P.A. has since altered their stance on homosexuality and the validity of such therapies. Homosexuality was also criminalized in Western nations through the sodomy laws of the twentieth century. Bullough (1977) argues the state sanctioned and medically supported desire to correct sexual deviants in Western nations was simply an extension of Christian values that demonize non-reproductive sex. People who engaged in subjectification to identify as homosexual would also internalize the social deviance attached to that category.

Therefore, while women are socially constructed to carry out the role of woman, Foucault's work on discipline is also at play, meaning women use agency to adhere to societal norms for fear of punishment (Witt & Wood, 2010). Punishment here would include self-loathing for not 'achieving' womanhood or femininity, but could also come from outside forces like media messages regarding or describing what it means to be a good mother or wife, other individuals making judgements, or

not being able to use the 'correct' bathroom. Salih (2007) argues individuals'
exercise agency by either following gender norms or subverting them and
undergoing punishment. While the meaning of woman is socially constructed
women feel compelled to fall in line and follow norms which leave them in a
disadvantaged economic position, which is discussed in the follow sections.

The social construct theorists would argue that no one individual is
essentially anything, but rather socially constructed through their experiences within
their own unique society. This research takes the position that personhood is not
biologically predetermined or wholly socially constituted. The classic nature versus
nurture debate assumes such simplicity. A more modern theoretical perspective
argues, biologically determined characteristics are entangled with societal constructs.
Material feminists acknowledge the embodiment of social, cultural, and political
understanding in biological attributes (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008; Warin, 2015). We
have assigned words, with different meanings, in order to identify everything. Chair,
zebra, child, big foot. Language is a tool we use to understand the world and interact
with the world around us. Social constructs do not end with simple language, the
simple sounds we put together to create a word or an identifier. Social constructs
also account for historical meaning and cultural understanding, what Foucault would
term discourse (Foucault, 1972). For example, consider shades of skin color. The
words we have to identify skin color, e.g. white, tan, ebony brown, have meaning
beyond the simple color adjectives. Identifying as white often assumes some sort of
Western privilege. To have black skin in the United States conjures notions of a
history of continued discrimination, economic disadvantages, or criminal intent.
Given this theoretical position, woman does not, and cannot, simply mean you have
the 'correct' biological pieces. The material feminist argument maintains that bodies

are not simply linguistic signifiers, as social constructionists propose, but rather the entanglement of biological realities that affect the material or lived experience (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008; Lock, 2013).

Narrative of Woman

The narrative of woman synonymous with the narrative of mother. Since the earliest feminist writings and permeating through nearly 250 years of evolving feminist theory this sentiment has rung true. Mary Wollstonecraft wrote in 1792 that women do not exist to serve the pleasure of men, which challenged a commonly held notion that women's purpose was to serve as property in a marriage contract and produce children (Wollstoncroft 1792). Wollstoncroft was writing with the French Revolution in the background and thus engaged in the debate of inalliable rights, as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke, and concluded that these natural rights extend to women as they are human beings, and not chattel, equal in the eyes of God. She advocates for women's education so they, too, may contribute to society, and that leaving women uneducated harms the nation as mothers are the ones who educate young children. She contends that women are perceived as silly and incapable of rational thought by demonstrating that girls' educational tools instruct them in how wield their appearance into the stability of marriage instead of the art of politics or business (Wollstonecroft, 1792). While Wollstonecroft does suggest women have the right to pursue a career she speaks of the rights of women in a fashion that confirms their current place in society, as property of her husband's and a mother. More than 150 years later in the U.S. Betty Friedan birthed a second wave of feminism from her widely received book, The Feminine Mystique. Friedan's interviews with homemakers revealed that women were deeply dissatisfied with their

place in the home and longing greater personal fulfillment. Her analysis of women's magazines and advertisements show how they revere motherhood and portray career women as unhappy, thus promoting the notion that women's destiny is wife and mother (Friedan, 1963).

Deeply rooted in western thought is the public/private dichotomy. The public sphere includes systems of government and economy where individuals earn and spend income or participate in government. The private sphere is designated the home realm. According to traditional liberalism, within this private sphere the government is limited, if not unseen. Men have had the luxury of engaging both the public and private spheres since the dawn of modern societies; women however have only been permitted to the public sphere in the last 150 or so years since the laws of coverture were removed (Elshtain, 1981). The role women play within the private sphere is one of mother, wife, caregiver and nurturer (Pateman 1988; 1992; Kaufman 1989; Poortman & Van Der Lippe, 2009). The public/private dichotomy offers a simple distinction of 'work' for men and women, a gendered division of work or labor.

This public private separation suggests men were built for earning a paycheck while being employed in the public sphere and women were built for homecare and childcare. The word built implies some innate or essential component to engage in childcare. Those who look to biological differences to explain women's subjugation often note nature's influence, which minimizes arguments that seek to change gender exploitation (Lorber, 1993). The biological position is not helpful to the feminist cause as it does not offer women any avenue for emancipation. No gene has been found that causes some people to be more successful than others at cooking or caring for children. All people can be taught some level of skills necessary for

these activities. One might argue that women have the biological ability to breastfeed so vis a vi, they should care for children. A woman, or man, without the ability to secrete milk can still feed a baby. What about women who cannot give birth or do not menstruate or lactate? Are they not women (Jagger, 1983)? Transsexuals who have transitioned to female may still have the ability to produce sperm, an experience associated with males, yet they are socially presented as female (Kessler & McKenna, 1978). Biological differences between males and females have been challenged by acknowledging that male and female human bodies are basically made of the same material, except for their procreative hormones and organs (Naftolin & Butz, 1981). Kessler (1990) finds that biology is used quite arbitrarily in sex assignments for intersexed babies at birth. For instance, the size of penis determined whether an infant would be classified as a girl and subject to a sex-change surgery. Turns out Beauvoir was correct, women are made.

As Beauvoir, and many other feminists (West and Zimmerman 1987; Butler 1990; 1999), argue, women are taught and groomed to be a woman: how to act, how to dress, how to be a mother, which qualities to exude, and which to silence. These skills and traits are often viewed as necessary to be successful at obtaining a husband and then motherhood. Historically, this path has attracted women who could not own property independently and whose husbands, if the women had worked, would have accessed their income under the laws of coverture. Given these constraints, the role of wife and mother has been an attractive option for most women until the 20th century, so preparing girls for that role makes sense. Let's be honest, if the law or societal norms discourage women from working in the private sphere, then leveraging their caregiver skills in exchange for a husband who will put a roof over their heads is a logical option. Drawing on the public/private dichotomy and a

gendered division of labor the gendered frame, or social narrative, of female homemaker/male breadwinner is born. Feminists have identified this frame as beholden to traditional gender expectations. However, society has progressed and now many women work outside the home. That being said, women are still viewed as the primary overseer of the home and what happens within it.

Sociologists, political scientists, economists, and feminists have studied the division of housework between spouses over the last few decades. Time and again, women were found to carry the lion's load of household labor, likely due to the societal norms of the division of labor based on the public private dichotomy. Bianchi et al. (2000) studied the division of housework between men and women using several historical data points. They found that between 1965 and 1995 women decreased their time allocated to housework from an average of 30 hours a week to 17.5 hours a week. Men had increased their participation in housework from 4.9 hours a week to 10 hours a week during the same time period. More recent research demonstrates a continued disparity between spouses in divvying up the housework. Fuwa and Cohen (2007) found that women reported performing on average 13.2 hours of housework and men 6.6 hours of housework. What is interesting about their study is that childcare tasks were not included just household chores. Seemingly, given the assumption of mothers being the primary caregiver, these women surveyed underreported the time allocated to 'taking care of the home.'   Using time surveys from Australia, Denmark, Italy, and France, Craig and Mullan (2011) found on average mothers reported more time spent on childcare then fathers. The difference of time spent on childcare between these parents was not narrow, but rather mothers reporting, on average, twice as much time allocated to childcare than fathers.

In The Second Shift, Arlie Hochschild articulates a new phenomenon within the feminist cannon, the second shift. Hochschild (1990) describes the unpaid 'second shift' of household and childcare labor women engaged in after their paid shift within the traditional labor market ends. Through detailed interviews and household observations, Hochschild concludes that woman not only engaged in housework and childcare more regularly and for longer on average than their spouses engage, but also feel more responsible for the unpaid tasks that need to be completed to maintain a working household. Her work offered a language to describe the realities of working mothers in the U.S., and also elevated this type of 'unpaid labor' as incredibly relevant and intrinsic to nurture human life. I acknowledge Hochschild did not interview any gay or lesbian couples, single parents, parents with older children, or parents who were not employed full time. While these are fair criticisms, they are not necessarily meaningful for this study as I am concerned with the overall narrative of 'woman' and how it is either upheld or challenged. More recent data from Australia makes claims of increased time in childcare by fathers, which was surpassed by the increased time in childcare by mothers at the same time. Both mothers and fathers experienced an increase of paid work time during the same period.

Female Labor Force Participation

Women's labor participation has increased during the 20th century to now include paid labor. In 1900, 20% of all women worked and earned a paycheck in the United States, but by the end of the 20th century 60% of women over the age of 16 were employed for pay. As Costa (2000) describes, it was not until the 1950s that married women surpassed the threshold of 20% participation in the labor force, and

those percentages increased as the decades passed. However, Costa reminds us that many of these married women were initially serving as clerical workers or secretaries in the mid-1900s. Costa explains women fit these roles well as firms were not significantly impacted by women leaving the job for several years to take care of their small children. These entry level and clerical jobs flourished as firms became more bureaucratized, and men were promoted within their own areas of specialization. Feminists would point out that the role of women within the office resembled that of a wife within a household. A secretary who maintained schedules, ensured the boss had lunch, and kept notes reflects the duties of a wife in a home. Perhaps the gendered segregation of the labor force was maintained, or at least influenced, by societal expectations of men and women. Women have entered and increased their participation in the public sphere, but are also still burdened with the workload of the private sphere. While women's participation in the paid labor force has changed, the narrative of woman still regulates their experience.

One should not address women in the workforce and ignore the economic implications of their womanhood. Studies demonstrate that on average women earn less than their male counterparts, are less likely to be promoted and more likely to work part-time than men (Deschacht, 2017; Becker, 1981; Nemoto, 2013; Blau and DeVaro, 2007; Blau and Kahn, 2006). These studies demonstrate a disparity between men's and women's work experience, performance, and outcomes. Much of the literature focuses on the theory of specialization to explain why there is a 'motherhood penalty' and 'fatherhood premium.' Economist Gary Becker (1981) suggests married men and women invest more time in activities that they have a comparative advantage. Meaning men specialize in paid labor in order to benefit from the wage gap demonstrated in the labor market, and married women specialize

in housework as that's where she would have a comparative advantage (Killewald & Gough, 2013). This argument pairs well with data demonstrating women engage in a larger percentage of housework or childcare than their husbands. The motherhood penalty can also trickle down to non-mother female workers as societal norms predict that at some point in time the non-mother will become a mother and therefore will need to adjust her work performance. This is why the narrative of woman is analogous to that of mother. Perhaps employers have the same hesitation towards female employees without children as those with children since the expectation is that she will one day be a mother with multiple obligations demanding her time. Trying to find a reasonable work life balance is very difficult for women who want to work full-time but also have the obligation of housework and childcare. This is partially why more women than men work part-time (Deschacht, 2017).

A man, whose wife is the primary laborer of the home, can spend more time focused on his paid labor; thus specializing in work. Some working mothers also decide to leave the workforce entirely because when trying to balance home duties with part-time work, they feel as if they are not performing to their maximum ability at the job (Stone and Lovejoy 2004). Not specializing in paid labor leaves women in a disadvantaged position for wages and promotions. Chances are remote that women will ever specialize in work to the degree of their male counterparts if the female narrative dictates them as a mother first. Women have displayed an increase in household work after marriage due to societal gender expectations that women should care for the home.

Unpaid Labor

Unpaid labor in the home is women's work. Reiterating the assumptions of separate spheres ideology, women are in charge of running the home even given their addition and advancement in the paid labor market. Cooking, cleaning, managing schedules, and caring for children are all unpaid tasks, and societal expectations and behavior indicate that women engage in these activities at a higher rate than men. This is where FMLA and unpaid family leave laws become very problematic. Yes, both mothers and fathers have the ability to take unpaid leave to care for a newborn or other family members, but as the data from the 2012 Department of Labor Family and Leave report show women are taking longer leaves than men to care for a new child, on average 58 days versus 22 days respectively (Sholar, 2016). One may present an economic argument to explain why this is the case, perhaps because the husband earns more money so the family would be at a larger economic disadvantage if he were the one to take leave. Reimann's (1997) research describes how lesbian couples divide their work and family obligations. This research is interesting because both partners are biologically able to have a child, so the couple is able to decide which partner will birth the child, and how household work is divided. While the sample used is small, 25 couples with children (not from previous relationships), the data is significant. Neoclassical economic arguments suggests the lower wage earner births the child, since this partner risks less financial loss. This did not seem to impact the decision of the couples in this sample. Reimann (1997, p. 161) states, "Economic considerations were rarely mentioned and were clearly secondary in the decision-making process of who would bear the first child." From this study, it appears that biological motherhood is an emotional decision, not an economic one, as some researchers would lead us to

believe. Interestingly, 11 of the 12 couples with two full-time employees, the birth

mother earned either the same or more than the non-birth mother. This last point

contradicts economic arguments, though it could be explained as the higher wage

earner having access to greater leave benefits from their employer. Yes, families

have the ability to decide what is best for their unique situation, however the data

suggests that many heterosexual families in the U.S. follow traditional gender roles:

father breadwinner and mother homemaker (Hochschild, 1990). While women have

the ability to earn income and do, they are still challenged by separate spheres

ideology, leaving them responsible for the fulfillment of unpaid labor.

Paid family leave policies are beneficial to fathers as well as mothers.

Feminists, with whom I concur, advocating for these policies suggest their

implementation leads to a more egalitarian split of unpaid labor within households.

Evidence from cross-national time-use data support this point (Gornick & Meyers,

2008). In Finland, Norway, and Sweden, which all have generous paid parental leave

policies, fathers assume a larger share of unpaid household and child labor compared

to fathers in the United States. Of the time spent on unpaid labor by couples in these

countries fathers assume 33% of the total share in Finland, 35% in Norway, 36% in

Belgium, and 31% in the United States (Gornick & Meyers, 2008). Furthermore, a

larger percentage of fathers in the United States expressed wanting to spend more

time with their children compared to fathers in European countries, 95% versus

81.5% (Gornick & Meyers, 2008). In Gerardo Meil's analysis of European fathers,

he finds that men who take leave are 1.84 times more likely to engage in daily

housework over father who do not take leave (Meil, 2013). These data suggest that

not only do women enjoy a more egalitarian division of unpaid labor in countries

where paid leave policies have been enacted, but the traditional narrative of mother homemaker/father breadwinner in the U.S. leaves men wanting more too.

Advocating for paid family leave policies by feminists is twofold. One, since women are more likely to use unpaid leave laws to care for new children, women are most likely to benefit from the addition of pay to go along with the leave. Two, providing paid leave helps to legitimize unpaid labor care as male labor, thus assisting in the dismantling of traditional gender narratives. Only in the complete shattering of gender norms will men and women be free of the chains they are required to wear. Historically, women's work was unpaid house and childcare labor but the influence of tradition and traditional gender roles maintains this unfair labor division in the United States.

Significance of Media

Media is a term used to describe a number of concepts. Media could refer to the technological or material apparatuses which deliver messages, such as newspapers, newscasts, radio programs, advertisements, and even newer forms such as Facebook and Twitter. Others may conceptualize media as a group of actors including journalists, editors, bloggers, producers, etc. For public policy studies, media is often perceived as a group of actors that have the ability to exert influence on policy or public opinion. This research parallels the policy studies' perspective of media as the concern is how the media impacts societal conceptualizations of gender narratives.

"THE FAKE NEWS media is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American people," tweeted President Trump (Trump, 2017). Some, such as President Trump, declare the media is an enemy of the people. Jones (2004) found that strong partisan

conservatives generally disfavored the news media by what Domke et al. (1999) claim is an unfounded perception of a liberal slant in political media coverage. Many others find the role of the media significant within a democratic society. John Stuart Mill argues that a free press is necessary in democratic systems and serves as the forum for public debate. Mill suggests that any argument or position, if worthy to base governmental decisions from, should have the ability to stand the test of public critique (Barry, 1993). The mass media is then the arena for which free thought is developed and challenged.

Donohue, Tichenor, and Olien (1995) present several perspectives on the role of the mass media in society as a watchdog, lapdog, or part of a power oligarch. They posit that an independent free press with the authority to challenge powerful groups or institutions and represent the interests of the populous is viewed as a watchdog. Others have echoed this perspective, claiming the media's purpose is to investigate and act as an adversary of the government (Schulte, 1981). The lapdog perspective assumes the press is at the disposal of the elites of wealth and power (Mills, 1956). Where in the watchdog perspective the media engages in a role of conflict, the lapdog media would only engage in such conflict as to defend the powerful from those who seek to challenge it (Donohue, Tichenor, & Olien, 1995). Alternatively, Gans (1979) describes journalists, news sources, and audiences in an environment of information tug-of-war. This third perspective assumes the media is part of a larger power oligarchy, or the fourth branch of government (Arterton, 1984; Abramson, 1990). This perspective is demonstrated by the press promoting progressive policies aimed to assist citizens or collaborating with the public to fight corruption in the national government (Linsky, 1986; Spargens, 1979). A more recent focus of media investigations regarding agenda setting seems to support this

perspective as these scholars argue the media are powerful co-actors to determining

which societal problems are awarded a place on the national agenda (Semetko,

Blumler, Gurevitch, & Weaver, 1991). This last perspective, one of agenda setting,

demonstrates how the media is often reflective of current public opinions. Others

have accepted that the media has the ability to influence and shape public opinion or

simply echo current social norms (Anastasio, Rose, & Chaptman, 1999). What one

can assess from the findings of media experts is that what is communicated through

media channels is on the minds of people located within that society.

Media's Role in Policy

For some time policy scholars have been interested in how the media

influences public policy creation. Media investigations have provided a rich

literature regarding the selection of particular facts and characters to define societal

problems and solutions as well as possibly influence policy changes. Media

influences the policy making process in two ways, according to Crow and Lawlor

(2016). It engages in agenda setting, which is selecting issues to garner media

attention to demonstrate the issue's importance to the public and policy makers and

it frames and constructs narratives, i.e. attaches meaning to a particular policy.

Many studies have demonstrated how narratives used by media, stakeholders, and

citizens to describe policies can be significant in shaping public opinion

(Baumgartner & Jones, 1993, 2009; McBeth, Shanahan, & Jones 2005; Stone 2011;

Zaller 1992). While influencing public opinion and public policy are not the same

concept, the two are inextricably linked. Under a democratic system of government,

as the U.S. has, public opinion should impact public policy outcomes; this

perspective is fundamental within the normative theory of democracy (Key 1961;

Lasswell, 1941). A democratic system assumes policy makers are responsive to public opinion. The media may not have a direct causal effect on politician responsiveness, but through the media's power on public opinion (Iyengar & Kinder, 2010), media messaging influences policy outcomes.

As previously mentioned the media has the ability to frame issues by highlighting certain dimensions and providing context and structure for individuals to make sense of any given issue (Jones & Song, 2014). Contradictory to rational choice theory, framing effects are demonstrated by individuals altering their preferences for a policy when presented with different, but equally logical, words or phrases. For instance, if the messaging of a policy indicates that implementation will result in a 5% unemployment rate many people will reject it, versus a message which states the policy will result in a 95% employment rate (Druckman, 2004). Both interpretations are correct, but framing effects produce different opinion outcomes. Another perspective of framing, which is most useful in this research, references a difference in qualitative considerations. For example, in a discussion of hate groups participating in public demonstrations, one may focus on their constitutional right to free speech or how these rallies cause a public safety issue (Druckman, 2004). This type of framing, what some have identified as issue framing, is significant for this research as I evaluate how media messaging supports or challenges traditional gender narratives.

Does media messaging, or the use of particular frames, impact individual attitudes or perceptions? Brettschneider (2005) argues that individuals' perceptions of reality often align with the reality the media presents more so than objective reality. Consonance, or uniformity in media reporting, enhances this effect (Noelle-Nuemann, 1972; Rolle 2017). As this research is concerned with how long-standing

gender narratives are challenged (or not) in the media and how those messages might influence society's position on gender roles and expectations, consonance of gender portrayals in reporting is significant. If the aggregate media coverage of paid family leave policies challenges traditional gender norms, the mother homemaker/father breadwinner frame, then we can assume that readers may be cognitively influenced in their opinions of appropriate gender expectations. While the media is not responsible for dismantling gender norms, their messaging can indeed influence the public's opinion on the matter. Interested in how frames impact individual attitudes toward voter ID laws, Wilson and Brewer (2016), ask for individual opinions on voter ID laws and then present a statement, or frame, which insinuates that voter ID laws harm other individuals' voting rights. After being presented with this 'harm' frame, the overall support for voter ID laws diminishes amongst respondents. Gillig et al. (2018) finds similar results of media influence on individual attitudes toward transgender people and policies in their study. Survey respondents either watch a TV show depicting a transgender storyline or not, and afterward their opinions of transgender people and policies are evaluated. Individuals who are exposed to the transgender story line report more positive attitudes toward transgender people and policies, at a significant level, than those who are not exposed. Their research is particularly significant to my study as transgender individuals challenge traditional gender norms and expectations. It appears that individual attitudinal changes can and do occur through the consumption of media messages.

Theoretical Framework

The origin of gender stereotypes, modes of their transmission, manifestations of them, and proposed methods for dismantling their restrictive natures are

intersecting and complex issues. This chapter has provided the necessary foundational knowledge for one to understand the purpose and implications of the theoretical framework that guides this research. The theoretical framework of this project assumes the general adherence to gender roles as supported by Butler's theory of gender performance (Butler, 1990). These traditional gender roles have led to the acknowledgement and presence of the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative.

Previous research served to demonstrate the economic implications of these gender roles, as discussed earlier in this chapter. These studies found that on average women earn less than their male counterparts, are less likely to be promoted and more likely to work part-time than men (Deschacht, 2017; Becker, 1981; Nemoto, 2013; Blau and DeVaro, 2007; Blau and Kahn, 2006). Feminists would argue this is problematic in terms of gender equality. To realize economic gender equality, this research argues traditional gender stereotypes, found in the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative, must be dismantled. This dismantling will not, and cannot, occur quickly, which is why the research will only investigate its progression, if any, over time.

The position that egalitarian policies, such as paid family leave laws, can assist in realizing gender equality is paramount in this project's theoretical framework. Evidence that paid leave policies lead to a more egalitarian split of unpaid labor in the household, as found by Gornick & Meyers (2008), support the argument of this research which asserts that paid family leave policies will lead to economic gender equality. This argument is based off Becker's (1981) theory of specialization, which allows one to assume that a decrease in women's responsibility to unpaid labor will increase their ability to succeed in the private sphere.

Given the media's ability to influence the perceptions of policy through framing, its role in agenda setting and policy formation, and its function to echo current social values it is appropriate to use an evaluation of media coverage on paid family leave laws to understand how, and if, these laws are dismantling the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. The theoretical framework of this project allows one to question whether these laws have any impact on dismantling traditional gender roles broadly.

Gender narratives, while resilient, are not incapable of being altered, or ideally done away with altogether. The woman narrative assumes all women are, or will metaphorically become, mothers. Again, this would be less of a problem if mothers (women) were not responsible for unpaid labor and also suffering the economic consequences of such conventions. While some states have made the leap to offer paid parental leave policies, media interpretations of said policies may have an influence on individuals' perceptions or how society views the appropriate role of men and women in the household.

Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodology executed in this research project. The goal of this project is to explore whether and how the media, specifically newspapers, perpetuates gender norms while reporting on paid family leave or challenges said norms. This researcher acknowledges that the existence of progressive policies does not guarantee the dismantling of a gender narrative that leaves women at an economic disadvantage as described in the previous chapter. This research asserts that women will enjoy the same economic treatment as men only when the mother homemaker/father breadwinner gendered narrative is dissolved.

Feminist epistemology assumes the subject cannot rise above the split between themselves and the object (Sprague & Kobrynowicz, 2006). Humbly, the interpretivist subject is aware of their unique position to the object (Smith 1987; 2005). Dorothy Smith (1987) is well known in feminist literature as one of the originators of standpoint theory. She argues that what an individual knows of the world is affected by where one stands. This is not to say that we do not have the ability to see the world in any other way, but rather an argument that suggests no one can have complete objective knowledge (Smith, 1987; Appelrouth & Edles, 2007). As the subject, the researcher is conscious of her own social construction and that of the world around her, and understands how her values and positionality influences her interaction with the objects, newspaper articles in this case, of research in this study. The feminist researcher is interested in the resilience of gender stereotypes in our society, especially as progressive public policies in this realm continue to

expand. This feminist scholar often acknowledges gender stereotypes and gendered

forms where others do not. Not to say that feminists are consciously seeking

evidence of a gendered society, but through their lens as feminists they take notice to

gender differences. Patricia Hill Collins expands on Smith's epistemological position

by noting that race, class, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, etc. all work in

tandem to impact our standpoint from which we know the world (Appelrouth &

Edles, 2007). Collins situates her work within the critical theory tradition and argues

that the commitment to justice, for one's own group or another, is pivotal within the

critical theory space (Collins, 1998; 2004). This research is motivated through a lens

advocacy for gender equality, but not compelled by it. This form of activism is

supported by the traditions of critical theory, as described by Collins above.

   To discern support for or dissent of the mother homemaker/father

breadwinner norm within the media, this research analyzes narratives within

newspaper articles from each state where paid family leave has been adopted,

enacted, and available to employees. These states include California, New Jersey,

New York, and Rhode Island. As argued earlier, paid family leave is a progressive

and egalitarian policy that challenges the mother homemaker/father breadwinner

narrative. As such, an analysis of how media portrays the policy is critical to

understanding the pervasiveness of gender norms in society. Given the issue is paid

family leave, will the media frame this policy in a way that promotes gender equality

or transmit the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative? Limiting the

sample to newspaper coverage in these states allows an examination over time as the

legislation is introduced, debated, enacted, and finally utilized. In addition, limiting

the analysis to states that have policies that have been in place long enough for

individuals to receive paid leave benefits will allow the analysis of any change that

may have occurred once the policy was used versus while it was debated. A collection of newspaper articles (n=305) from a database including local and regional newspapers was generated based on the inclusion of the phrase 'paid family leave' within the headline. Figure 3.1 illustrates the geographical diversity of the 80 locations of newspapers in California from which the data is drawn. While most of
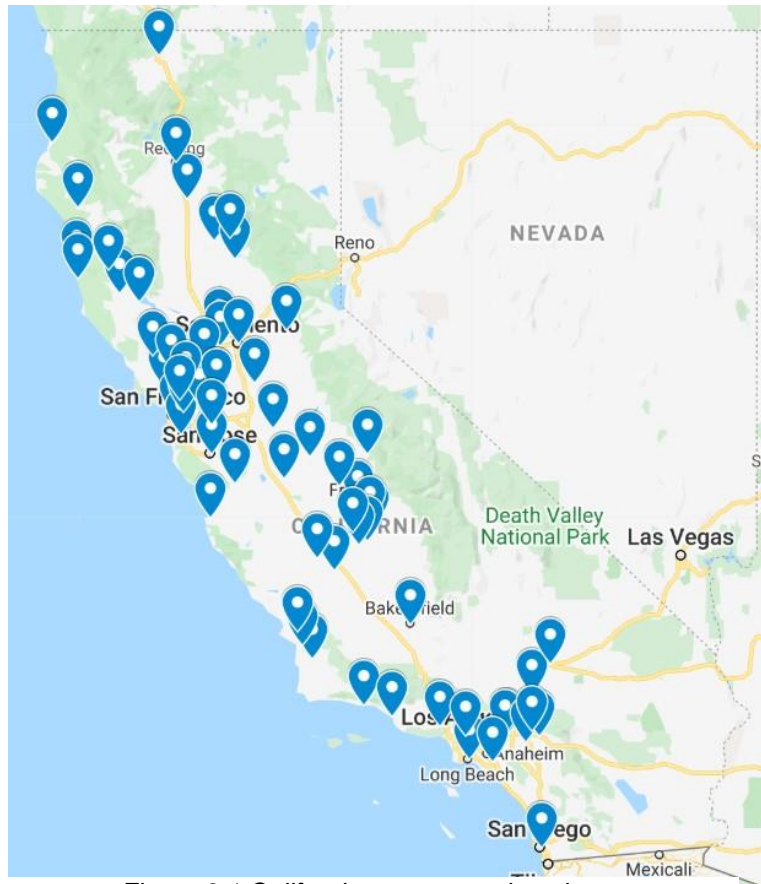

Figure 3.1 California newspaper location

the state is covered there is some lacking coverage in the rural western parts of the state. Of the 80 newspapers located in California, the circulation for half of those newspapers totaled 2,606,677, 6.6% of the state's population. The circulation size could not be determined for the other half of newspapers included in the California data, as some are no longer in circulation and no data could be located for 24 current newspapers. The eight newspapers included in this study serving the state of New

Jersey, shown in figure 3.2, also acknowledges the lack of coverage in the more rural

portions of the state. The circulation total for half of the newspapers is comparable to
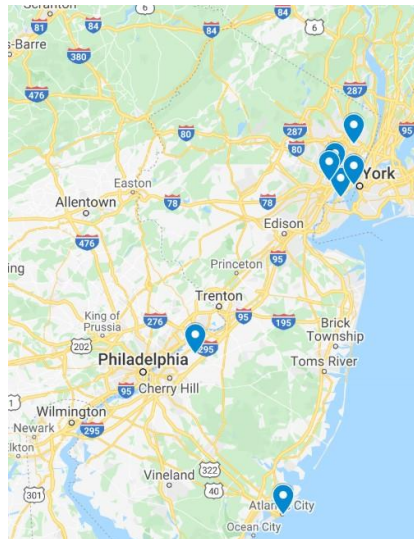
Figure 3.2 Locations of Newspapers in New Jersey

5.1% of the state's population. Again, the circulation size of half of the newspapers

included were not identified as some are no longer in production and for some the

data is not available. The locations of the 18 newspapers within the collection of

data covering New York are shown in figure 3.3. New York's newspaper coverage is

Figure 3.3 Locations of Newspapers in New York

quite geographical diverse, but again less coverage in the rural areas. The circulation

size of 10 of the 18 newspapers from New York account for 3.8% of the state's total

population. Finally, figure 3.4 illustrates the locations of newspapers included in data
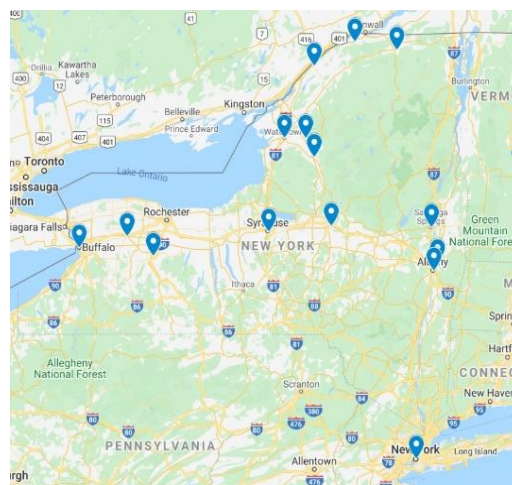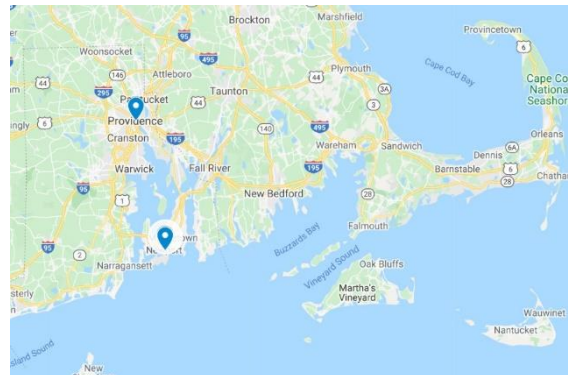

Figure 3.4 Locations of Newspapers in Rhode Island

covering the state of Rhode Island. While there are fewer newspapers located in

Rhode Island (2) versus other states included in the sample, one must remember the

smaller population of the state compared to others in the sample. Given the smaller

population, generally fewer media outlets would be necessary. The circulation of

these two newspapers combined accounts for 9.8% of the state's population. Also

included in the data are articles from the AP wire of each state, yet there was no

circulation size identified for any of these wire outlets. The data is analyzed utilizing

the technique of qualitative content analysis under the guidance of the Narrative

Policy Framework. The data includes articles published two years prior to the year of

the policy passed within that unique state through the end of 2019. California was

the first state to adopt paid family leave in 2002, indicating that January 1, 2000 acts

of the start date to data collection in California. Content analysis is utilized in the

evaluation of newspaper articles within the states offering paid family leave policies.

Content analysis allows the researcher to understand the narratives used by media

outlets who produce content consumed by individuals and also reflect the lives of

those individuals. This research utilizes qualitative content analysis versus

quantitative content analysis.

The debate on what constitutes content analysis extends from Berelson's 1952 perspective of it as "a research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" to the more qualitative perspective of "a research method for subjective interpretation of the content of text data through systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Berelson, 1952, p. 18 & Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Beginning in the 1950s content analysis as a method of study was utilized in very strict quantitative fashion. This is likely due to the adherence in many social science realms to the positivist or objective perspective (Devi Prasad, 2019). In regards to content analysis specifically, early work by Lasswell, Lerner, Leites, and Pool (Lasswell, Lerner, & Pool, 1952; Lasswell & Leites, 1965) set the foundations for the method (Devi Prasad, 2019). Researchers utilizing the method initially often worked with communication-orientated data (wartime propaganda, news broadcasts, newspapers, etc.), fell under the philosophical perspective of objective research, and viewed statistical methods as ultimately valid (Roberts, 1997). This form of quantitative content analysis, where texts are analyzed by the counting of particular words, does not suit this research project. Simply counting the number of articles that mention paid family leave does not allow one to understand the context in which the words are written. Daniel Riffe and Alan Freitag (1997) reviewed the trends of content analysis within the Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly over 25 years and while they found an increase in of articles utilizing content analysis, and a focus on their quantitative aspects, there was no mention of qualitative techniques. The interest in and utilization of content analysis eventually expanded to include more qualitative or interpretive modes in the late twentieth and early twenty-first

century in the United States, however European and German scholars had embraced the method decades prior (Devi Prasad, 2019).

Qualitative content analysis is appropriate for this research as I examine the frames used to describe paid family leave policies. These narratives encompass the definition of the problem or issue being resolved by the passage of these policies, the use of the policies, the impacts of their passage for families, employers, economy, values, etc., and broadly, the meaning these policies have in society. Qualitative content analysis reduces textual data by trying to identify patterns, meanings (either manifest of latent), or consistencies within the data (Patton, 2005; Cho & Lee, 2014; Devi Prasad, 2019). Schreier (2012) describes qualitative content analysis as a method for systemically describing the meaning of qualitative material. This research does just that by analyzing the text of newspapers and determining if the meaning of the article challenges the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. Qualitative content analysis allows for flexibility in the use of inductive or deductive approaches and even a combination of the two, depending on the needs of the research (Cho & Lee, 2014). The significant difference between the two approaches is in how the codes or categories are determined. The inductive approach draws codes, categories, and themes directly from the data, whereas with a deductive approach the researcher has predetermined categories and themes, based off previous research, to codify the data (Cavanagh, 1997; Kondrracki, Wellman, & Amundson, 2002). This research project uses the flexibility of content analysis and employs a combination of these two approaches. Finally, qualitative content analysis allows the researcher to interpret the manifest words for their latent meaning. A number of researchers utilizing this method acknowledge how interpretation of actual text is a necessary component to identify meaning (Patton, 2005; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Qualitative content analysis as a method does present concerns regarding reliability and validity (Mayring, 2000). In order to address issues of validity, scholars suggest creating a strict systematic method in which to code the data prior to data collection (Mayring, 2000; Crowley & Delfico, 1996). Weber (1990) states that consistency is key in regards to reliability and that different people should code the data in a similar vein to address this issue. Some scholars have suggested the use of multiple coders and reporting the inter-rater reliability to demonstrate a strong sense of reliability in a study (Chambers & Chiang, 2012). However, the debate over these described criticisms is even deeper. There are a number of scholars who argue that qualitative research methods are incompatible with the concepts of validity and reliability from quantitative methodology and should be abandoned (Hayashi & Hoppen, 2019; Smith, 1983; Wolcott, 1990). Other scholars advocate for replacing the concept of validity with trustworthiness or rigor (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006; Golafshani, 2003). Lincoln and Guba (1985) compare trustworthiness to address the issues that are typically associated with validity and reliability. Meaning that researchers should approach their study with credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. This study is guided by scholars who have challenged the traditional notion that quality methodological analysis is one that follows the paradigm of the natural sciences. The rigor of this research project is demonstrated in its saturation of data, well-informed structure, and systemized coding structure.

Policy scholars have previously used the examination of media frames and media narratives to better understand the influence media has on the policy making process (Baumgartner & Jones, 2009; Kingdon, 2003). While media may influence the decisions of policy makers and average readers, media also act as a reflection of

current social values. Meaning, media coverage has the ability to both influence or shape opinions as well as serve as a cue to current social norms and values. While analyzing the content of a news article a researcher is challenged to determine the motivation of a single news reporter as either advocating for a particular perspective or simply providing a recap of events occurred. This study does not attempt to judge or measure the motivation of journalists. This research is concerned, instead, with how paid family leave is presented or framed in newspaper coverage, not the motivation of the journalist. This research adds to the existing literature by examining how media coverage of paid family leave policies either support or challenge traditional gender stereotypes, specifically that of the mother homemaker/father breadwinner. Additionally, this research encompasses an analysis of the entire policy making process from agenda setting, through implementation, and reaction. This expands the current literature that typically focuses on media influence up to policy implementation.

　　　　This research utilizes the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) to determine if frames of paid family leave policy, presented in newspaper articles, challenge or support the father breadwinner/ mother homemaker narrative. When Jones and McBeth (2010) introduced the NPF a decade ago it was established as a scientific and quantitative method to studying the impact of narratives in the policy making process. Since then, scholars have used the NPF to evaluate how interest groups use particular narratives to promote their unique agendas and build public support for their policy preferences (McBeth, Shanahan, Tigert, Hathaway, & Sampson, 2010), argue that policy narratives serve as a causal variable for policy outcomes (Jones and McBeth 2010; Shanahan, Jones, & McBeth, 2011), as well as identify ideological differences in news media presentations of policy narrative heroes (Blair &

McCormack, 2016). While the use of the NPF has been broad since its development, scholars are reminded to utilize the NPF only when their research aligns with the core assumptions of the framework (Shanahan, Jones, & McBeth, 2018). These underlying assumptions include social construction, bounded relativity, generalizable structural elements, three levels of analysis, and homo narrans (Shanahan, Jones, & McBeth, 2018; Jones, 2018). Homo narrans is the idea that humans speak or communicate in story form, which is reflected in the NPF (Shanahan, Jones, & McBeth, 2018).

The NPF is fitting for this research project because the mother homemaker/father breadwinner gender frame is socially constructed, as discussed earlier, and is maintained through the adherence to gender norms and expectations. Given these concepts of gender and gender roles are fairly consistent within the modern era in the West, as supported within feminist literature, the assumption of bounded relativity is also met by this research. This project also assumes that narratives share a general structure as the NPF assumes. Narratives include distinct components which can be identified and analyzed, such as a setting, set of characters, moral to the story, and the plot (Jones, 2018; Shanahan, Jones, & McBeth, 2018; McBeth, Jones, & Shanahan, 2014). In line with NFP research, this study identifies the setting, villain, victim, hero, and moral of the story of each newspaper article analyzed (McBeth, Jones, & Shanahan, 2014; Shanahan, Jones, & McBeth, 2018; Grey & Jones, 2016). The villain is determined as the cause of the victim's strife, this may be societal norms or business needs. The victim is determined by whom the journalist presents as the entity in need of change, which seemingly would include mothers, families, or workers broadly. Finally, the hero is identified as the character who has the capability of eliminating the 'problem' of the

victim, and this study expects these characters include the government or businesses. Shanahan et al. (2018) remind scholars that characters need not have human agency and can indeed include concepts such as global warming or society. Introduced by other scholars are new categories of characters, such as "beneficiaries" who are defined as individuals who would benefit from a policy change (Weible, Olofsson, Costie, Katz, & Heikkila, 2016) or "allies" as those who are aligned with the hero but not the hero (McBeth, Shanahan, & Jones, 2005).

Another component of narrative includes the setting. The narratives published by newspapers in the states included here begin two years prior to the passage, of each state, to the end of 2019. This time frame captures the problem definition, agenda setting, and evaluation stages of the policy making process. By extending the analysis to include articles throughout the end of 2019, well after a few of the states included in this study had passed the policy, will extend the use of the NPF into new territory. The NPF was designed as a method of analyzing narratives within the policymaking process (Jones & McBeth, 2010; Shanahan, Jones & McBeth, 2018) or policy debate (McBeth, Shanahan, Tigert, Hathaway, & Sampson, 2010; Shanahan et al, 2013), and studies utilizing the framework have only measured the use, impact, persuasiveness, etc. of narratives until the policy passed. The flexibility of the NPF allows (Jones, 2018), and even encourages, new uses or alternative manifestations of the framework. This is due to the continuing development of the framework theoretically and methodologically. Using the NPF in this vein enhances the literature regarding this up and coming framework.

The moral of the story is often conceptualized as the policy solution in NPF research (Gray & Jones, 2016) or as a call to action (Stone, 2002), and as such has been identified in this study as well. It is expected that government mandated paid

family leave policy (as what was passed in the states in this study), privately offered family leave, or maintaining the status quo will be captured within this component of the NPF. The manifest or latent meaning of each policy narrative component is not found within every article. The currently accepted definition within the literature is that a policy narrative includes at least one character and reference to a policy (Shanahan, Jones, McBeth, & Radaelli, 2017). The NPF is flexible; a singular definition has not been agreed to, which allows the researcher to include or exclude aspects of the narrative as need be (Jones, 2018). This study uses an inductive approach of qualitative content analysis to build categories or themes of characters and morals of the story in the policy narratives presented in each newspaper article analyzed. Some post positivist authors argue against the measurement of narratives, claiming doing so will risk the rich and nuanced depth of content and analysis (Hajer, 1995; Fischer & Forester, 1993; Radaelli, 2000). However, with the use of the NPF here, in combination with qualitative content analysis, this is not a concern.

A third core assumption of the NPF is that it operates at three levels, the micro, meso, and macro. At the micro level the NPF is used to examine narrative influence on individuals, groups, such as advocacy groups, at the meso level, and broad cultural or institutional at the macro level (Jones, 2018; Shanahan, Jones, & McBeth, 2018). While this research does not measure the influence of narratives on the macro level, this study determines if the narratives of paid family leave challenge the mother homemaker/ father breadwinner gender norm, which is a broadly accepted social construct in the United States.

The last core assumptions of the NPF requires adherence to homo narrans, which is the idea that individuals communicate in a narrative fashion (Shanahan, Jones, & McBeth, 2018). This research absolutely supports this assumption of the

human condition. Crow and Lawler (2016) state that narratives are how people organize complex sets of facts and communicate with one another, and have also been overlooked by policy studies until recently. Stone (2011) states that while media framing may be considered more of a broad interpretation of media coverage, narrative construction (and subsequent analysis) is determined by the storyteller and includes a specific plot, causal implication, and characters. Hajer (1993) assumes the narratives journalists select to describe through their storytelling include heroes, victims, villains, and conflict, just as is captured in this study with the use of the NPF. These stories include a conflict with a beginning, middle, and end. The way journalists are taught to tell their stories, their reporting, is to address the human element of the event at hand because readers care about relatable experiences, rather than abstract societal issues. This type of journalistic writing produces an emotive response from the reader (Crow & Lawler, 2016). The literature indicates that journalists, who are individuals, create content as readers ingest it, in narrative form. Analyzing newspaper articles for this study aligns with the last assumption of the NPF, indicating that it is the appropriate framework for this research project.

This study utilized America's News media database which includes local and regional digital and print newspapers, blogs, journals, etc., though this project limited the sample to only include newspapers. The criteria for selection was the presence of the phrase 'paid family leave' in the headline of the article. In the analysis of each newspaper article this research determined if the mother homemaker/father breadwinner frame is supported, challenged or neither and is neutral, as well as identified the components of the narrative. By reviewing how the NPF components were presented or framed in each article this research determined if the article, overall, supported, challenged, or remained neutral on the mother

homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. The NPF components captured by qualitative content analysis in this study included the victim, villain, hero, and moral of the story. By using qualitative content analysis the research was able to capture the latent or manifest meaning of each NFP component within each article. In the collection of data, the section of the newspaper the article is located within, name of the newspaper, date of publication, and the state in which the newspaper is located were recorded.

Before determining NPF component themes, all of the NPF components, position on the narrative, and basic newspaper data for each article were recorded. Using this raw data, this study separated all NPF components by state and position toward the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative (challenge, support, and neural), for a total of 48 categories. Once the data was separated into these categories, this researcher reviewed the raw data for each category and identified themes by similarities in latent or manifest content of the newspaper articles, and color-coded each unique theme for each category. By counting the frequency of each unique theme within each category, main themes for each category were identified. By using a color-coding scheme similarities across states were visible to the researcher. The main themes for the victims (gender-neutral workers, gender-neutral families, and business) were then used for guidance on the deeper investigation of their interactions with other NPF components, such as the hero, villain, and moral of the story. While the female theme was not determined as a main victim theme due to its frequency, it was selected for deeper analysis due to its significance to the theoretical framework of the study. The male victim theme was not included in a similar analysis due to its incredibly low, nearly non-existent presence in the data.

Only four total articles identified a male specific victim. This analysis is detailed in the following chapter.

This research increases the understanding of paid family leave narratives transmitted by media. This analysis explores how the media changes the presentation or coverage of paid family leave over time to determine if the media increasingly challenges the gender norm in question as more time passes from agenda setting to implementation. This researcher expected to identify an increase of news articles that challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner norm as the analysis moves longitudinally. While the ideas of paid family leave may seem more radical early in the debate process, this research suggests that as knowledge of and experience with the policy expand, the narrative of the policy will also alter.

This study also analyzes the connections between identified victims within each news article and the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. What is the pattern of identified victims in articles deemed as ones that challenge the narrative and those who support the narrative? From a feminist perspective, articles that identify women as the victim and paid leave policy as the moral of the story only reproduce the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative because it infers women are responsible for the homemaker role. This research expects a large proportion of the articles analyzed to present women as the victim within the narrative, particularly when the moral of the story is determined as a need to pass a paid family leave policy. Conversely, when fathers are specifically identified as victims, perhaps of unbalanced work and life habits, and paid leave as the moral of the story, the narrative challenges the mother homemaker/ father breadwinner narrative, because traditionally only women would have these balance issues due to their role and expectation of maintaining the private sphere. This analysis also

provides rich evidence of how the media frames paid family leave policy and its relation to western values of gender norms and expectations.

Previous research on gendered media coverage finds that men appear in the media in a higher frequency than women (Matud, Rodriguez, & Espinosa, 2011), women have a greater presence in sections relating to society and culture (Mateos de Cabo, Gimeno, Martinez, & Lopez, 2014), and finally that men are associated with coverage on issues relating to government and the economy (Jia et al., 2016). As discussed earlier, the separate spheres theory present in feminist literature suggests women are associated with the private sphere and men the public sphere. Given this position, this study identifies the section of the newspaper each article analyzed appears. How does the location of articles demonstrate support for or dissent of the mother homemaker/father breadwinner norm? Are articles that challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative found in a greater presence in sections of the newspaper that are more feminine (community, society, health, or education) than masculine (news, business, economy)? If so, then one might theorize that indicates an overall broad societal adherence to traditional gender narratives because the challenge of the mother homemaker/father breadwinner frame is not elevated to the stature of male public sphere (news, business, or government) standards. It is expected to find narratives that challenge gender stereotypes more present in 'feminine' sections rather than 'masculine' sections.

This research evaluates the narratives used to describe paid family leave policy and seeks to understand how they support or challenge traditional gender norms, specifically the mother homemaker/father breadwinner norm. At a minimum, this research advances the literature of feminist theory and policy studies, as well as the use of the Narrative Policy Framework.

Results

This chapter presents the results of this project's analysis. The goal of this research endeavor is to explore how the media frames state level paid family leave policy and whether media coverage challenges, supports, or is neutral regarding the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. As argued in earlier chapters, the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative assumes specific gender roles for men and women that are associated with their appropriate sphere, as determined by separate spheres ideology (Elshtain, 1981). These gendered expectations leave women responsible for unpaid labor in the home, and in a disadvantaged economic position compared to men (Becker, 1981; Killewald & Gough, 2013). A total of 305 newspaper articles covering California (121 articles), New Jersey (90), New York (72), and Rhode Island (21) are analyzed. Of the 305 articles of this data set, 33.77% support or uphold the mother homemaker/father breadwinner gender narrative, 23.61% challenge the narrative, and 42.62% are found to be neutral on the subject.

This research captures media coverage of paid family leave from the agenda-setting period to post utilization by individuals. Figure 4.1 illustrates the percentage of articles published in each state prior to the paid family leave law passing, after the law passed and prior to utilization, and after the law was available for usage. Of the total number of articles published in California, the overwhelming majority (76.03%) were published during the post utilization time period. This is likely due to the majority of the time captured in this study is represented by the post utilization period in California since it was the first state to pass paid family leave and has been available to Californians since 2004. Interestingly, only 9.92% of the articles
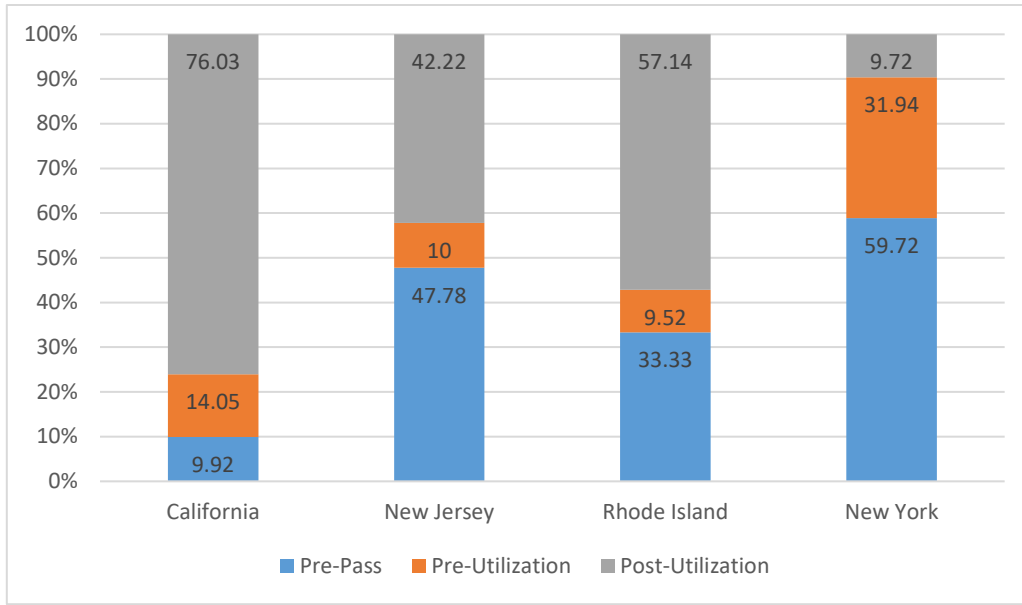
Figure 4.1 Percentage of articles published in each state

published in California newspapers were published prior to the law passing. This result could be due to the limitation of capturing data only two years prior to the passage of the law or because California was the first state to pass paid family leave in the U.S. so the topic simply did not garner much media coverage.

In New Jersey, Rhode Island, and New York there were substantially more articles, proportionally, published during the pre-pass time period, which represents the agenda-setting period, than in California, 47.78%, 33.33%, and 59.72% respectively. This project captured media coverage in New Jersey newspapers beginning in 2006, 2011 in Rhode Island newspapers, and 2014 in New York newspapers, all two years prior to the passage of paid family leave laws. This research suggests that this increased media attention in these three states during this pre-pass period is due to the increased interest in such policies, broadly, after California passed its law years before. However, the significant amount of media coverage of paid family leave prior to its passage in these states does align with prior

research that suggests the media are powerful co-actors in determining which issues make the policy agenda (Semetko, Blumler, Gurevitch, & Weaver, 1991).

The pre-utilization time period represents the time from when paid family leave was passed in each state until it was available for utilization by individuals. In California and New York that encompasses two years of media coverage, about a year in New Jersey, and less than 6 months in Rhode Island. Since the laws were more quickly implemented in New Jersey and Rhode Island, compared to New York and California, it is not surprising that only about 10% of the articles published from these states occur during the pre-utilization time period, compared to 14.05% in California and 31.94% in New York.

The post-utilization time period includes newspaper coverage of paid family leave since 2004 in California, 2009 in New Jersey, 2014 in Rhode Island, and 2018 in New York until the end of 2019. During this time period individuals in each state have the ability to utilize paid family leave laws. The high percentage of articles published during this time period in California (76.03%) could be due to how long the policy has been in affect compared to the other states included in this study. Conversely, the small percentage of articles published in New York (9.72%) during the post-utilization time period could be due in part to that the law was only available for one year at the conclusion of data collection, the end of 2019. Individuals living in New Jersey and Rhode Island have been able to utilize the benefits of paid family leave since 2009 and 2014, respectively. Newspapers from these states continued to cover the subject after individuals could utilize the benefits of the laws as 42.22% of articles in New Jersey and 57.14% in Rhode Island were published during this time period. The continued presence of paid family leave laws in the media after the law has been passed demonstrates the increased interest among

the public on the topic given the media's role in echoing current societal concerns (Anastasio, Rose, & Chaptman, 1999).

Section of Newspaper

Previous research shows that women have a greater presence in newspaper sections relating to society and culture (Mateos de Cabo, Gimeno, Martinez, & Lopez, 2014), and that men are associated with coverage on issues relating to government and the economy (Jia et al., 2016). Paid family leave policy presents a unique topic in this regards because, as the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative suggests, women would benefit significantly from the policy but the policy itself relates to government. The topic dips into both 'feminine' and 'masculine' camps of newspaper sections.

Most of the newspaper articles included in this research project are published in the news section (39.02%), but a significant number are published in the opinion (23.28%), business (15.41%), and what it referred to as feminine (14.1%) sections. Feminine sections, for the sake of this project, include family, local, lifestyle, features, and women's sections. As custom with journalistic expectations, articles published in the news sections are generally fair on the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative, because nearly half are found to be neutral (49.28%) and the other half split equally between articles which challenge or support the narrative at 25.21%. Articles published in the opinion section mostly support (52.11%) the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative, but only 18.31% challenge the narrative. Articles published in business sections have a similar breakdown as articles published in opinion sections (52.11% support, 18.31% challenge, and 29.58% neutral). Finally, articles published in the feminine sections of the newspaper

followed a similar pattern to those of the news section, and are mostly (41.86%) neutral, and split about evenly in those which challenge (27.91%) or support (30.23%) the mother homemaker/father breadwinner gender norm.

NPF Components

This research utilizes the NPF to analyze the media coverage of state level paid family leave policy. The NPF includes several components, i.e. victims, villains, heroes, and morals of the story that are embedded in storytelling (McBeth, Jones, & Shanahan, 2014; Shanahan, Jones, & McBeth, 2018; Grey & Jones, 2016). The victim component is whom the journalist presents as the entity in need of change. Villains are those who cause the victim's strife, and the hero is the character who has the capability of resolving the 'problem' of the victim. Shanahan et al. (2018) reminds scholars that characters need not have human agency and can indeed include concepts or inanimate beings. The moral of the story is viewed as the call to action with NPF literature (McBeth, Jones, & Shanahan, 2014; Shanahan, Jones, & McBeth, 2018).

Themes established in each component of the NPF are derived directly from the text analysis. For instance, 'financial loss' and 'lack of financial support' were two phrases located directly within the newspaper articles' text and this project has grouped them as the 'financial challenge' theme, as the meaning of each phrase independently is similar to the other. Direct language of 'families,' 'parents,' or 'children' were grouped as gender-neutral families as another example of how these NPF component themes were derived. A common villain theme of 'current limitations of paid family leave policy' was also identified and includes language, latent or manifest, of lacking knowledge of policy, lacking access to policy, or even

limited benefits of current policy. For individuals who lack knowledge of policy and those who lack access to paid family leave essentially find themselves without the ability to utilize the policy. For this reason, the two seemingly different villains, as presented in the article language, are grouped together because each victimizes the identified victim in similar fashions. This research evaluates each component of the NPF based on the codification of support, neutrality, and challenge of the gender narrative across each state independently first, then identifies common NPF components across the states to generate the themes presented in this chapter as NPF components. Table 4.1 outlines each NPF component theme identified in this

Table 4.1 NPF components

Position on Narrative	Victim	Villain	Hero	Moral of Story
Challenge	- Gender-neutral workers - Gender-neutral families	- Financial Challenge - Family Challenge - Limitations of current policy	- Paid family leave policy - Lawmakers	- Support paid family leave
Neutral	-Gender-neutral workers - Gender-neutral families - Business	- Financial Challenge - Family Challenge - Limitations of current policy - Paid family leave policy	- Paid family leave policy - Lawmakers	- Uncertain future for paid family leave policy - Don't support paid family leave policy - Support paid family leave policy
Support	- Gender-neutral workers - Gender-neutral families - Business - Females	- Financial Challenge - Family Challenge - Limitations of current policy - Lawmakers	- Paid family leave - Lawmakers	- Support paid family leave - Expand paid family leave

this research associated with articles that challenge, support, or are neutral in regards to the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. This data is presented broadly at first by just identifying the different NFP components found in articles that either challenge, support, or are neutral on the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. A detailed review of victim themes and their associated NPF

components will follow, which includes an analysis of the overall framing of articles covering paid family leave in these four states.

Articles found to challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative portray gender-neutral workers and gender-neutral families as victims, and financial challenges, family challenges, and current limitations of paid family leave policy as their villains. Paid family leave policy and lawmakers are both portrayed as heroes in these articles and the moral of the story is to support paid family leave policy. Gender-neutral workers, gender-neutral families, and business were victim themes among articles that were neutral on the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. Of these neutrally classified articles, financial challenges, family challenges, limitations of current policy, and paid family leave policy are all found to be villains. The heroes remain to be paid family leave policy and lawmakers here as in the articles challenging the narrative. There are several morals of the story themes found in articles that are neutral on the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. Those morals of the story include supporting paid family leave policy, don't support paid family leave policy, and uncertain future for paid family leave policy. Articles deemed to support the gendered narrative present gender-neutral workers, gender-neutral families, business, and females as victims, and financial challenges, family challenges, limitations of current policy, and lawmakers as villains. The same heroes, paid family leave policy and lawmakers, are portrayed in articles that support the narrative as do challenge it or are neutral. There are two morals of the story themes associated with articles supporting the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative, those are to support paid family leave and also to expand paid family leave.

Challenge the Narrative

A 2014 article published in California, identifies children and families, encompassed by the gender-neutral families theme, as victims, and lack of knowledge of policy as well as family obligations as villains, "We all know getting children off to a good start is an important factor in children's success in school and an important part of helping that child, once an adult, and his or her family stay out of poverty," ("Local government," 2014). The same article quotes a California woman who was thankful for the paid family leave offered in her state after she gave birth, "My husband was able to take time off from work to help me and our family get through it," ("Local Government," 2014). This article presents the victims in gender-neutral fashions by not singling out mothers as the victims, but rather children and families. Given the father character introduced in the article utilizes paid leave policy to address the family challenges of their home the article demonstrates a challenge to the mother homemaker/father breadwinner gender narrative. A significant number of articles identify employees or workers, specifically non-gendered terms, as victims with similar villains as gender-neutral family victims. Often these articles frame gender-neutral workers as having to choose between caring for their families and keeping their jobs, "Workers shouldn't have to make a decision between their family and their job…It's still an important protection for employees who are faced with a serious family leave situation. At least this way, they'll still be able to pay some of their bills," (Levinsky, 2007, p.1). The identification of a gender-neutral victim, either family or worker, does not necessarily result in the article classified as challenging the mother homemaker/father breadwinner norm. In the previous article, the character advocating the policy is a male senator and was able to utilize private family leave

when his premature daughter was born so he could care for her and his wife. This article presents a male utilizing and benefiting from paid family leave, and his position in government, the masculine public sphere, even further elevates the challenge of the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative.

Another finding was the presence of a social norm villain in articles that challenge the gendered narrative. While this villain was identified in articles published in every state, it happened very rarely. There were on average two articles published in each state which portrayed social norms as a villain. In these articles, social norms victimize parents, which is gender-neutral, and also fathers. This 2018 article, publish in the news section strongly criticizes gendered norms established by the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative:

> *Why aren't more men taking leave? Perhaps men are concerned that caring for family and going on leave will generate perceptions that they are not committed to their jobs. Studies have shown that employers are less likely to see mothers as competent and deserving of promotions. Yet large numbers of men taking leave would work against this stigma and reduce disparities between working mothers and fathers in terms of wages, workplace advancement and caregiving responsibilities… Entire families lose when only women are expected to care for children. In fact, fathers who take time off work at and around childbirth are more likely to be involved in child care later in the child's life, and those children do better developmentally… Moreover, as women's income contribution to the household increases, policies such as paid family leave become a matter of economic necessity. (Rodgers, 2018, p. 2)*

While this type of blatant dissent was rarely found in the analysis of newspaper articles, the very presence of such feminist thought in mainstream culture, the news section no less, could indicate that challenging this particular norm is not as radical as once thought.

The hero often associated with the victims of articles which challenge the narrative are paid family leave policy or lawmakers. It is of no surprise that lawmakers are a common theme identified in the hero component of the NPF, here,

as they have the ability to pass such government mandates. The overarching moral of

the story for these articles that challenge the narrative of mother homemaker/father

breadwinner is to support paid leave policy, as in the examples above. It is important

to note that a separate theme of 'expand paid leave policy' is also identified as a

moral of the story in some articles that challenge the narrative in question, but those

were only found in articles published in California and New Jersey. "The bill would

increase the eligibility period from six to 12 weeks and raise the cap on the

reimbursement an applicant can receive to 85 percent of their wages. Far too many

workers were not taking leave because they either didn't know about it or couldn't

afford to use it," (Marcus, 2019, p. 15). The distinction is important as the meaning

of expanding leave insinuates that the concept of the policy is good but in reality

should be given more funding, increase the actual time off or pay replacement for

recipients, or amend the qualifications for recipients. This 2017 article also supports

the expansion of paid family leave policies in New Jersey:

> *When fathers take leave, it encourages a cultural shift that also lessens the negative repercussions at work for mothers. And if we don't support caretakers, male and female, the cost burden will fall on Medicaid for nursing home care. Everyone, regardless of economic status, race or gender, should have the ability to take time off to care for a new child or loved one — it's unfair that some can't access paid leave when we're all paying for it. ("Make Family Leave," 2017)*

The language present in this article addresses the need to expand family leave to

cover those who need to care for elderly members of the family, not just children.

The additional focus on male encouragement to utilize paid leave also challenges the

mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative.

Neutrality Toward the Narrative

Of the subset of articles identified as neutral on the specific mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative, gender-neutral workers, gender-neutral families, and business were commonly found throughout as victims to the villains of financial and family challenges, as well as the policy of paid family leave. Business victims are often associated with paid family leave policy villains, and language such as, "the new law could be a particular burden for small businesses" or "This will make New Jersey unattractive for new businesses and impose further hardship on those already here," demonstrate this point (Hearden, 2003, p. B1; Jordan, 2017, p. 3). The limitations of current paid leave policy is found as a villain theme across all states, except California, and linked with gender-neutral worker and gender-neutral family victims. For example, "The bill would also make caregivers of a sibling or grandchild eligible. It would increase the amount that people who earn less than double the minimum wage can receive when claiming temporary caregiver insurance," ("Lawmakers push," 2018). This example demonstrates the limitations with the current policy in Rhode Island along with its negative impact on caregivers, which are classified as gender-neutral families in this research, without addressing the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative.

As with articles that challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative, paid family leave policy and lawmakers are both common themes among the hero component of the NPF in articles that are neutral on the narrative. Two common morals of the story, or calls to action, present themselves within this grouping of articles across every state. One, the future of a paid family leave policy is uncertain. The language in these instances usually revolve around the debate of passing the policy, such as, "Sponsors in both chambers said they'll work on a

compromise. A spokeswoman said Gov. Andrew Cuomo supports the idea but has concerns about the details" or "The battle lines are being drawn over paid family leave" (Klepper, 2015; Morley, 2007, p. B01). Two, there is a coalition against the policy which is concerned with the cost of policy and do not want to see lawmakers support it. This cost, and to whom, is demonstrated by language such as, "Christie called the bill a "costly expansion" that would raise taxes and harm small businesses," or "contributions by employers were scheduled to begin on July 1, but business leaders asked for a delay" (Hetrick, 2017; "Baker signs off," 2019). This moral of the story is often associated with business victims. A third call to action found across all states except California was to support paid family leave policy as was present in articles which challenge and also support the gendered narrative.

Support the Narrative

Articles which are deemed to support the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative include similar villains as with articles which challenge the gendered narrative, including family and financial challenges, as well as, limitations of the current paid family leave policy. Language such as, "we need to make sure that workers can maintain their incomes without sacrificing their families' needs," and "Expanding family-leave benefits helps to address the needs of working people who face the demands of supporting their families at the same time they experience the responsibilities of caring for their children or other family members," remind readers that without paid leave balancing the responsibilities of caring for one's family is challenging (Richman, 2009; Leonard, 2017, p. 7A). While this is similar language found in articles that challenge the narrative, the difference presents itself in a nuanced fashion. Latent meaning derived from language such as "This

expansion will be especially important to low-income families and to working women who so often carry the responsibilities of caring for newborns" reminds the reader of the family responsibilities of women and their place in the private sphere (Leonard, 2017, p. 7A). However, at a much smaller rate than other villains, lawmakers were also a common theme of villains throughout coverage in each state except Rhode Island. Interestingly, lawmakers are also identified as hero components of the NPF in articles which support the gendered narrative, along with paid family leave itself.

The victims within this subsection of articles, those supporting the narrative, vary slightly from those in which the articles challenge the narrative, and not only include gender-neutral workers and gender-neutral families, but also business and females. While gender-neutral workers and families are more often identified as victims, business is found as a common victim across all states but Rhode Island. Females (mothers and women) identified as a victims occur in each state's newspaper coverage but at a very low rate. This research anticipated females would be identified directly as victims more regularly than in actuality. Female victims were presented by focusing on one challenged mother's story of family and financial challenges, the plight of many mothers, or even both within the same article. In a 2017 article, Stephanie, mother to a daughter with health challenges, says, "That's basically what we use (paid time off) for, to travel for the doctor's appointments and any days she doesn't feel well" (Labernik, 2017, p. A1). This example recognizes the relief paid family leave policies could provide this mother. The article continues by mentioning fellow mothers in similar conditions, "There are a lot of (Chiari malformation) moms this is going to help," but also enforces the gendered roles the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative asserts (Labernik, 2017, p. A1).

Another article from California reporting on the usage of the policy in the first year of availability mentions gender-neutral families but focuses on usage by women, "83 percent of those who filed a claim for the newborn bonding benefits were women, compared to 17 percent male participation," and one mother specifically, "The one-on-one time led her to decide to remain a full-time mom, at least for a while longer," which again reinforces the gendered narrative (Osterman, 2005, p. D1). The overwhelming call to action among these articles is to support paid family leave policies but expanding government mandated paid family leave is also a common theme across all states except New York. New York's paid family leave policy began allowing workers to draw benefits at the beginning of 2018 and this analysis only includes articles through the end of 2019, so it's possible that enough time has not passed to see a centralized push for paid leave expansion yet.

Narrative Over Time

This research also evaluates any changes to the framing of paid family leave over time. All articles were again placed into 3 different metaphoric sub buckets based on when the article was published in regards to when the policy was passed and individuals could utilize the benefit of paid family leave in their state. Of the articles published prior to the passage of the paid family leave law (n=105) over 50% were found to be neutral on the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative, 30.48% support the narrative, and 12.38% challenge the narrative. Figure 4.2 shows a slight increase in the percentage of articles where a challenge (17.65%) frame was present and a slight decrease in the articles that support (29.41%) the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative in the subsection of articles which were published after the passage of the law and prior to the date in which workers could
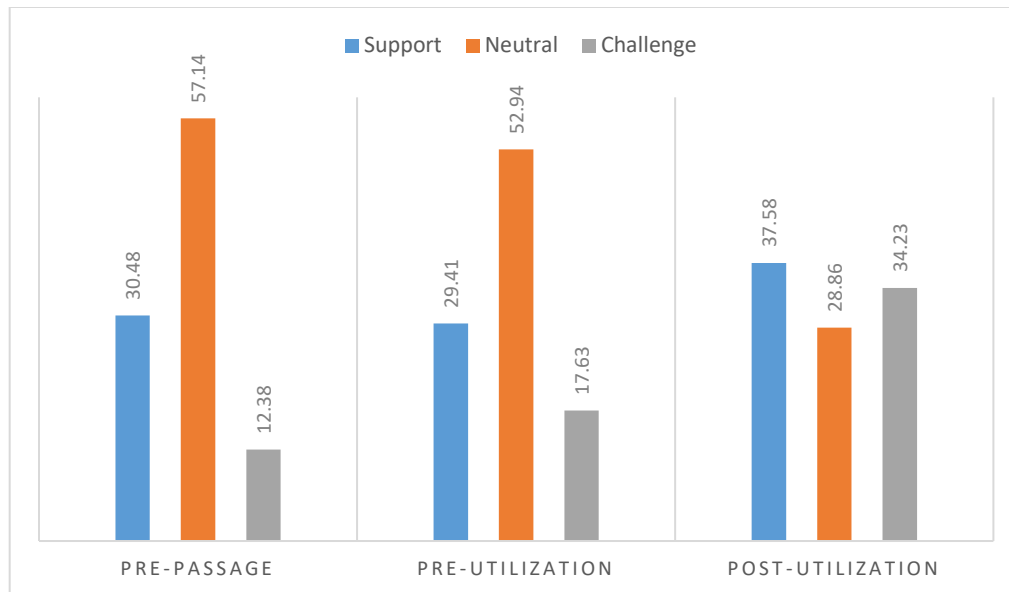
Figure 4.2 Percentage of narrative classification over time

utilize the benefits of the paid family leave law. For the articles published post-worker utilization of the paid family leave policy (n=149), there is a significant percentage decrease and significant increase for articles found to be neutral and to challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative, respectively. There is also an uptick in the percentage of articles deemed to support the narrative amongst these post-utilization articles. One may observe that while the neutrality of independent articles lessens as time passes, two conflicting positions persist in the coverage of paid family leave.

A similar pattern is revealed within the coverage of the individual states. Figure 4.3 shows the percentage of articles that support, challenge, or remain neutral on the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative across the three time periods in each state. In California, New Jersey, and Rhode Island the percentage of articles that challenge the narrative increase from the time the paid leave policy was on the agenda to when the law was passed and finally to the time when it was utilized by residents. This increase in articles that challenge these limiting gender norms
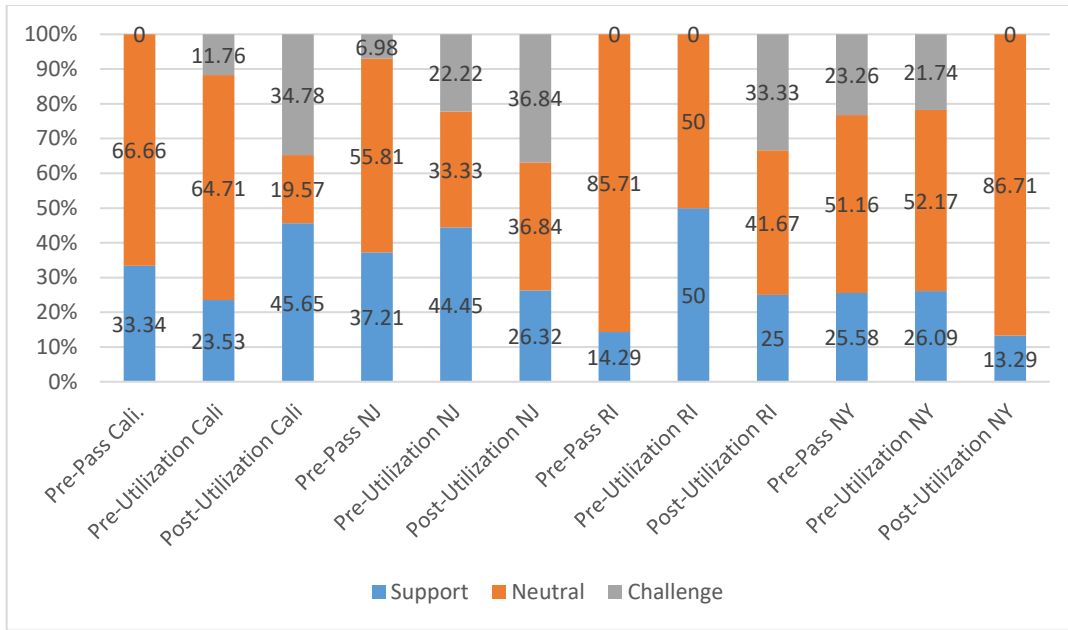
Figure 4.3 Percentage of narrative classification over time by state

demonstrate a larger societal acceptance of changing and more egalitarian gender

roles since social values are often reflected in media coverage (Anastasio, Rose, &

Chaptman, 1999). Of the articles published in New York, there are about as many

articles, proportionally, that challenge and support the mother homemaker/father

breadwinner during the pre-pass and pre-utilization time periods. There were no

articles published from New York during the post-utilization time period that

challenge the narrative. This could be due to the limited amount of time from when

the policy became available for utilization in New York (2018) to when data

collection concluded (end of 2019).

This research seeks to understand any changes in the framing of state level

paid family leave overtime by utilizing the Narrative Policy Framework. Four groups

of victims including, gender-neutral workers, gender-neutral families, business, and

females, are identified as themes throughout the project and thus require deeper

investigation. The follow section reviews the associated NPF components of each of

these victims overtime (pre-pass, pre-utilization, and post-utilization).

Pre-Passage Time Period

Articles published during the pre-pass time period that challenge and support the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative are found evenly across business, news, opinion, and feminine sections of the newspaper. Articles published prior to the passage of the paid family leave law in each state identify gender-neutral workers as victims in 65.71% of the articles, as shown in table 4.2. Businesses

Table 4.2 NPF components during the pre-passage time period

Victim	Villain	Hero	Moral of Story
Gender-neutral Workers	- Family Challenges - Financial Challenges	- Paid Family Leave Policy - Lawmakers	- Support Paid Family Leave
Gender-neutral Families	- Family Challenges - Financial Challenge	- Paid Family Leave Policy	- Support/Need Paid Leave
Business	- Paid Leave Policy - Negative Aspects of Law	- Lawmakers	- Don't support Paid Family Leave
Females	- Family Challenges - Financial Challenge	- Paid Family Leave Policy	- Support Paid Family Leave

(23.89%) and gender-neutral families (23.89%) are also identified as victims during this time period.

Gender-neutral workers, as victims, share the same villains as gender-neutral families, i.e. family challenges and financial challenges. While paid family leave is presented as these workers' hero, "The simple solution is to provide paid family leave for all workers," so too are lawmakers when presented as the gatekeepers of the policy, "A proposal that would allow workers in Rhode Island to take paid time off to care for a new child or sick loved one has passed the state's Senate." (Ott & Rankin, 2014, p. D1; "RI Senate," 2013). Figure 4.4 depicts about a third of the articles that identify gender-neutral workers as victims support the mother homemaker/father breadwinner norm, which is more than twice as often as articles that challenge the narrative. Articles challenging the narrative focus on or present
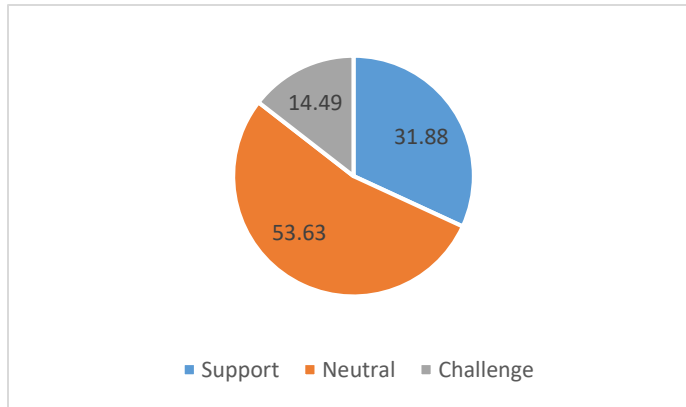
*Figure 4.4 Percentage of classified articles when
gender-neutral workers are victims*

examples of male need and use of family leave policies. For example, in one article

describing the new private policy at one tech firm, " the video game developer

started offering the new benefit last year during a "baby boom" at the firm that made

new dads out of three workers," or another describing the ongoing legislative debate

over policy, "Sweeney, a business representative for an ironworkers' union, said he

took time off after his daughter, Lauren, now 14, was born with Down's syndrome,"

(Rulison, 2015, p. E1; Livio, 2008, p.1). Not only does the presentation of a father,

in the latter example, utilizing leave challenge the narrative, but so does his

identification of an ironworker, which manifests very masculine ideas for most.

Gender-neutral families, as victims, find family challenges and financial

challenges as their villains with paid family leave associated as their hero. Figure 4.5
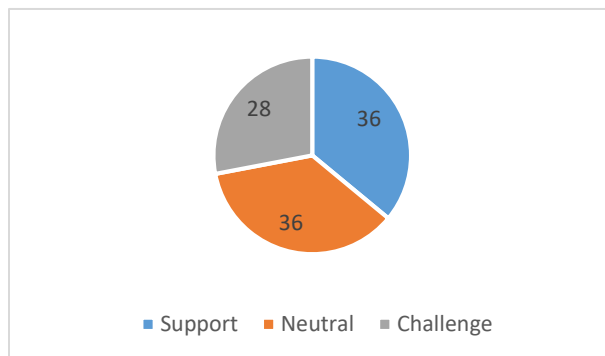

*Figure 4.5 Percentage of classified articles when
gender-neutral families are victims*

shows that about as many of these articles support the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative as are neutral on the subject. While the victims are gender-neutral the examples used to demonstrate the need for paid family leave, the associated hero, were clearly gendered feminine, as in this 2008 article:

> *She could only afford to stay out for four weeks. By the sixth week she had to go back to work because none of the utilities bills were paid and she had the rest of the family that had to eat. Her co-workers took up a collection too, but it just wasn't enough. She had to leave her 19-year-old son home with a hospice worker and go back to her job in a cafeteria. ("Six weeks' paid," 2008, p.26)*

The example of this woman in need of paid family leave to care for her dying teenage son, again supports the notion that childcare, at any age, is reserved for mothers. Fewer of these same pre-pass articles challenge the narrative as this 2016 article from New York does by focusing on how both men and women utilize from the policy, "she twice benefited from paid family leave -- once from her former job with the town of Colonie and once from her husband's job with the state," (Carleo-Evangelist, 2016, p. C1). The main call to action to be bring relief to gender-neutral family victims is to support paid family leave policy. This action is demonstrated by reporting on the state's governor supporting the policy, ""Sometimes I don't get everything I want out of the Legislature," he said at the AFL-CIO's Legislative/Committee on Political Education Endorsement Conference. "This is the issue I'm going to fight for. We will get it passed."" (Rao, 2007, p. A1). Other articles demonstrated support for paid family leave by presenting a position combating business opposition, "There are many businesses in this state that have recognized that a progressive workplace is family friendly. A large number offer maternity and paternity leave to care for newborns," (Burgess, 2016, p. D3). Both demonstrate the support for paid family leave to be passed.

The number of articles that present females as victims is very small during the pre-pass time period. Females, as gender-neutral families, are challenged by family challenges and financial challenges and paid family leave is portrayed as their hero. "One factor may be that some mothers who would like to work simply cannot afford child care, which can cost upwards of $200 or $300 a week," (Schoonmaker, 2007, p. L15). In this article we see how paid family leave would serve to lessen the hardships of the mothers described here, but also mothers (women) are in this predicament, not fathers, thus supporting the gendered narrative. All of the articles which present females as victims are associated with a moral of the story which advocates the support and need for paid family leave, as in the example above. The reinforcement of the mother homemaker/father breadwinner is clearly present in some articles, such as this article from New York's The Buffalo News which begins with, "What's the best Mother's Day gift New York State lawmakers could give? Paid family leave, guaranteed under state law," (Walsh, 2015, p. 2). The takeaway from these articles, broadly, is that women need paid family leave to lessen the burdens of balancing family and financial challenges, that are caused by their responsibility to and obligations within the private sphere according to the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative.

Business as a victim has different associations within the NPF. Paid family leave policy and the negative aspects of that policy are identified as villains to the business victim. An article title Paid family leave clears N.J. Senate – Critics say it would be a curse to businesses states the policy, "ultimately puts an undue burden on businesses, which would have to either find replacement workers — some of them licensed or highly specialized — or go short-staffed while employees are on leave," (Young, 2008, p. A1). Lawmakers, having the ability to provide relief to these

businesses by not supporting the bill, which is the only moral of the story associated with business victims, serve as the heroes here. The majority of these articles are found to be neutral on the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative, as seen in figure 4.6. Articles which focus on business, or their interests, as victims tend not
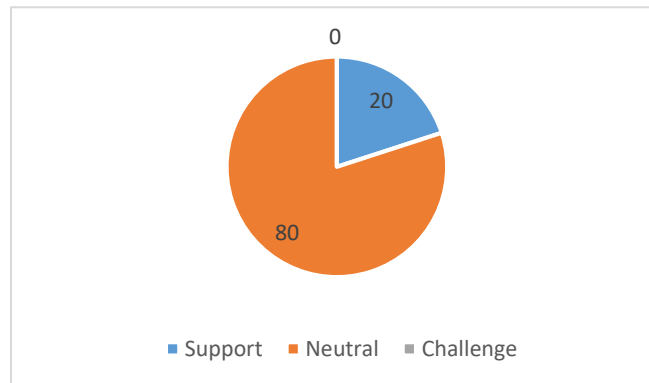

Figure 4.6 Percentage of article classification when business is victim

to bring gender into the debate. The 'debate' on paid family leave, here, instead focuses the rights of businesses versus the mandates or control of government or the negative impact such policies may have on business.

Of the articles published during this pre-pass time period in California newspapers gender-neutral workers and business are the two main identified victims, as they are identified 5 and 6 times respectively. Both business and gender-neutral workers are victimized by the cost of the paid family leave policy but family challenges are also presented as a villain to gender-neutral workers. The media presents lawmakers as the hero to both victims. The presented morals of the story in these articles are split about evenly to support or not support paid family leave policy. Articles published in New Jersey identify gender-neutral workers as victims 27 times, business 16 times, and gender-neutral families 13 times. These gender-neutral workers are victims to family and financial challenge villains. Paid family leave is presented as the hero to these worker victims and the moral of the story is to

support the policy. Similarly to articles in New Jersey, those published in New York identify gender-neutral workers 31 times, compared to gender-neutral families 13 times, and women seven times. Gender-neutral workers, in New York newspapers, are associated with family and financial challenge villains, and paid family leave as the hero. The moral of the story for these articles is to support paid leave policy. Of the seven articles published in Rhode Island newspapers during this time period six frame gender-neutral workers as victims. Family and financial challenges are presented as villains to this victim. As in California, articles in Rhode Island present lawmakers as the hero, but in Rhode Island the moral of the story is to support paid family leave.

Pre-Utilization Time Period

Articles classified under the pre-utilization time period were published in their respective states after the law passed but prior to the benefits of paid family leave being utilized by employees. Only 51 articles are included in this time period, this lower number can be explained by the short amount of time included compared to the pre-pass time period which includes a total of 8 years of data spread across four states. As mentioned before, there is not a substantial change in the percentage of articles deemed to support or challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative from the pre-pass time period.

In the earlier time period articles which either challenge or support the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative are published evenly across newspaper sections, roughly, However, during the pre-utilization period, articles found to either challenge or support the narrative seem to be centrally published in the news section.

Table 4.3 identifies all of the NFP components of articles published during

Table 4.3 NPF component of pre-utilization period

Victims	Villain	Hero	Moral of Story
Gender-neutral Workers	- Family Challenges	- Paid Family Leave Policy	- Support Paid Family Leave
Gender-neutral Families	- Family Challenges - Financial Challenge	- Paid Family Leave Policy	- Support/Need Paid Leave
Business	- Paid Leave Policy		- Don't support Paid Family Leave - Unknown future of policy
Females	- Family Challenges	- Paid Family Leave Policy	- Support Paid Family Leave

the pre-utilization period. An analysis of victims in the articles of the pre-utilization

period show a larger demonstration of business than in the pre-pass period. Paid

family leave policy is still strongly associated with the business victim as the villain,

this is to be expected as many businesses were concerned about how the policy

would impact their operations. Interestingly, very few NPF heroes were associated

with business as the victim. This can be explained because the policy has already

passed, so only time could tell the outcome. The morals of the story associated with

the business victim are either not to support paid leave or the future of the policy is

unknown. As in this Daily News article that reports on the implementation of payroll

taxes for employees to fund the family leave policy but also the predicted costs,

though unknown, on business, "If you are gone for eight week, or 12 weeks starting

in 2021, that takes a toll on a small business. It's unique in that it's an employee

deduction, so that's why they say it's not a burden (on businesses), but we have to

create a system and a policy. There's still an administrative burden," (Krencik, 2017,

p. A1). None of these articles challenged the mother homemaker/father breadwinner

gender narrative, 67% were found neutral on the topic and 33% support the narrative,
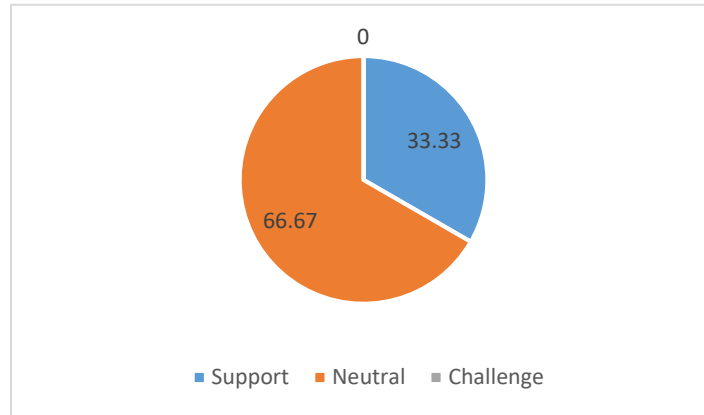
as depicted in figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7 Percentage of article classification when business is victims

Family challenges are presented as the main villain for female victims, but financial challenges are also mentioned, while paid family leave acts as the hero. A 2002 article published in the Modesto Bee describes the relief one woman will experience once the policy is in place, "her mother's insurance policy doesn't cover the $1,900 a month for caregivers while Callison is working. Paid leave would give Callison a chance to take care of her mother and pay her mortgage," (Weaver Teichert, 2002, p. A1). The overwhelming moral of the story in these few articles is to support paid family leave. Much need for paid family leave, published in The Buffalo News, details 3 women, no men, who expressed gratitude for their privately available paid leave benefits, ""I wish I had longer, but I just couldn't afford it," said Reaghan, who told me she could not continue nursing once she went back to work," and advocated the broad need for such benefits ("Much need," 2016, p. 5). However, the article's focus on women and repeated use of the term maternity leave, leave the reader primed that women need this policy, not men, since they are responsible for childcare. All of the articles which classify females as victims support the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative, as in the example above, confirming

feminist literature which suggests women are associated with the domain of the home.

When gender-neutral families are portrayed as victims the associations with other components of the NPF are similar to that of female victims, where family and financial challenges are villains fairly equally, paid family leave policy is the hero, and the call to action or moral of the story is overwhelmingly to support paid family leave policy. There are an equal proportion of articles classified as supporting the mother homemaker/father breadwinner gender narrative as challenging it when gender-neutral families are viewed as victims, as depicted in figure 4.8. Articles that
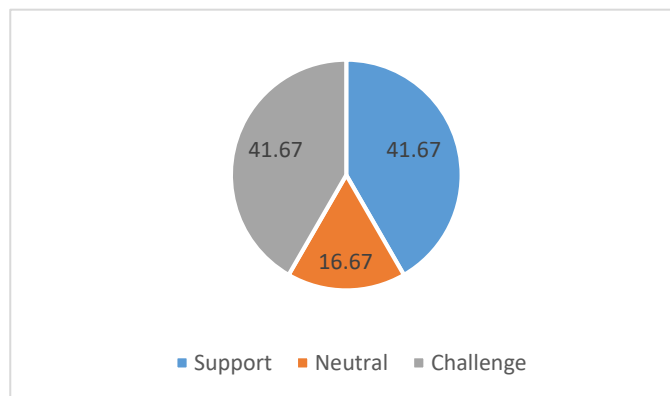

Figure 4.8 Percentage of article classification when
gender-neutral families are victims

challenge the narrative mention both men and women, or parents using paid leave for childcare responsibilities, "Under the new program, a husband and wife who had just had a child could take their paid time off simultaneously….If both parents of a birthed or adopted child. (Labernik, 2017, p. A1). Conversely, articles found to support the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative often used mothers or women as examples of these gender-neutral families, such as, "a mother of a child born with end-stage renal disease, was able to take 12 unpaid weeks off under the Federal Medical Leave Act. But because it was unpaid leave, she said she and her

husband paid their mortgage with their credit card and almost lost their home,"
(Livio, 2009, p. A4).

Gender-neutral workers, as victims, are associated with both family and financial challenges as their villains, though more strongly with family challenges. This 2002 Oakland Tribune article reporting on the Governor's statements said, "Three out of four Americans who would like to take family leave to be with a seriously ill child don't do it because they can't afford to miss a paycheck," which acknowledges both the family and financial challenges workers face without such policies available (Geissinger, 2002, p. A1). While paid family leave policy is the strongest association with these victims as the hero, that mention occurs in less than half of the articles included. Also, as shown in figure 4.9, 50% of these articles are
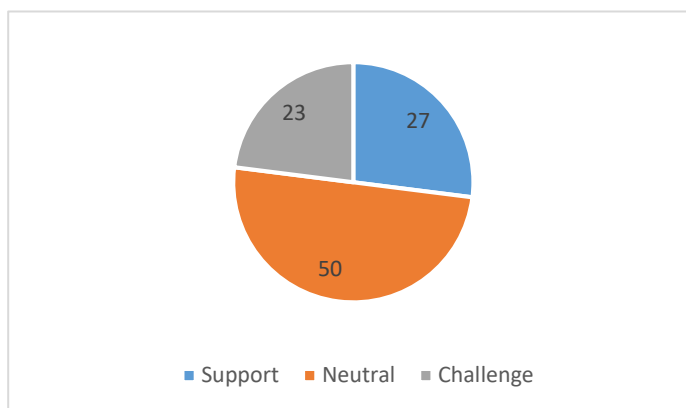
Figure 4.9 Percentage of article classification when
gender-neutral workers are victims

found to have a neutral stance on the mother homemaker/father breadwinner norm, while the other half are just about evenly split to either support or challenge the narrative, 27% and 23% respectively. The determination of whether an article is classified as one which challenges or supports the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative was sometimes more nuanced, for instance when an article mentions "advocates for women pushed for the new law," it insinuates this policy is

FOR women and therefore supports the narrative ("RI gov," 2013). At other times, the distinction was fairly clear, like when the new law "isn't just a benefit to mothers. It allows employees to apply to take off up to six weeks to care for a newborn or a sick parent, child or spouse. Each of us falls into at least one of those categories at one point in our lives," ("Paid family," 2008, p. C20). In this article, published in The Jersey Journal, it reminds the reader that the policy is not gender specific, as well as predicts we all will need it at some point which demonstrate a challenge to the mother homemaker/father bread winner norm.

Gender-neutral workers are presented as victims 12 times and business 8 times during this time period in California newspaper articles, these are the same main victim themes seen in California articles during the previous time period. The business victim continues to be victimized by the cost of paid family leave, and in addition, paid family leave policy is also presented as a villain to the business victim. There is no hero associated with business victims and the moral of the story is the unknown future of the policy. This is to no surprise as the policy has already passed but yet to be utilized so businesses are still uncertain of the implications it will bring to their firms. Gender-neutral worker victims are now, however, associated with family and financial challenge villains, not the cost of the policy as in the previous time period. Paid family leave policy is presented as the hero to gender-neutral victims as it would bring relief to their family and financial challenge villains. As with the business victim, gender-neutral workers are associated with a moral of the story where the future is unknown regarding the policy.

Business and gender-neutral workers are the two main victims in articles published in New Jersey newspapers. Each are mentioned equally five times, and gender-neutral families twice. The business victim is associated with the costs of

paid family leave villain and gender-neutral workers with family challenge villains. No hero is presented for the business victim, as in California, and the moral of the story is not to support paid family leave policy. Both lawmakers and paid family leave are framed as the heroes to gender-neutral worker victims, but there is no consensus on an associated moral of the story. Of the two articles published in Rhode Island newspapers during this time period one identifies gender-neutral families as the victim and the other gender-neutral workers. Both are associated with the family challenge villain and the moral of the story to support paid leave. Lawmakers and paid family leave policy are presented as heroes to gender-neutral families and gender-neutral workers, respectively.

Females are presented as the victim three times, gender-neutral workers seven times, business eight times, and gender-neutral families 8 times in articles published in New York newspapers. The increased frequency in gender-neutral family and business victims during this time period is different than the previous. Gender-neutral worker and family victims are both associated with family and financial challenge villains and a moral of the story to support paid family leave. Paid family leave policy is the presented hero to gender-neutral family victims and lawmakers to gender-neutral worker victims in these articles. Female victims are only associated with the family challenge villain and both lawmaker and paid family leave policy heroes. Supporting paid family leave policy is the moral of the story associated with female victims. The costs of the policy are presented as the villain to business victims. The moral of the story associated with business victims is to not support the policy, and there was no consensus on an associated hero.

Post-Utilization Time Period

About half of all the articles included in this research study were published after the date when individuals could utilize the paid family benefits guaranteed by the laws in their state. Of these articles, those that challenged the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative, most were published in the news sections (44%), but also in the feminine (20%) and opinion (16%) sections. For those articles that uphold the gender narrative, they are found mostly in the opinion section (35.71%), and also in the news section (25%) regularly. This data suggests the media coverage is fair in terms of the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative because both the support and dissent of the concept is being published. One would recognize, though, that the position to retain the status quo and support the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative is found mostly in the opinion section rather than the news section.

The data shows a moderate increase in the in the percentage of articles which frame gender-neutral families (33.56%) and workers (63.76%) as victims than during

Table 4.4 NPF components during the post-utilization period

Victim	Villain	Hero	Moral of Story
Gender-neutral Workers	- Financial Challenges - Lack of Paid Leave	- Lawmakers - Paid Family Leave Policy	- Expand Paid Family Leave
Gender-neutral Families	- Financial Challenges	- Paid Family Leave Policy - Lawmakers	- Support/Need Paid Leave
Business	- Costs of Policy - Expanded Paid Leave Policy	- Lawmakers	
Females	- Lack of Paid Leave - Financial Challenges	- Paid Family Leave Policy	- Support/Need Paid Family Leave

the pre-utilization period. The percentage of articles that present business as the victim takes a dramatic drop from the pre-utilization period, 8.74% down from 41.18%. Females as victims only present themselves in just over 6% of the articles during the post-utilization period. Table 4.4 provides a quick glimpse of the

associated NPF components for the four main victim themes examined throughout the paper.

Though females are presented as victims very rarely during this time period, the lack of paid leave becomes a very present associated villain; this is a new development and had not been present in earlier articles. A 2016 AP article discusses the broad support for paid family leave policies, "An Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll released Friday said 72 percent support paid family leave… At least 19 states are considering paid family leave laws, but only three have active programs," but limited access to said policies (Cancino, 2016). Financial challenges are almost equally framed as females' villains, paid family leave remains the hero as does support and need of leave policy as the moral of the story. "Supporters of the law said it addresses the needs of the modern workplace, which includes two-income families, single moms and many people caring for elder relatives," (Vesely, 2004). The latent meaning of this quote acknowledges the financial challenges of families and women, and the relief paid family leave brings them, which are reflected in the identified NPF components associated with females. All of these articles are found to support the mother homemaker/father breadwinner gender narrative. Some by, again, referencing women's experiences throughout the articles, "Morelli, 52, said she expects that someday she'll need time off to care for her aging mother and in-laws who are now in their 80s" or "Carla Dartis-Carter of Oakland is applying for the benefit to spend time bonding with her newly adopted six-month-old son," (Cancino, 2016; Vesely, 2004). Some articles demonstrate support for the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative by mentioning strong support for paid leave by women as here "support was stronger among people age 40-64 and among women," simply reminding readers of women's connection to

the home, "Mom isn't home baking chocolate chip cookies waiting for the school bus to come home anymore," or associating the policy with women by reporting on the United States of Women Summit which will include a panel on the topic (Cancino, 2016; Vesely, 2004; "Lawmaker to talk," 2016).

Business is framed as the victim only slightly more often than females during the post-utilization period, which is a significant decrease than time periods prior. The costs of paid family leave, as described here, "In the midst of a recession, it seemed unwise to put an additional burden on businesses… a provision that could be easily abused and cause serious scheduling issues for some businesses," and expanded paid family leave are framed as villains to the business victim ("Our view," 2009, p. A12). After paid family leave laws are initially passed discussions of extending the policy presented themselves in each state. Due to this evolution businesses and business interests turn their attention to maintaining the status quo, which is likely why extended paid leave presents itself as a villain during this post-utilization phase. This is apparent when New York lawmakers were debating whether to extend their paid family leave policy, "Critics say it's too generous to employees and unfriendly to business…The Business Council of New York State is among two dozen business and industry groups that have urged Cuomo to veto the legislation," (Weiner, 2018, p. 16). There are no singularly obvious heroes or calls to action associated with the business victim. However, lawmakers are framed as heroes in about a third of these articles as they have the ability to deny or delay paid leave expansion as in this 2019 AP article, "Baker signed off Thursday on the three-month payroll tax delay after he and legislative leaders said it would give businesses more time to adjust and allow for some unspecified adjustments to the law," ("Baker signs," 2019). Interestingly, paid family leave policy is mentioned as a hero a few

times as the framing of these articles shows that satisfied workers, those who have

access to paid family leave, are actually good for business. This Fresno Bee article

from 2004 does just that, "Susan Lipinski, editor of Working Mother magazine in

New York, applauded the state for creating the program, saying studies show that a

positive work environment creates better and more loyal employees," (Rodriguez,

2004, p. A1). None of these articles are found to challenge the mother

homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. Figure 4.10 indicates most of the articles
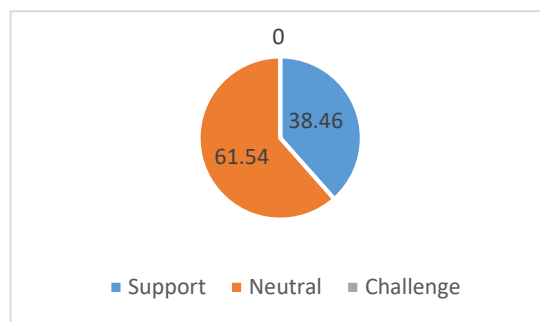

Figure 4.10 Percentage of article
classification when business is victim

are neutral on the gendered narrative and about a third support it. This Sacramento

Bee article reminds readers the policy is for women by associating it with maternity

leave, "Women could get disability for a maternity leave, return to work and up to a

year after the birth take a family leave for bonding time," (Payne, 2004, p. A1). This

example also demonstrates how business is victimized by the use of the paid leave

policy by employees. In articles where business is the identified victim, it seems they

are not terribly concerned with which employees take leave, men or women, but that

government mandated leave creates challenges, especially for small business owners.

The gender-neutral worker victim continues to be confronted with

financial challenges, as before, and also the lack of paid family leave. Expanding

paid leave is the associated moral of the story with this victim. This addresses the

limits of the current paid family leave policy which is framed as not providing

enough financial support to make the use of the policy an actual reality for some workers. This Jersey Journal articles reports on the usage of the policy in the state and notes, "not enough parents partake in this program for primarily two reasons: the fear of losing their job and the fact that the weekly benefit doesn't cover their bills," ("Why aren't more," 2018, p. 2). Other articles reported, "too few workers knew the benefits were even available and the reimbursements needed to be raised to boost enrollment," which again demonstrates the connection between the worker victim, their villains, and the moral of the story (Marcus & Johnson, 2019, p. 4).

Given lawmakers' governing powers to expand the policy and the need for paid leave for these victims it is not surprising that each present themselves as heroes to these worker victims. "This is going to be life-changing, especially for low-wage workers," referring to the relief provided by New York's paid family leave law and cementing the policy's status as a hero in regards to the NPF (Esch, 2017). Lawmakers were presented as heroes for their efforts to expand paid family leave policies, such as in this AP article, "The California Senate is advancing a bill that would expand job protections for those who qualify for paid family leave to care for relatives," ("California Senate," 2015). Figure 4.11 shows about the same number of
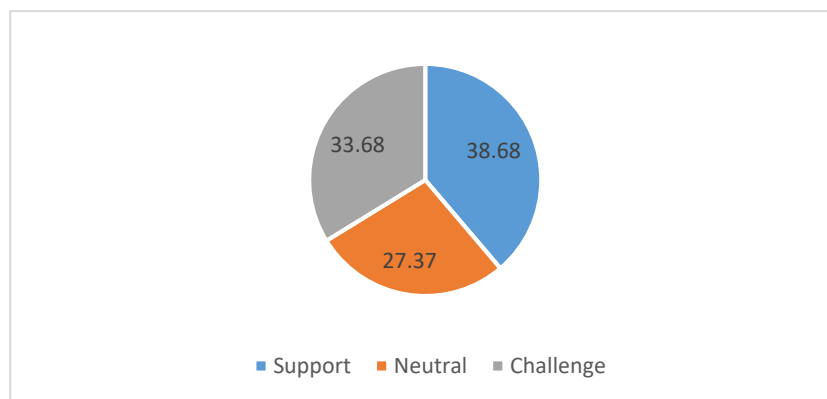

Figure 4.11 Percentage of article classification when gender-neutral workers are victims

articles that support (38.95%) the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative as

challenge (33.68%) it when gender-neutral workers are the identified victims. "Congratulations, you're expecting!" is the opening line of a The Star-Ledger article which was found to support the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative by resembling the language one would find in a Hallmark card for expecting mothers (Marcus, 2019, p. 3). The article goes on to mention that in the first seven years of New Jersey's paid family leave law, "About eight in 10 claims were for maternity leave," again reinforcing the gendered roles upheld in the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative by showing use of policy by women and also referring to it as maternity leave. Conversely, articles challenging the narrative focused on male use of the policy, "When Salvador Guillermo's wife was expecting the couple's first child, he requested paid family leave so he could spend time helping at home and bonding with his son," (Smith, 2018, p. 7). This article even further challenges gender norms as the father above wishes to bond with his infant son, an act of nurturing typically associated with mothers and women. The clearest takeaway from articles that identify gender-neutral workers as victims is that current paid family leave policies include gaps, in awareness or coverage, which leave some workers unable to realize the benefits of it.

Gender-neutral families as victims are associated most strongly with financial challenges as a villain, as well as current limitations of the policy to a moderate degree. This Press of Atlantic City article acknowledges the financial limitations of the current policy by reporting a proposal to expand benefits in New Jersey, "The amount paid during the leave also would be boosted, from two-thirds to 80 percent of weekly earnings. That would help low-wage workers, but because of the benefit's cap anyone earning $44,000 a year or more wouldn't see an increase in leave pay," ("Paid family, 2017, p. 10A). Paid family leave policies are framed as the

hero to the financial challenges of these victims, and lawmakers the heroes for the limitations of the policy. Ask Emily Columnist shares her own caregiver story, that she must take days off work to transport her father to his cancer treatment appointments, but "when I do, I get part of my salary reimbursed through California's Paid Family Leave program," ("Ask Emily," 2018, p. 2). Another article from the Sacramento Bee also refers to paid leave as "replacement salary" for new parents (Karpilow, 2017, p. 3D). Noting the lack of use and limitations of New Jersey's family leave policy another article reports on family advocates urging lawmakers to "strengthen the program" and increase awareness of it through media messaging, thus positioning lawmakers as the heroes (Jordan, 2017, p. A3).

Over half, 54%, of the articles framing these families as victims challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner norm, as shown in figure 4.12, an increase from the pre-utilization and pre-pass time periods. While these articles identify
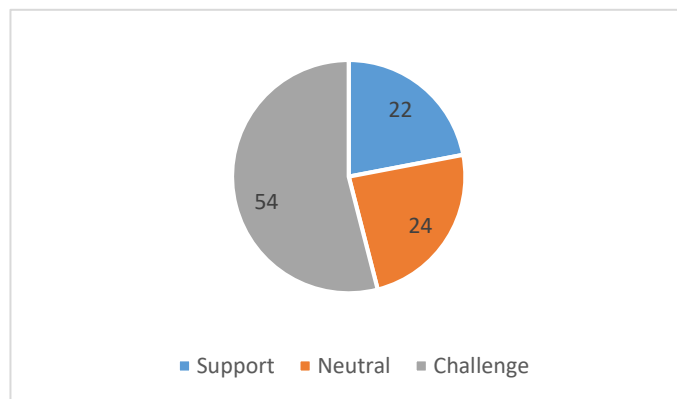
Figure 4.12 Percentage of article classifications when gender-neutral families are victims

gender-neutral families as victims there are still subtle reminders that paid family leave is a female issue, "the United States is the only country in the developed world that does not mandate paid leave for new mothers," in some articles ("Time for," 2019, p. A8). Here, the author had the option to remove the association between paid leave and women, and challenge the narrative by instead mentioning that most

developed nations have policies encouraging male use of paid family leave, but they elected not to. Another article which challenges is this Daily News of Los Angeles article detailing the Mayor's wife's battle with postpartum depression, "My husband was able to take time off from work to help me and our family get through it," ("Local government," 2014, p. 3). Not only does this article challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative by presenting an example of male usage of paid leave, but on top of that the male employee utilizing the benefit was the Mayor of L.A, an executive and masculine role.

Of the 92 articles published in California newspapers during the post-utilization time period gender-neutral workers are framed as victims 58 times and gender-neutral families 38 times. Both paid leave policy and lawmakers are framed as their heroes and the associated morals of the story are to support or expand paid leave. Gender-neutral workers are victimized equally by financial challenge, family challenge, and limitations of current policy villains. Gender-neutral family victims are mainly associated with the financial challenge villain. Most the articles that identify gender-neutral families as victims challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative, while slightly more than half of those that identify gender-neutral workers as victims support the narrative.

Representing the two main victims, gender-neutral workers are mentioned 29 times and gender-neutral families 12 times in articles published in New Jersey newspaper articles. Both victims share paid family leave as a hero and to expand paid leave as the moral of the story. Gender-neutral worker victims are associated with limitations of the current policy as a villain. Additionally, more than half of these articles are found to challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. Limitations of the current policy victimize gender-neutral family victims

too, but so do financial challenge villains. Of these articles that identify gender-neutral families as victims, there are equally as many that challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative as support it.

Gender-neutral family victims are identified twice as often as any other victim theme in articles published during the post-utilization period in Rhode Island newspapers. These victims are associated with limitations of the current policy and financial challenge villains, lawmakers as heroes, and a moral of the story to expand paid leave. Half of the articles including gender-neutral family victims challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. Of the seven articles published from New York newspapers during the post-utilization period more than half identify gender-neutral workers as the victim. Family and financial challenge villains victimize these gender-neutral workers, but paid leave policy is presented as their hero. Expanding paid leave is the moral of the story in these articles; and none challenge or support the narrative, all are neutral toward the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative.

This section provided a detailed analysis of the four main victim themes, gender-neutral workers, gender-neutral families, business, and females, and their associated NPF components over time. Articles published during the pre-pass time period describe the nature of the debate leading up to the passage of paid family leave policies. The pre-utilization phase presented an unknown future to business while other victims waited in anticipation for the benefits. Finally, the post-utilization phase described the limitations of the policies which passed and even suggested furthering the benefit. There is not one specific theme of victim, or other component of the NPF, which clearly marked or identified an article to challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative broadly. Narrowly, this research

argues that articles which identify gender-neutral families as victims present the strongest challenge to the gendered narrative. This discussion is expanded upon in the next chapter.

Change Over Time

By isolating the articles based on the identified victim, as shown in figure 4.13, changes over time do present themselves in terms of whether the whole article
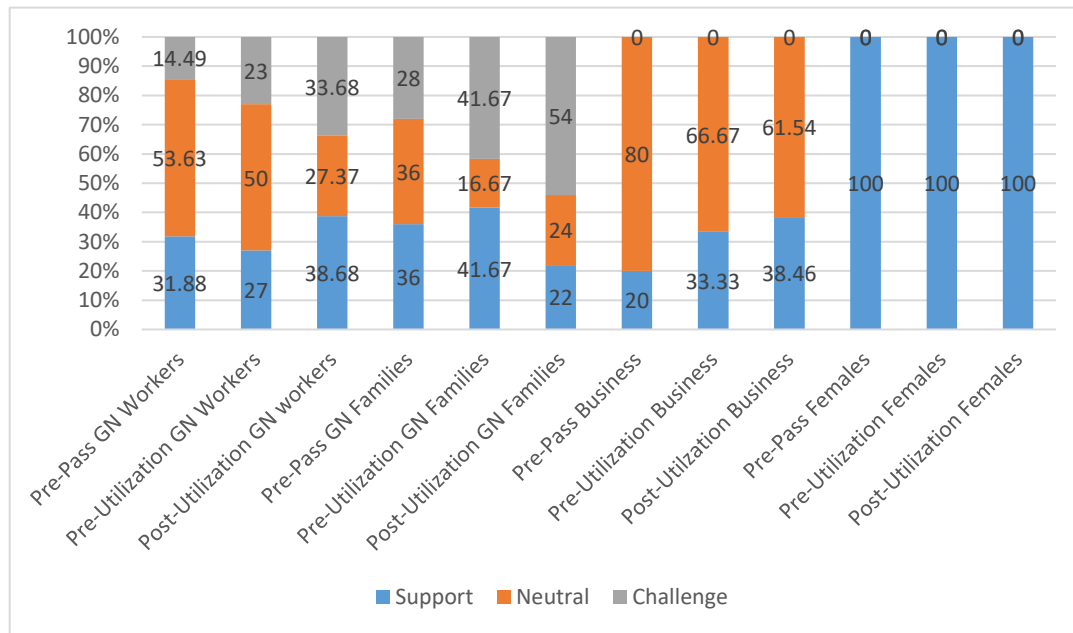
Figure 4.13 Percentage of article classification based on victim over time

challenges or supports the   mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative in question. Articles that present business as the victim increasingly support the mother homemaker/father breadwinner norm over time. The inverse is seen in articles that find gender-neutral workers or families as victims. Undisputed support for the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative when female victims are identified is unsurprising because the narrative assumes women (i.e. mothers) are responsible for the obligations of the private sphere and would benefit from paid leave policy to fulfill those.

Articles identifying gender-neutral workers as victims are increasingly polarized on the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative overtime, as the percentage of neutral articles decreases overtime. However, articles which support the narrative in these instances outweigh those which challenge the narrative in all three time periods. There are more articles published from California newspapers during the post-utilization time period due to the length of time the policy has been available in that state which may skew these results slightly since a majority of the articles published, with the gender-neutral worker victim, support the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. However, when the same victim is presented in New Jersey newspaper articles during the post-utilization time period more than half of the articles are found to challenge the gendered narrative.

Of the articles identifying gender-neutral families as victims, there is a higher percentage of support for the narrative at first. However, there is a sharp polarization which is apparent during the pre-utilization period as the percentage of neutral articles drops sharply, and those that challenge or support the narrative increase to an even level of each other. After individuals are able to utilize the benefits of paid family leave laws there is a continued increase in articles that challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner norm, and decline in articles that support it, if gender-neutral families are the identified victims. In the case of California and Rhode Island media coverage, when these victims are present there is a greater percentage of articles that challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. In New Jersey newspaper articles which include the gender-neutral family victim about as many articles challenge as do support the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. This is an interesting change in New Jersey media coverage

because during the pre-utilization time period gender-neutral workers and business were the two main identified victims, not gender-neutral families.

This chapter has detailed the results of the analysis of data included in this research project. By allowing the NPF component themes to present themselves through qualitative analysis of articles published in each state provides a foundation from which to analyze the framing of paid family leave policies. Each set of NPF components provided a unique lens to the problem and solution of paid family leave policies in these four states. The following chapter provides a theoretical discussion of the consequences of these results as well as suggestions on how to build upon this research project.

Conclusion

Discussion

This research project seeks to increase the understanding of newspaper coverage of paid family leave, determine if that coverage challenges or upholds the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative, and identify any changes in media framing overtime. Until now, no study has analyzed the media framing of state level paid family leave in the United States. To that end, this study now serves as a benchmark for further research evaluating this increasingly present policy among states. Using the NPF, this study analyzes the identified victims and their associations with other NPF components to describe the different media frames of paid family leave laws.

Upon review, the data does not demonstrate, broadly, that newspaper coverage of paid family leave policy either challenges or supports the mother homemaker/father breadwinner norm. Interestingly, the proportion of articles found to be neutral on the gendered narrative is much higher than this project expected, but does reflect the notion that journalistic coverage is fair, objective, and unbiased. Another interpretation may suggest that journalists do not consider the narrative in question here, and it just isn't on their radar. However, the proportion of articles classified as neutral decreases overtime, while the percentage of articles that either challenge or support the narrative increases. The disparity between articles classified as supporting or challenging the narrative decreases over time as the proportional increase of articles challenging the mother homemaker/father breadwinner is much higher than the increase in articles that support it. Except in New York, this trend

was found in the analysis of individual states as well. This data suggests that once people are able to utilize the benefits of paid family leave the media is more likely to present paid family leave in a fashion that challenges the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative. As more states pass paid family leave laws, and if this trend continues, societal expectations of gender roles may be altered because individuals' perceptions of reality often align with the reality within the media (Brettschneider, 2005). As Rolle (2017) reminds, consonance, or consistency in media reporting, simply enhances this effect.

Previous studies suggest that women, and women related issues, are often published in newspaper sections relating to society and culture (Mateos de Cabo, Gimeno, Martinez, & Lopez, 2014). Results of this research offer an alternative reality. Articles found to take a position as either challenging or supporting the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative were published evenly, by proportion, across news, opinion, business, and feminine newspaper sections during the pre-pass time period. However, during the pre-utilization time period, articles classified similarly were more centrally located in the news section. The post-utilization time period deviates from earlier time periods because articles that challenge the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative are published mainly in the news section and those that support it are located mostly in the opinion section, at least proportionally. Feminists would remark that gender norms are being dismantled as the plurality of articles in the post-utilization period challenging the narrative are located in the news section which could be a demonstration of the acceptance of this 'radical' position of challenging such a strong gender narrative, the mother homemaker/father breadwinner norm. Additionally, the greatest proportion of articles supporting the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative

during the same time period are located in the opinion section. One would remark that the greater presence of articles challenging the narrative in news sections, coupled with the large percentage of articles supporting the narrative in the opinion section, serves as a legitimizing force for gender equality. The data from the post-utilization period may provide hope for future media coverage since more states have already passed such laws but individuals have yet to draw benefits from them.

To better understand the way in which paid family leave is framed in the media, and inform future research on this topic, this study identifies and analyzes the associated NPF components of four main victim themes, i.e. gender-neutral workers, gender-neutral families, business, and females. There are clear similarities between how the media frames paid family leave policy when gender-neutral workers, gender-neutral families, and females are identified as victims. These three victims share family and financial challenge villains that can be overcome with the assistance of paid leave policies and lawmakers, their common heroes. Articles that include a business victim present a vastly different frame of paid family leave than articles including other victims. The percentage of articles that identify business as the victim vary dramatically from about a quarter in the pre-pass period, to over 40% in the pre-utilization period, to only 8.74% in the most recent time period. These articles frame paid family leave laws as a costly villain to business, who can only be 'saved' by lawmakers who vote against these policies or challenge their expansion once initially passed.

Surprising to this study is the small percentage of articles identifying females as victims. In accordance with feminist thought, this study expected women and mothers, specifically, to be identified in articles reporting on paid family leave much more frequently. However, females are only identified as victims in 9.52% of articles

included in the pre-pass period, 9.8% during the pre-utilization period, and dropping slightly during the post-utilization period to 6.04%. The connection between the family challenge villain and female victim is predicted by separate spheres ideology within feminist literature and also reinforces the traditional role of women (Elshtain, 1981; Pateman 1988; 1992; Kaufman 1989; Poortman & Van Der Lippe, 2009). Articles published during policy implementation, represented by the post-utilization time period, frame paid family leave policy as a relief to women's financial challenges, not family challenges. It appears that once paid family leave is passed and states move into the policy implementation phase and beyond, the limited benefits or lack of access to them, become the primary villain for female victims. This pattern is also evident for gender-neutral worker and family victims. This changes the frame of paid family leave during policy formation from a policy that assists individuals with work and family balance to one that lacks financial benefits to the point that some workers cannot utilize it.

From a feminist perspective, which seeks to dismantle gender narratives that constrict gender roles and enforce gender stereotypes, articles that frame gender-neutral families as victims are most useful in this endeavor. One could argue the same for gender-neutral workers as victims too since there is a proportional increase in these articles that challenge the narrative as time moves on, but so do the percent of articles that support the narrative with the same worker victim. Articles with gender-neutral family victims challenging the narrative increase in percentage over time and eventually surpass the 50% mark. In addition, a feminist perspective would further support the focus of gender-neutral family victims in articles as this particular victim more acutely resonates with the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative since the private sphere, which encompasses families, is typically

associated with women and these articles have removed the gendered slant of the term (Elshtain, 1981). Through this framing of paid family leave, the concept of unpaid labor in the home is presented as a family responsibility, rather than one of only women. Removing the gendered associations of families and unpaid labor defies the mother homemaker/father breadwinner narrative by testing separate spheres ideology, and even insinuates a replacement with a family homemaker/worker breadwinner narrative.

This study is concerned with how the media portrays state level paid family leave policy and whether that framing upholds traditional gender expectations, which leave women in a disadvantaged economic position. Two main media frames are identified in regards to paid family leave policy. One presents paid leave as a solution and is associated with worker, family, and female victims. The other, associated with business victims, frames paid family leave policies as costly to business. Over the course of the agenda setting, policy formation, and policy implementation phase articles reporting on paid family leave increasingly found themselves either supporting or challenging the mother homemaker/father breadwinner norm. There were simply fewer and fewer articles as time passed that were found to be neutral on the gendered narrative and more and more that challenged it.

The Narrative Policy Framework is a valuable tool in identifying common themes found in newspaper coverage of paid family leave policies and tracking changes to the way media frames this policy over time. This project's use of the NPF is innovative in that here it is utilized to observe changes in media framing overtime. Other policy communication scholars could benefit from the use of the NPF as this project does, and policy practitioners may find using the NPF in this fashion helpful

to inform future communication strategies. As the Covid-19 pandemic continues to be omnipresent in our lives, future research could analyze how the framing of mask mandates change over time utilizing the NPF as described here.

This research expands the current literature on policy scholarship by innovatively employing the NPF, as well as, pioneering the work of how state level paid family leave policy in the U.S is framed by the media. Although state paid family leave policies are relatively new in the U.S. more states are considering these policies, like New Hampshire, Nebraska, and Vermont (Keshner, 2019). It would be wise for future research to evaluate if the media behaves similarly in these other states if they begin to enact paid leave laws. Grounded in the feminist cannon, this project should provide confidence to gender equality advocates who seek to dismantle gender narratives that constrict, constrain, or disadvantage individuals because paid family leave policies, once utilized, are increasingly disassociated with gender in the media.

For feminists, removing the gendered responsibility of unpaid labor is progress. Without the sole responsibility of unpaid labor falling to them, thus relieving the burden of Arlie Hochschild's 'second shift', women are able devote as much time and energy as their male counterparts to succeeding in the private sphere, succeeding economically. This creates a more equal, level, and just economic market with fair outcomes for men and women. If the media not only influences consumers but also reflects the values of society, then this research suggests the use of paid family leave laws, which are increasingly passing among states, does help to dismantle economically limiting gender narratives and further gender equality. Feminists, and gender equality advocates, would be wise to continue to push for and support the passage of paid family leave policies in states that have not yet supported

these measures. In the short term, they help women and men with the difficult balance of work and family obligations, but in the long run, these policies are acting as an equalizer. This author recognizes that egalitarian family policies alone will not likely dismantle patriarchy, or that challenging one gendered narrative more frequently in the newspapers will ensure gender equality. This study serves as evidence that efforts to support these policies and encourage the use of them is worthwhile, and feminist organizations should prioritize their resources to do so.

Limitations

While this study generates significant contributions to policy, communication, and feminist scholarship, it is not without limitations. This study analyzes how the media frames paid leave in four states, California, New Jersey, New York, and Rhode Island. These states were included in this project because their paid leave policies had been in place long enough for residents to draw on those benefits. As of October 24, 2020, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Washington have also passed paid family leave laws and future studies should include these states, as well as any others that pass similar laws, to verify whether the trends outlined in this project continue. This research acknowledges that the states included in this research project, or any who have passed such progressive policies, exhibit certain socioeconomic factors that contribute to the acceptance of

State	Median Household Income	Percentage of BA or higher earners
California	71,228	33.3
Connecticut	76,106	38.9
Massachusetts	77,378	42.9
New Jersey	79,363	38.9
New York	65,323	35.9
Oregon	59,393	32.9
Rhode Island	63,296	33.3
Washington	70,116	35.3
United States	60,293	31.5

Table 5.1 Socioeconomic factors

such policies. The percentage of individuals over the age of 25 with a bachelor's

degree or higher and the median household income of the states in the U.S. who have

passed paid family leave laws are shown in table 5.1

(U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018). All the states that have

passed paid family leave laws, including those of this study, have a higher

percentage of individuals who have earned a minimum of a bachelor's degree than

the national average. Additionally, all of these states, except Oregon, exhibit a higher

median household income than the national average. Williamson and Carnes (2013)

remind us that states with a higher percentage of Democratic members in the state

legislature as well as those states with a higher percentage of female legislators offer

more substantial parental leave policies, in general, than states with a higher

membership of Republican lawmakers and fewer female legislators. When California

passed their paid family leave law in 2002 democrats made up a majority (63.33%)

of the state lawmakers. This expected trend was apparent in 2008 when democrats

made up 59.12% of state legislative branch in New Jersey, in 2013 when democrats

held 90.18% of state legislative seats in Rhode Island, and in 2016 when the New

York legislature was controlled by democrats with a 64.15% makeup. This

additional socioeconomic and political context also explains why these progressive

policies have passed in the states included in this research project. The support of

such progressive policies by the lawmakers and citizens of these states may impact

the media coverage of paid family leave policies as the media often acts as a mirror

to current social attitudes (Anastasio, Rose, & Chaptman, 1999).

This researcher's decision to analyze newspaper articles, rather than other

forms of media, i.e. television, twitter, podcasts, etc., may have impacted the

reported results. It is quite possible for other media forms or outlets to frame paid

family leave policies in a way not presented here. Other scholars may wish to utilize the NPF, as this study does, to examine the discussion of paid leave policy across social media platforms for instance. However, it is my suspicion that at least a few NPF component themes identified in this research would appear there too. Social media platforms certainly have a further reach than traditional newspapers these days. As mentioned in chapter 3, the circulation sizes for all the newspapers included in this research's sample do not account for 90% of the populations in each state. Admittedly, this research only included newspaper articles in the sample with the phrase 'paid family leave' in the title, and there are likely many more articles which discuss the topic but simply weren't included in this study due to the title.

Some feminists may critique the coding decision of this researcher on the gender-neutral family victim, and claim it is inappropriately deemed gender-neutral. As a number of feminists have argued (Elshtain, 1981; Butler, 1990; Hochschild, 1990), women are socially situated in the private sphere that encompasses the family. Given these two concepts, women and family, are so interwoven and intertwined they may refute the gender neutrality of this victim. I would remind such critics that one, the intent of the journalist is unknown and it would be irresponsible for this researcher to assume the articles' authors used the term family but wished to promote a latent meaning of mother or woman. Two, the average newspaper consumer is unlikely a feminist zealot who conflates family and women.

This research provides a foundational understanding of how state level paid family leave laws are portrayed in the media. As an advocate for gender equality, the results of this study are encouraging because more states continue to pass these gender egalitarian laws and there is evidence that the media is

participating in the dismantling of the harmful mother homemaker/father

breadwinner narrative.

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