

didn't want to get involved." Subsequent psychological research suggested that the reason was more likely to be confusion, fear, misapprehension, or uncertainty. Some neighbors may have thought that it was a lover's quarrel, or that Genovese was drunk when she staggered from the scene of the first attack. An account pieced together from court testimony by lawyer and Kew Gardens resident Joseph De May (at oldkewgardens.com) suggests that some of the elderly residents of the apartment complex thought the fight may have spilled out of a bar near where the first stabbing occurred. Only one person admitted seeing a knife.

The late *New York Times* editor A. M. Rosenthal stood by the newspaper's account until his death last May. "In a story that gets a lot of attention, there's always somebody who's saying, 'Well, that's not really what it's supposed to be,'" he told Rasenberger. "There may have been 38. There may have been 39."

## PRESS &amp; MEDIA

## The Mute Majority

**THE SOURCE:** "The Gendered Blogosphere: Examining Inequality Using Network and Feminist Theory" by Dustin Harp and Mark Tremayne, in *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, Summer 2006.

FOR MORE THAN A GENERATION, the editorial pages of America's newspapers have been assailed as testosterone terra firma. Even as women moved into nearly four of 10 editing and reporting jobs, they still

contributed only about 10 to 20 percent of opinion pieces. The free, uncensored, unedited World Wide Web was supposed to change this. Guess what? The number of women among the top 30 political bloggers was exactly three, or 10 percent, in 2004, according to Dustin Harp and Mark Tremayne, journalism professors at the University of Texas, Austin.

This would be merely another anecdote in the inexplicable realm of gender differentials if the number of blogs—Web logs or online



Conservative blogger Michelle Malkin

entries in diary form—were not growing so fast. About 32 million people reported reading them in 2004, and researchers increasingly find that young Americans regard them as a superior form of citizen journalism. They are free, include a wider range of views than traditional newspapers and magazines, and provide opportunities for dialogue.

Of the 30 top-ranked political blogs in 2004, the most popular female-written blog, "A Small Victory," at No. 13, has disappeared from the Web. The conservative blog

MichelleMalkin.com, then ranked 23rd, continues, and liberal and raunchy Wonkette.com, then written by Ana Marie Cox, was 26th.

Harp and Tremayne argue that one of the most common explanations for women's paltry showing among the top blogs—that there just aren't many female bloggers—doesn't hold up to scrutiny. While it is true, they say, that women were slower to start blogging than men, women now write 43 percent of all blogs, and hundreds of female bloggers—at least 466, according to a recent list—write about politics.

A more fruitful explanation might be found in the history and culture of the Web, as bloggers link to one another and boost each other's readership. "Original players in any network have an advantage: The longer you have been around, the more links you are likely to acquire. In the 1990s, men outnumbered women on the Web by a sizable margin. While that is no longer true, the early advantage may continue to grow and snowball." Men also may simply prefer to link to other men, they suggest.

Could it be that women's political blogs are inferior? Harp and Tremayne dismiss the notion. As long as quality is judged by popularity—and popularity is skewed by historical patterns—there is no way to make unbiased judgments. Their verdict: "Patriarchal hegemony" should be actively combated by women bloggers and others "who understand the importance of inclusive spheres of discourse."