

All the Resistance That's Fit to Print: Canadian Women Print Journalists Narrate Their Careers

by

Vivian Smith

BA, University of Western Ontario, 1975

MA, University of Western Ontario, 1977

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

PHD

in Interdisciplinary Studies

© Vivian Smith, 2012

University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This dissertation may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

Supervisory Committee

All the Resistance That's Fit to Print: Canadian Women Print Journalists Narrate Their Careers

by

Vivian Smith

BA, University of Western Ontario, 1975

MA, University of Western Ontario, 1977

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Lynne Van Luven (Department of Writing)

Co-Supervisor

Dr. Darlene Clover (Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies)

Co-Supervisor

Dr. Annalee Lepp (Department of Women's Studies)

Committee Member

Abstract

Supervisory Committee

Dr. Lynne Van Luven (Department of Writing)
Co-Supervisor

Dr. Darlene Clover (Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies)
Co-Supervisor

Dr. Annalee Lepp (Department of Women's Studies)
Committee Member

Canadian women print journalists both protest against and acquiesce to the patriarchal culture of newspapering in their daily work. Utilizing narrative analysis and the feminist theory of intersectionality, this dissertation argues that other social characteristics interact with gender as practitioners negotiate the multiple hegemonies of their workplace, and that the impacts of these characteristics change over time. The purpose of the qualitative study was to do fieldwork needed to respond to scholarly uncertainty about journalists' individual motivations on the job and their perceived impact on the socio-political agenda. Individual interviews and focus groups were conducted over 2010-2011. Participants included 26 Canadian women print journalists in five newspapers across Canada, as well as one former journalist, now an academic. Key generational differences appeared when participants' stories were examined with age and gender intersecting as an organizing theme. Senior participants tended to see themselves as *lucky survivors* in frustratingly gendered newsrooms; those in mid-career were *self-sacrificing, hard workers* who needed, but were not getting, workplace flexibility; and the most junior ones presented themselves as *individual strategists*, capable of handling whatever routine injustices

were thrown at them. They wanted to stay in the business long enough to “choose” between careers and parenthood, with technological proficiency as a lifeline. Participants’ narratives revealed how the most senior tended to combine their multiple identities and externalities into a coherent whole, while younger participants experimented with and exploited aspects of their complex identities and larger societal influences to survive in a high-stress, gendered environment. This study produces evidence that the participants’ career paths are influenced in fluid and often hidden ways by other characteristics as they intersect with gender. Assumptions about these characteristics, such as age, race, parenthood status and class, further complicate the shaping of participants’ experiences in their workplaces, offering them other possible positions from which to either reinforce or resist the newsroom culture. The participants take up navigating these confused seas in ways that often leave them frustrated and angry, but ultimately most say they feel they make a difference in the socio-political agenda because of their complex identities and as voices for those deemed “voiceless.”

Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	v
Acknowledgments.....	viii
Dedication	ix
Chapter 1	1
Introduction: Are You Still Here?.....	1
From concern to action	4
The study in context.....	8
Purpose.....	14
Objectives	15
Role/Place of the Researcher	17
Theoretical Framework.....	18
Significance.....	19
Chapter 2	21
The Story So Far: Context and Background	21
Stories of Girls in the Balcony and Behind the Washroom	21
Taylorism and the Legacy of ‘Scientific Management’	29
Journalistic Traditions of Ordering the News	32
Gendered Responses to Traditional Discourses.....	34
Intersectionality: Key debates around gender, parenthood, race, disability	39
Chapter 3	48
Methodology and Procedures: My Three Years of Slowing Down, or	48
Narrative Analysis: “We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live”	50
Stories of Our Brilliant Careers	55
Narrating the Narrators	57
The Truth, or Something Like It.....	59
Procedural dramas, close encounters, insights and screw-ups.....	61
Who, What, When, Where and How, More Specifically.....	63
I’ll Show You Mine, if You’ll Show Me Yours	69
Reflexivity Takes the Stand	71
Chapter 4	75
Such luck: senior women print journalists explain their careers	75
Luck, longevity and a passion for story	77
The defining business of being an outsider.....	80
‘Let’s just say I am happy’	85
‘A story that is connected to your heart is glued to you’	89
‘Journalism is easy if you have a wife at home’	94
‘If I had kids, I don’t think I’d be where I am’	98
‘I still think this business needs me to change it’	103
Conclusions.....	108
Chapter 5	112
Mid-career participants: hard work, sacrifice and a search for flexibility	112

'I've found what I love to do and I want to get better and better doing it'	114
'They're going to find out that I am a total fraud'	118
'If you've never experienced racism, you'll never know the pain of it'	121
'Will my son be proud of me or will he think I just wasn't there?'	126
'I can't be a good mother and a good journalist at the same time'	132
'I've always been a story-teller; I think that's it.'	139
'This is a whole new world and we have to look at stuff differently'	145
'At the <i>Free Press</i> , there is room to be ambitious'	151
Conclusions: Twisting and turning on a middle rung	156
Chapter 6	160
For the youngest journalists, it's 'a game of chicken'	160
'We're going to be well-positioned – if we can hang in'	162
'I have to fight every single day if I want to stay'	170
'This shift toward technology, I don't think it is gender specific'	177
'If someone needs to stay late because someone called in sick, it will be me'	184
'You can't write about the world if you are stuck in the newsroom'	189
'It's possible to brand yourself and still be a good journalist'	196
Conclusions: 'There is a lot of ship to turn around'	201
Chapter 7	205
Of darkness, dragons and black holes	205
<i>The Spectator</i> : 'What will be left of journalism in 25 years?'	206
<i>Winnipeg Free Press</i> : 'There would be a sea of 12 men and me'	209
<i>Calgary Herald</i> : 'I didn't know I'd have such a desire for power'	214
<i>The Times Colonist</i> : 'Still a very male-oriented power structure'	217
<i>The Chronicle Herald</i> : 'We can challenge the status quo'	222
Conclusions	225
Chapter 8	230
Six who walked away: frustrations and new beginnings	230
'My father expected me to be President of the United States'	232
'He golfs with the managing editor! I can't compete with that'	241
'Newspapers are structured in a way to squeeze people to death'	247
Media can help change your community, your society, for the better	252
'That's haunted me forever, that we can't be leaders and women'	258
'I don't think any newsroom in Canada is completely diverse'	266
Conclusions	270
Chapter 9	273
Conclusions: Taking control of the narrative	273
Summarizing the content	276
Back in the headlines again	278
Reflexivity revisited	280
Implications	280
Significance of the findings	284
Limitations of the study	285
Recommendations for further work	285
Recommendations for practice	286
References	288

Appendix A Application for Ethics Approval	298
Appendix B Interview Questions.....	318
Appendix C Participant Consent Form	319

Acknowledgments

If it takes a village to raise a child, then it takes a small city to support a PhD student. My gratitude goes to the participants in this study, whose stories, passion and candour made it possible. The University of Victoria's individual Interdisciplinary Studies program provided the opportunity (and some cold, hard cash) for me to carry out my doctoral research. Dr. Darlene Clover, Dr. Annalee Lepp and Dr. Lynne Van Luven at the University of Victoria comprised a supervisory committee absolutely extraordinaire. I also thank many other faculty members and grad students, and administrative, technical and library staff at UVic, all of whom regularly saved me from myself, notably Vivian McCormick, Val Tenning and Helen Rezanowich. The tireless, trusty transcribers? Goddesses all.

Across Canada, many friends, present and former colleagues, and family members cheered encouragement; thank you Mom, Lisa, my McInnes in-laws, Dorelle and Judy. My sister, Callie Cesarini, gave wise counsel, as did Dr. David Black at Royal Roads University, Mary Doyle at Western University, Susan Down at the Canadian Newspaper Association, Dr. Catherine McGregor at UVic, Duncan McMonagle at Red River College and Ann Rauhala at Ryerson University. Anne Mullens, my colleague at *Boulevard* magazine, buoyed me up and left me alone in perfectly balanced measures. Without the camaraderie of sister PhD travellers Sienna Cullimore, Anita Girvan and Margaret Scaia on lonely Interdisciplinary backroads, I would not have found my way to the finish. My dear, patient friends Dan, Eileen, Heather, Joyce, Lynn, Penny and Verna listened to me rattle on about this stuff for years. And thanks again, Pete.

Most importantly, my wonderful family – Craig, Mary and Will McInnes – supported and inspired me without fail, as always. I love you.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Ruth Smith; to the memory of my father, Goldwin Dennison Smith; and to my husband, Craig Stirling McInnes. It is also dedicated to Shirley Sharzer, my journalism teacher, mentor and friend.

Chapter 1

Introduction: Are You Still Here?

The publisher of *The Globe and Mail* during the 1980s and early '90s was A. (for Archibald) Roy Megarry, a beaming Irish-born accountant with a trim physique and a quick step. He had a reputation for solid financial management, back in the days when Canada's news barons had solid finances to manage. In press reports, Roy Megarry was invariably described as bold, and as a publisher who, perhaps more than others, personified his paper. Yet inside the *Globe's* Toronto newsroom at 444 Front Street West, we editorial staffers – reporters, columnists, editors and managers – rarely saw him emerge from his elegant offices. Communications from him were nearly non-existent.

During those years, I was one of a small group of women managers in the newsroom who jokingly called ourselves “the brown-haired girls.” This came out of seeing male colleagues (usually older editors) look nervously at us because they simply could not remember our names, unable to distinguish one of us from the other. It must have seemed to them that we were interchangeable, if not actually invisible. If Roy Megarry knew of my existence, I would not know it until late in 1985, after five years at the *Globe*, when I became the editor of the new national edition. Indeed, I often doubted if he would recognize anyone beyond a few top editors, our marquee columnists and foreign correspondents, whose expense accounts he would review. I have wondered if he approved a demand once made for a lawnmower for the use of the *Globe's* man in Harare. (Or, perhaps, for the use of our man's houseboy.)

I was summoned into his presence one day in the fall of 1985, as Megarry wanted to brief me on an assignment I was given to hopscotch across Western Canada, talking to premiers,

bureaucrats, businessmen and other power brokers – essentially, the leading edge of our newspaper’s elite demographic – to promote the national edition to them. I am sure I feigned nonchalance for the brief audience, but didn’t dare to drink the coffee I was offered in a fine china cup, for fear of spilling it. If I took notes, they have long been discarded.

Two years went by with no further contact between us, except the report I sent to him on my tour. I did keep a copy of that report, but if he replied, there is no record of it. So on a blistering hot afternoon in late August of 1987, I was surprised when I looked up to see him stride toward me in the newsroom the way a five-star general might cross a parade ground, at full speed and looking neither left nor right. I had just come out of a meeting in the managing editor’s office and was walking slowly, engrossed in a printout. Without stopping or even slowing, Megarry eyed my approaching mid-section and asked with his usual broad grin, “Are you *still* here?” “Yes,” I said, although I wasn’t quite sure what he meant. It was early in the day, not hours past the end of a late shift spent handling reporters and breaking stories, when an editorial manager might be asked that question as a hint to go home, as it would all start again in a few hours. Then I got it. I was more than eight months pregnant, and within two weeks would begin my 15-week maternity leave. I have wondered since whether he imagined my water breaking, splashing onto his elegant, summer-weight suit. “Yes,” I repeated. “I am still here.” But that was the beginning of the end of my being there.

The day before my 41st birthday in 1994, with two small children, and having already abandoned the stress and long hours of management for a return to general assignment reporting, I took a buy-out that the *Globe* was offering at the time. My husband, a senior political reporter who started at the paper four months after I did, had accepted a position as the *Globe*’s first Victoria Bureau Chief (to call itself truly national, the *Globe* needed a correspondent in the

British Columbia capital). My bosses, however, would not agree to me working part-time during my husband's five-year deployment. I gave up my job after 14 years of rising through the ranks from copy editor to National Beats Editor, responsible for about 30 staff, and we moved to Victoria. While my *Globe* office had overlooked Skydome (now the Rogers Centre), the busy Gardiner Expressway and Toronto's soaring office towers, my new bedroom workplace at our suburban home had a view of the front walk. I had once organized civic and provincial election coverage, and argued persuasively on behalf of my beat reporters (health, education, law, police, Metro Hall, social trends, etc.) to bring the stories I assigned them onto the front page. I now walked my kids to school, took them to swimming lessons and arranged play dates. Parenthood changed everything.

After turning down a job offer for night city editor of the *Times Colonist*, which would have meant seeing my family only on sleep-deprived weekends, I became a freelance writer, which means being paid poorly and irregularly by the word, with no benefits or vacation pay. In Canada, freelance writers' incomes have stagnated for three decades at \$25,000 a year on average, before taxes (Cohen, 2012). My income dropped by two-thirds, but I had flexibility and more time for family. What I did not have anymore, however, was a challenging, exciting career. I no longer had a regular national platform for my stories, columns, and news decisions. To earn more money and use my journalism skills, I took up teaching as an instructor at four different universities, began training professionals such as lawyers, doctors, professors and government workers on how to talk to the media; and hung out my shingle as a writing coach, going to various newsrooms to coach editors and reporters. I took on unpaid 'collegial' activities such as judging National Newspaper Awards and National Magazine Awards, and speaking at industry

conferences. Today, besides being a fulltime PhD candidate, I am the part-time Associate Editor of a lifestyle magazine in Victoria, because, in the end, we never did return to Toronto.

Over the past 20 or so years, many other women of my generation at the *Globe* and at other papers have exchanged similar personal stories of leaving daily journalism – all in frustration and sadness, some with fully stated regret and others definitely not – for public relations, teaching, homemaking, freelancing and other kinds of paid and unpaid work. We told our stories to each other; our voices and views were no longer heard in the newsroom. While these fields are rewarding and valuable, I could not stop wondering what, if anything, daily print journalism, and by extension, the socio-political agenda in Canada, has lost by so many women's voices being absent from the news pages and from meetings where decisions about what to tell readers are made. Simultaneously, because of my work as a freelancer, editorial consultant and presenter at national journalism conferences, I continued to work with women (and men) in newsrooms across Canada and saw first-hand how women who have stayed in the newspaper industry, along with those who have joined it more recently, were/are still passionate about their work as they still encounter, submit to and fight against increasingly subtle and complex discrimination based on gender and other human qualities.

From concern to action

Eventually, the stories became too compelling for me to simply shake my head over and lament: young, single women would wonder at conferences whether to stay at their newspapers or jump into public relations and gain footholds there rather than risk losing their nascent journalism careers after a climb of a few years; newly married women fretted to me about whether to have kids now, later or at all; more senior women saw men promoted around them, the door to the editor-in-chief's suite barred. In my university classes, young women, who

consistently made up the majority of students, would graduate, not to take up daily journalism at all. Who wants all that stress, they said, with little hope of advancement?

In May of 2009, I attended a Canadian Association of Journalists conference that brought me face to face with women's dilemmas. The sessions were all on the record, meaning their proceedings could be reported, so I taped this one. During a session called, predictably, "Breaking the Glass Ceiling," women reporters in their late 20s and early 30s told how they were considering leaving journalism, largely because of the family/career conflict. Heather Robinson, a 30-something CBC journalist, said she and many of her peers in newsrooms across Canada were considering leaving or were "going to bail" from a business that still forced women to choose between a family and a career. A reporter from *The Edmonton Journal* described how she had started lowering the pitch of her voice and dressing in mannish suits to appear more serious. "I have changed the way that I am" in order to progress, she said. "I've cut out the 'girly talk.' I dress like a man at work so that I have more confidence." Kim Bolan, a long-time reporter for the *Vancouver Sun*, recalled how 25 years earlier, the all-male editing staff eyed new women reporters to see which ones wore bras. Female summer interns were sent to cover the Abbotsford air show to see who would throw up during the jet-fighter flights. They were routinely assigned to do features on Wreck Beach, which is a nude beach, for the amusement of male editors. Many battles and 25 years later, Bolan said, things had improved, but women still faced obstacles in the newsroom, and were still rarely assigned to traditional male beats such as the legislature. Bolan herself covers terrorism and organized crime for the *Sun*, and said she received mail from angry people asking how she, as a mother, dared do this dangerous work.

Hearing the women at the conference describe their daily work experiences in Canadian newspapers reminded me that, despite most of them never having met before, as women

journalists they appeared to become an instant community, listening to each other empathetically as well as angrily, and vowing to push harder at the powerful forces in their newsrooms. Here were about 30 women (and four supportive men, one of whom commented how many talented women had left his newsroom) exchanging nearly identical stories about working within a power structure that has been hostile to women for nearly 150 years, while claiming to interpret the world accurately and fairly to all who read the paper.

Newspapers that pride themselves on exposing social inequality on the page as part of the accountability discourse can demonstrate myopia about their own in-house discriminatory cultural practices. A good example was a *Globe and Mail* editorial on the importance of bringing more women into leadership positions. The *Globe* lamented that while women “have made great strides in four decades, they still remain a small minority in the narrower world of power and authority in society today” (*Globe and Mail*, 2010, Jan. 9). The editorial then described many powerful places where women were underrepresented, from Crown corporations to boards of directors to the House of Commons. But nowhere did the piece make the point that newspapers are a prime social institution where women are missing from the highest ranks, including the *Globe* itself. A list of the paper’s senior editors at the time showed just seven women among 26 top-ranked editors; the online version did slightly better with 10 women among 27 names. At this writing, the senior editors’ list is about the same, with nine women among 25 senior editors, and the online senior staff consists of four women to eight men (*Globe and Mail* online, retrieved 2010, April 30, and 2012, Oct. 6). The sports section, as with most newspapers, was written and edited almost entirely by men, manifesting how sports reporting is “part of promotional culture, completely incorporated into the economy (and arguably) ... exists in a parallel male universe” (Aldridge, 2001). A literally graphic example of this phenomenon appeared in the *London Free*

Press: the chain owner's Olympic Games reporters were congratulated for their reportage with a photograph that showed one (small, attractive) white woman, from the broadcast arm of owner Quebecor Media Inc., among 30 white, male reporters (*London Free Press*, March 1, 2010).

The voices of my female friends, colleagues and students, who either left journalism, were still in it but feeling increasingly frustrated and trapped, or who never entered journalism to begin with, had gone from whispers to an invisible chorus; all of these intelligent, educated and passionate people were looking ahead and seeing a career path leading nowhere. I went back to a question that was similar to Megarry's that day back in 1987, except that I was actually curious about the answer: *why were those who remained still there?* I began to do more organized research, both on my own time and while at the University of Western Ontario (now Western University) as a Canwest Fellow in Media Studies, over the fall of 2008. It struck me as I reviewed the literature and spoke to colleagues across the country that a significant amount of research examined how women are portrayed in the media worldwide, and feminist theorists in particular had written thousands of scholarly papers theorizing on the impact of media representations of gender. Yet little in-depth academic research had been done on Canadian women print journalists, with the most obvious exceptions being work undertaken by Dr. Barbara Freeman at Carleton University, historian Marjory Lang, and Dr. Gertrude Robinson at McGill University. Freeman has written extensively about Canadian women's experiences in journalism from a historical perspective (Freeman, 1989, 2001, 2011), Lang has written a thorough social history of Canadian women in newsrooms (Lang, 1999) and Robinson spent much of her long career quantifying and questioning equity relations among journalists across the Western world (Robinson, 2005). Their work, and that of a few others, revealed to me the

dimensions of women's historical struggles and achievements in Canadian print media (and elsewhere), and illuminated the path where I felt the next steps needed to be taken.

The study in context

Since American journalist and social watchdog Walter Lippmann began critiquing newspapers in the early 1920s, scholars have been exploring how news media influence the ways in which citizens in a democracy see their world and their place in it (Altheide, 1985; Donsbach, 2004; Lippman, 1922; Robinson, 2005). Today, the daily press, while regularly reported to be in great turmoil in terms of financial viability and technological challenges, continues as a primary site of public learning and debate, and a powerful force both propelling and preventing societal change (Beers, 2006; Donsbach, 2004, Strong, 2011). Mass media's role in shaping and upholding public opinion is central: it is the media's function to "amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs and codes of behaviour that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society" (Chomsky & Herman, 1988, p.1).

Despite the Canadian news media's fundamental role as public agenda-setters (Nancoo & Nancoo, 1996), Canadian academics have noted that little study has been done on a small group of historically influential workers within them: senior women print journalists in Canada (Robinson, 2005; Barber & Rauhala, 2008). Worldwide, women occupy a small fraction of middle management in news media organizations and they are even more seriously under-represented in senior management (de Bruin, 2000; Media Reports for Women, 2009; Robinson, 2005; Strong, 2011). In Canada, women have done comparatively better: their numbers in print newsrooms have risen to about one third of editorial staff, including middle management, but women still hold only one in 10 top editorial positions at Canadian daily newspapers (Robinson, 2005). This minority status has persisted even though women have been the majority gender in

journalism schools for over 30 years in North America (Media Reports for Women, 2009; Reinardy, 2009; Vlad, 2011). At Carleton University in Ottawa, for example, associate director Dr. Christopher Waddell (personal communication, April 22, 2009) indicates that since 2001, enrolment into the undergraduate journalism program has been 80 per cent female. (The program cuts the class from 200 to 100 after first year. Because of their higher grades, it is women who advance.) Women's rise through the ranks of journalism is slower than in the overall workforce: while nearly half the people in management or professional occupations in the U.S. are women, only 24 per cent of women occupy supervisory roles in journalism (Reinardy, 2009). In Canada, the Conference Board of Canada reports that "contrary to popular belief, women have not made significant progress toward gender equality at the middle management level in either the private or public sector" (Wohlbold & Chenier, 2011, p. 5), and puts part of the blame on media reports that pay "disproportionate attention to the few female leaders who make it to the top" (p. 5). If any statistics exist that take into account the number of racialized women in various editorial ranks of Canadian newsrooms, I have not been able to find them.

The newsroom, like the majority of workplaces in Canada, is a gendered space (Freeman, 2001; Lang; 1999; North, 2009; Robinson, 2005, Ross & Carter, 2011), where women have experienced varying levels of hostility since they began working as print journalists in Canada (and other democracies) in the mid-1800s (Freeman, 1989; Lang, 1999). Many women journalists in the Western world today find their minority position in the industry increasingly problematic. More women than men (21 per cent compared to 16 per cent in a recent study of 715 U.S. newspapers) say they are burned out, frustrated and thinking of leaving the field altogether (Reinardy, 2009). An already stressful environment is compounded for women by family issues (Everbach & Flournoy, 2007), sexism and the proverbial glass ceiling. In Australia,

female journalists, especially those with children, say they find it more difficult to perform the journalistic tasks expected of them as the industry's financial instability continues (North, 2009). In New Zealand, journalist Catherine Strong's 2011 PhD thesis found that while women represent a majority of journalists in that country, the daily newspaper industry relegates women to lower career levels, and they are nearly invisible at the top editorial and executive level so that the very few who do break through the gendered ceiling feel keenly the hardships of isolation from both management and journalism collegiality (Strong, 2011).

In Canada, scholar Catherine McKercher of Carleton University notes that legions of women journalists in this country have been "laid off, bought out of, or denied entry to the fulltime labour market in the news business: their only option if they want to work in journalism is to freelance" (McKercher, 2009, p. 370). Many women journalists who leave newspapers turn to freelancing; it pays poorly, with rates of between nothing to \$1 a word unchanged in 30 years. Often, articles must be written "on spec," meaning "on speculation" that the editor will publish it. If rejected, the writer has done the work for nothing. Digital "content farms" pay a few cents for hundreds of "clicks" on a story (Barber, 2012). Freelancing is a precarious, powerless sort of intellectual piecework done mostly by women (PWAC, 2006), while editorial work at the highest and best-paid levels of the daily newspaper business is still done mostly by men (Djerf-Pierre, 2005; Robinson, 2005).

So, as newspaper editors ask every morning when deciding what stories will be covered that day, who cares? Is it a problem if senior women print journalists are under-represented, under stress and under the radar in terms of what might affect newspaper readership, and, by extension, what issues citizens think about and act on? Would listening to women print journalists discuss their working lives tell us anything new about them – and the newsroom and society – that would

be worth knowing? At first glance, it would seem that while feminist scholars have produced masses of papers on the effects of mass media sexism on what is published and broadcast, few scholars appear intrigued by the idea of talking in-depth to women journalists who produce news. At the quantitative end of journalism research, for example, American scholar Linda Steiner (2008) concludes that most large-scale journalism studies ignore who specifically creates the news. On the qualitative front, Canadian communications theorist Gertrude Robinson (1998) pointed out nearly 15 years ago that in a feminist framework, the role of lived experience, which once lacked credence as a source of knowledge, could now be included in the building of theory. Yet to date, this role of lived experience has been seldom employed by academics studying women journalists and journalism. Historically, the precedent is there: Lang notes of women journalists in Canada in the early 1900s, for example, that “from their entry-level jobs to their career mobility to their retirement, the profiles of women’s contributions to journalism and their experiences as journalists distinguished their career patterns from those of their male colleagues” (Lang, 1999, p. 9).

But rather than scholars’ lack of interest, the problem may be one of limited theoretical approaches leading researchers repeatedly to get lost in the woods, unable to move forward. To date, contradiction and ambivalence are the terms most often reported in academic papers concerned with how senior men and women journalists influence news creation or think they do (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009; Peiser, 2000; Rodgers & Thorson, 2003; Strong, 2011; Thiel, 2004). Research on what factors motivate journalists generally is so inconclusive that we cannot say with confidence what *does* motivate them (de Bruin, 2000; Deuze, 2005), and so cannot yet draw precise, reliable conclusions about the nature of their personal impact on the socio-political agenda (Peiser, 2000).

Where media and communications scholars do take up the issue of women journalists' specific impact on the craft, attention has been focused on the impact of gender *in isolation* and whether it makes any observable difference to how journalists conduct their various tasks, therefore causing differences to show up in the final product (Barber & Rauhala, 2008; Benson, 2005; Craft & Wanta, 2004; Robinson, 2005; Rodgers & Thorson, 2003; Ross, 2007; Schudson, 2008; Strong, 2011). The Global Media Monitoring Project, which is the "largest and longest longitudinal study on the representation of women in the world's media" (Who Makes the News, 2011), has focused on gender's influence on journalism since 1995. Non-profit MediaWatch Canada did similar work in content-analysis for 26 years, challenging primarily sexism in the media.

In their landmark literature review, Craft and Wanta (2004) found studies "do not support drawing a straight line from reporter or editor to news content that somehow flows out of one's gender" (p. 136). Then we might ask if other intersecting lines of diversity – race, class, age or parenthood experiences, for example – could affect how women work in newsrooms and be made manifest on the news pages. If so, could these intersections be related to what scholars currently label only as ambiguities in their search for how individuals affect news? Do these contextual variables perhaps combine over time to create for women enough reason to abandon the newsroom mid-career or to cling to it fiercely in the few numbers that they do? One recent study that did use a novel approach helps us to understand the need for more work in this area. It looked at short descriptions from more than 300 American reporters of what stories they felt constituted their best work and indicated that unlike what many previous studies have suggested, "social and demographic characteristics of reporters can be linked systematically to news decisions" (Beam, 2008, p. 2).

Beam argues that not enough attention has been focused on how a journalist's gender, age, race and religious convictions can influence the nature and subject matter of stories, and so set about letting journalists describe their own best work, rather than trying to theorize from yet another content analysis. Beam found that about 30 per cent of journalists cited "serious, traditional" (p. 8) topics as their best work, with one in five naming articles on education and social services, then business and consumer affairs, as most important. More women than men cited education and social issues stories as part of their best work, while racialized journalists were more than twice as likely as white journalists to see education and social issues stories as part of their best work catalogue (p. 8). Writes Beam:

Research on the sociology of news clearly establishes that professional, organizational, economic and cultural factors have tremendous influence on news. The findings here suggest that in some situations, a connection can also be drawn between the demographic and social characteristics of reporters and the kinds of stories that they create and admire (p. 10).

This is a promising finding borne of an innovative approach. It is worth pursuing further, if we believe, as I do, that there is indeed a problem. Understanding the experiences, opinions and struggles of those few (generally white, middle-class) women who help define for Canadians what is newsworthy will help us to understand how social issues are prioritized as they are and whether these priorities are conducive to our progress as individuals and a nation. How can editors be so sure, for example, that the best story of the day is about a new arena in Quebec rather than a lack of affordable day care? Why write an editorial about the cost of iPads instead of the costs of illiteracy?

The strength and progress of a democracy such as Canada's depends on its citizens being well informed; editorial staff do influence the news media for which they work in various, if contradictory, ways (Gist, 1993); and the media are among the main transmitters of information

about what is allowable behaviour for women (Freeman, 2001). As Barber and Rauhala note, “it is surely valuable to discover who the [news managers] are, whether they reflect the society they live in and what they think about diversity both in employment and society at large” (2008, p. 8).

Fieldwork in newsrooms is needed to witness, document and re-theorize the impact of individual journalists’ experiences and differences from both a public-policy/social-agenda perspective and in terms of the working lives of senior women journalists and those who might wish to follow them. Steiner (1998) notes that, autobiography, or telling stories about themselves, helps “explain work experiences, including what would lead [women journalists] to leave their jobs” (p. 94). We could then logically address the question of what makes them stay.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to do this needed fieldwork. I conducted 28 individual interviews and five focus groups with women print journalists across Canada in order to investigate and analyse how junior and senior women print journalists in Canada make sense of their career trajectory over time.¹ I focused on the ways in which they say they have had to adapt to, reject, rationalize and/or revolutionize the male-dominated newsroom culture which persists across Canada (and all other Western and non-western democracies) today. I have also analysed the ways in which the study participants say they have affected the socio-political agenda as a result of their complex individuality and what they do as journalism decision-makers. The goal is to create new knowledge about the personal and social nature and impact of women’s journalistic practice and leadership at daily newspapers by analysing the influence of their social – and socially constructed – characteristics on their career trajectories. By examining autobiographical data – most importantly, their narrative inquiry about their working lives – I studied power

¹ After I defended this dissertation and just before the deadline to submit it, one participant withdrew without explanation, leaving a total of 27.

relationships as the women experience them, documented the ways their personal lives were affected by the work they do, investigated how their decision-making affects what is defined as news, and theorized women's exclusion from the highest ranks of print journalism in terms of its potential implications on them as individuals and for matters of social justice.

I chose to analyse the data through the lens of intersectionality, a feminist theory and a method of research which recognizes that many strands, such as gender, class and race, make up individual identities (AWID, 2004; Cole, 2009; Davis, 2008; Knudsen, 2006). Intersectionality also refers to the convergence of systems of race, gender and class delineations that shapes people's experiences of subordination and privilege (Crenshaw, 1991). An important sub-theme to address as well is whether and how the new industry focus on emerging media technologies will change the entrenched newsroom cultural discourses that women appear to find limiting.

Objectives

The goal of this thesis is to contribute new knowledge about a small but important group of Canadian workers who help set the public agenda from local politics to global issues, using the theoretical approach of intersectionality, and the qualitative methodology of narrative analysis. With journalism providing much of the input into how citizens perceive the world around them (Donsbach, 2004), it is important to investigate in an original way how and why so few women stay at newspapers to become leaders and to theorize on how their exclusion, as well as any of their own exclusionary practices, might affect the definition and production of news. I also compare the experiences of members of the current generation of women journalists to those of their predecessors, who faced – and fought against – newsroom hostility. As Lang (1999) observes, the facts of gender not only dominated what women journalists in Canada traditionally covered from the late 1880s into the 1940s, but how they did it: simply entering a political event

made a woman reporter stand out. “The presence of a woman distorted the event just by her being there, and it made obvious the fact that what was defined as the public world of “newsworthiness” was a world of men and that “objectivity” was a privileged perspective, not a universal one” (Lang, 1999, p. 9).

By enlarging the focus of my research from such a traditional gender analysis to an intersectional one, I will produce knowledge that reveals more about the multiple and fluid ways in which power acts in the women’s lives, and how they in turn use it or defer to it, as the situation and their positions change. The vast majority of women print journalists, like men, work within corporate entities that organize their employees along strict hierarchies of authority, which are complicated by equally formal (and hidebound) union seniority rules. Simultaneously, the women, especially senior columnists and writers, also have power as individuals to decide what to write about and how to write it, within certain parameters. The fluctuating inequalities created by these complex power systems are of interest to feminist researchers, who see the media “as a powerful tool that can be used to challenge or support gender stereotyping in the community” (Strong, 2011, p. 43). If an intersectional approach is not used, leaving gender as the single lens through which research is analyzed, there can be a danger of reproducing time-worn simplistic, dualistic accounts of how the world supposedly functions or malfunctions: the effort is wasted, the work viewed among scholars as having the potential to be “theoretically misguided, politically irrelevant or simply fantastical” (Davis, 2008, p. 68). More than even identifying inequalities, intersectionality pushes the feminist-activist scholar to hold dominating institutions to account for reproducing and reifying those inequalities.

Role/Place of the Researcher

My goal was also to examine critically my own responses to the research. I am a former senior newspaper writer and manager who, like many other women, left a leadership role at a daily newspaper in mid-life for many reasons, mainly the increasing demands of parenthood. My experiences as a former daily newspaper reporter, columnist, copy editor, “women’s editor” and manager inform my inquiry, as does nearly a decade as a consultant to newspapers in Western Canada and my current position as a magazine editor who hires freelance writers, most of whom are women, for 30 cents a word.

As a white, middle-class, university-educated, able-bodied, English-as-first-language, heterosexual person, I share many demographic similarities with the majority of employees in newsrooms. Being a woman and parent at the mid-management (department head) level put me in a minority position, however. I have experienced journalism both in a segregated, low-status “women’s section,” writing up recipes and wedding accounts, and on the high-status national news desk, working on municipal, provincial and federal election coverage. As a senior journalist at Canada’s “newspaper of record,” I felt the power of the dominant male culture of the newsroom to both silence me in-house and empower me as I interviewed national business and political leaders and helped direct coverage of issues from education to law and social policy to medicine and the environment.

As well as contributing new knowledge to the academy, I plan to communicate the outcome of this study to industry members, in the hope of making media managers more responsive to the social justice aspects of newspapering, and the need to hire journalists who are more varied and more valued for their diversity. The promotion and wide dissemination of different accounts of the world and a wider witnessing could lead to greater understanding and better public policy, potentially improving all of our lives – and the bottom line of an industry in ongoing financial

flux. I have already discussed this research at a national industry conference in Toronto, in April 2012, with participants from the study taking part.

Public policy makers at all levels of government could be better informed if this study were to play a part in helping the news agenda evolve as a mechanism to promote social justice. This holds true for media owners seeking new leaders and improved readership, and Canadians in general. As well as publishing the results and discussing the research at academic conferences, I intend to make the study known to media executives, journalists and students through presentations at industry gatherings. As a long-time, national media practitioner myself, I am well positioned to help extend a dialogue that may help accelerate the pace of change in mass media editorial production.

Theoretical Framework

Throughout my coursework, particularly in feminist research practices, community-based research, leadership and social justice, and politics in organizations, I have expanded my thinking about the theoretical framework of my project from seeing gender as the defining identity marker, to embracing intersectionality. It regards power as unstable and circulating across, around and within individuals with multiple characteristics, including gender (Snyder, 2008). I have come to appreciate how feminist theorizing has evolved to embrace the partiality of perspectives, to undertake research for the sake of knowledge and social justice, and not to presume to raise the consciousness of the research subject. The research may be understood as a cautionary tale or an inspiration to act, if it is persuasive in theory and execution. But as Diane Wolf (1996) asked, “who are we to change or raise the consciousness of others?” since consciousness-raising “implies that someone, usually the researched, is less than fully conscious and needs to have her consciousness raised by someone else, the researcher, whose true and

superior consciousness is already raised and who therefore knows what the researched needs to know about her life” (1996, p. 26).

Ontologically speaking, I see knowledge as grounded in lived experiences of individuals. In terms of epistemology, I regard knowledge as gained through subjective and inductive means, emphasizing the specific and not the general (Moosa-Mitha, 2005). I stand with analysis that is “contextual, contested and contingent” (Scott, 2008, p. 279). I repeatedly return to Susan Strega’s notion of feminist poststructuralism, which takes poststructuralist ideas about power – circulated and dispersed rather than held exclusively or primarily by certain groups (Strega, 2005) – and informs it with the “progressive politics of feminism” (Strega, p. 226). In this way, the researcher is not doing analyses based on “hierarchies of oppression, which inevitably pit those on the margins against one another” (p. 226), but rather exploring the interplay of characteristics, as intersectionality does. I also proceeded with the acceptance that any theoretical approach will have inherent limits and flaws, a view well expressed by Mann and Huffman (2005), who wrote that “theories of emancipation can be blind to their own dominating, exclusive and restrictive tendencies and ... feminism is not innocent of such tendencies” (p. 56).

Significance

This highly focused study moves beyond the traditional exploration of gender as a duality to examine what shapes experience and how accumulated experiences become narrated and embedded in the public discourse through the daily press. This research attends to the effects of power as women journalists use it and are used by it in order to make sense of their own lives, as well as to help make sense of the lives of Canadians about and for whom they write. I hope the study enriches and expands scholarly literature on women and news media, as it focuses on producers of news and commentary rather than analyzes what appears on the printed page and the screen as if the articles were authorless. Women in print journalism, particularly those

aspiring to or holding management positions, will have access to this new research data that may increase their own understanding of what factors influence their personal development within the newsrooms, as well as offering a new way to assess their relationship to the workplace and the public whose interests they hope to engage.

As this is an interdisciplinary study, I will also be able to inform journalism research with broader epistemological underpinnings and return from the field with new knowledge to bring to and enrich the disciplines of both women's and leadership studies, adding to the literature of the latter a rare study of Canadian women print journalists as leaders.

In the next chapter, I review the relevant literature and in Chapter Three, discuss the methodological aspects of the study. The data chapters, Four through Eight, describe and analyze the participants' individual interviews and focus groups. The final chapter reviews the research project and highlights aspects of its significance.

Chapter 2

The Story So Far: Context and Background

This chapter situates my research within the broader context of scholarly literature and general interest/journalism texts that bear upon it. As it underpins a study that is interdisciplinary in nature and scope, the literature review ranges across many fields, including journalism and communication, education, women's and gender studies, leadership studies, social work, history and business, among others. Such diversity of source material can fuel a more productive and fruitful generation of ideas (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). I also review texts on intersectionality, which is becoming increasingly important to feminist inquiry and expands this study beyond a gender-only focus. Readings that describe and use narrative inquiry, a methodology I will employ to analyse the stories my participants tell about their career trajectories over time, will be discussed in the next chapter.

Stories of Girls in the Balcony and Behind the Washroom

Over the past 25 years or so, women journalists' status in newsrooms has become of increasing interest to scholars globally (Strong, 2011). But stories by and about women journalists themselves have not been integral to Western democratic journalism's historic male-dominated narratives, from everyday newsroom discussions to countless books and articles about the "great men" of journalism. (Even a simple Google search of "great men" and "journalism" brings up 142,000 sites, while "great women" and "journalism" brings up only 21,700.) In Canada, chronicles of women journalists' achievements and challenges are rarely mentioned in the Canadian scholarly history canon (Freeman, 2001 and 2012; Kesterton, 1967). As Lang notes, "in Canada it has been relatively uncommon for women to reflect publically on their careers

(Lang, 1999, p. 13). These journalists are only occasionally written about in general-interest books (by women) with titles that indicate their status as interlopers/outsideers, such as *No Daughter of Mine* (Rex, 1995) and *No Life for a Lady* (Dempsey, 1976), autobiographies of roughly contemporaneous women journalists Kathleen “Kay” Rex and Lotta Dempsey, who worked at Toronto’s *Globe and Mail* and the *Star* respectively. The theme of being in male journalists’ orbit is echoed in the scholarly text, *The Satellite Sex* (Freeman, 2001), which explores media and women’s issues in English Canada in the late 1960s through a feminist analysis of coverage of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. Marjory Lang, in *Women Who Made the News: Female Journalists in Canada 1880-1945* (1999), borrows Arnold Bennett’s 1898 term “second species,” his definition of Fleet Street’s women journalists, to describe the situation for early women journalists in Canada (p. 27). Lang also notes that given the fleeting nature of news itself, those in the business tend to disregard their own past in it, just as readers toss out yesterday’s paper. Many women’s achievements in newspapering have thus been forgotten as the “path closed up after the path breakers” (p. 11) argues Lang, whose work challenges the notion that women did not “‘break out’ of the women’s sections until the 1960s and 1970s” (Lang, 1999, p. 11). However, most scholarly literature characterizes the antecedent of the modern Canadian newsroom as workplaces largely for men only, with the few women who worked for the society pages either writing from home or in segregated offices until the 1960s, when women began to be admitted in small numbers to city rooms (Freeman, 1989; Kesterton, 1967). Lang does note that while women may have been in the city room in numbers greater than is noted in broad journalism histories, those women journalists were asked to provide the women’s “angle” (Lang, 1999, p. 11) on current events.

While the earliest newspapers were essentially government flyers (Vipond, 1992), political and economic developments in Canada, as well as technological innovations such as the telegraph, meant that in the 1850s the daily newspaper began to depend on advertisers (Kesterton, 1967; Lang, 1999; Vipond, 1992). Thus began the defining relationship of newspapering that combined capitalism and democracy on one page, creating a dominant discourse of power and profit that both transmitted the intertwined business and political news of the day for moneyed elites, and displayed advertisements for the goods and services that the capitalist system produced and upon which fortunes were made (Vipond, 1992; Osler, 1993). Writing about the first half of the twentieth century, Lang notes that while “bondage to the profit motive impinged on all journalists ... the fetters were plainly visible in the case of women writers, whose intended function on the paper was almost wholly commercial – to attract and instruct the female consumer” (Lang, 1999, p. 9). Men, meanwhile, had the playing field of the rest of the paper with no low-status ghetto from which to try to escape. What male reporters traditionally wrote about was hard news (North, 2009), the stories that focused on laws, regulations, business deals, crime and punishment: the eventual inclusion of so-called “soft news” was in recognition of the fact that household products and fashion were being made and marketed to women, and so over the early part of the 1900s publishers created special sections that focused on domestic concerns such as cooking, cleaning and motherhood, reinforcing the private sphere as women’s proper place (Lang, 1999). As newspapers moved from the political to the commercial, women journalists “were hired as a result of the major advertisers’ recognition that homemakers were the primary consumers” (Lang, 1999, p. 8).

Beyond boosting consumerism, continues Lang, “women journalists were employed to create a specifically feminine form of news that would popularize a gender identity for women readers

within the existing newspaper or magazine” (p. 8). These women were part of a group of women that trickled into the craft as journalists, essayists and short-story writers as female literacy and confidence grew in the late 1800s. In 1891, just 35 of 756 journalists in Canada were women (Freeman, 1989). One of the most famous was Kathleen “Kit” Coleman (1856-1915), who wrote advice on largely domestic matters in *Women’s Kingdom*, which was first published in 1889 in the *Toronto Mail*, and continued from 1895 in the *Mail and Empire* (Fetherling, 1990). Coleman, an educated but destitute Irish immigrant and single mother of two children, turned to journalism for a sensible reason: she needed the work (Fiamengo, 2008).

Despite reinforcing the domestic sphere as a woman’s ‘kingdom’, Coleman encouraged women through her column to find paid work if they wanted it, whether in a factory or as a domestic, and supported women who wanted to be journalists as she was, although she cautioned that not much opportunity loomed beyond the women’s pages (even though she herself would become the only accredited female correspondent to cover the Spanish American war.) Freeman notes she “implicitly devalued her own work (by writing that) ‘elections and single taxes and all kinds of men-fads are going on, and the Editor will crowd us out if we don’t cut our chatter short’” (Freeman, 1989 p. 39).

Coleman was the first president of the Canadian Women’s Press Club, which stood for expressing “Canadian national sentiments” in members’ work (Freeman, p. 138), indicating that the women journalists who joined the group felt that their published writing could influence the national socio-political agenda. Her biographer writes that her subject was a transitional figure in Canadian journalism who “sometimes defied, but always fulfilled, the expectations of editors and the public in what she wrote for women,” walking “a creative tightrope between what was acceptable for a nineteenth-century woman and what was too daring” (p. 5). Here we see the

historical documentation of how women in print journalism simultaneously challenged and upheld the status quo, from their first forays into the hostile world of newspapering. This strategy continued throughout the last century with women gradually moving, in small numbers, from reporting to signed columns, from women's sections into city rooms, and finally into the offices of senior editorial management. Lotta Dempsey and Shirley Sharzer exemplify this development.

A next-generation "celebrity" journalist, Lotta Dempsey (1905-1989) of the *Toronto Star*, belonged to the feminist-oriented Canadian Women's Press Club (for which Coleman had served as first president) and won several of its writing awards. She appears not to have made an issue of gender discrimination in journalism in much of a public way, instead projecting the image of the glamorous gal reporter of the times. However, later in her career, during the nuclear threat of 1960, Dempsey wrote about nuclear testing possibly endangering children and asked women readers to write to her if they wanted to do something about it. Out of those replies was born the Canadian Voice of Women, with Dempsey as a founder. VOW became a leading voice for Canadian women advocating peace, and is an accredited NGO to the United Nations (Voice of Women, 2009).

The title of Dempsey's 1976 autobiography, *No Life for a Lady*, reflects the continuing common wisdom that journalism, even in the Roaring Twenties, was not an appropriate job for decent women. Her biographer, her daughter-in-law, describes Dempsey's first job as writing about the social goings-on of Edmonton's elite (Fisher, 1995). Once she went to Toronto on a job-hunting trip, only to be told by the city editor of the *Mail and Empire* that he didn't have any woman reporters and he didn't want any (Dempsey, 1976). At the beginning of her career, she was allowed to interview visitors of national interest when men journalists were unavailable (Dempsey). And while Dempsey loved to write about celebrities, she did her share of hard news

throughout her more than 50-year career (Fisher, 1995), but was never given a promotion to political correspondent or other prestigious beats. Dempsey's contributions as a columnist at the *Toronto Star*, first with a general interest column and then the *Age of Reason*, which dealt with seniors' issues, gave her an opportunity to rally women to political causes.

While some "gal reporters" such as Dempsey were making indelible marks on the pages of newspapers throughout the last century, even fewer were on the inside as senior editors with responsibility for hiring and news decision-making. One was Shirley Sharzer, a Winnipegger born in 1928. She was being considered for a job on the news desk of the *Toronto Telegram*, the first woman in line for such a position, the same year as the Royal Commission on the Status of Women was called into being. She had progressed steadily through the ranks, but in 1967 her career was stalling (Breckenridge, 1984). On this occasion, a senior editor was balking at the thought of a woman on the hard news side, where he figured Sharzer would cry under stress (Finlayson, 1999). But she got the job.

Sharzer, like most women journalists of her era, had long since figured out ways to repress her own outrage so as to continue working with the gentlemen of the press. She had begun reporting as a teenager in 1945, working for a paper put out by printers striking against the *Winnipeg Tribune*. She recalled that she felt the ways in which she was treated because of her gender and youth (for instance, being taken aside and having court or police proceedings carefully explained) were an advantage that increased her learning: perhaps an early example of the theory of power circulating, as experienced by a young woman reporter. At the *Free Press*, Sharzer became the first woman on a major city daily in Canada to cover city hall and then the legislature, when most women journalists worked on the society pages (Finlayson, 1999). She

was moved to the desk when she became pregnant: the city editor did not feel it was appropriate for “a pregnant reporter to be running around in public” (p. 238).

Without maternity leave, Sharzer quit work and would not return to journalism for a full decade, after having another child. Once, at the *Telegram* in the late 1960s, Sharzer called in to work to say her child was ill and she needed to stay home. A benevolent male boss suggested she should lie and say that she was sick, so as not to be seen by other colleagues as having motherhood interfere with her job (Finlayson, 1999). This is an accommodation practised by many women journalists and other workers over the decades, my own colleagues included, but usually not at the suggestion of male bosses.

Sharzer’s husband died unexpectedly in 1972, causing her to bury her grief in more work. She went to the new graduate journalism school at the University of Western Ontario, becoming assistant dean by 1977. She left daily journalism reluctantly, having realized that not even her progressive male mentors could move her past what would become dubbed “the glass ceiling” that held her at the level of features editor and ended her “youthful attitude of expecting to be able to do whatever I wanted” (Finlayson, p. 239). She returned to newspapering in 1979 as assistant managing editor of *The Globe and Mail*, working up to deputy managing editor. She was responsible for most of the hiring and development of staff, which put her in a position to hire and mentor dozens of reporters and columnists whose words and opinion would help shape the national discourse, including how the paper covered such issues as abortion, birth control, pay equity, sexual harassment, violence against women and the growth in human rights bodies. Many of those hired were women, some of whom, like me, had been taught and mentored by her at the University of Western Ontario’s Graduate School of Journalism.

From Coleman's lesser kingdom to Dempsey's globetrotting dispatches to Sharzer's influence as a career-maker, the work done by these three journalists, and other women journalists like them, helped to place women's issues on the national agenda. They saw and experienced blatant and subtle sexism both in society and in their workplaces, denying or ignoring much of it in order to survive. But when it came to gross inequality, they fought back in their writing (or in Sharzer's case, hiring) on behalf of other women. Each journalist moved farther out into the newsroom, from the women's page to the front page to management offices, chronicling and tacitly encouraging the expanding role of women in Canadian society. They learned the lessons of their patriarchal societies and workplaces well, but were not willing to repeat them unquestioningly to their elite and middle-class readers.

The following excerpt from a review of Nan Robertson's book *The Girls in the Balcony: Women, Men and the New York Times* (Robertson, 1992), about a 1978 sex-discrimination lawsuit at *the New York Times*, sums up conditions in mid-twentieth-century women's departments and captures the historic, widespread contempt for women in newsrooms during that time. I spent three years in such a department during the late 1970s – located behind the women's washroom at the *St. Catharines Standard* – so this certainly rings true to me:

(Robertson) and her colleagues were expected to produce burbling "news" stories about major retailers in precise proportion to each store's advertising outlay at the *Times* – a practice rigorously policed, down to the column inch, by the paper's advertising director. It was, among other things, a perfect sign of the paper's contempt toward its women employees. Men took care of delivering the news without fear or favor, while women were delegated the dirty job of bringing in the cash Her work on the women's page was only one of many humiliating experiences in what she describes as an almost unrelieved history of piggery at America's most important newspaper. (Williams, 1992, p 1)

Taylorism and the Legacy of ‘Scientific Management’

Perhaps nobody cared more about the efficient rendering of such profits to business owners than Frederick Winslow Taylor, the father of “scientific management” (Gabor, 2000, p. 3). As the twentieth century loomed, Taylor, an American industrial researcher, pioneered (for better or worse) notions of productivity rising with standardization of processes and he theorized how hierarchies of managers were needed to control the labour pool so as to maintain and improve productivity (p. 4). His legacy was to make industrial management become “technology-centred, hierarchical and highly bureaucratic” (p. 8), and his fateful influence on modern business life was that neither Taylor nor his many followers understood that a workplace is a social system as well as a profit-making machine (p. 43). With Taylorism as a foundational business model springing from the Industrial Revolution, it is not surprising that press owners from the mid-1800s on demanded long shifts and high productivity from newsmen, and that open arms did not greet women, who were seen as weak and emotional when they began to look for careers in newspapering (Rex, 1995). Even today, notes researcher (and ex-journalist) Louise North, men news managers complain about how women are hired only to go off and have babies (North, 2009). I still recall an occasion at the *Globe* in 1987 when a senior editor, having walked by and surveyed the central news desks and noticed three or four pregnant bellies among us editors, smiled and said loudly, “I don’t know who this guy is, but when I find him ...” We all laughed out loud at the joke, because he was an otherwise gentle, quiet manager (now deceased) who had seen and named the baby-boom in the office, with a wagging finger to exaggerate the point. But underlying his joke was a growing concern among managers about the hassle of a few maternity leaves among dozens of employees. Who would do the work while we were gone on our 15-week leaves? Well, at least money would be saved, since there was no income top-up with our EI cheques. (I wrote a letter asking for such a top-up the second time I was pregnant, but was turned

down.) Historically and today, then, we see how newspaper owners and managers consider journalists in primarily actuarial terms, more as cost centres than as assets; and viewed in that light they are certainly costly. In 2008, newspaper publishers paid \$1.85-billion in salaries, up from the previous four years (Statistics Canada, 2010). This has been likely reduced by the continuation of downsizing through the economic downturn, but new Statscan data has not been published to my knowledge.

Profits, the primary concern of industry owners as discussed, are most reliably accrued in stable societies; so what is defined as news has traditionally tried to make sense of problematic reality within a conservative, status quo that seeks consensus (Matheson, 2005). Part of maintaining that stability involves perpetuating conservative societal beliefs about woman's status, including maternity, beliefs most women were historically eager to support (Fiamengo, 2008). Productivity continues as a key subject matter in the internal discourse of the news industry (as it is in any industry) and the goal of easily charting newsroom productivity has contributed to often tense relations between generations of managers and rank and file (largely unionized) reporters. Staff members go about creative work without being monitored – out of the newsroom, away from supervisors for much of the day – but ultimately produce stories acceptable for publication as required. Always uncomfortable with journalists' absences, newsroom managers have tried various ways to monitor and increase productivity, using such tools as byline counts and performance reviews (Giles, 1988). But reporters have never been as easy to keep under surveillance as industrial workers on assembly lines. Journalism education today essentially does its bit to groom students to be more visibly productive, focusing on turning out good employees who will report the news – mostly in its traditional inverted-pyramid form for the page and increasingly for the web – and to write headlines, edit copy, take photos

and videos, learn about advertising, legal issues, public relations and communications technology, and to produce across multiple platforms in a 24/7 time frame (Herrick, 2003).

Technological changes in newsrooms have also presented challenges to the unions that represent many journalists, with owners tending toward compressing and eliminating as many production tasks as possible and moving them to the editorial department. Catherine McKercher outlines the history and impact of these challenges in *Newsworkers Unite: Labor, Convergence and North American Newspapers* (2002); however, she does not address any impact based on gender.

Hastened even more by debt loads that accompany corporatization, cost-cutting has added more stress to a line of work in Western democracies (North America, the UK and Europe, New Zealand and Australia) that has always had meeting deadlines and the need for accuracy as bottom-line stressors (North, 2009). Journalists surveyed by U.S. researchers say they are stressed out by deadlines, pressure to produce good work, low pay, media competition, long hours, implementing new technology and time away from family (Reinardy, 2009). But in newsrooms, the traditional discourse of neo-liberalism runs deep – the idea that one makes free choices in this world as a citizen and consumer, unaffected by a context of power structures (North, 2009). This conception of the news and public good being framed in terms of private ownership, free markets and consumer choice (Sparks et al, 2006) is a neo-liberal discourse that runs from regulatory agencies (Sparks et al, p. 391) right through to journalists at a person level. Even when they are talking about whether to leave journalism or stay, or to have children or not, journalists tend to use a discourse of personal choice with researchers, as opposed to voicing the idea that they are forced into making decisions by institutional inflexibility. A gendered effect is that women journalists, especially those with children, say they find it increasingly difficult to perform the journalistic tasks expected of them (North, 2009) and more women than men say

they are burned out, frustrated and thinking of leaving the field altogether (Reinardy, 2009). On the page, the neo-liberal discourse plays out for everyone to see, especially in the lifestyle pages, where women are instructed on how to be “good” mothers and workers, have sleek figures while producing gourmet meals, and to keep improving themselves to unattainable standards of perfection, as seen in the accompanying advertising.

Journalistic Traditions of Ordering the News

As they go about chronicling change that is a constant in society, journalists themselves often feel threatened when owners or senior managers try to impose change on their own work habits. Journalists rely on a deeply embedded culture of professionalism to resist change in their newsrooms (Ryfe, 2009). They distrust a change in the public-accountability discourse, for example, feeling that they are losing their identity as society’s watchdogs: routinely visiting powerful public institutions such as the courts fulfils a function of that role (Ryfe, p. 199) and solidifies their sense of community and of what makes a good journalist. Their resistance to change appears to be deep-seated, both institutionally and culturally (Ryfe, p. 199). This may not be surprising, given that journalism is an authoritative discourse with the power to convince and manipulate (Matheson, 2005). But the watchdog function is also deeply entrenched for good reason: a constitutionally protected free press can do the work of keeping institutions accountable, which is expensive and time-consuming.

The journalists’ access to sources in high places is important then, and also feeds their sense of esteem, but a gender-specific effect emerges out of this discourse. One recent Australian study found that for men journalists, brushing up next to power can lead to an enhanced sense of personal power and confidence – power speaking to power – while the women journalists

surveyed felt their access to individuals – both powerful figures and ordinary folks – helped them develop more compassionate feelings toward people in general (North, 2009).

Politicians, businesspeople, religious leaders and senior bureaucrats lead powerful groups and are in a position to order societal interests, so by primarily interviewing them, journalists effectively reinforce the dominance of institutions and render “all major news topics as male-oriented as the social and political domains they define” (van Dijk, 1995, p. 24). If social stability is good for business, then the news media play a pivotal role by “constructing an ideology of consensus in the face of seemingly unusual or problematic circumstances ... and ... formulating certain “preferred” viewpoints about the world” (Greenburg, 2000, p. 519).

Researchers have also noted how news discourse, as part of the workplace culture, is rife with subtle gender politics, such as the selective privileging of ““masculine over feminine” discourse and “ways of knowing” (logic versus emotion, science versus intuition)” (Kitzinger, 1998, cited in de Bruin, 2000, p. 225). Even when they act with what could be seen as a high degree of personal agency, because they are left alone to do much of their work, what journalists do always occurs within the pressures and routines that are embedded in the organization (Van Zoonen, 1998, cited in de Bruin, 2000). Those styles and values, especially around adversarial and competitive frames for “hard” news, become professional standards that were traditionally developed by male decision-makers (de Bruin, p. 232; Lang, 1999). So strong is the institutional discourse that researchers have found that an individual reporter’s voice can be muted on many levels in the hierarchy of a newspaper (Craft & Wanta, 2004). For example, an English study found that any one reporter’s ideas about who best reflects the local community is often trumped by a dominant newsroom culture that prefers elite and other white male voices as journalists’ interview subjects (Ross, 2000).

Carole Stabile, in an article analyzing the widespread sexist coverage of celebrity decorator and publisher Martha Stewart's fall from grace, explains the pervasiveness of an androcentric culture manifested in the press this way:

To suggest that sexist coverage of Stewart resulted from some rightwing conspiracy or masculinist cabal is to misunderstand how an androcentric culture reproduces itself. Rather than resulting from conscious intentions, this kind of coverage proceeded from the everyday practices of a journalistic culture that remains steeped in sexist modes of thought and behaviour. We forget at some risk that journalistic objectivity is every bit as androcentric as scientific objectivity. (Stabile, 2004, p. 326)

Gendered Responses to Traditional Discourses

Gendered responses to how newspapers work and what news "counts" vary as much as women themselves, of course. Historically, while we have seen how many women journalists adopted male-dominated news norms to participate in the business, others shouldered past the male snickering and raised important issues such as legislation regarding rape and equity in marriage, and have acted to dismantle women's pages (Steiner, 2008). They challenged exclusionary hiring practices and organized women's journalism groups (Rex, 1995), bringing more women into the business. It must be noted here that "macho" masculinity is privileged in newsrooms, with even the construction of long, unsociable working hours required for the most prestigious beats ('hard' news, covering politics), tending to exclude women journalists. This masculinity of toughness is taken for granted as the norm, causing gender effectively to become invisible (Ross & Carter, 2011.) This masculinity also contains a strong element of professionalism, a combination of knowledge, power and privilege that delivers cultural and economic advantages back to the relatively few who engage in and reproduce it (Connell, 2000), as journalists do.

The victories women have achieved in this arena have come at some personal cost. Today, in a recent American study (Reinardy, 2009), women reporters said they experienced more

exhaustion and lower levels of professional efficacy or personal accomplishment than their male peers. Significant differences in organizational support were perceived, so that women felt they had no help contending with family and day-care issues, sexism, discrimination and the glass ceiling, with the result that more women than men were contemplating leaving journalism altogether. As it is, women's advancement up the senior ranks of journalism is slower than the overall workforce: where nearly half the people in management or professional occupations in the U.S. are now women, only 24 per cent of women occupy supervisory roles in journalism. My own experience as a long-time journalist who left fulltime work tells me that without a management team that can level the playing field for women, women will continue to suffer discrimination at "the hands of unsympathetic bosses and unrealistically long hours" (Chambers et al, cited in Reinardy, 2009, pp. 43-44). Research also indicates that women are even leaving newsrooms in advance of having families, anticipating irreconcilable conflict between work and personal life (Hardin, AEJMC online discussion, 2010, Jan. 21).

Literature on leadership and gender also indicates that when times are difficult, as they are now for the news industry, women who are moved into leadership positions not only face the usual higher level of scrutiny and criticism than their male counterparts do, they also are singled out for blame when things go wrong, with the precariousness of their appointments overlooked as a factor (Ryan & Haslam, 2005). If a sudden (unexplainable) rise in women's numbers in the senior levels of the print media should occur over the next several years, they may find themselves on a risky perch, if Ryan and Haslam's theory holds true that a company's poor performance can trigger women's rise in leadership roles, thereby providing handy fall guys (gals?) when troubled times inevitably occur.

Amanda Sinclair also argues persuasively that narrow, neo-liberal measures of gendered “hero” style leadership in corporations around the world, which include corporate news media, have alienated women and minority groups, who might otherwise seek leadership contributions (Sinclair, 2005). She notes:

Increasingly, an ideology of leadership has evolved which portrays leadership as an enlightened force that frees people to deliver their potential but fails to mention that this is in the interests of profit for the already wealthy in privileged countries – the managers and owners of capital. The language of enlightenment, democracy and freedom is seamlessly connected to agendas that are self-interested and futures that are commodified and enslaved Leadership, as traditionally enacted, delivers a privileged masculinity. (p. viii-ix)

Research on whether and to what extent gender influences not just experiences of journalists under this dominant style of leadership, but the news discourse itself – in the form of what stories appear where in the paper, how they are written, what kinds of sources are used and so on – has brought mixed results. In a broad review, Craft and Wanta (2004) found the literature reflected a range of effects from gender and political leanings on the shaping of the news from none to significant, suggesting that such results indicate that “something other than or at least in addition to an individual’s personal characteristics of viewpoints shapes the news the individual creates” (p. 126).

Higher up the chain of command, Craft and Wanta note that earlier research showed that “women are often pressured to adapt certain management styles or structures that reflect men’s priorities more than their own” (2004, p. 127). Their own large content-analysis study found that newspapers with a higher percentage of women in management (editors) tended to cover news in a more positive light, and that reporters of both genders tended to cover a similar agenda of issues only when they were working in a paper with a high percentage of female managers (2004). They also noted that male-dominated management ranks tend to reward male reporters

with what the discourse traditionally sees as a prestigious beat: politics. They conclude by pointing to fieldwork in newsrooms as the next step required for studying senior women's experiences as gatekeepers, which is where my own interest lies. This is also a pressing concern for Catherine Strong of New Zealand's Massey University, whose 2011 PhD thesis is the first study in that country of the rare female journalists who become daily newspaper editors: they numbered nine between 2000 and 2009 (Strong, 2011). Strong notes that in its 2006 review, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women drew attention to the lack of women newspaper executives globally, which it deemed problematic because of the great power and influence of daily newspapers. Strong also observes that international research fails to find conclusive reasons for the exodus of women from the industry and that no solutions to ameliorate the situation have been offered (2011).

It makes sense to me that such strong, traditional male discourses in the news media globally will have a normalizing effect and that women will incorporate themselves into the male-dominated profession, either not finding it problematic or finding ways to resist and alter the discourse from within, continuing to work in their chosen field and to earn incomes. Inside an industry that helps create the media-saturated environment in which we all live, it would be hardly surprising that women journalists contribute to "our culture's prejudicial conventions" (Woodward, 2006). In terms of the normalizing effect, one recent study that looked at how the American press covers work/family conflict, notes that the neo-liberal discourse of "choice," the typical frame for stories about work/family demands, does not apply to the vast majority of working women who might read those stories (Williams, 2006). The study indicates that press articles about women "choosing" to opt out of the workforce focuses on only the 8 per cent of working women in professional or managerial roles, which are the roles held by women

journalists (Williams). Thus those inside the newsrooms can spread the neo-liberal “choice” myth that they universalize to include (incorrectly) women in the working classes.

One female media commentator who supports this view is the *Globe*’s Margaret Wente, whose column appears regularly on the op-ed (opposite the editorial) page. Recently, she described a Conference Board of Canada study called *Women in Management, Where Are They?* (Conference Board of Canada, 2011), naming factors listed by the organization such as “gendered choices in education, stereotyped ideas about leadership, women’s lack of mentoring and preparation, their discomfort with self-promotion, inhospitable organizational cultures, and harassment” (*The Globe and Mail*, p. A12, 2011, Sept. 22) as holding women back. She complained that the board ignored what she called “two other factors that might conceivably be relevant, ‘motherhood’ and ‘children’ ” (*Globe*, p. A12). Leaving aside the fact that those two factors are actually one, we see how Wente perpetuates the choice myth by going on to opine that “the overwhelming explanation for the relatively small number of women in senior management is that women – especially women with children – *choose* not to be there” (*Globe*, p. A12, my italics).

Wente offers up her vast, generalized neo-liberal notion of choice as if there were no other factors that affect the women who “choose” not to be in management, or that prevent other identifiable groups of people from becoming managers. Matters are much more complicated than that, as this research will show. It is part of a growing body of scholarly literature that suggests interrelated, interacting variables have multiple effects on experiences and choices, a notion that is becoming more pivotal to our understanding of complex human knowledges. Intersectionality, as outlined in the first chapter, is the theory I will use to analyse the narratives of women journalists in print newsrooms.

Intersectionality: Key debates around gender, parenthood, race, disability

Intersectionality, as previously noted, is a feminist theory and a method of research that argues many variables, such as gender, class and race, make up individual identities (AWID, 2004; Cole, 2009; Davis, 2008; Knudsen, 2006) and that the interplay of such characteristics affects how individuals experience their lives (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009). This section of my survey of the relevant literature offers evidence as to how and to what extent intersectionality has been taken up in the literature on women and the media, particularly in the areas of media representations, ideas about audience or readership variables, and newsroom demographics.

While feminist scholars enthusiastically research the interplay and impacts of differences in many areas of media generally, the literature that bears directly on the ranks of journalism's practitioners has just begun to use intersectionality as a frame.

Among most journalism researchers, a key question is whether identity variables (and journalists will often deny or dismiss such variables) make any observable difference to how journalists conduct their various tasks, therefore causing differences show up in the final product (Barber & Rauhala, 2008; Benson, 2005; Craft & Wanta, 2004; Robinson, 2005; Ross, 2007; Schudson, 2008). Contradiction, ambivalence and fractured identities are terms frequently seen in academic papers about women journalists and their personal influences (Thiel, 2004; Hardin & Whiteside, 2009).

Picking up any one of Canada's 95 daily newspapers will bring readers many stories that deal with issues involving difference, as will a survey of the recent literature on class, race, ability and motherhood in relation to women in the media. But intersectionally-oriented readers of both must by and large make the connections themselves: not only in terms of published news content and its impact in society, but in scholarly musing on the nature of those who produce it.

A sweep across the demographic vista of Canadian print journalism may help explain why an intersectional focus, particularly on race, gender and class, has not been used to date in the literature on women in the newsrooms of the nation's dailies: indeed, even gender as a central category of analysis has been scarce in journalism scholarship until recently (Robinson, 2005). Interestingly – to me at least – the most numerous sort of journalist is almost always described in an intersectional way – white, middle-class, male – but this is not seen as recognizing diversity, of course, because these factors create the powerful, monolithic norm around which “others” situate themselves.

A review of the major communications journals reveals many articles that touch on one element of difference or another, particularly detailing content analyses that examine race, class and gender, but not the interplay of their effects. Searching the academic journal *Journalism Studies* for the term “intersectionality” reveal no mention of the word, while searching “gender and race and class” brings up just 21 articles, none of which deals with issues connecting the three. In the journal *Feminist Media Studies*, intersectionality is a concept not yet in wide use, and where it is used, the emphasis is on representation or portrayal. The theory is discussed in a collection of short commentaries on the need to move difference to the centre of studies involving children and the mass media (Mendes, Silva, Duits, van Zoonen, Lamb, Banaji & Edwards, 2009); and an editorial opines on how feminists can try to engage globally in bridging what the authors describe as “incommensurabilities” (Aniko, Marciniak & O’Healy, 2009, p. 387), which they define as differences that are recognized as complex and perhaps even difficult to accept. The edition’s articles examine how the transnational reach of global mass media can be accessed for theory, but none of the articles refers to women in print media in relation to issues of gender, class and race.

The keywords “gender,” “race” and “class” bring up more than 80 references in *Feminist Media Studies*, where one might anticipate the most fruitful search. The vast majority of articles involve analyses of how various mass media, especially American film and television, frame and portray one, two or all of three of the central categories. But so far, no articles appear to engage with the intersections of characteristics and experiences of those who produce daily print journalism. Differences are generally taken up one at a time (or one heavily emphasized) in the articles brought up by the terms “journalism” and “diversity” within all available databases.

A textbook, promisingly titled *Gender, Race and Class in Media*, delivers the message of the critical connections that are at play among differences and power inequities, but its articles concern themselves solely with representations in and responses to American entertainment media (Dines and Humez, 2003). A typical piece employs a gender frame and perhaps tacks on a reference to diversity of other kinds: one example looks only at women and men and how they are used as sources in a British newspaper, but ends with a call to the local press to reflect more accurately its communities “in all their glorious shapes and colours” (Ross, 2007, p. 468).

In terms of reflecting diversity, however, the modern, geographically-based newspaper is to a great degree, still a descendent of advertiser-driven (especially department store) papers that promoted local businesses (Schudson, 2000). Newspapers publish within urbanized areas (*The Vancouver Sun*, the *Regina Leader-Post*), and their commercial nature still prompts a focus on statistics gathering to court advertisers, not to reflect diversity. In the United States, this has meant owners and newsroom leaders have tended to see community in simple, homogeneous terms, imagining readers who live in the same area as having a common shared vision of social good and ignoring the multiplicity of social groups (Haas & Steiner, 2001; Schudson, 2000).

In Canada, the industry gathers statistics for potential advertisers that include readers' age, education level, occupation and income (NADBANK, 2009, www.nadbank.com). But if its interest in reflecting diversity editorially has increased since the 2006 study mentioned above, it was not reflected in the agenda of annual meetings of publishers and owners held four years later. The only mention of community on the 2010 agenda was in regard to creating Internet communities to draw readers online; the rest of the sessions, save one on editorial innovation globally, focused on business and marketing issues (CNA, 2010, retrieved 2010, April 22). The 2011 agenda was also devoid of diversity issues (CNA, 2011, retrieved 2012, Dec. 2)²

Press owners are not alone in dismissing the centrality of difference. Scholars generally analyze journalism produced by what they term mass media, which are the print and broadcast media that try to reach the majority of a given population (Gutierrez, 2006). These scholars ignore or devalue, argues Gutierrez, what he terms "class media, the media reaching (or attempting to reach) specific audience segments often identified by race, language, special interest, sexual orientation, gender, religion or other characteristics marginalized by the general audience norm" (p. 259). It is perhaps not surprising that two large, powerful, male-and-white-dominated institutions – Western academia and mass media – tend to go about their information-dissemination business in similar ways, reproducing similar kinds of articles.

Hass and Steiner, however, argue that a particular vein of print journalism known as public or civic journalism (defined loosely as chronicling the public deliberation of issues) could be improved if journalists helped citizens reflect on social inequality "by making the particular social locations from which they view given issues the very focus of citizen deliberations" (Haas

² At the industry's national conference in April, 2012 in Toronto, one panel did talk about lack of newsroom diversity. I suggested, organized and moderated the panel, whose members were participants in this study.

& Steiner, p. 140). The writers of this article do not discuss the gender of the print journalists involved in the public journalism projects that newspapers occasionally produce.

Taking readers inside the newsroom in her 2005 book *Gender, Journalism and Equity*, McGill University communications scholar Gertrude Robinson notes that in 1999 men made up more than 70 per cent of journalists in the Canadian daily press (Robinson, 2005) and provides various other markers according to gender: more women had degrees, they were younger, had more or less the same years of experience on the job and were more likely not to be a parent than men journalists (Robinson, 2005). Categories of race, class and ability in newsrooms were not analyzed in the book, only to be noted briefly in a description of equity legislation in general. She notes that employment equity laws were working for women, but not for Indigenous peoples, disabled persons and ethnic or racialized minorities in the general workforce (Robinson, 2005). She notes patterns of inequality globally are complex and layered, resulting in women being treated differently “depending on their age, ethnicity, education, and the sectors in which they work” (p. 190).

According to a 1994 study, 2.6 per cent of journalists in Canadian newsrooms were non-white. In 1998, the most recent year for which statistics are available, the number had increased only slightly to 3.4 per cent (Ojo, 2006). Long-term and widespread hiring freezes suggest the number will not have risen much, while racialized minorities have grown to nearly 17 per cent of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2008). This is not apparently a problem for print media owners. Canada’s wide diversities of race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion and age are still not reflected in mainstream media newsrooms, and are vastly misrepresented on page and screen (Fleras, 2011). Publishers rank diversity as a low priority, with one study showing that they list diversity at 19th among their concerns, of less interest than issues like computerization and how

to compete with the post office for flyer business (Ojo, 2006). Even the bible of Canadian newsrooms, *The Canadian Press Stylebook* (Tasko, 2010), contains just one sentence on the lack of diversity in the industry within nearly 500 pages: “Too often journalists – a profession that is only slowly starting to reflect the many faces of Canada – assume their readers share their WASP background” (Tasko, 2010. p. 20).

Rodney Benson argues that a lack of diversity in U.S. mainstream press means just 12 per cent of daily newspaper reporters are people of colour, compared to their presence in the general population of nearly 30 per cent (Benson, 2005). The diversity he speaks of in his article refers only to ethnic/racial differences among American journalists, not to gender. Michael Schudson, however, asserts that U.S. newspapers seek inclusivity in their staff across race, gender and class, with the last becoming the most problematic category as “the press caters to both employees and audiences regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, as long as the employees have journalistic skills and the audiences have disposable incomes. The trends to inclusiveness are powerful” (Schudson, 2000, p. 58). He and Benson agree that “a long tradition of social science research has shown that the news product is ultimately shaped far more by economic and organizational constraints than the personal characteristics – race, class, sexual orientation or even ideology – of individual journalists” (Benson, 2005, p. 17). Gender is not on his list of identity markers and he does not attempt to connect the characteristics listed with organizational constraints or economic inequalities.

Catherine McKercher of Carleton University, however, does make the economy/gender connection – but goes no farther on differences – remarking on the legions of women journalists in Canada who have been affected by the current economic downturn, left to the vagaries of the freelance world (McKercher, 2009). And an Australian study undertaken by former journalist

Louise North, looks at gender and motherhood's impacts on Australian print journalists (North, 2009). Using narrative analysis, North finds that motherhood makes the task of producing journalism more difficult for women, particularly as they have to negotiate the neoliberal discourse of personal choice within an industry spinning with change. Male journalists interviewed for the study seemed "locked into a discourse of female advantage in the industry" (p. 519) with several noting that it was a "waste of scarce resources to train women because they leave work to have babies" (p. 519).

Echoing this issue of motherhood's influence on newsroom demographics in an unpublished paper from Ryerson University's School of Journalism, Marsha Barber (a former radio journalist) and Ann Rauhala (a former *Globe* foreign editor) found that the average Canadian woman newspaper editor or broadcast producer is white, middle-aged, middle-class and married, but much less likely to have children than other married, employed women (Barber & Rauhala, 2008). An American survey similarly indicates U.S. women journalists are less likely to be married and be parents than men, with those wanting to have children sometimes facing discrimination (Reinardy, 2009). None of the three studies (Australian, American, Canadian) names intersectionality as a theorizing instrument, but all three touch on it as the researchers look at what happens when the female gender meets parenthood in the male-dominated workplace.

Swedish researcher Monika Djerf-Pierre went looking for those mechanisms that put men into powerful positions in journalism and tend to shut out women. She concluded that gender interacts with other social characteristics such as class and race and that the male/female frame itself is not enough, preferring masculinities and femininities as multiple (Djerf-Pierre, 2005). She focused her interest on gender differences as they interact with social background, wealth, education, marital status and parental responsibility, concluding that elite women journalists

created and used social capital to succeed more than elite men did, in order to make up for their relative lack of power. In effect, they were demonstrating the intersectional theory that identity is continually up for negotiation (Snyder 2008, Thiel, 2004), and supporting the notion that gender is a kind of embodied cultural capital with women tending to internalize the male/female opposition as they negotiate the domains of paid work and family responsibilities (McCall, 1992).

As an identity marker, disability barely registers in the literature on women or men in the news media: it is occasionally included in the sort of round-up phrases that corral differences, which are then herded into the scholarly barn for a single analytical shearing. Mark Deuze, for example, in a piece that looks at journalism's purposes through the lens of its practitioners' professional identity and ideology, notes that the growing multiplatform news requirement to serve immediacy over depth is a credo that is being challenged by multicultural and multimedia journalism (Deuze, 2005). That necessity and predisposition to work fast can prevent journalism from becoming more open to difference "both in terms of newsroom diversity (including and accommodating different voices like younger, female, disabled, and ethnic minority colleagues) and sourcing" (p. 457). Here, the author's use of the word "accommodating" and his parentheses say a great deal about the way in which the whole issue of difference, let alone disability or any other component of identity, is considered and practiced among news media power-brokers, certainly as I know them after decades in the business. Those who own the table may choose to make some space for diversity as the competitive market demands. But accomplishing this is not top of mind, especially when they have the convenient excuse of seemingly endless difficult economic times.

Veteran feminist media scholar Carolyn Byerly has encouraged scholars to use intersectionality to ground research in this area. In her recent review of Dustin Harp's *Desperately Seeking Women Readers: US Newspapers and the Construction of a Female Readership*, Byerly criticizes the author for failing to adequately problematize issues of race and class in her analysis of American newspapers' so-called women's pages:

Such an analysis would strengthen her argument for more inclusive gender news if newspapers are to play any kind of meaningful role in (re)building our failing democracy [my (Byerly's) view]. Black, Latina, Asian, immigrant, and other women are moving into majority status, and poor women are expanding rapidly across racial and ethnic lines. Newspapers' attention to their interests is long overdue, and as feminist scholars, we have a meaningful role to play in showing why and how. (2008, p. 779)

Her view does not directly link the creation of more inclusive gender news with the characteristics of those who might produce it, but further research, such as mine, could address that aspect as part of Byerly's "how." The idea of doing research that is ultimately useful to the academy as well as to the Canadian print (including online) news industry – including its employees and those considering a career in newspapers – is certainly compelling.

The next chapter on methodology and procedures details the process by which I came to ask better questions than the ones with which I began, guided by the groundwork of the scholars and journalists whose work I reviewed and discussed with my supervisors, colleagues and classmates.

Chapter 3

Methodology and Procedures: My Three Years of Slowing Down, or ...

If this doctoral thesis were written as one of those memoirs describing how a baby boomer chucks it all to pursue a dream (which most commonly seems to involve restoring a crumbling villa in Tuscany) I might have called it *My Three Years of Slowing Down or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Methodology*. Not exactly the heralding of a best-seller, perhaps, and clearly derivative, but such a title comes close to describing the humbling process in which I engaged in order to approach and execute this research in a way that would be worth my time and that of readers.

Twenty years of being in daily journalism trained me to gather information quickly, synthesize interview quotes and secondary research on the fly, and write not just one coherent narrative inside of a seven-hour shift, but likely two. (Or edit a dozen or more.) A more complex feature story of several thousand words and a modicum of analysis would be a three-day affair, perhaps slightly more if other daily news stories had to be written simultaneously. A freelance magazine piece? Maybe a week, or the paid-by-the-article-writer is working for less than minimum wage.

How print journalists get to the “send” button on these articles is their own business. Sometimes assigning editors have time to discuss with the reporter how to approach the story and who will make the best interview subjects, but this exchange becomes less frequent as the reporter gains experience. The methods of inquiry the reporter uses, learned at journalism school and honed with on-the-job experience, are deployed to make the resulting story credible and readable, balanced and fair. But she or he will not include in that story what routes were taken to get which facts, what promising leads fizzled, what assumptions were torpedoed or theories

rejected, unless a particularly enterprising editor is curious, an obvious factual gap appears or you are being grilled by a libel lawyer, in which case you hope you've lost your notes. If you are a reporter with a regular beat, you will be expected to add context, and explore contradictions or investigate more deeply as you become more familiar with your terrain. But it is widely – and rightly – assumed that busy readers are not interested in how the reporter got the story, unless, of course, the reporter had bullets whizzing around his or her head (bullets, in these cases, must always whizz) or is a star columnist, whose personal exploits are of interest. For workaday freelancer writers, the unwritten rules are clear: do not bother the busy and distant editor with your process problems. Be low-profile, be accurate and just file the thing on deadline.

Even accepting, therefore, that it was a reasonable requirement to provide a thorough explanation of how and why I wanted to undertake this study required a considerable amount of reluctant personal growth on my part. Resistance paled, however, as my reading list grew and I tended to my coursework in media history and technology, women's studies and leadership studies, as well as having discussions with supervisors, fellow students and instructors. It became clear to a career "instant expert" that in order to make any persuasive claim to addressing a gap in knowledge, I had to identify the gap precisely and offer compelling reasons for trying to fill it in a sound and fruitful manner. I came to see that every step of research involves a choice, and each choice must be accounted for in terms of both its significance and its limits, and that the methods used must be justifiable, carefully conducted and thoroughly described. This, as Biklen and Casella explain, "clearly places your work in a qualitative framework and shows how you understand that framework" (Biklen & Casella, 2007, p. 79). In this way, scholarly readers feel that they are in the hands of a reliable narrator who can confidently and logically demonstrate the

validity of the work, even if those readers may not ultimately agree with its conclusions (Biklen & Casella, 2007, p. 79).

This notion of the reliable narrator brings me to the methods and procedures used in my study, in which the status – or more correctly for an intersectional study, statuses – of a narrator is central to the approach. After my literature review, coursework and countless meetings with supervisors, I decided on a qualitative analysis that would foreground intersectional aspects of the participant women’s narratives. The last chapter reviewed those intersectional readings; in this chapter, I explore the methodological underpinnings of the study, and how they shape the procedures I used to undertake it, and what those steps were.

Narrative Analysis: “We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live”

American narrative journalist and playwright Joan Didion, while not a scholarly practitioner of narrative analysis, nonetheless has spent her long and celebrated writing life trying to understand and explain people’s stories. Didion observes, for example, the power of story to rationalize our behaviour in her famous piece *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*, originally published in 1968. After immersing herself in the emergent hippie world of San Francisco in the Sixties, she wrote how young women in the city’s Haight-Ashbury area described being free from traditional female roles in their so-called counter-culture; yet this included getting into the “beautiful thing” of women’s work, which was housekeeping and baking. This caused Didion to muse how “it is possible for people to be the unconscious instruments of values they would strenuously reject on a conscious level” (2006, p. 86-87). The title of her 2006 collected works of non-fiction explains this power of narrating our own experience to help us understand, celebrate, rationalize, find meaning in and/or cope with our lives within powerful social structures: *We Tell Ourselves Stories in Order to Live*.

Like Didion, Canadian women print journalists spend their working days telling other people's stories in the context of our society. But in what ways do these women journalists tell their own stories in order to live in that society and their workplaces? Such a question can be addressed using the theory – and/or method – of narrative analysis, which invites participants not only to describe what has happened to them over a period of time, but to reflect on what those events mean and where they position themselves culturally, as well as their notions of whether they are agents, victims, witnesses and/or critics inside those events (Bryman et al, 2009). After reading about feminist critical discourse analysis, institutional ethnography, participatory action research and other possible modes of qualitative analysis, I concluded that while each had aspects that might be illuminating, narrative analysis offered the most fresh and relevant way to analyse the “big picture” (Biklin & Casella, 2007, p. 79) of the field I was interrogating.

A review of the literature suggested to me that the long views of women in print newsrooms offer many opportunities for their evolving experiences of family/workplace intersections, disjunctions and overlaps to reveal themselves, so that I might have more tools at my disposal to theorize as to why the underrepresentation of women at print journalism's senior levels continues. This project, therefore, is a narrative analysis.

Happily, the scholarly “story” about storytelling is a blockbuster: narrative analysis is richly and widely described in the literature, with myriad views offered of how stories and narratives can be defined and interrogated for their meaning (e.g. Coffey and Atkinson, 1999). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) offer that narrative inquiry is both phenomenon and method, and nothing less than the “study of the ways humans experience the world” (p. 2). In *Analysing Narrative Reality*, Gubrium and Holstein (2009) barely contain an open field by defining narrative, story and account interchangeably as “spates of talk that are taken to describe or explain matters of

concern to participants” (p. xv11), and explain the researchers’ goal is to explore how “these accounts are socially organized and ... the process of storytelling is circumstantially shaped” (p. xix). This text conveyed to me that narrative analysis, which at first seemed an untameable qualitative methodology, could be harnessed for research such as mine that embraces the partiality and contingencies of knowledge and hopes to understand meaning-making by participants. Accepting that a storyteller “provides an account of experience or event of his or her own that is more or less credible” (p. xix), is the fundamental, respectful condition of this analytical approach. This is not to say that narratives tell the truth, but that they describe events in a person’s life in a way that gives the events coherence (Richmond, 2002, Sosulski et al, 2010). The narrator/participants are the experts on their own experiences.

Coffey and Atkinson (1999) are guided by the idea that all qualitative textual data has storied qualities, in that “social actors produce, represent, and contextualize experience and personal knowledge through narratives and other genres” (p. 54) and that ultimately, stories “are discursive structures that reflect cultural norms” (pp. 67-68). Daiute and Lightfoot (2004), similarly, call narrative analysis “a place holder for different ways of conceptualizing the storied nature of human development” and a method of inquiry that uses narrative “as a root metaphor, a genre, and a discourse” (p. x). As a metaphor, say Daiute and Lightfoot, narrative analysis helps us to understand the significance or meaning of psychological phenomena, relying on themes, often drawn from literary analysis, “to explain the vicissitudes in the drama of interpreted lives” (p. x). Echoing Gubrium and Holstein (2009), Daiute and Lightfoot (2004) note that different types of narrative genres organize experiences and knowledges: feminist researchers, for instance, have used narrative analysis to show how dominant forces promote patriarchal values through grand or meta-narratives, as well as charting the counter-narratives that challenge those

values (Snyder, 2008). This is where one begins to see the possibilities of narrative analysis for interpreting journalists' stories, as they are at ground zero of reproducing and challenging meta-narratives: the daily newspaper.

The approach of narrative analysis is also considered to be holistic. Bryman (2009) and Connelly and Clandinin, (1990) suggest examining people's entire lives in society rather than working with coded methods such as surveys; it provides a way to examine social histories that influence the identity and development of individuals; and creates insights into the myriad, overlapping forces that regulate and reveal relations between individuals and society. Here, we see articulated the companion philosophy of the thesis, that of intersectionality, and how participants' stories might make those unseen or invisible intersections manifest. Narrative analysis can also apply literary analysis (plots, literal and figurative meaning, intersecting story lines, setting, metaphor, character development, heroics, victimization, et cetera (Richmond, 2002) to explore how these cultural and personal motivations interact and evolve.

Narrative analysis also draws on a traditional view that explores how individuals' positions themselves using stories within competing and contradictory discourses. With some power of agency, individuals essentially pick a cultural position, practice it and that becomes the position to be drawn on when the question arises, *who am I?* Another view posits that we perform identity, yes, but we are constantly self-revising, contradicting and flirting with ambiguities, not simply acting out established identities (Bamberg, 2004; Snyder, 2008). Analyzed from the former view, the stories that senior women journalists tell about themselves could be understood as anchor lines that help them remain securely connected to a practiced identity; from the latter, stories are perhaps renegotiations of developing and fluid self-hood within a workplace that has been traditionally hostile to women and racialized minorities in Canada, the U.S. and Europe

(Robinson, 2005). The stories could, of course, combine both and might further speculate about the future, as the business is being transformed by technologies assumed to be best wielded by the young, and perhaps not as competently by older women journalists, who experience (and perhaps reify) a gendered ageism that is culturally pervasive (Woodward, 2006).

Bryman et al (2009) describe the ways in which narrative analysis can be approached: it can be thematic, focusing on what is said rather than how it is said; it can be structural, emphasizing the narrative mechanisms used for the story to be persuasive; it can be interactional, privileging the dialogue between the story teller and the listener; or it can be performative, examining how words and gestures are used to transmit the story to the audience.

Using a narrative analysis, that process of sense-making is enriched with an intersectional approach, liberating the participants and researcher from pointing to any single “-ism” (sexism, ageism, racism) that we perceive as our chief oppressor or enabler. Over time, stories about what we deem to be our pivotal life events reflect the impact of the passing years and the perspective they bring, so that we could, for example, start to tell stories about ourselves that are as much about the impact of age as gender, or as much about white privilege putting us in a power position. While researchers cannot essentialize by generation (Snyder, 2008) any more than they/we can by gender, ethnicity or ability, some elements associated with second- and third-wave feminism surface in narrative analysis, including mine. The wave metaphor has limits, however, including a false divisiveness as well as a focus on the activities of white, American women (Snyder) and so should be invoked with these caveats in full view. No two women are the same, nor are men, nor members of a generation or racial group. But narrative inquiry and intersectionality can operate together, as in this study, to theorize how “merely idiosyncratic personal stories or confessions [can be seen as] examples of postmodern subjectivity that intend

to destabilize dominant discourses” (Snyder, pp 191-192). Life histories such as the ones told to me by the participants cannot reveal any “totality of social life” (Roets & Goedgeluck, 2007, p. 91) but offer for analysis “slices and glimpses of localized interactions to understand more fully both others and ourselves” (Roets & Goedgeluck, p. 91).

Stories of Our Brilliant Careers

Coffey and Atkinson (1996) describe the usefulness of narrative as autobiography to the examination of career experiences, which is central to this current study. As social actors organize life experiences by storytelling, they can reveal different characteristics and events central to careers, careers being both “individually constructed and structurally determined” (p. 69). A key concept here is that while we may imagine (as children, teen-agers or adult students) that we are individuals planning or yearning for a career as individuals, our stories as we progress through our careers tell listeners that “these stories are mediated by structural dimensions and social arrangements that at least seem outside the control of the social actors” (p. 69). Such narratives, Coffey and Atkinson suggest, reveal how the “I” works within the institutional structuring of a career, how those institutional demands and realities change over time, at what stages turning points or conversions occur within the career trajectory, and where tension exists between the career and life path as they intersect with circumstances and luck. What rhetorical devices will the participants use to tell their stories, what figurative language and vocabulary? Do their kinds of speech justify, legitimate, excuse or simply situate their career positions?

While Coffey and Atkinson urge researchers to consider such questions while in the field, Gubrium and Holstein (2009) suggest that when analysing job narratives, scholars ought to:

observe job circumstances surrounding narrative production to identify the work-related resources and orientations that shape accounts. Listen for and record narratives with the aim of showing how they are characteristic of occupations and professions, taking note of how formalized categories are used to ‘certify’ or ‘authorize’ descriptions and accounts within and beyond the work setting (p. 165).

In this way, Gubrium and Holstein manifest their understanding of narrative analysis as useful when setting is taken into account: not only the physical “where” and temporal “when,” but the “what” of an institution’s structural model. Simply stated, the narrative environment shapes stories, in tandem with narrative purpose. Ultimately, narrative inquiry posits that narrative is socially organized and shaped by circumstance. Operating as they do as instruments of societal negotiation, narratives (stories and storytelling) can be analysed “to understand personal experience as it relates to work, family life, the community, and nationhood, for example” (p. vii). The authors are referring to social science research, which includes cross-disciplinary studies that can encompass “gender studies, family studies and communication, as well as to narratively-focused researchers in nursing, education, public health, social work, management/organization studies, and counseling” (p. ix). The literature reviewed describes how narrative analysis has been applied across social science disciplines to study a wide variety of groups and individuals in their social settings, including white working-class women in North and South Carolina, who were found to be restricted in the story types they could tell (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006); students and teachers in Canadian urban classrooms, where they “composed their lives in the moment of curriculum-making” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 48); first-year nursing students in Ireland, Canada and Wales, who expressed their fears and worries about the nature and complexity of the tasks ahead of them in school (Allen, 2006); and mentally ill black women in the United States, who describe experiences negotiating health systems (Sosulski, Buchanan

and Donnell, 2010). The last example foregrounds stories of resilience that emerge when significant events are described over a lifespan, showing how and what shapes development.

Over the course of reviewing the literature (historic, theoretical, journalistic and methodological) for this project, I was struck over and over by the congruence of the journalistic and scholarly purposes, if not discourses and processes. In discussions of narrative inquiry, for example, scholars could just as easily be referencing newspaper reportage that uses individual, human stories to try to make sense of larger societal trends and to analyse the implications of institutional policy-making, as experienced at the life-lived level. In particular, I began to see connections between journalism at its most activist, and academic research that has a strong social justice component. Both the academic and the journalist ask not only “how can I make a living with my work?,” but “how will my work make a difference in the world?” Whose stories will be told through my efforts, and will those stories make a difference? These questions keep reporters and academics at their desks and in the field, digging for answers, or, more frequently, better questions.

Narrating the Narrators

Finally, after two rather fretful years of considering what methodology would add to the literature, I came to the conclusion that narrative analysis offers something nothing else does: an opportunity to utilize a method of inquiry for a journalistic topic that is congruent with the field itself: the project could chart how the subjects make sense of their lives as journalists using their own lingua franca of storytelling. Critical questions arise: Do women print journalists tell stories that help them accommodate contradictions and intersections, or to be subversive, or both, in order to live? Do the stories end with them remaining excluded from power positions? Or are they creating new styles of leadership? What will I learn about my own story and whether it is

about development, resistance or abdication, or all of those things? After all, as the narrative inquirer, I am equally complicit in the world under study (Clandinin, 2006).

As an interdisciplinary exercise, this method allows me to inform journalism research with broader epistemological underpinnings, and also permits a return from the field with new knowledge to bring to and enrich the disciplines of both women's and leadership studies, including, I hope, a greater understanding of how a "story" can be defined.

Terms such as narrative and story vary across and within the disciplines, as well as in the professional field under study. For journalists, the "story" is everything: it is the product; its construction shapes the workday; it represents a competition (my story on the front page, not yours); and is the proof of expertise and effort, the recognition of which increases opportunities for advancement. The story is what you wrote this afternoon as much as it is the difference you try to make in the world over a career.

"Story" is shorthand for any piece of reportage, but usually it is in the form of a news report written in a utilitarian inverted pyramid style (the most important information at the top) that can be swiftly chopped in half without losing much meaning. A narrative is a story, but a story is not always a narrative. As a practitioner and teacher of narrative non-fiction story-telling, I define a journalistic narrative as a story in which something and someone change. The narrative has news value – the reader understands that a topic of public interest is being conveyed through it – but the narrative explores in detail a character's motivation, dilemmas, decisions, turning points and ultimately her or his personal change within the meta-narratives of society. It is structured with a beginning, middle and end that returns to hint at the probable fate of the main character. There is a plot, pulled along through exposition, dialogue and description. The narrative is ultimately a

tale of self-making, with, the journalist hopes, this left in the reader's mind: *I care about this issue now because I have heard this person's story.*

In a news report, the goal is to describe what happened, synthesizing accounts. In a narrative we want to know more: not just what happened from a variety of perspectives, but how people make sense of what happened and how they place themselves inside events (Bryman et al, 2009). In narrative analysis, we seek to analyze that process of sense-making, starting with a focus on concrete experiences over time, and ultimately addressing how interviewees navigate the power structures in which they have had those experiences. Personal narratives give our days a sense of coherence, connecting “the multiple identities of our lives into a pattern that explains sense of self” (Sosulski et al, 2010).

The Truth, or Something Like It

A journalistic narrative is a value-rich, interpretive expression of selected events. It does not stray far from the literary kind of narrative (except its facts are not imagined), and allows members of the reading public to study their connections to society and role in its development. Stories in general, of course, are never factually precise and a narrative account does not lead directly to “truth” (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006). As with the literary version, a real-life “narrative never provides a perfect copy of the reality constituting its subject. A person who narrates what has happened ... will always summarize, expand, embellish, and leave out certain aspects of ... experience,” write Herman and Vervaeck (2001, p. 14). Responding to this selective telling, both the journalist and the scholar add further potential instability, given their power to decide what details to delve into with the subject and how to convey them and to what purpose. Does this fallibility of participants or interview subjects limit the scope of worthwhile analysis? Atkinson and Delamont (2006) say no, since the analytical force of narrative emanates from an

understanding that narratives are performed and are forms of social action based on socially shared conventions (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006). By utilizing the lens of intersectionality, we can analyse stories as shaped by circumstances and social organization (Gubrium & Holstein, 2009) and theorize about what they might mean in terms of better understanding *not only* the specifics of individual experience *but also* their possible significance within larger socially-organized frameworks, if any. The two aims are not contradictory.

Like Atkinson and Delamont (2006), I do not privilege narrative inquiry as gleaning superior insights due to some “unique or special qualities” (p. 165) and would stress that the methodology, in the case of this study, does not “give voice” to the voiceless. We are talking here about members of the free press, who have access to daily, widely distributed print and online publications and whose jobs, in part, require them to reflect community back to itself every day. I do not use narrative inquiry to provide a way for participants to struggle out from the margins of society and into the light of liberation, but to analyse how their narratives about themselves function in “constructing particular versions of events, justifications of actions, evaluations of others, and so on” (p 167).

As described in the introduction and literature review chapters, my own position (as a white, female, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle-class, middle-aged, educated, married Canadian-born person with grown children) informs my inquiry, as do elements of my character, which the discerning reader will likely discover for herself or himself. My career in daily newspapers, as well as turns as a magazine writer and editor, a university instructor in B.C. and Ontario, a writing coach and editorial consultant, may give the reader a sense of being in steady hands, but faith in me as a reliable narrator might be lessened if I reveal that I have come to academic research late-ish in life (at 56) and with an eyebrow up regarding scholarly writing conventions.

The next section of the methodology chapter documents the procedures I have followed so that the reader can feel confident that I have done what I said I was going to do in the manner that I said I would do it for the reasons I have put forward.

Procedural dramas, close encounters, insights and screw-ups

Narrative enquirers can begin either by engaging with participants through telling stories or “through coming alongside participants in the living out of stories” (Clandinin, 2006, p. 47). I chose the former for practical reasons: I work part-time as a magazine editor in Victoria, BC, and could not abandon my job to come alongside my participants for any length of time. The average working print journalist would not be in a position to let someone shadow her for weeks on end, either. And globally, journalists have been found to widely ignore requests to fill out surveys (Strong, 2011). I needed to go to the participants for in-person interviews for as much time as we all could spare. In all, over two weeks in late 2010 and two more weeks in early 2011, I interviewed 28 individual women³ at different ages and career stages in person for about 90 minutes each at the five newspapers across the country, plus one journalist-turned-academic, and conducted five hour-long focus groups with the women, one at each paper, with most of the participants from each paper attending. I conducted two follow-up interviews on site nearly a year later with two participating women, and have had ongoing email exchanges with several of them, the contents of which have become part of the study and are covered by the ethical review.

Once my method of analysis was in order, and field work was in its preliminary stages, I felt confident that I would be breaking some ground as an interdisciplinary PhD student working across the humanities (writing) and social sciences (women’s studies, leadership in education), with their varied disciplinary requirements regarding methodology, and even more importantly

³ As noted earlier, one withdrew just before the final draft of the dissertation was submitted.

perhaps, pursuing a doctorate at a university, indeed in a country, that has no PhD programs in journalism. The reason for this state of affairs could be the topic of another dissertation: suffice to say I felt not only the responsibility to explain my procedures as part of meeting the rigorous demands of the academy, but to persuade skeptical journalists who might read this that rigour is alive and well in other areas of endeavour besides theirs. Credibility is the most valuable asset that a journalist – or an academic – possesses.

The first decision involved how to gather data and defend that method. For narrative analysis, as described above, the interview helps researchers to get under the hood of generalizations to explore what drives individuals in society, and in particular individuals who might, in the general course of things, be excluded from research (Fraser, 2004). As the literature review indicates, no Canadian women print journalists today, to my knowledge, have been involved in such a qualitative narrative project. Equally important to the decision of whom to interview was why; by conducting semi-structured interviews, the interviewer can, with careful listening and exchanges with participants, gather stories that counteract what journalists call the official version, which is to say, stories the participants might hide or discount, or tell only among themselves (Fraser, 2004).

Women broadcast journalists would be compelling participants as well, but I chose to exclude them in order to keep the focus narrow and research not unwieldy. I have done little work in broadcast myself (aside from occasional stints as a radio producer), and also, for a study to accurately reflect the stories of women radio and television journalists, I would have to include both public and private broadcast outlets in Canada, further complicating the scope, methodology and analysis. The visuals of television (how one appears on camera) add a crucial dimension to the hiring and retention of women journalists that would make a fascinating study on its own, but

appearance is less a part of the job equation for print journalists. That is not to say women are not hired for their looks at newspapers: many I have worked with talk about this issue, and it was clear to me and other women in the newsroom that the female summer students who came to the *Globe* each year underwent scrutiny from the male editors that was physical, not professional. Appearance may become more important in print newsrooms, as videography and “personal branding” through blogs and Twitter become more common. Ultimately, by interviewing print journalists only, I have kept the ‘who’ of my interview subjects tightly defined.

Who, What, When, Where and How, More Specifically

The next decisions regarding interviewing involved the more specific who, what, when, where and how of it. Interviews, I decided, needed to be in person, since experience told me that the face-to-face interview provides data on more levels than that of a phone interview, which may provide information and some inflection, but does not offer the benefit of seeing the storyteller’s surroundings, gesticulations and expressions. These non-verbal aspects of communication offer the researcher many opportunities to further interrogate the act of narration, which, as described above, is performative. The email exchange could also be considered a performative act, but not one that, in my view, provides the richness of real human exchange. Besides, one can never truly be sure who is on the other end of the email address. Individual, face-to-face interviews are also seen by scholars as most effective for gleaning information about participants’ attitudes (Strong, 2011), and since I wished to learn more about the women’s attitudes toward their experiences over time in newsrooms, the decision to do in-person interviews was logical to make, despite the drawbacks of the time and travel costs.

On the advice of my supervisors, I prepared the ethical review forms ahead of what the normal schedule would require. This meant that even if I were not yet ready to commence field-work, I

could still interview participants for course work, so that if any of those early interviews made their way into the final dissertation, they would have been covered by the ethical review. This proved worthwhile as I interviewed several people early on whose contributions are in the final product, including Lucinda Chodan, who was the editor-in-chief of the *Victoria Times Colonist* when I interviewed her ahead of the others (she is now the editor-in-chief of *The Edmonton Journal*).⁴ In terms of tailoring the ethical review to survive the scrutiny of document-driven journalists, it was also an advantage to prepare the forms well in advance, during my first year of study. I was able to go through the review forms and make more precise the meaning of “anonymity,” which, for journalists, can mean many things: is this off the record completely? Is this going to be published without my name but with other identifiers? Will I be identified by default because of the group I am in? As the participants are journalists who expect members of the public to reveal their names for publication every day and in the most trying of circumstances, most of the women agreed that I could use their names and identify them through their position at the newspaper and their city. However, most also feared some possible retribution if they spoke about certain matters on the record, so asked to be anonymous for certain comments or at least be identified as, for example, “a senior editor in an eastern Canadian city.” All the various permutations of anonymity are in the participant form, which is attached in

⁴ Lucinda Chodan and I have shared history, most importantly an incident that took place in July of 2006. As Editor-in-Chief of the *Times Colonist*, she was forced to fire me (briefly, as it turned out) from a freelance position as a columnist as well as from a regular contract as the *TC*'s editorial coach. This took place several years before I began my graduate program. Chodan carried out (with tears, at a coffee shop) an order by the publisher to relieve me of my contracts because, apparently (I say apparently because this reason was reported in the press but never said by anyone at the *TC* to me) a group of advertisers had not liked a column I had written. Since in a democracy like ours journalists rightly hold to a strict code of non-interference from advertisers, complications and reverberations ensued. Suffice to say that within a month I was rehired, the affair having reached the ears of the president of publications for Canwest, which owned the paper. Many people stood up for me, but none more publically than another *TC* columnist, Dr. Lynne Van Luven of UVic's Department of Writing, who quit in protest. Her move could have harmed the Department of Writing's important connections to the *TC* (including hiring writing students), but Dr. Van Luven felt that she could not support the publisher's decision to fire me on ethical grounds. Happily, those connections withstood the whole mess. Dr. Van Luven is one of my supervisors for this thesis. Interested readers can go to www.thepubliceye.com or www.thetyee.com for more background.

the appendix. Because of the rarity of senior women in newspaper ranks, this got tricky. It raised the difficulty of keeping certain statements far away from those who made them. I solved this by keeping the theme of intersectionality in the forefront: by grouping women according to their age – younger, mid-career and senior – I could publish sensitive comments without giving away which woman said them. If I had chosen to group participants by newspaper, this would have immediately identified them: indeed, my hope is (and I included this in the ethical review and with the participants) to share findings with the wider public at some later date. In this way, the methodology was always connected directly with the ethical review and guided further steps.

I went back and forth a number of times on what criteria would determine the make-up of the participants, and again, answering the needs of intersectionality proved effective in making the final choices. The study needed to be national, so that I would be in a position to analyse their understanding of how they might or might not be influencing Canada's socio-political agenda from their positions at the newspapers, all of which have online components and share stories either through the Canadian Press, a nearly industry-wide news service, or the Postmedia chain's news-sharing service. Unfortunately, I had to exclude French-speaking Canada, since I am not fluently bilingual and would not have been able to tease out important narrative aspects of the stories in French.

I also had to cast a wide net to avoid interviewing journalists who were employed by one chain of newspapers, in case a concern arose that the studied group was biased, with women participants potentially being seen to be operating inside a common corporate culture rather than inside a larger culture shared by the industry across Canada. A handful of regionally based owners dominate the daily press in Canada, principally Glacier Canadian Newspapers, Postmedia Network Inc. and Quebecor/Sun Media/Osprey, with only a few, such as *The*

Chronicle Herald in Halifax and *The Globe and Mail* in Toronto, being the sole paper in the owners' stable. The newspapers also needed to be roughly the same circulation size in similar markets, big enough to employ a number of journalists at various career stages who are women, so that personal intersections would be available for analysis, and comparable in terms of how management responds to labour market factors (lay-offs, buy-outs, maternity leave policies, etc.). I wanted to avoid interviewing people I already knew, so that I would have as few preconceived ideas about my subjects as possible, although it was not possible to avoid former colleagues completely: the print journalism world in Canada is small, and I have worked in it a long time. As a consultant for newspaper staffs, I have coached several of the women over a couple of months; one hired me to do some editorial training several years ago and another was an acquaintance I had not seen in 20 years. I have socialized occasionally with a few of the women in Victoria, but none is a close friend.

The newspapers I eventually chose were the *Victoria Times Colonist*, *Calgary Herald*, *Winnipeg Free Press*, Hamilton's *The Spectator* and *The Chronicle Herald* in Halifax. The *Times Colonist* and *Calgary Herald* were owned at the time by Postmedia, but as of October 2011, the *TC* is owned by Glacier Media Group. The *Winnipeg Free Press* is owned by F.P. Canadian Newspapers Limited Partnership, along with the *Brandon Sun*. *The Chronicle Herald* is owned by Halifax Herald Ltd., and *The Spectator* is part of the Torstar chain in Ontario.

I recruited women by email and telephone follow-up, looking first at the papers' websites to see who would have begun her career in the late 1970s and 80s and who would have joined the paper more recently: who was a junior reporter, a middle manager, an editor-in-chief, a columnist. This offered the participants an opportunity to share their varied histories and experiences, as well as to reflect on possible generational differences and the industry's changing

structure. If I could not tell from thumbnail photos on the paper's websites that the paper had any visible minority women journalists, I asked the first person recruited at each paper if they could recommend someone: only one newspaper of the five, the Halifax *Chronicle Herald*, employed a person of colour as a journalist at that time, and only the *Winnipeg Free Press* employed a woman with Indigenous status, a white woman who had married into a nation in the Maritimes and had long since been divorced. Only one person, also at the *Free Press*, self-identified as lesbian, and only one, at *The Chronicle Herald*, had any obvious physical ability issues she was willing to discuss. Most of the women were married or in long-term relationships but a minority – 10 – had children, and they included the only participant, Kelly Toughill, who no longer worked at newspapers at the time of the interviews. A former *Toronto Star* reporter and manager, she is the director of the journalism program at the University of King's College in Halifax, preparing the next generation of journalists.

I told the women they could choose to be interviewed wherever they liked so that I could facilitate their own narrative comfort and out of practical concerns, to avoid missing work or other appointments. Most of the women chose small, unoccupied meeting rooms in their workplace, one came to my hotel room, one chose a coffee shop and one her home. Only three were senior enough to be interviewed in their own offices. I conducted small focus groups in office meeting rooms (one was held in the private home of a participant in Victoria) in order to discover if any aspects of their narratives changed when shared with peers, underlings or bosses. Interviews were recorded and fully transcribed by several graduate students I hired (with Department of Writing financial support in one case) in order to save my time for analysis and writing. Each woman had an opportunity to review her transcript: some were returned with comments, others did not respond. In journalism, there is no prior restraint, which means nobody

who is interviewed for a story has the right to read the transcript or the story ahead of publication so the source cannot pressure the reporter into changing or censoring material that is in the public interest. So to be able to read the interview transcript, take issue with it or ask for a new arrangement for being identified, is a strange thing, from a reporter's perspective. A few did have comments about their transcripts, correcting misspellings or small errors or to tell me that they had changed their minds about certain things that they had said could be on the record. One senior woman lamented that she felt her comments were dumb and useless and that she hoped I had found women smarter than she. I interviewed her at a "bad time," she said in an email (Sept. 9, 2011), but she added that "lately, it's always a bad time."

Aside from a couple of women who did not answer emails because they were out of town, the people I contacted swiftly agreed to participate, and several asked if I could include a few more participants with whom they had discussed my request and who wanted to contribute. My original plan to interview 20 to 25 women thus expanded. Only one mid-career journalist thought it necessary to get permission from her boss to speak to me during her workday, which she did; the rest were constrained only by the possibility that an assignment might mean they would have to reschedule. The individual interviews did go off smoothly (one woman who asked to be added on during my visit simply lacked the time in the end), but a few women were unable to attend the focus group sessions because of story or meeting commitments. Luckily, no big local news stories broke during the scheduled interview times, so nobody had to cancel at the last minute. I also did two follow-up interviews in Hamilton, because two of the women there were particularly compelling in their stories and situations. Since I was already going to the city for family reasons (over Thanksgiving of 2011), I was able to see both women for about an hour each, just under a year after I first interviewed them.

I'll Show You Mine, if You'll Show Me Yours

Establishing rapport was not a problem as far as I could tell. The participants knew I was familiar with newspapers, having been a reporter, editor, columnist and manager. As Strong discovered in her interviews with New Zealand women journalists in a mixed-methods, gender-only study, rapport is further established when the interviewer knows industry jargon and players, making interruptions for clarifying questions rare. Being an industry insider (and in my case a person who had experienced newsroom life before and after parenthood) offers the benefits of quickly-established trust, the capacity for insights and an easier entrance to the field, all pluses noted by Strong (2011). When I asked if participants would tape the interview too, so that I had a back-up, nobody wondered why and most had a tape recorder with them, ready to go. This helped confirm an equal-status partnership between participant and researcher.

I had also sent each woman a copy of the interview questions, which I developed with my supervisors, so the women knew the extent to which I wanted them to share their personal career stories. Those questions are listed in the appendix, and range from the open-ended first question “please describe yourself in general terms,” which allows the participant to create her own narrative, as well as for a range of intersectional aspects to be named or not. The response to this question typically took up most of the time, with me occasionally asking for clarification about timing or how they felt about events described. I then asked more specific questions about their perceived impact on the news agenda, whether women in the newsroom gather to discuss their issues, whether they were mothers and how that affected their working lives, and how they feel they are placed to address the challenges and opportunities of technology.

By recruiting participants at different ages and career stages, I was able to establish three groups to analyze in terms of the influence of intersections: senior women journalists, mostly

editors and/or columnists up to age 61, some of whom were single and without children and others with partners and grown children or none. One had step-children she did not raise from birth, as they were teenagers when she married their father; mid-careerists, who were reporters in their 30s and 40s, mostly with partners and a few with children; and junior reporters, a group in their 20s who were single or partnered, with no children.

While several women said at first that they felt odd talking about themselves at length, and one was clear from the start that she did not wish to be named for fear of repercussions, all were voluble and showed, through their thoughtfulness and expressiveness, that telling me their stories was something they wanted to do, and not just because I asked them nicely. At several papers, participants said it was interesting to them that I was doing the interviews at that time. Things were happening that made the women more acutely aware of the issues that were under discussion, including flexibility of hours or lack thereof, maternity leaves, buyouts, fallout from recent layoffs, handling new technological requirements and contract position vulnerability.

In each interview, while the digital recorder (or recorders, if a participant had hers) was in front of us and running, I also took notes. I did this out of an abundance of caution regarding battery life (and one did run out at a crucial moment in one case, compelling me to write notes immediately after, as it took me a few moments to notice the red light was on), and it is simple for me to do so after so many years of taking interview notes. I have a personal version of shorthand that I use to record key words (nouns, verbs) and, where necessary, whole sentences that I know will be possible for use as quotes. I also noted the surroundings in the room, the weather and if the participant commented on her surroundings. My notes also include facial expressions and physical descriptions as *aide-memoires* for each participant, as well as my own responses to their remarks or our exchange; I take these notes during and immediately after

interviews, when my memory is fresh (and to make sure I can read my own handwriting). I recorded the date and time of each interview in a notebook, as well as the number on the tape recorder so that I could move each one over to my memory stick and then the computer with the appropriate name attached. All this material remains in my home office, except for one CD containing all the recordings as well as drafts of the thesis, which is in a locked drawer in a locked office off-site (at my husband's office in downtown Victoria) in case my house burns down or an earthquake flattens my office.

Reflexivity Takes the Stand

After what I call “inhabiting” the interviews to see what they would say to me, I did more reading about qualitative analysis in general and narrative analysis in particular, as described above in this chapter and in the literature review. The urge to make hasty generalizations and to say “aha! I was right!” each time a participant appeared to reinforce my own views was hard to resist, since I was viewing their stories from the perspective of a woman journalist who has experienced newsroom culture for many years. To state that I am not acting as a liberator of participants from their chains (as I did in the introduction) does not mean I can put away my hacksaw without great effort. Staying alert to my own reflexivity was difficult, and that was a good thing: why bother spending four years in a study if you've decided the answer at the start? Of course I connected with these women's experiences that mirrored my own: I became so caught up in certain stories, especially about the impact of parenthood, that I offered ‘helpful advice’ rather than neutrality. But having defined my terrain at the outset as partial, and acknowledging that I have spent years examining its contours in a certain way, does not mean I will refuse to revisit it in a new, differently illuminated way. A declaration that my own experiences inform my research is not incriminating evidence that the study lacks rigour, but

supports and reinforces the notion that all knowledge is situated, including the conclusions that I will draw from analysing the participants' stories.

Throughout, I worried how their narratives were putty in my hands as the analyst; I made a reasonable decision to group their narratives by age according to my intersectional approach, but would they think that was appropriate? I wasn't going to ask each of them for permission on how to proceed analytically, but rather they would have to wait to see the outcome in the thesis, and then could respond to what was to be published, based on the ethics agreement.⁵ Being journalists, many of them did want to know how I would treat the material: what would my "angle" be? At the time of the interviews, their partiality meant they could only tell their stories in relation to my questions, or in response to the other women in their own focus group. In those shared sessions, they had a chance to reflect critically on their working lives and the institution of the newspaper that governed them and how that might cause challenges or opportunities, as Richmond suggests (Richmond, 2002). But I had created a bigger narrative context they knew little of, comprised of other women telling their stories in other individual interviews and focus groups in other provinces. I briefly viewed this situation as unfair, but returning to the ontology of all knowledge being situated and partial relieved me of that concern.

Each such crisis in confidence sent me back to the literature and my supervisors, so that I was finally able to steady my analytical footing. Like me, educational researcher Heather Richmond went into the field self-directed, without a critical mass of narrative-analysis colleagues to consult (in her case, to study adult learners' perceptions of the literacy programs with which they were involved). She did so not only to try to understand how her research participants made sense of their experiences over time, but also out of a desire to make sense of her own world

⁵ One participant did respond during this last part of the review process by withdrawing from the study six weeks after I defended it and two weeks before the submission deadline. Each participant has the right to depart at any time from the study without explanation, as she chose to do. All references to her have been removed.

through stories (Richmond, 2002), which resonated with me. She devised a story map for her analysis, essentially a graph that grouped past, present and future imagined experiences, with the goal of identifying repeated patterns (of events involving literacy programs) for her and future researchers' use, as well as to create an opportunity for critical self-reflection among participants. Her plan helped me to visualize how my own "coding" might look, as I was studying the women in three groups over time. Louise North's work in Australia was also useful in helping me to understand that qualitative data can be rich and detailed even in small samples (her group numbered 17), as she used narrative analysis with male and female journalists to uncover gendered differences in newsroom experiences (North, 2009).

My own method of analysing the interview transcripts and notes evolved out of these readings on narrative analysis, my own journalistic method of identifying common themes with initials beside examples (A for age-related comments; R for race, G for gender, M for motherhood, and so on) and highlighting particular comments from the participants that captured with passion and clarity the issues the women were facing. I marked the place in each transcript with a C where the women described their life events in terms of "choices" they made to accommodate the cultural norms, rather than challenging the status quo. Given the previously described context in Canadian print journalism of women journalists both upholding and simultaneously challenging broader cultural norms, these were important pieces of narrative to uncover. I also looked for turning points, those times in life – and in stories – that struck the women as pivotal in their career and life choices, so as to see what intersections may have been at work. Contradictions were noted (often prompted by a journalist's best friend, the "oh really?" question): for example, some participants said they felt their work was valuable to the social good, including using their racialized status, ability or gender to improve their own newspaper's coverage in those areas, yet

as women they did not recognize the possibility of changing entrenched newsroom discourse to better reflect their own needs and aspirations. With each analysis of an individual interview, other themes emerged, such as the more senior participants' attribution of luck to the course of their career progress.

The following three chapters outline the analysis of those interviews, grouped as discussed earlier into three stages of career trajectories: I begin with the longest-employed women, examining how they recount their experiences over decades in the business, often with a sense of deep frustration but also with humour and satisfaction; continue with the mid-career women, who find themselves at a crossroads, where the demands of their careers and personal lives are most extreme and demanding; and conclude with analyzing the stories of the latest recruits to daily print journalism, the young women who look warily ahead and worry that they will be sidelined by maternity if they are not ousted before their contract positions expire. The contours of their career paths are obscured by the precarious state of Canadian newspapers and executives' obsession with monetizing digital media technology. The few women who have made it to top editor positions do not seem to beckon to the youngest ones. And with their heads bent over the seemingly endless process of producing news across multiple platforms, all of the participants focus, not surprisingly, on what they experience as individuals, not on what unseen forces might be hidden from them. And by the time I began to revise the final draft of this dissertation, more than one quarter of the participants were already gone from their newsroom jobs – often described to me as their dream jobs – having quit, been laid off or bought out.

Chapter 4

Such luck: senior women print journalists explain their careers

It was really only the once, more than a decade ago, when Elissa Barnard, a nursing mother, felt she could not do her job because of her baby. As a Halifax *Chronicle Herald* arts reporter, she headed out one night to review a performance by the Royal Winnipeg Ballet:

EB: I went to the ballet and came home and I was going to write the review in about a half an hour and e-mail it to the office for the next day's paper. And when I got home, the baby woke up, screaming to be fed. I called my editor, and I don't think he really understood, but he was a very good type. I said 'I'm sorry; I will have to write it tomorrow I can't do this right now.' I think that's the only time that I really couldn't get a story done because of being a parent.

VS: Do you remember what he said? You said he was a good guy.

EB: Yeah, he's her godfather (laughs).

VS: (Laughs) Lucky!

EB: Yes! He said 'okay'. He was a wonderful editor. He delivered 110 per cent and he expected a lot. We usually always came through. He is the kind of person who always comes through. So I did feel very bad. There were no consequences, he said 'fine', and I felt bad because I let the job down that night. In the end it didn't matter. We ran the review the next day. It didn't affect my job or our relationship at all.

VS: Well that's interesting because we still beat ourselves up.

EB: Yes, that's right.⁶

In this chapter I focus on participants such as Barnard who, at the time of the interviews, had stayed in the industry the longest, 25 to 30 years or more, arriving at newspapers when historical,

⁶ E. Barnard, personal communication, Nov. 15, 2010, Halifax. All direct quotations in the following discussion are taken from this individual interview, as is the case for all direct quotations in this chapter.

overt sexism had only somewhat diminished, thanks to the feminist movement of the day, their own reporting on that movement, and their own struggles.

Participants' positions ranged in rank from reporter to columnist to section or department editor and editor-in-chief. They included Elissa Barnard, Pat Lee and Pam Sword of *The Chronicle Herald* in Halifax; Michele Steeves of *The Spectator* in Hamilton; Margo Goodhand and Alexandra Paul of the *Winnipeg Free Press*; Monica Zurowski of *The Calgary Herald*; Lucinda Chodan, then the *Times Colonist* Editor-in-Chief in Victoria; and Janet, who asked not to be named.⁷

In the stories that follow, each journalist explored with me the meaning of her own experiences independently of the others; yet themes of frustration combined with a sense of mission and the impact of parenthood connected the stories, expanding their significance. Like the other two age cohorts (with one exception, Sherri Borden Colley), this group of senior journalists was comprised of exclusively of white, middle-class and well-educated women. Five were mothers. Besides feeling lucky, they felt “stuck” due to industry upheaval; multi-tasking was seen as a “natural” thing that women like them did and had to do; women chose between work and family and constantly sought work/life balance; as women journalists they could change the world, but they could not see changing the newsroom culture, and even suppressed their own ideas about how to cover stories differently. Those who were in power positions (such as editors-in-chief) spoke of how they enacted and longed for a new model of leadership that had a clear gender component, based as it was on women's perceived communication and collaborative skills. These women, aged 49 to 61, told stories that relayed aspects of struggles taken on by second-wave feminists, despite feminism being mocked inside newsrooms (Freeman, 2001): they

⁷ Members of the most senior cohort who have left daily print journalism (one before the study) are described in Chapter 7, along with others from the mid-career and youngest cohort.

bristled at overt, sustained sexism; expressed a lack of entitlement to interact with men as equals; and felt, with some sense of a woman's duty to address, the white, middle-class bias of their own privilege (Snyder, 2008).

When Barnard told me her story in a Halifax *Chronicle Herald* meeting room, I had yet to grasp the importance of luck in those stories told by the participants who had been the longest at newspapers. It became significant as an indication of how, as noted above, they generally lacked a sense of entitlement, with luck seen as equal to or more important than their work ethic, skills or talent in how they developed as journalists. Simultaneously, they often acknowledged, but did not describe as matters of luck, the privileges of race, class and education. That acknowledgement seemed to bear heavily on a sense of duty to tell the stories of those they considered unable to tell their own. It seemed ingrained as part of their myriad responsibilities to stand up for the dispossessed in their communities, often while inhibiting the expression of their own gendered workplace problems.

Luck, longevity and a passion for story

In a small, corner meeting room at the half-empty suburban offices of *The Chronicle Herald*, Elissa Barnard, 51, an arts writer, looked out at the darkening fall sky. She asked me a rhetorical question about passion for story, which she declared to be undiminished in her after nearly 30 years at the paper, mostly in the same job, covering performances and writing about Nova Scotia's busy arts community. "I like a good story and I am interested in the mechanics of writing," she began, and then paused briefly. "How do you translate a good character, a good plot line into a readable story and convey the passion you have felt for the topic into the article?"

Barnard came by her passion for puzzling over narrative by birth: both parents were print reporters, with her father eventually retiring from a communications job “to write a book he never completed,” and her mother leaving journalism for a while to raise Barnard and her sister.

Trying to convey passion through story drove her working day. On a good one, Barnard said, she might interview an artist or entertainer who had a great tale to tell, and when she returned to the newsroom, her colleagues joked around and the photographer had taken a wonderful shot of the subject. That combination of passion and teamwork was magical.

But Barnard had bad days, too: in particular, the incoming rush of technology that management expected reporters to use made her fear she would be a “dinosaur,” a word in common use around newsrooms to describe the oldest generation of workers who appear to resist new demands on their approach to work. Barnard wanted to “embrace” (a word she used several times) new technology but was not sure how: management had offered little training. Also, one-quarter of the staff had been cut in recent layoffs and the once-separate arts and lifestyle sections had been folded together. What she wrote about seemed less important to senior managers, she said, requiring the head of her now-merged department to wage an almost daily fight for diminished space. Then she shrugged her shoulders and smiled, and talked about how journalists like to complain, effectively minimizing the importance of her own observations. She had been at the paper long enough to recall that the publisher gave out turkeys at Christmas, in the 1980s.

Barnard had an Arts BA and was married with one child, aged 11 at the time we spoke. After telling the story of how lucky she was that the editor on deck the night of the ballet performance was her child’s godfather, Barnard said things were getting easier on the work/parent front. By rising at 6 am and working until 7:30 am, she could take 90 minutes off later to get her daughter to piano lessons. “I can make it all work, usually,” said Barnard, recalling an article she read

once about how women are good at multi-tasking to explain why she was good at “juggling” family and work. It struck me how well she had internalized the prevailing social belief that women are naturally good multi-taskers when she said that “there is something to be said for trying to put all the pieces together.” After years of being the family’s main breadwinner, she described her husband’s new job in terms of luck, too. He happened to have an understanding boss: a single mother, who was flexible about hours. But Barnard did not connect this situation with her own, at least not to me.

After all this time and experience, and with her daughter older, had Barnard considered a management job? No, she said, managers would make her work nights. She feared she might have to fire someone, maybe a friend. But women had not been encouraged to apply for management jobs at the *Herald*, although they had applied. Four such jobs existed, all held by men. Once there was one female managing editor: she became a politician.⁸ Barnard regretted not having learned to edit, which made her feel stuck, unable to move up to the editing desk.

As for why so few women were senior managers, Barnard hesitated, then posited that it may have to do with a “bigger time commitment,” the same reason so few women went into politics, she said, as well as management being boring, full of meetings with people who have a “corporate” style of thinking. Most of the men in the newsroom, especially in positions of authority, she said, didn’t have to deal with the multi-tasking and schedule-juggling that she and other women did. “I don’t think they understand it; I don’t think they know about it, really.”

Barnard’s job, as she saw it, was to promote the arts in Nova Scotia, especially by women, Indigenous and Black artists. She, as a middle-class, educated white woman, didn’t think much about her privileged position, but was aware of it, and complained about the lack of diversity in

⁸ The paper did have a female publisher: Sarah Dennis inherited the position from her late father, the first woman in the family dynasty to own the Atlantic provinces’ largest-circulation daily.

the newsroom, as other participants did. It annoyed her still that “women artists are not as validated or accepted by the establishment as male artists.” But despite her personal commitment to promoting diversity in arts coverage, Barnard ultimately did not see herself as a newsroom decision-maker, rather as part of a small, struggling team whose work mattered most to the growth in the local arts community. Could the choices she made over three decades about what stories to cover have influenced the nature of that growth? No, she said, she didn’t think so. When it came to the power of the exclusively white, male management team to downsize arts coverage, Barnard felt that “breaking news ... has to be the priority in a daily newspaper.”

Barnard’s was a story of long-term adaptation and resignation and apologies, with a positive experience with managers depending on good fortune, not policy or even her own skills. In Winnipeg, meanwhile, Alexandra Paul, another longtime reporter, was feeling lucky, too, just to have a job. Like Barnard and others in this group, she positioned herself outside the dominant culture and cherished her opportunity to champion others from within the dominant news discourses. But for Paul, this meant Indigenous peoples.

The defining business of being an outsider

When I asked why women print journalists were rare in senior management, general assignment reporter Alexandra Paul at the *Winnipeg Free Press* said journalism is so tough on family life that even talented women were not staying while men did. She also recounted a story about a young woman who recently left the business, even though it was her dream to be a journalist, because she could not get a permanent job in an unstable industry. Women like herself, said Paul, who still had reporting jobs – and “good days” of teamwork-driven journalism were fewer and fewer – were simply “fortunate,” according to the luck theory of career

longevity. In her own case, she positioned herself as “not really management material,” because she was not part of the community elite:

AP: (pause) I’m too independent. I remember a prof who said ‘there are two kinds of journalists, the ones who maintain the status quo and the ones who rock the boat.’ I think a lot of the management people, men or women, are the people who maintain the status quo. They know how to work within parameters, they’re part of the community’s life, and they’re used to sitting on the boards, volunteering. Their parents have been part of a community.

VS: Do you mean the people who maintain the status quo tend to be part of those elites who are the power brokers in the community?

AP: Well, I’m the kind of reporter who’s an outsider. I think you kind of have to be accepted as an insider to go into any kind of management position.⁹

After decades in newsrooms, Paul did not see herself as an insider who would fit as a manager, but as an outsider, a “rebel, contrarian, thorn, a real prick,” going toe-to-toe with editors on certain stories, but ultimately having the support of her (female) bosses. As she got older, though, she was beginning “to mellow,” while worrying that women were sliding back as the larger culture demanded entertainment over news, and entertainment involved women portrayed as they were in the 1950s. For her, feminism’s gains were not necessarily sustainable. Women, she sighed, were “going to have to start all over again.”

I interviewed Paul in a quiet meeting room at the *Winnipeg Free Press*. She was an only child, born 21 years after her parents married: her father used to joke that he was collecting the Baby Bonus and his old-age pension at the same time. He ran a brokerage firm in Montreal, while Paul’s mother was at home, with six servants, including a Scottish nanny called Flossy Goodfellow. (“A name right out of a movie,” laughed Paul.) When Paul was about six, her father

⁹ A. Paul, personal communication, Nov. 22, 2010, Winnipeg.

lost his business, and the family decamped to St. Andrews, N.B. Her mother died at 53, the age Paul was when interviewed, when Paul was only 13.

Five years later, in 1975, Paul did something even more shocking to her family than being born. She eloped with a Maliseet man in New Brunswick. (She only learned after her father's death that he tried to have her committed to an insane asylum, but this was not legally possible.) Her new in-laws, militant about Indigenous rights, encouraged Paul to go to university, for which she was grateful. After earning two degrees (English honours, Education), she took her interest in writing to Carleton University's journalism school, where she thought she might learn to write stories that would help white people understand the "parallel universe" of Indigenous peoples.

The marriage did not last long, but Paul's interest in Indigenous affairs did. She'd kept her husband's name and had not remarried: she paused when she said that she "wasn't able to have children so I became a career woman." She went from the Guelph *Mercury* to the *Winnipeg Free Press*, with most of her career at the *Free Press* as a health reporter. A series Paul did on regulatory bodies making decisions behind closed doors resulted in the College of Physicians and Surgeons requesting a change in medical legislation to open up disciplinary hearings:

VS: Getting a law changed is not a bad day at the job!

AP: Yeah, it was a very good day. Yeah, those were good days. When you feel like you're being useful and you're making a difference and you're helping and that you're valued, that's a good day for me.

For 18 months before our interview, Paul had been on a leave to act as a director of communications for the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, which gave her a chance to see the difficulties of the Indian Act from the First Nations' perspective. She assumed that because she was "status by marriage and white by birth" that people in the Assembly would object to her ideas. However, she said, while that may have been a factor behind the scenes, she was

considered neutral in her approach by at least one chief because she was not associated with any Indigenous nation. Eager to test my new knowledge about intersectionality, I ventured:

VS: So (the Chief) assumed that your neutrality came with being *outside* the group.

AP: Yup, interesting, eh?

VS: Yeah.

AP: I haven't thought of it like that. But because I was neutral I was also independent and I wasn't really answerable to anybody in the group.

VS: Right. You didn't owe any particular group anything.

AP: Yeah, which makes me pretty "not political." (finger quotes)

VS: And would your position as a white person also perhaps mean to them that you could craft their message in a way that was going to be understandable?

AP: Yeah. I had people tell me they were glad I was there because I understood both worlds. 'You understand us,' I was told. 'And you understand how to talk to those other people over there.'

It intrigued me that the Chief who felt Paul was neutral in her dealings with all the groups in the Assembly thought so because she was non-Indigenous, or an outsider, and Paul's comment that she had "never thought of it like that" alerted me to the notion that our own partiality is invisible to us and how easily we allow others to define our own positions, often based on a balance of perceived power. It struck me as well that Paul's demeanour – friendly, listening, interested – could influence people as much as her Indigenous status by a long-ago marriage.

In terms of her own newsroom politics, however, Paul talked about that same position as a conflict of interest when it came to her reporting about Indigenous issues. She mentioned various Indigenous/non-Indigenous conflicts over the years, and how she had been afraid that her

knowledge and relationship to Indigenous peoples would make her reporting biased and so she held back on offering to cover their issues for years. That was changing:

I didn't think I could keep an impartial focus. I could have talked about what had happened [in the Oka crisis] but back in those days there seemed to be more of a focus on an impartial, balanced, unbiased point of view. Today with journalism it seems more relaxed. They're all columnists and bloggers and everybody's talking about what they think. Well back in the journalism world I grew up in, it didn't matter what you thought, or what you saw. What mattered were the facts, so the narrative, I just wasn't ready to do the narrative I guess. Not prepared. I would be now. Not that I wish for anything like that to happen again.

Paul had a conflicting insider/outsider position to negotiate, depending on whether she was perceived as Indigenous or not: her "independence" was an asset when working for the Chiefs, but she had seen it as a newsroom liability, although that could change as more personal journalism was springing up around her. She was more ready to write "narrative" based on facts.

At the *Free Press*, the only Indigenous employees in editorial were a Métis man, who edited online copy, and Paul. Somehow, a white, educated woman of some privilege had become the paper's only Indigenous reporter, with the Métis copy editor having no public profile. Paul said nothing about that situation but mentioned the backlash against Indigenous peoples that cropped up in anonymous posts on the paper's website, echoing a concern *Free Press* Editor-in-Chief Margo Goodhand expressed to me about people hiding behind anonymity to make sexist, racist comments. Paul found this backlash depressing, but lauded her paper for seeing the "human rights" issues involved, citing gender balance as a key factor. Racist comments seemed to be handled better because of women's newsroom contributions:

AP: They keep a very human rights attitude toward the whole thing and I'm thankful for that. I think that's as much due to having a newsroom balance between men and women as anything else.

VS: How so?

AP: (pause) I think in an all-male newsroom, because that's what it was when I first started, the mood's different. You bring women into it and it opens up somehow. There is something modulated about having a balance between the genders, you have additional viewpoints. And those additional viewpoints get more viewpoints. So like you've got one that's one; if you've got two, then you'll get more. That's the multiplying fact of nature.

In this account, it seemed gender was a defining difference to an understanding of public backlash that included racist and sexist commentary online. Paul, like Barnard, did her work with difference and social justice in mind, even though both felt hampered somewhat by larger forces at work in the industry. Paul's and Barnard's career passion still burned, but back in Halifax, reporter Pat Lee, after 21 years at *The Chronicle Herald*, was finding it hard to get excited about her daily assignments.

'Let's just say I am happy'

Pat Lee said that all her years on the job had given her confidence; there weren't too many situations any more that she found intimidating. "With age comes experience," she told me with a smile.¹⁰ Yet Lee expressed the least job satisfaction among the cohort of oldest participants: she had grown tired of routine assignments like Remembrance Day and cancer cure runs. She'd even told an editor she simply couldn't cover another such run. This would have been unusual, as most reporters whine about assignments, but very rarely would they refuse one.

After arriving at my hotel room a couple of hours before starting her afternoon shift, Lee told me how she was raised in a middle-class home, as were most other participants: her dad was a regional director for Colgate-Palmolive, and her mother was a homemaker. They moved a lot when she was growing up, ending up in Halifax. After high school, Lee, a "jockette," had a brief

¹⁰ P. Lee, personal communication, Nov. 14, 2010, Halifax.

idea to teach gym but ended up moving to Toronto. A few varied jobs later, she wandered into a community college and signed up for journalism, being something of a “news junkie.”

Lee, a white 50-year-old, also described herself as a late bloomer. She had been married only eight years, to a retired military man who had custody of two kids. She helped raised them for only a short time and they were now grown. She was hired at the *Herald* as a GA (general assignment) reporter and had returned to general assignment after a stint on the editing desk and 10 years as a TV columnist. She also spent a year as the community reporter, which she liked. The job had been killed during recent layoffs, when about a quarter of the staff was let go.

She did not feel prejudice because of age or gender in the outside world, she said, and anyway, now people usually talked to her on the phone so they couldn't tell her age. (Invisibility it seems, reduces the risk of possible ageism.) But a new regime of managers – all men – had caused a feeling among older staff that the new regime considered them lazy; managers' eyes “just kind of go over us,” she said. She speculated that story assignments like Remembrance Day might be the kind of “not hot” stories older reporters like her were assigned:

Well, unfortunately, this is the first time that I've ever felt this in my career. Cause I've had male bosses, I've had female bosses, but this is the first, and again this is just a newish crowd that has come in. It is somewhat anti-women to some extent and age-related as well, I believe. Just based on assignments, promotions.

Here Lee identified an intersection of age and gender that appeared to influence her new male bosses and might have an impact on story assignment. She then told a story about a man who was parachuted in to the editing desk and then “the layoffs came.” Lee stated flatly she would never want such a job. She continued:

It was not any job that I ever would have been interested in but, it set the tone. You know? It set the tone because this guy goes around the newsroom, looking tough and cracking the whip. It's just one of those more of feeling kind of things. The guy who hired

this guy used to quite severely bully a younger reporter, a woman. It was noted and she was one of the people laid off and I don't think it was ever formally grieved. I know it was sort of taken up as an issue because he used to berate her in the middle of the newsroom, which was really unprofessional, at the very least.

Lee noted that a couple of plum jobs had come up – columns and the legislature beat – and men and women applied, but men got the jobs. Lee said her history of being the president of the union local for four years may not have helped her: the paper has not always been a union shop.

A good day for Lee involved having some control over her work: in fact, the word “control” came up a lot. Having her own story idea turn out well, maybe going on the front page, not having to take constant change in direction from editors, made a good day. They didn't happen much anymore, however. Lee remembered the only woman managing editor they had, who gave her the TV column job. “The climate seemed more friendly under her,” said Lee. Her main regret, she said, was leaving the column of her own accord, for reasons she did not explain. Lee enjoyed it because of the freedom and control it gave her, and how she would get good feedback from readers after drawing their attention to shows they would have missed. She saw the practice of writing just a few paragraphs for the website as a return to the old days of rattling off short pieces of hard news. It seemed difficult for her to find much fun in that, and she had pitched column ideas to no avail, while “they go and create columns for guys.”

Women journalists tended to focus on different news stories, she felt, echoing others in her cohort and in the literature (Beam, 2008). They took pride in covering welfare, children, education, social agenda stories, more than men generally did. It would also be hard for a man to write about a battered woman. But then, Lee said, why make that assumption? It was like assuming women weren't interested in sports – no woman was in the *Herald* sports department – and she thought sports stories were fun.

Lee lamented the loss of energy at the paper when the young reporters were laid off. She had liked mentoring the young reporters, as their questions made her feel like she was not “out to pasture,” echoing Barnard’s concern about being seen as a dinosaur and the implications of being stereotyped by age. However, at that moment, with fewer young people and a more traditional male structure in power, Lee found the atmosphere irritating. “Maybe I am just sensitive to it because I am 50, I’m not 35,” she said, observing the intransigence of newsroom culture from the perspective of her long experience in it. Lee said she hated to say it, but to a great extent reporting was a young person’s game. It was hard at her age to be enthusiastic about covering a murder at 11 at night.

When I asked Lee why senior women print journalists were so few, she answered that “a lot of it is the side-tracking that happens with women.” What was “natural” (women’s first priority is kids) was seen as problematic by managers, and caused women to have to make a “choice” to step back from promotion unless managers helped them. But when I wondered aloud about the notion, she indicated that managers forced mothers into this so-called choice because the newspaper system demanded it. Male managers were “used to promoting men so why would they start promoting women?” This came as a rhetorical question, laced with resignation:

PL: They [working mothers] can’t put in the hours maybe that are required. Some managing editors we have work weird shifts. They come in at 10 or 11 and don’t go home till seven or eight at night. I don’t know too many working mothers with young kids that can do that. You’re not home for supper, you’re not home for bath-time. And well I shouldn’t say, most women choose not to. Most women put their children, their young children over — I don’t judge anybody for that. That’s just, those are choices people are making and it would be better if companies could accommodate working women, working mothers, better.

VS: I often think of this idea that it’s a ‘choice,’ and I think, ‘huh? Is it’?

PL: Well it's the mother's choice 'cause you're given no choice.

Lee did give former managers credit for giving some mothers at the paper four-day (reduced hours) weeks when their kids were little, and that approach had lasted even though the children were grown. Then she sounded resigned to her return to GA work, and spoke of being in “that weird age spot” where she could stay another 10 years and protect her salary, or find something else. “I’m happy where I am for now. Let’s just put it that way,” Lee said. Only then, within a couple of minutes of the end of our talk, did Lee talk about her volunteer work in animal rights, and how she, too, now had a four-day week (and less pay). “I’m not 100 per cent happy in my work life so I’ve got to improve my out-of-work life to compensate for that,” she said.¹¹

Lee seemed to have ceded much of her sense of power and control when she left the position (as TV writer) she loved, returning to the mercies of harried assignment editors and filing bits of news to the website, and reducing her hours. She talked about how workplace conflict was based on gender and age factors founded on status quo beliefs, but unlike many others, still did not see herself as a crusader for change, rather, as someone who endured her job and found satisfaction elsewhere. Still, she acknowledged women journalists’ preference for covering matters involving social justice for disadvantaged groups. On the editing desk, Pam Sword was even closer to the upholders of the dominant news culture, finding herself quietly at odds with them in meetings and suppressing her own views about the story line-up for the day.

‘A story that is connected to your heart is glued to you’

Like Barnard and Lee, Pam Sword was a veteran at the Halifax *Chronicle Herald* who described herself as being somewhat at odds with the news discourse. But her position was that of editor, not reporter, so she had the added possibility of affecting the paper more widely

¹¹ Lee has since become a web editor, giving her “that control that I so dearly seem to need” and is doing a freelance TV blog. Two managers she spoke of were fired, she said. (P. Lee, personal communication, April 8, 2013.)

through her defence of certain stories over others. Sword began our talk in a meeting room by giving her age with a laugh, or rather not giving it: she “stopped counting after 50,” which turned out to be four years earlier.¹² Born in Belleville, Ont., to “definitely middle-class” parents, Sword said she always liked writing, working for the high school newspaper (what she called the “cliché stuff” of budding journalists), doing a stint at community college for journalism, and then working in a string of jobs throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s in small-town Ontario newspapers. After she worked at the Owen Sound *Sun Times*, Sword said abruptly, “stupidly I got married.”

She and her husband eventually broke up after they moved around the country for his job as a Snowbird pilot. Settling in Halifax, she had worked at the *Herald* for about 20 years, 15 on the news desk, editing. She recalled a day early on in her career that underscored the notion of the journalist-as-superhero role she loved (but also gave an apologetic-sounding “hokey” label), which she hinted had been undercut by budget cuts:

When I was a reporter, once I went to a career day for kids. There’s so many cutbacks in modern journalism but I said to them, a reporter was like being a modern-day superhero. Where you write a good story and you can change maybe not the whole world but (pause) you can change a little piece of it, you know? We’ve done stories about people that need help, or you shine the spotlight on the grievous wrongdoing. My dad was a bit of a social activist. So I thought ‘ah, this is sort of a way to change the world for the ... Oh my god, I’m so idealistic, I sound so hokey: A way to change the world for the better.

Sword, as the single mother of an 11-year-old daughter, felt that parenthood cemented her interest in stories about ordinary people at the working end of policy-making, those struggling and overcoming problems. She covered the education beat before she had her child, and since had become more interested in education as her daughter moved through the school system.

¹² P. Sword, personal communication, Nov. 23, 2010, Halifax.

Sword was a night news editor who was in charge “after the boys go,” referring to the male managers who worked during the day. She “carries out the wishes” of the earlier news meetings and supervised the night desk, the editors who produced the pages, wrote headlines and so on. After talking about why she found certain sports and business stories less interesting (it was not the subject, but rather the repetition of the Team A versus Team B paradigm), Sword said:

I try and be cognizant of people, when we’re talking about stories ... maybe this is a girl thing, but you get in meetings and people are like, ‘Oh, this is a great story,’ and I don’t know. Maybe it’s an older thing too, but there are certain things I’m very interested in, and I might know that 80 per cent aren’t interested. I’m a vegetarian, so if there’s a story about vegetarianism, I’d be super interested, but probably most people wouldn’t.

Here Sword positioned herself, as Paul and others did, at odds with the majority of the senior people in news meetings, who were middle-class, white men. Rather than seeing herself, for instance, as being able to assign stories to reporters that appealed to vegetarians because she was one, or seeing vegetarianism as a phenomenon that was worth a story, she saw herself as excluded from or as a small undercurrent in the mainstream in the new meetings. She equivocated over whether this thinking was a gender or age issue, as Pat Lee had in Halifax, adding that she “wouldn’t push a story because it was something I embraced.” But as a parent and environmentalist, she tried to ensure “important” stories were at least “briefed,” meaning an editor made a paragraph out of a potential news story as part of a digest of items. She gave the example of briefing a wire story about cadmium in children’s jewelry, and running stories about BPA’s in baby bottles, as part of her interest in environmentalism and child safety.

Sword said on the night desk, she couldn’t assign stories on anything but breaking local news, like a break-in. But still she tentatively expressed (apparently for the first time) how in those meetings, she was standing in (or not) for all womanhood:

I guess 'cause I'm usually the only woman there too. So, I've never really vocalized this before – not having thought about this before, right out loud, but I probably feel like I'm somewhat there representing and not representing women in terms of an activism sense but the interests of readers. 'Cause they (the male managers) all have wives, most of them have children ... but I don't know how a man thinks. Maybe I do. [laughs]

Being the only woman – and she was in a union job, not management – at most news meetings had become so routine for Sword that she thought of it rarely and in non-gender terms, along the lines of “I am the only one in here wearing a T-shirt and everyone else is wearing a blazer,” as she termed it. If that was a metaphor about internalizing structural differences, Sword had put on the uniform of the casual weekend worker, not the power suit.

Like Lee and Barnard, Sword felt the layoffs that took out the youngest reporters caused the *Herald* to lose valuable energy and new ways of thinking. Class-related matters seemed off-topic: she felt strongly that representatives of an age group were valuable for insights they brought to what is news and how it is reported:

Just as we were talking about, things that women might be concerned about, or whether you're middle-class, or whatever. We sit around trying to figure out what this allegedly desirable demographic of young people who are turning away from traditional media, what are they interested in? I can bring what 10 and 11-year-olds are interested in to the table. But, I don't know, what are teenagers interested in? What are people in their 20s interested in? And how do we know that? I guess if you have kids, but it's not the same as having the people in here in their 20s who can say, 'That story's boring' or 'Why are we doing it like this?'

Sword felt senior staffers felt the “hot breath on the back of the neck” from young people's ambition, which kept the older group sharper. When asked why so many women leave print journalism, Sword said she didn't know but maybe pressure increased the higher up the career ladder women went. Her ideas about child care, whose smooth functioning hung on luck and access to resources, evolved. Traditional management thinking prompted sarcasm:

I work terrible hours. It's harder on your family life. If work's stressful, I try not to bring it home. Sometimes I do, and I'm cranky. And child care is probably an issue too, if you have a family, the old work-life balance. I got to my position before I had Emma. Now if I had had Emma first ... I've been really lucky, I've had the same child-care provider the whole time. But if I didn't have a super-flexible – because I work nights, right? So if I didn't have that, I couldn't do my job. And being a single parent too, and having to pay for a full-time child-care provider?

I still do it because I love it, not because it makes my life easier. I don't see any place I've ever worked where, anyone has said, 'Gosh we need more women in the higher ranks' and 'so how can we facilitate that?' Or 'let's talk to women who we think would be good managers or supervisors, and what stops them from applying for these jobs?'

Another reason had to do with women not wanting to go outside of the bargaining unit. Because it was easier to lay off managers rather than people with seniority within the union, women at the paper with “years and the experience and are talented, they're far enough off the seniority chain so that the paper would have to close before they'd be laid off,” she explained.¹³

I noticed Sword articulated the ambivalence I felt in meetings where I was the only white woman among white men. Using rhetorical questions, she outlined the central false binary and gendered thinking about “hard” versus “soft” news, what supposedly interested women and what didn't. In meetings, she negotiated this tension by telling herself (using finger quotes in the air) to “shut up,” suppressing her own defined – and gendered – views of what constituted news, and giving way to a fear she could not name. In the place where the culture was easy to reinforce – the news meeting – she felt silenced, but passionate about what was invisible to the men:

We have this four o'clock story meeting. I know the managers are fairly interested in politics, and maybe sports, and a bit of crime. I

¹³ *The Chronicle Herald* had been unionized only relatively recently. Several guilds represent fulltime journalists, as well as other print and broadcast workers, in most dailies across the country, including the ones in this study. The *Toronto Star* and the *Globe*, have the largest units of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union in Canada. The Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild represents Sun Media workers, which is owned by Quebecor Inc. Union membership has dropped nationwide with newsroom hiring freezes and layoffs.

appreciate those stories too, but if there's something else, I don't want to say just human interest, but something that women would be interested in. And not just women, I mean, we all, it's almost like, 'shut up, Pam.' Why are we so afraid? We all eat food. But is food a women's issue? Well, it's not. What's happening to your kids' school, is that a women's issue? No it's not. Is pay equity a women's issue? Well sadly, maybe yes, but it's not. Is the fact that a woman could get stoned to death for adultery a women's issue? No, it's not. Are animal stories women's stories? I hate animal stories. But I call it emotional resonance. That makes a connection. You can read a story out of Ottawa that's important, and maybe it makes you mad, but it'll make my brain mad but it won't connect with my heart unless it's about something like the (teen girl suicide in jail) story. That connects with my heart and that's a systemic problem too, with Corrections Canada. But a story that connects with your heart is glued to you. And you might even read it twice.

Once again, we see flashes of passion for the craft sparking, followed by hesitation on contact with the male-dominated, traditional news model; cultural myths about motherhood repeated; and continuation in the business (working terrible hours) seen as a matter of luck, in her case because of the good fortune of having reliable child care for a daughter born at just the right time. Sword carried these themes up from the reporter's cubicle to the assigning desk: *The Spectator's* Michele Steeves took them further, to the department head level, where her luck was to have an editing job that aligned with her domestic interests.

'Journalism is easy if you have a wife at home'

Michele Steeves, the oldest study participant at 61, warmed gradually to being interviewed: she started with one-word answers, then slowly increased the length of her responses. Her enthusiasm grew when she described how lucky she felt because her own personal interests intersected with those of the pages she filled. As Style editor at the *Hamilton Spectator*, Steeves was responsible for fashion, gardening, decor and lifestyles coverage, as well as for a Saturday section, similar to the *Globe's* Focus section in its emphasis on issues and feature news. When I commented that she had a lot of responsibility, she said "yeah." When I asked how many

reporters worked for her, she replied “none.”¹⁴ Like Kathleen Coleman, who ruled Kit’s Kingdom in the late 1800s (Freeman, 1989), Steeves commanded a broad field every day with little in the way of resources. (She had also been Life editor from 1979 to 1999.)

Without staff, Steeves hired freelancers and used whatever staff-written material the city desk editors gave her. This scenario was typical for lifestyle editors, the whirling dervishes of the newsroom, who cobble together freelance stories, event calendars, syndicated material (such as health columns), so-called “soft” features and items about the arts, health, social issues, parenting, hobbies and so on from wire services. These sections pay close attention to design matters, as much of the content deals with aesthetics, and this is especially true for section fronts. Lifestyle and weekend pages must be completed earlier in the workday (and earlier in the week for weekend sections) to leave more press time available to breaking-news pages, so the lifestyle editor and her or his (usually her) assistant, if there is one, are continually run off their feet.

Steeves was the youngest of three children whose father was an airline records employee and mother worked as a sales clerk. A Maritimer, she earned an English degree from Memorial University in Newfoundland, and says she “fell” into journalism, taking a job as a copy editor upon graduation. After moving to southern Ontario and working at several editing jobs, she landed at the *Spec* 33 years ago and has remained, always in the lifestyle area. She was married, with one grown daughter, age 26. Her personal characteristics, she told me, certainly informed her work, as a woman, wife, mother, gardener, and someone interested in decorating, cooking, reading and “caring for a home and that sort of thing.” These characteristics seemed to define what choices she made at work, and she expanded that approach to all editors:

VS: Do your personal characteristics bring something to the way you do your work?

¹⁴ M. Steeves, personal communication, Nov. 18, 2010, Hamilton.

MS: Certainly they do. As a content editor you are always looking for stories that other people want to read and you have yourself as sort of an example of, well, I'm a woman reader, 'this story is fascinating.' You know?

VS: You're putting yourself in the place of the reader.

MS: Yeah. I think every editor does that. It's pretty hard to take yourself out of who you are in this job. For instance, I couldn't be a sports editor because I don't know anything about sports and have no interest in sports. I'm fortunate that the content that I edit includes a lot of things that I personally enjoy and do and are part of my life.

After more than three decades in more or less the same position, it is not difficult to see how and why Steeves would interweave her job with her personal life, where she found pleasure in the same activities that her sections described: and that was "fortunate." In terms of her impact, she made a point when deciding how to cover consumer stories to spotlight local, independent retailers, and to give readers a feeling she covered "personal consumer shopping" to make their lives easier and their money go farther. Reader response was huge, she said.

Steeves' big challenge was to be able to source and edit enough content to fill her sections well and in a timely way, because the inexpensive material that came from wire services had declined as U.S. newspapers shut down or cut back. She noted that when cuts came, "it's usually the life section and style departments that go first." Concurrently, her freelance budget had been reduced with "all resources really in news these days." Like *The Chronicle Herald*, where the arts and life sections were folded together, the *Spec* sought to squeeze the pages that happened to be most read by women and most likely to be edited by women journalists.

As Steeves talked about how the *Globe* had begun to emphasize lifestyle stories, even on the front page on Saturdays, she began to use more emphatic language ("for me, it's thrilling to see") as she contrasted the *Globe* with the *Spec*, from the perspective of someone who had seen – and

overseen – much change. “We’re almost 99 per cent wire-dependent,” she said of her page content. “It’s tragic in a way, to see that erosion.” (The *Globe* has since combined its life and arts section into one, effectively reducing those pages, just as the Halifax paper had done.)

Still, like the other senior participants, she saw herself as lucky: she had been a working mother who rarely left work on time, with a husband at home. It was a dream situation:

VS: To what do you attribute women’s low numbers at senior positions in Canadian newspapers?

MS: I would have to point to working conditions.

VS: What would you mean by working conditions?

MS: Well, my main experience is *The Spectator* and I would say it’s the lack of flex time, flex schedules and certainly no on-site day care. There has been reluctance, from the company to even entertain different ideas that women have brought with regard to flex time, working at home or different schedules. So you’re either in a traditional working environment or you leave. Take a break and hope you can get back in after a few years. I think too, it’s just the same way it is in our culture in general, the old boys’ network has been around for a long time and is taking a long time to go away.

VS: Yeah.

MS: Journalism, like many other professions, is easy if you have a wife at home.

VS: And for those who have a husband at home it is not the same thing.

MS: No, it’s not the same thing. Although I was lucky when I had the years as life editor when it was just me, and five or six reporters and doing the assigning, editing, layout everything myself. During those years when I was never home on time I did have my husband who’s also a journalist and had much more flexible hours than me and could work from home because he was a columnist. That was when my daughter was a baby and that was just a dream.

The *Spec*, said Steeves, did not have a level playing field for women. She hesitated to answer the question at first, since she said she was “so marginalized now from the newsroom.” Things looked better “on the surface” because two senior editors were women, but she also noted the newsroom “whispers” about gender issues, a fear among women of speaking out (biting their tongues as the Halifax *Herald*’s Pam Sword described), and the reality of the “high-pressure, 12-hour-day senior jobs” being unappealing to women who preferred family and job balance. Her experience a decade earlier, of having expressed interest in a senior editor’s job only to be ignored, made her feel disappointed with management generally.

We discussed how difficult it still was to get to a day-care centre on time (a problem I had 20 years earlier at the *Globe*), and Steeves remarked, “you know, I can’t think of a time when I’ve heard of a man in the same position.” I also noticed that Steeves was articulating the notion that journalism operates in lockstep with society (for example, in her comment about the old boys’ network) rather than considering how journalism might actually reinforce societal norms. In Calgary, Monica Zurowski was taking “toddler steps” to address gendered aspects of that idea.

‘If I had kids, I don’t think I’d be where I am’

Lots of luck and a lack of kids figured in Monica Zurowski’s story, as did widely shared themes of multi-tasking, choice and beliefs about women’s communication skills. But Zurowski, whose position as Managing Editor at the *Calgary Herald* was higher than that of Barnard, Lee, Paul, Sword and Steeves, felt she was positioned to do things differently to create a better workplace for both men and women, and somehow to begin righting the wrong of gendered career barriers.¹⁵

¹⁵ M. Zurowski, personal communication, Jan. 18, 2011, Calgary.

If Zurowski had had kids, they might have attended the day-care centre downstairs from her sun-filled office beside the newsroom hub. Earlier that day, as I waited for my appointments at the *Herald* in the large cafeteria, a day-care worker went by pulling a trolley full of toddlers around the building. I recalled how a few years ago, when I did coaching sessions at the *Herald* in a seminar room, we emerged once for a break to see pre-schoolers in tutus trundle by. The sight was uplifting and told me that a business can make money in many ways, even sensibly.

Like most in the cohort, Regina-born Zurowski, 49, had middle-class roots and a university degree. After a disastrous insurance job, she tried an education degree, since many of her relatives were teachers, but got “lucky” and found a journalism program in the same university. “I loved it from the start,” said Zurowski, citing journalism’s lack of routine, the privilege and fun of talking to interesting people, of developing a global view. She had an internship at *The Edmonton Journal* (“very lucky”) and ended up at the *Calgary Herald*. She described herself in her 20s as naive but competitive, turning down the out-of-town bureau the *Herald* offered at first and starting as provincial court reporter. By 29, she was Assistant City Editor, with people much older than she reporting to her, including “curmudgeonly, grumpy, 55-year-old men.” She told me about one man who refused to walk over to her at the assigning desk, even though she was his immediate boss. So she would go to his desk and “sort of pay homage to the great journalist that he was.” After management training (which is largely a thing of the past, as consultants are the first casualties in hard times) and gaining experience, Zurowski persuaded the older reporter to meet her half way: sometimes he went to her desk, and sometimes she went to his. Her story was a stark example of the lengths to which many women managers will often go to accommodate the dominant cultural norms in a newsroom, as expressed in everyday contact.

Zurowski was appointed Features Editor, encompassing 11 sections, and stayed there for years. Moving to features had been her choice; looking around for experience in other departments, she applied for the editor's post after spending more than a decade in the City department. Plus, the features department oversaw the weekly news review section called "Observer." It was her first department head position. When reorganization occurred, the next job up, that of Deputy Editor, came open and Zurowski said she thought that while there might be other good candidates, she was best-suited for it. She also thought about all the times she and women colleagues talked about not being risk-takers, while men were more likely to see a chance for promotion and apply. Zurowski did not continue suppressing her own competitive streak. She got the job. Eight years and another restructuring later, Zurowski was the managing editor, reporting to the (white, male) editor-in-chief. She was "lucky" this man recognized the extra things she did and supported her. She was responsible for the day-to-day running of the newsroom, and "arm-wrestled" each night with other newsroom leaders to decide what went on A1. She was the only woman to hold one of the half-dozen powerful positions in the newsroom.

Invited to consider how or if any of her personal characteristics intersected or acted in concert to affect how she did her job, Zurowski responded that she had been thinking about this, since she had had time to read the questions ahead of our talk. Her answer was multi-faceted, and with a focus on commonly held views about gender differences. She saw being a woman as having a positive effect: women had a "fabulous ability" to multi-task, while men were more likely to focus on one thing, and that mix brought strength to the team; interview subjects tended to find women more open, approachable and better listeners, so they opened up more; women had a greater connection to community, so they would likely adapt better to the new demands for community-based online reporting and blogging; and women were better networkers.

Regarding what might hold women back, Zurowski talked first about society's "expectation of women doing the bulk of the child-raising" and that taking long leaves was "a choice" women were making. But as she talked more, she began to question this patriarchal ideal:

There's still that society expectation of women doing the bulk of the child-raising. We've had lots of couples in the newsroom. And 99.9 per cent of the time it's the female journalist who stays home for a year. I've had a few cases where they've split it, actually not even evenly, like maybe 10 months for the woman and two months for the guy or something. So it's a choice that women are making. And it can be a great choice. And it's great, women raising their kids is a fabulous thing and I obviously have no problem with that, and I support that. I don't have kids. So I don't know if it's a societal expectation? Is it their own wishes that lead them to that point?

Whatever caused the inequity, Zurowski saw herself as part of the solution, a manager who helped women if they wanted to work part-time, for example. But how could they then keep a senior writing job three days a week? She had been part of "endless" discussions about this, so it was clearly on the *Herald* agenda. Zurowski speculated about why so few women were at the top, touching on parenthood, age and work-life balance. Later, she cited a lack of confidence women held regarding their own experience, echoing uncertainty expressed by others, like Elissa Barnard in Halifax:

I could go out in the newsroom and pick the next 10 or 12 people who might want this job and I don't know if any are women. Some of it is because they have kids. Some of it is the hours. Maybe women are smarter (laughs). I mean they have a better sense of the work-life balance. They see how as you climb the ladder how it becomes increasingly difficult to keep any kind of balance outside of work. So maybe that's what discourages them. It might be because they know they can't have that same drive at work and at home and where is their priority. But in the last five years, I can think of one young female journalist who has come to me and said 'I want your job some day.' I can think of nine or 10 young male journalists who have expressed 'I want to be a managing editor and editor-in-chief some day.' So, I don't know. Maybe women don't

apply for as many jobs. They don't promote themselves. They don't apply for promotions.

Zurowski saw herself as having the power to negotiate personal time and to do so for her staff, and she accomplished that in part by breaking down some “myths” about management life. She described telling a young mother with leadership potential that senior positions had some flexibility, despite journalism not being a nine-to-five job and that it was not “the most conducive thing for women, especially women who have a lot of family pressures.” In a follow-up email, Zurowski explained she was urging the woman to consider applying for a senior job, and wanted her to know that while management could be difficult, it was not impossible.¹⁶

“Toddler steps” were being made at the *Herald* in work-life balance, said Zurowski. She made sure that the sports editor had a regular date night with his wife and another editor left in time to coach his son's basketball team once a week and she did not make these arrangements as “favours” the way male managers tended to do. This was all part of her responsibility – and power – to set the tone, to keep things as positive as possible, keeping up creativity and productivity – and, using gendered decision-making, not to put a Calgary Flames' photo on front as often as the male editors would like. Her competitive juices still flowed: she loved knowing that the *Herald* had an exclusive or great photos that the Calgary *Sun* or CTV didn't have. That was a great day at work.

Had not having kids (Zurowski had a male partner) changed how she experiences her career?

Yeah. And I do think that's one of the difficulties for women who have children is that they can't always do the – if there is a big news story breaking or special initiative or special report or whatever needs to be done. If I need to stay tonight, if all of a sudden XXXX needs me stay and do something until 10 at night, I can do it. If you're a mother and you've got a kid who you have to take to soccer or cook for, you can't do it. So, you know, not

¹⁶ M. Zurowski, personal communication. April 9, 2013.

having children probably makes it easier to get ahead or to do that kind of job. I don't know what the answer is. I don't think it's right. I do think that's the way it is, yeah. I've probably said before 'If I had kids, I don't think I'd be where I am.' Yeah.

An on-site day-care centre notwithstanding, it seemed that the mother-or-journalist conflict was unsolvable. Still, after more than 20 years climbing its ranks, Zurowski, in small but she hoped meaningful ways, tried to change the culture of her newsroom for men and women. If tackling other diversity issues was on the *Herald's* agenda, she did not say so. She did not discuss age as a factor that might sideline her or how age might intersect negatively with gender. She was the managing editor, after all.¹⁷

When a woman print journalist leaves the business, it is often out of frustration with newspaper culture and/or a sense that her personal life suffers, or will. One participant, in an off-the-record comment, said that this was so common that "it was normal for women to disappear" from the newspaper business. And even if they do not disappear, they can still feel invisible.

Lucinda Chodan, one of the two editors-in-chief in this study, recalled long-ago experiences of sexism as Margo Goodhand will do in Chapter Eight, to the point of feeling as though she did not exist in the minds of her male bosses. Did this invisibility fuel her wryly self-described megalomania? Chodan thought she was the right person to fix the industry and to champion social justice, despite not having much confidence herself, and being hamstrung by tight budgets.

'I still think this business needs me to change it'

Lucinda Chodan's entry into the world of print journalism was unusual, as she began as a typesetter (at the Edmonton *Sun* in 1978), after stints as a teacher (Chodan has an Education degree and grew up in smalltown Westlock, Alta.) and test-designer for the Alberta Ministry of

¹⁷ On the way out, I was shown a quiet corner for newsroom staffers to retreat, named in honour of Michelle Lang, a *Herald* reporter who died in 2009 while covering the war in Afghanistan. Lang, 34, was the first Canadian reporter to die in that conflict.

Education. She quit journalism twice, going back to the education field, before returning for good. She drily framed her own kind of luck as a “gift from God.” The second time out of newspapering ended after the Assistant Deputy Minister of Education stopped by one day:

I was resigned to a life developing tests. I was having a meeting with my boss at Alberta Education. I didn't like it there very much, but my boss was a woman, and I liked her a lot. She and I were sitting in her cubicle, talking about some aspect of the Grade three test and where it needed to go, when the ADM walked by and he said ‘I hate to interrupt your hen party’ and I just thought ‘Fuck this, man.’ Later that day, [a *Sun* editor] called and he said ‘I won't bother you again, but [the editor's wife] says to just ask you, ‘are you happy there?’ And I go, ‘Wah! I'm not! Get me out of here!’ Since then it's been a pretty unbroken trail.¹⁸

In an editorial department meeting room at the *Times Colonist*, she told detailed stories about her early days as typesetter, a proof reader and features writer, and how she moved to editing jobs that took her to Montreal's *The Gazette* and then the *TC*. Chodan, who was 53, described “awful, humiliating” hazing rituals at the hands of male editors and pressroom men, sometimes together: she talked about several such complex incidents at length, borne at the time with suppressed fury and still keenly felt.

Chodan framed her career as a series of big breaks she was able to exploit because of what a friend called, she said, her “quietly aggressive manoeuvres” and what she characterized as a dogged work ethic, honed by her small-town upbringing. Unlike her male peers at *The Gazette*, she had no sponsor, so Chodan battled the inevitable presence of whichever “fair-haired boy of the managing editor” was in vogue in the office at the time by metaphorically “doing windows,” the grunt work of editing copy instead of something high-profile like flying “to Cuba to cover the FLQ.” It would never have occurred to her, she said, to put herself forward for such a marquee assignment. Nor did she speak out when senior male editors engaged in everything from leering

¹⁸ L. Chodan, personal communication, June 30, 2008, Victoria.

to audible sexist remarks to “hitting on” the summer interns. As for how it felt to see these events happen but feel powerless to stop them, Chodan explained that these men held the fate of editors like her in their hands and it was “part of the landscape,” as inevitable as the fact of not having kids helped assure Zurowski’s career, as she told it. “I don’t think I really existed for them,” Chodan said of her male managers in the 1980s. “I wasn’t one of the curvaceous, brown-haired, brown-eyed young interns.”

By the end of the 1980s, from her position as assistant entertainment editor, Chodan began what she called a “fairly serious assault on management ranks in a fairly weirdly passive way.” I was not surprised by how she described herself as accommodating her quiet nature to a war-strategy metaphor, since military conflict dominates newspapers as a narrative construct.

But Chodan’s motive was to make “a better place, a better newspaper.” Having come up on the arts side – as was typical for the senior women in the study – she felt her lack of news experience held her back, describing a feeling shared by the *Spec*’s City Editor Carla Ammerata and others that she needed more experience before taking on a new assignment, instead of learning on the job. Rather than taking on a more senior position immediately, one that her (male) boss thought she could quickly grow into, Chodan asked to work on the foreign desk:

I didn’t have a lot of confidence, about my familiarity with news, so I said to XXXX, ‘You know, I don’t feel that comfortable doing this. Can I work on the news desk for a while?’ And he said ‘Oh, you don’t need that,’ but I think I have felt all along, I don’t really want to do a job that’s built around my own bluster. I think men that I have worked with have felt a lot more confidence in that the office itself has authority attached to it, whereas I have never been comfortable with having authority without having expertise attached to it.

(Few seconds pause.) I think that’s probably held me back, held women back, because I want to know when I say something that it’s true, or that if I think something can be done. This probably is a limitation as a manager, I have to know that something could be

done if people stretched, rather than just saying that something needs to be done and making people do it, however they have to do it.

Chodan echoed the self-doubt expressed by Elissa Bernard and others, which she generalized to include all women: her long experience did not give her enough faith in her ability to do the next higher-level post, even though her male manager felt she was ready. She took a dim view of the traditional model that allowed the holder of a job title to take authority from it (what she later called the “magic wand” approach), preferring to inspire rather than ordering a task to be done.

As Chodan continued to describe how her career evolved to her position as editor-in-chief of the *Times Colonist*, a pattern emerged: self-doubt or insecurity appeared before each next step up the ladder, while simultaneously she described (sometimes with a wry laugh) her own sense of “grandiosity.” A sense of mission, of passion for social change, for giving readers what they wanted and needed: these ideas dominated her reasons to stay in an industry she feared was in peril. She was the only one, Chodan said with a smile, who could “save” *The Gazette*, and would serve in that job, if asked. And like her counterpart Margo Goodhand in Winnipeg, she saw her abilities to make change thwarted by forces beyond her control. Why then, did she stay?

LC: I still think this business needs me to change it. I have always loved newspapers. I think we play such a huge role in a democratic society. And we’re only going to continue if people like me stay in and help them change. Number two, I still have a lot left to do in journalism that needs to be done. Number three, it’s a great job. On the days that I’m not profoundly depressed about my inability to change even the smallest thing, I am buoyed by a sense that I have made changes and I continue to make changes, and eventually the rest of the world will catch up and see what the rest of those changes are. I think absolutely you have to have a degree of megalomania to do this job, and for some reason, in spite of not having a lot of personal confidence about many things, I do have an absolute conviction that I have a sense of how to save newspapers.

VS: You have this sense from where?

LC: I don't know. A gift from God. Same as my proof-reading. Excellent. No idea why.

VS: Is any of it to do with the fact that – as you said, and I say to people too – it's not rocket science? Is it simply by being that part of a society that newspapers historically have simply appealed to?

LC: Maybe. (pause) ... Well, first it comes from the success that I've had doing it. Measurable success, repeated in different places in different times, that makes me comfortable that I should have faith in my own decisions because they work. Also, I don't think of newspapers ... the kind of approach that I see ... what has ... (stumble) Oh, gosh. (Pause.) I think that one of the things that has been in many people's eyes a weakness of my own career and my approach is that I'm not a particularly hard-news person. I don't come from that traditional hard-news background. I'm not a ballsy Christie Blatchford or Rosie Di Manno. Or any of the great newspaper leaders that existed before, or the models of them anyway.

Just when she reached the part of her story where she could have cast herself as the heroine – the one who killed a “women's” section that she created herself just because it had run its course; the one who took a deep breath and fired people (I nod here) because she had to; the one who had fended off a publisher who only thought about the sports department – she stumbled, then described herself as a victim of the old, male image of a successful woman in journalism, somebody she was not, which was “ballsy” with a “hard-news background.” Yet elsewhere she described male managers as “gutless cowards,” and said women had more “stomach” for dealing with the hard, complex people issues that men tended to avoid. She saw women as far more adept at change, because the vested interest men had in keeping power made them reluctant to give it up, echoing another participant's off-the-record comment. “I think that great leaders welcome change,” said Chodan. Male managers, in refusing to be open to change, Chodan said, were weakening an industry already in a panic, where the standard answer to fighting the unknown was to stop hiring. She predicted that the Canwest head office, which had not noticed

that *TC* readership had increased on her watch, would do so eventually and offer her a promotion. She was right: it took them three years.

Chodan did not mention that she had no children until near the end of our discussion. This was partly because I knew, partly because the rest of her story had been so captivating, partly because it appeared she hadn't worked out the reasons why "for the record" herself. She had the usual reasons: the work was hard, the hours long and crazy, the business unforgiving, the news culture sexist, she "forgot" to have children (which she said with a laugh). As well, she named her musician husband's peripatetic life as an important factor. Echoing Monica Zurowski at the *Calgary Herald*, Chodan said that she told women entering the business that "for me it would not have been possible to have children and have this job. So maybe things will be changed when you're in this kind of role, but that certainly was the case for me." Change for women was left to a "maybe," while she could position herself as Superwoman, saving print journalism single-handedly.

Conclusions

The higher the rank of women journalists I interviewed, the less they attributed random external serendipity to their own success, but the vast majority did attribute their decades of successful journalism to being plain lucky. Lucinda Chodan did so with humour, talking about her "gift from God" success. While those good-luck stories perhaps allowed them to feel they had improved their community or society as a result – an important factor for these women's job satisfaction – they also saw their own careers as circumscribed over the years by what they took to be immutable truths. Women, they mostly agreed, were multi-taskers, so they were asked to do more and they obliged; women had babies, so they naturally made more sacrifices for family than men (and when they did not have babies, many reasons were given, but never that they just

didn't want them); journalism was a 24/7 job, even more as media technology was imposed on them, and there was no getting around the hours for work-life balance, so women naturally could not keep up the grueling pace. Here we see the most senior participants tending to reify the notion (Coffey & Atkinson, 1999; Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004) that narratives discursively reflect dominant cultural norms, in this case industry norms of how journalism production “works” and how larger society “naturally” operates. As social actors, the participants describe their working and private-life arrangements as largely outside of their control (Coffey & Atkinson, 1999) and position themselves as aware but passive accomplices, their agency undercut by powerful forces (Bryman et al, 2009). Their stories appear to indicate that the oldest participants, in order to remain on the job, have internalized – or grudgingly take for granted – the gendered oppositions they experience daily (McCall, 1992). They felt powerful and simultaneously powerless, often feeling stuck in whatever career position they found themselves.

In terms of intersectionality, they were aware of their own racial and class privilege (not described in terms of luck, however), which seemed to motivate them to focus on social justice issues. A contradiction arose here: they felt they could change things in society, but seemed to see structural inequalities in their own workplaces as inevitable. Three of the participants named age stereotypes (the “dinosaur” worry) as part of what might increase their sense of powerlessness, along with gender. They could clench their teeth and bear it, suppressing their own views about the situation, or leave. As time went on after these interviews, more and more of them did leave – the majority of those who have left are from this oldest cohort – which will be discussed in Chapter 8.

Ideas about power were contradictory too, often expressed as an absolute where men were concerned (they have it, want to keep it and if they lose it, it's gone) but as women, they saw

their power as an energy supply to be tapped to fuel social-justice projects, if only they could get – and keep – their hands on it. Social characteristics, here primarily age and gender, may cause them to foreground the social-justice aspects of their journalism (Beam, 2008).

Much of what the participants in this cohort said was offered with a mix of pride and resignation, after a lifetime of working inside a male-dominated workplace, striving to chronicle the experiences of those outside mainstream power sources (lifestyle and arts news), while the newspapers placed more value on the exploits of the powerful (political and economic news).

While individual stories of senior women print journalists related wide-ranging experiences, observations and opinions, and understanding we cannot essentialize by generation (Snyder, 2008), the participants' stories had common touchstones regarding the forces that order the women's relations between themselves and their workplaces, where each had worked for many years. The women were all white, spoke English as a first language, were well-educated, were able-bodied and mostly raised in middle-class households. Most were married and several had a child or two, mostly teens or older.¹⁹ Several described their stay-at-home husbands as making their careers possible. Where participants had stories about immigrant experiences or difficult or unusual circumstances early in life, those were described as formative, disrupting privilege in a good way. They seldom had women mentors and only a few remembered male mentors fondly. These most experienced participants saw themselves possibly at the height of their abilities, maybe already as stale as yesterday's news, worried about the industry itself, as well as the women coming after them. Embedded in the newsroom culture and responding to the increasing list of daily tasks, they often felt stuck, exasperated but unable or unwilling to do little more than

¹⁹ The only woman who identified herself as a lesbian will be described in Chapter 8, as she was among those who have left journalism.

recognize their gendered accommodations and lament the lack of diversity in the newsroom, instead seeing themselves as standard-bearers for “the voiceless,” whoever they might be.

In terms of weaving together their narratives thematically, with intersectionality as the main theoretical thread, the oldest participants told stories that helped combine their multiple identities as women, newsroom veterans, wives and mothers, into a coherent whole (Sosulski et al, 2010). Looking back on their own histories, there was less ongoing revision and fewer contradictions than emerged from the stories of mid-career and younger women, still in the thick of negotiating their own complex identities. With narrative available both to give their lives clear meaning and purpose, and to expose life’s ongoing discrepancies and inconsistencies, the oldest cohort tended toward the former.

From their perspective as women developing their careers during second-wave feminism, they told stories about their own luck, rather than skill or effort, reflecting what feminist researchers have identified as a lack of a sense of entitlement in that generation (Snyder, 2008). At the same time, they used their version of the war story to describe their own resilience – especially as women and mothers – to show strength and resistance (Sosulski, 2010). Lacking further characteristics of diversity themselves, they still appeared to feel gender gave them the right to speak for others with less power, and through their journalism took up the cause of others whose own characteristics (such as race) effectively banned them from the newsroom.

In the next chapter, I examine that next generation of women print journalists coming up in these five papers, struggling at the epicenter of young motherhood and mid-career challenges. Their negotiations with the dominant newsroom culture are less resigned than the oldest group, and their stories of life and career interactions more frenzied.

Chapter 5

Mid-career participants: hard work, sacrifice and a search for flexibility

Having spent years grinding through the water for over four hours a day as a competitive swimmer, Editorial Page Editor Licia Corbella knew something about the interplay of privilege and sheer determination: she was once the fastest female swimmer in North America in the 11-12 and 13-to-14 age categories. But by the time she finished high school in Point Grey, one of Vancouver's most exclusive neighbourhoods, Corbella had abandoned the pool. Her dream to swim at the 1980 Moscow Olympics ended with the boycott of the Games because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; her swim coach moved away; her top grades dropped; she felt, she said, "shattered."²⁰

But remembering this when we talked in her *Calgary Herald* office, Corbella said the life lesson for her was not to stop trying when adversity hit, but to reset her goals. Yes, the Olympic dream had been ripped from her, but she could have tried out for a competition in Japan. Olympic trials were still on, so she could have at least found out if she would have qualified for the Moscow Olympics. "I should have stuck with it," she said.

Corbella has more than stuck with her chosen career: she was the oldest of the mid-career cohort of participants, who ranged in age from 32 to 47. Most had been in the business between 10 and 20 years: she had been in it for 25. Her story about regretting the abandonment of her sport reflected a theme common to these participants, which was to attribute hard work more than luck to their career rise. Also, rather than singling out gender as central to any "outsider" status they felt, many white women in this group named immigrant status as an important factor

²⁰ L. Corbella, personal communication, Jan. 18, 2011, Calgary.

in their professional lives. The only Black participant in the study was detailed and emphatic in her description of the impact of racism on her life and newsroom career, naming it as both motivational and painful.

Parenthood, whether they were mothers or not, was a key element to their understanding of how careers developed, and those who had children felt keenly how they were in the thick of a work-family tug-of-war, often naming self-sacrifice and a sense of duty to family on the one hand, and society on the other, as a necessary component of survival. Five of nine had at least one child, and those children were in the toddler to pre-teen stage. This helped to explain why workplace flexibility (or lack of it) was a crucial issue for this group, even for the three who did not have children but hoped to or observed their colleagues in the thick of it. Their stories reflected the change that has occurred in many newspapers, due in part to women journalists' increasing presence: they showed how they reinforced the continuity of the hierarchy, too. The managers might not be flexible, but these mid-career women were the Gumbys of the newsroom.

Unlike the most senior group, all but one mid-career participant – the above-mentioned Corbella – did not rise through the arts and entertainment side, reflecting women's increasing arrivals directly into hard news from the start of their careers (Freeman, 2011). They did not mention the path-clearing done by the women who went before them, but it appeared they benefitted from the hard work of those “lucky” journalists. Being sandwiched between baby boomers who wouldn't retire and ambitious 20-somethings also made a few feel stuck in the middle of the newsroom hierarchy, while the oldest cohort more often cited industrial upheaval and cutbacks for their sense of being stuck. These mid-career women were significant for having inherited the media-hyped “have-it-all” meta-narrative (Snyder, 2008), only to find they were *doing* it all. They embodied continuity in the workplace, and in the society on which they

reported or commented, but also manifested its change as they named, and often challenged, the same oppressive social norms they described so richly in their stories.

The mid-career cohort included Corbella, who ran the editorial pages of the *Calgary Herald*; Carla Ammerata, City Editor of *The Spectator* in Hamilton; Paula Arab, then columnist at the *Calgary Herald*; Sherri Borden Colley and Patricia Brooks Arenburg, reporters for Halifax's *The Chronicle Herald*; Denise Helm, then online editor at the *Times Colonist* in Victoria; Nicole MacIntyre, reporter for *The Spectator* in Hamilton; Sarah Petrescu, reporter, columnist and online editor for the *Victoria Times Colonist*; and Stephanie Coombs, then City Editor of the *Times Colonist*. Only one participant in this cohort, Mary Agnes Welch, worked for the *Winnipeg Free Press*. At first I thought it was coincidence, but perhaps this was due to that “lost generation” lamented by Margo Goodhand.²¹

‘I’ve found what I love to do and I want to get better and better doing it ’

Despite the sharp early lesson in broken dreams, Licia Corbella expressed satisfaction with her life. At 47, she had been married for 25 years, her sons were thriving and her position was a pivotal one as editor in charge of representing the editorial board’s opinions at the *Calgary Herald*. She worked her way up from city and beat reporting through lifestyles and travel editorships, sections where, as noted in the last chapter, women who rise up the ranks were routinely installed, and she had been an assistant city editor. Her “ed board” was comprised of five members, three of whom were women, including herself and Paula Arab. The third edited letters to the editor and wrote columns and editorials.

As she told stories about childhood, young adulthood and her career rise, Corbella often referred to determination, tenacity and sheer hard work to account for her position. However, the

²¹ Two members of this cohort, Denise Helm and Paula Arab, left daily print journalism after the interviews. They will be discussed in Chapter 8.

luck theme did appear a couple of times, in her being “very lucky” to have been chosen for an internship at *The Province* in Vancouver as she was starting out, and also lucky in being able to write a column regularly, which was going to be announced the day after we talked. “It’s fantastic!” Corbella loved the process of reportage: her joy was in the digging, making the calls, observing and getting the big, hard-news story.

Like many participants, Corbella was singled out early as a good writer. After a year in Europe after high school, she worked on a newspaper in Mallorca (her mother is Spanish, and Corbella speaks Spanish), and despite being rejected twice by Langara College’s journalism school in Vancouver, she was finally accepted. Also, like other participants across cohorts, her goal was to “have a career that had meaning, where I could make a difference.” Her parents’ divorce made her realize, too, that as a woman, she needed to be financially independent. Her husband had a good job, but “staying employed for all these years” had been a motivator.

Corbella told a story about her first few days working weekends at the *Toronto Sun* in the late 1980s, which illustrated how her well-honed work ethic influenced her career trajectory. She figured at the time that if she could hustle on those weekends, “they’d never let me go:”

LC: There was a plane crash, a hobby pilot was taking his inaugural flight in a plane he built and it crashed and he died. This was in Oshawa. So I drove down to Oshawa and, this was before cell phones, and I left *Sun* business cards. I wrote my phone number and my name on them and I left messages on people’s answering machines who were involved in the flying club in Oshawa and got some calls back and got together a pretty good story of this man, and the irony of this being his inaugural flight and blah blah. But no photo. So it’s 6:30 at night, and I file the story and the phone rings and [the caller said] ‘I do have a photo of him with his plane!’

She drove back to Oshawa, got the photo, brought it back and the next day, Corbella said, she knew she was “in” at the *Toronto Sun* for having literally gone more than the extra mile.

Gender did add to her efficacy as a journalist, she said, listing commonly expressed beliefs about women's qualities. Women were more empathetic than men as reporters: an example she gave was in "bawling my eyes out" talking to the mother of a child who had been raped and murdered. A male colleague told her she wasn't being "objective," to which Corbella replied, "Well, you want me to take the side of the friggin' rapist?" Because Corbella felt for the mother, and let it show, the mother was able to tell that important story, she said. Women were also better at "smoothing out the rough edges" in heated newsroom situations, Corbella said, and could mediate arguments between men staffers, allowing them to "kiss and make up" without losing their dignity. Making a positive difference in the world was more important to women journalists (and women generally), she felt, and being able to share personal stories helps women journalists reach out online as bloggers and excel on that increasingly important media platform.

As to why newsrooms continued to lack diversity beyond gender, Corbella cited the tendency of immigrant parents to want their children to get science degrees rather than arts degrees, but she added that this was changing. To address why women were scarce at the highest levels, Corbella offered that the business concerns of publishers and editors-in-chief didn't make women "happier and more fulfilled" because those roles were more about budgets and "firing" people, echoing Halifax participant Elissa Barnard's distaste for the idea. The issue was much on her mind, as Corbella assessed the current hierarchy, especially as corporations were exerting more control in editors-in-chief and publishers' offices. She increasingly felt that real power lay in reporting and commenting on important stories, rather than in being in increasingly hamstrung top positions. Like Lucinda Chodan in Victoria, Corbella had a bit of the messiah in her:

LC: When I was at the *Calgary Sun*, my publisher wanted to groom me to be editor-in-chief and then to try to work toward being a publisher. I eventually said to him, 'there's parts of those jobs that I would love to do and there's parts that I would absolutely hate

doing,’ and I said ‘I’m really not interested in heading down that road.’ I’ve found what I love to do and I just want to get better and better doing it. What is attributable for the top echelons of many corporations, not just journalism, is that women are more in tune with who they are and what makes them tick. They recognize that moving up in itself will not make them happier and more fulfilled. I’m where I want to be and I really don’t want to be editor-in-chief and I really don’t want to be publisher.

VS: Why not?

LC: I dislike doing budgets for instance, I find that to be drudgery. I don’t like firing people and that seems to be a growing part of the job. The whole business side doesn’t interest me. Don’t get me wrong, I want newspapers to be successful businesses, I want them to make lots of money because I love newspapers. I understand that, but what I want to do is help shape where society goes. And help prevent bad things from happening. Expose wrongs. Speak truth to power. All of that stuff is what makes me tick. So why put a square peg in a round hole?

Corbella talked about how she had already had to deal with cutting her freelance budget by 40 per cent the previous year, and watched as what she called a lack of workplace flexibility (the onsite day-care centre notwithstanding) sidelined many women who were general assignment reporters because “let’s face it, if you’re on the roll doing shift work as a general assignment reporter, you cannot stay in the business and have small kids. You can’t.” In a later email, Corbella explained that by the time she had children, she was already working regular editor’s hours. If she had had her children earlier, she would have likely left the news business.²²

Corbella told an intensely personal story about parenthood that she said she had not told her colleagues at the time. She had kept it to herself that she was trying to become pregnant through in vitro fertilization, even though a few men in the office described how their wives were doing so, because, she said, “I thought that would be career-limiting.” So she suppressed sharing that experience, but now wondered if the delay in pregnancy that seemed problematic for so long was

²² L. Corbella, personal communication, March 14, 2013.

actually “planned divinely,” harkening back to the luck theme. If her kids had come earlier, she thought she might have been in public relations work by now, rather than overseeing the *Calgary Herald*’s editorial stance and, as of the next day, having the platform of a regular column.

Like Corbella, Carla Ammerata found that being the daughter of immigrants drove her work ethic. But it was not the only way to feel like an outsider in Canadian newspapers. Being a rare female manager also gave her the feeling that sometimes she pulled the wool over male eyes.

‘They’re going to find out that I am a total fraud’

Carla Ammerata, City Editor at the Hamilton *Spectator*, worked about 10 to 12 hours a day, but longer on Fridays, because she was responsible for organizing city news for Saturday and Monday editions and for the *Spec*’s website. She carried an office-issue Blackberry 24/7. With newsroom staff having shrunk from about 120 to roughly 80, she said her most difficult task was organizing the people to do the work for even the next day’s paper, let alone two issues.

The trouble was, Friday night was movie and pizza night at her house, where her stay-at-home husband and two sons carried on the tradition whether she made it home in time or not. Usually, she did not. On Fridays she rarely got home before 10 pm. At least she had been spared the guilt of her long work hours because her husband had always been the at-home parent, doing the meal preparation and picking up the kids. That “non-traditional” arrangement allowed her to succeed in her career. “I have been lucky in that way,” she said.²³ That way was slightly different from the luck described by most in the oldest cohort, whose sense of a lack of entitlement permeated their stories. Only one senior participant described the luck of having a husband at home during the day: in her case, it was because his employer let him work at home, so he could help mind their own child. Ammerata’s husband is a fulltime, at-home parent of two.

²³ C. Ammerata, personal communication, Nov. 18, 2010, Hamilton.

At 43, Ammerata saw success as having achieved her goal to become City Editor. That would not have happened at the North Bay *Nugget*, where she had started her career 20 years earlier, she said during our interview in a *Spec* meeting room. Ammerata was born in North Bay to parents who emigrated from Italy: “Dad was the immigrant story,” she said, meaning that he came to Canada first for 10 years, returned to Italy to marry and brought back his home-maker bride. He started with nothing but a Grade Five education – reading newspapers in English was a struggle, but important to him – and built a successful auto dealership. Ammerata learned about hard work and the importance of an education, with her parents making sure all their offspring graduated from university debt-free. After obtaining a degree in Political Science, Ammerata decided to pursue an early love of reporting. But the idea was not well received by her father:

He wasn't happy. He always thought I should either go into teaching or into law, some other type of profession just because he felt I didn't have a chance to succeed just because I had a vowel on the end of my name. Let's put it that way.

Ammerata laughed, because, when her father said he did not see how she could succeed in journalism as an Italian immigrant's daughter, she became determined to do so. After nine years at the *Spec* and reaching her city editor job goal, she had begun to consider what might be possible next. But more than being an immigrant's daughter or a woman, she felt sandwiched between a generation that seemingly had all the opportunities that the journalism profession had to offer – and who were stretching out their careers because of such factors as the economic downturn – and the younger, ambitious generation coming up behind her.

Still, she was aware of how she simultaneously reproduced and challenged the newsroom power structure when gender came into play. Ammerata described, for example, how by working such long hours, she was patterning herself after the male power model in the newsroom. This was due to how tough it was to break through as a female “outsider.” And she had begun to

notice others (including women without kids) rolling their eyes whenever a woman staffer wanted to leave the office to pick up her child from day care. It also surprised her that a corporate committee, brought in to implement an overhaul of how content would be processed, consisted of only men. Sexist language bothered her, too. Yet Ammerata also valued her experience and position as a woman, because it did afford her a different perspective, she said. In a big series the paper did on bullying at school, for example, while male editors questioned the sanity of a bullied boy's mother, Ammerata made sure that relevant school-board documents were produced as evidence that this woman was not "crazy."

While the top tier of management at the *Spec* was still male, plenty of women were thriving in mid-management, Ammerata noted; the paper had just hired four young, female reporters on contract, so she hoped things would improve. What might hold women back, she thought, was feeling like frauds. Ammerata shared this fear in conversations with women colleagues, who experienced what the popular press calls "imposter syndrome" and what the academy has defined as the Imposter Phenomenon, first described by social psychologists in the late 1970s as feelings of inadequacy or deception despite having achieved success through one's own efforts (Caselman, 2006). Often those experiencing the phenomenon (including men and women) attribute their success to perceived outside sources such as luck, as many of the older participants in this study did. Ammerata described the feeling of constant insecurity:

The conversation that we have quite often, and I wonder if this is a female thing. It wasn't until one of my colleagues voiced it, I thought, 'Oh my god, it's not just me.' She had just been made a manager and she said, 'What are they thinking? They're going to find out that I'm a total fraud.' And I thought, 'Oh my god, you're in my head!' 'Cause it just struck me that, we bring that on ourselves, where we think 'I'm not smart enough to be in this position. I don't have enough experience. What are they doing promoting me?' We're our own worst enemies in some ways.

Her story highlighted how, by suppressing their own insecurities as well as achievements, she and the women around her helped keep a “secret” that perpetuated their outsider status while they busily emulated the male leadership model that eventually rejects them. The power of luck is not named as much as hard work, but in this sense, it seems to be at play underground. Ultimately, said Ammerata, the choice for women was to look at the situation of feeling “disconnected” from the newsroom power structure and “either change it or leave.”

Despite replicating the long hours and worrying about being an imposter, Ammerata tried to level the playing field: she’d been a part of a committee that hired four of the best candidates for contract work, all women. She had the authority “to bring human faces to stories” and to give those stories prominence. She felt the *Spec* needed more staff diversity, and served on a civic diversity committee that existed outside of the paper.

Meanwhile, in Halifax, Sherri Borden Colley was experiencing the realities that a lack of newsroom diversity brought to her newsroom, to the community it purported to serve, and to her own experiences as a Black print journalist who was not, as most other participants were, raised in a middle-class household.

‘If you’ve never experienced racism, you’ll never know the pain of it’

On the day in the mid-1990s when Sherri Borden Colley picked up her journalism degree at the University of King’s College in Halifax after years of hard work, she was so happy she felt like kissing it. But when it came to making a small bow before the university president as she accepted her degree, she refused. Earlier in her journalism studies, when she was interviewing this high-status white man for a story, he told her about an art exhibit mocking Black stereotypes that had made him “embarrassed for every nigger joke” he had ever told.²⁴ He said this after she

²⁴ S. Borden Colley, personal communication, Nov. 15, 2010, Halifax.

had turned off her tape recorder. Even in the context of his own learning, his use of the “N-word” offended Borden Colley deeply. She would not bow to him:

VS: Did he remember you from that incident do you think?

SBC: I’m sure he did. And it was a silent statement but it was very powerful for me to say, ‘you know, I’m not going to allow you to have that power over me.’ And that I consciously made that decision. I’m not going to bow to him. No. And you know, it’s all based on my experience. It really is just as a Black Nova Scotian. I won’t bow. I quietly fight racism. I’ve done it all my life. But, sometimes that’s as effective as anything. I’m not a shouter, like out there, ‘Black power’ kinda thing, but I fight it through education, I fight it in a more quiet way.

Borden Colley had been at the Halifax *Chronicle Herald* for 15 years when we met in the same small corner meeting-room where I interviewed Elissa Barnard and several others. She started at the paper when “things were really good, when summer students got to stay on.” She was one of those summer students, working weekends until she finished her degree, and then hired fulltime. She was a general assignment reporter at 40, in her “dream career,” like others.

Borden Colley drew attention to the interplay of more identity markers than the other participants: she was the sole Black person interviewed and did not have a middle-class upbringing as most others did. As intersectionality theorists suggest (Cole, 2009; Davis, 2008; Gubrium & Holstein, 2009, Knudsen, 2006), these aspects both motivated her and caused her sense of oppression. They also reflect the notion that Black women’s multiple struggles in relation to gender, social class and race give them a unique standpoint (Sosulski et al, 2010).

The youngest of five siblings, Borden Colley was born in New Glasgow, N.S., to a homemaker mother and a father who was a self-employed garbage man. She barely passed classes in an education system that “was not friendly toward the Black community.” But in Grade 11, her

English teacher did something that changed her life: it was a turning point of the kind that narrative analysis suggests helps social actors situate themselves, or find ways to operate within the structures that try to define them (Coffey & Atkinson, 1999). Journalists, as well as fiction writers, also seek out these turning points in their narrative work:

We were asked to write about a favourite Christmas gift and I had written about this little Black doll that my aunt had given me and I talked about how it was so important because the doll reflected me. She was dark complexioned like me. I compared it to the dolls you see with the blue eyes and fair skin, and what defines beauty kind of thing. I remember he read it out in class and that was a turning point for me because the Nova Scotia education system was, when I was going to school, hostile towards Black students. To have a Caucasian teacher think that much of a project that I did, it was life-changing and he didn't say 'you should go into journalism,' but I felt so proud.

Spurred on, after high school and a few jobs, Borden Colley took a transition program at Dalhousie University for Black and Indigenous Nova Scotians, and then attended journalism school at King's. As one of two "visually Black" students in the program, both women, she found the environment tough. One student told her she only got into King's to fulfil a quota for Black students. Her story about that episode showed her vulnerability to racist expressions, as well as her resilience (Sosulski et al, 2010) in the face of it. She kept getting on the bus:

It was rough. Honest to goodness, when I used to take the bus to university and I would physically get sick when I walked on that campus, because, if you've never experienced racism you will never know the pain of it. If you've never experienced what it's like not to have privilege. Kings is a very elite school, you know what I mean?

Her comment regarding my not knowing what this pain might feel like cast me as an outsider, which I certainly was: those who have not shared such an experience may not fully understand such a reality (Sosulski et al). However, narrative analysis and feminist inquiry allow us as

researchers to highlight such “secrets of repression and resistance” (Sosulski et al, p. 3) with the participants’ permission. With that, we carried on.

Borden Colley made it through on sheer hard work and student loans, as her parents had little money, and was grateful to be taken on fulltime at the *Herald*. At the time of the interview, she was the only Black reporter there, the other having been let go in a recent round of layoffs, since he had been one of the most recently hired. After spending six years covering the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, she said her general assignment job suited her, except for being assigned an increasing amount of what she called “fluff” stories.

Borden Colley had a five-year-old son with medical problems, and her husband, who was in the navy, was often away at sea. So the nine-to-five day worked well: she often ran out at lunch to grocery shop. She still enjoyed the voice her work provided – she said “when I leave this Earth I want my work to have spoken for me” – and was glad of her benefits, pay, an understanding supervisor and great colleagues. She felt she had a good workplace flexibility, offering the example of asking to work a night shift for eight months for personal reasons in 2006 after maternity leave, with management agreeing. This seemed to me not so much a sign of flexibility, but that she asked for something the paper always needed but few reporters ever want.

Her racial background had shaped her experiences in multiple ways, Borden Colley said, as intersectional theory posits can be the case (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). She took it upon herself to educate other reporters and editors about racism, whether it was language used in copy, or what stories they covered and how. She encouraged her contacts in Black communities to contact the paper when they saw racist terms or coverage. The paper tended to cover drug busts and violence in Black communities such as North Preston, rather than writing about the community itself. So Borden Colley tried to counteract that by writing stories, for example,

about Black veterans and businesses. She suggested that rather than focusing on attracting youth readers, why not appeal more to the growing Black middle class? But tokenism crept in too, with editors once expecting her to go to North Preston to accompany white staffers who feared going alone. She laughed: she was so tiny, it was hard to imagine her as a bodyguard. (As if white reporters needed one.) Here, her physical size interacted with her race and gender, complicating and enriching her experiences.

With four white males ahead of them in management, Borden Colley said she and her women colleagues felt “kind of stuck” in their careers, but she also felt that she was most effective getting out into the community as much as she could under new budget constraints, talking to people and “making a difference.” A striking example she gave were her 2010 stories about Viola Desmond, an African-Nova Scotian who refused to leave a New Glasgow theatre’s white section in 1946, and was arrested and fined. Borden Colley’s stories ultimately resulted in the province issuing a posthumous pardon and apology to Desmond, who died in 1965.

It did bother her that none of the *Herald*’s columnists was a person of colour, but when I asked her why she wouldn’t apply to be a columnist, she answered with a little hesitation:

SBC: I can — I don’t know. I don’t know how to write a column. I really don’t. I don’t know what I would write about.

VS: Ah, come on!

SBC: Honest to goodness. But you know what I mean, for my community, I’m not the ‘Black reporter,’ but I’m most effective doing news. I really am. I think. I think — right now at this time, those are the stories that need to be told.

Despite her sense that her gender and racial identities guided her social-activist approach to journalism, and despite a unique position as the paper as its sole Black editorial employee, Borden-Colley could not see herself having more power as a commentator there than as a

reporter. In any case, she had a new posting coming up at King's College to teach a short course. That university president in front of whom she would not bow was gone.

Her colleague, Patricia Brooks Arenburg, had similar views on scheduling flexibility and recognized it was as much about her employer's needs as her own. It was about surviving.

'Will my son be proud of me or will he think I just wasn't there?'

Patricia Brooks Arenburg, who was 36 when we spoke, graduated from King's the same year as her friend and colleague Borden Colley. She too, talked about the benefits of what she described as workplace flexibility. As a parent with one child and a husband who worked part-time, she was the main breadwinner in her family: as such, she was grateful that *The Chronicle Herald* needed a general assignment reporter to work a weekly rotation of early day shifts (filing to the paper's website) alternating with a week of nights. Even though it was tough to cope with the constantly flipping schedule, she said she was glad she could see her then five-year-old after work on the seven-to-three day shift, and to be home before midnight on the four-to-11 night shift. The opportunity for these shifts arose after she returned from maternity leave, and found the regular 12-hour shifts on the Supreme Court beat were too much: she had been at the *Herald* for 13 years, and had covered police and the courts. In fact, on her first day back at work after six months of maternity leave, Brooks Arenburg's son said his first words, which made her feel bad. Early in 2010, she asked to go onto general assignment, and was pleased with the results:

I needed some more time with him. And that's the one really good thing about here is that they're flexible with — as much as they can be. As long as you can fill a need for them, and they needed somebody to work a week of nights, on rotation because they already had someone doing it, and they needed an early morning shift and here I am.²⁵

²⁵ P. Brooks Arenburg, personal communication, Nov. 15, 2010, Halifax.

She later added that this “flexibility” was brought on by the company having laid off a quarter of the newsroom. With so many gone, most of whom were young people, many holes needed to be filled. Brooks Arenburg noted that men were assigned to the main beats (health, crime, the legislature), and that mostly women were general assignment reporters. She also thought that it was interesting that most of the women in the newsroom who had kids had only one or two, while the male editorial staffers had more children each – one had six.

Born in Cape Breton to a homemaker mother and a salesman father, Brooks Arenburg, who had two older brothers, always loved writing. She took up the family habit of watching TV news and reading newspapers early. She studied journalism and French at university and in the midst of her degree took a year to study in France: several other participants had made similar treks in their early years. She described herself as nosy and curious, always wanting to talk to people about their lives, but said she also had “terrible cases of nerves,” and was happy to cloak herself in the anonymity of print, rather than face the limelight of broadcast journalism. After several summers interning at other papers, Brooks Arenburg, who had a “whopping student loan,” got a job at the *Herald*. Because she had previously been turned down for internships there, “it was just luck, luck, absolutely” that she was hired in 1997. Here was an echo of the luck theme of senior participants. Today, she said, “If I lose my job we’re toast,” the “we” being her family.

Brooks Arenburg said she worried that she might be seen as having “gone soft,” by which she meant that her experiences as a mother might “get in the way of getting a story and getting the facts of a story.” She struggled with this, citing a decision not to volunteer to cover biker gang stories.²⁶ Brooks Arenburg had trouble composing herself when she talked about not wanting to

²⁶ This is similar to the experience of Vancouver *Sun* reporter Kim Bolan, who described at a Canadian Association of Journalism convention I attended in Vancouver in 2009, the criticism she has received from readers who thought that as a mother, she should not cover such crimes, as mentioned in Chapter 1.

cover “kids” in court and her responsibility to raise a child who would not end up in front of a judge, as well as to provide for her family:

I’ve been to court. I know what could happen if you don’t focus on your children. I don’t want that to happen to him. I love him dearly, but I have a responsibility to society to make sure that he, you know, does not go down that path. And uh, I also have a responsibility here. I’ve been the main breadwinner for a number of years.

Brooks Arenburg went on to describe how her age and experience changed her perception of other parents at work and told a story about how that shift in thinking came about. Her story can be read as an example of how social actors use narrative to help describe the constant self-revision they undergo as various characteristics come into play (Bamberg, 2004; Snyder, 2008):

I remember, before I had my child, going, ‘everyone’s leaving at five o’clock: they all have to get home to their kids and I’m stuck filling holes.’ I resented that. Later on I started looking around, and went, ‘you know these are busy people, it’s not that they are not committed.’ Now that I have a child I know that every minute I spend beyond the end of my shift is one more minute I’m not spending with my child. And working a seven-to-three shift is great, ‘cause I get home early enough that we can have a day. When you work nine to five you don’t get home ‘til 6:30 or seven. By the time you get settled, have supper, it’s time for bed so, when I was younger I resented it because I didn’t understand. And now I do. I hope everybody else understands when I do that.

Not only did Brooks Arenburg feel the weight of her family responsibilities, she also felt that as a new mother, she owed it to society to keep her offspring out of legal trouble. As a GA reporter, she wanted the kind of understanding from her colleagues that she had had to learn herself.

Related to her concern about providing for her family was a recollection from when the paper became unionized. She found out she was paid less than men hired after her:

VS: What did that make you feel like?

PBA: Garbage. Garbage. I came here in the same year that I graduated, but I did have experience. I spoke two languages. Some

people didn't. So to look at that and to go 'okay: so I have a unionized job now, the pay is so much better than I thought it would ever be, here at least.' And you know I have benefits, I have all sorts of protection in place. It's not perfect, it's not utopia but, what happens if I leave that?

There was a hint of internal conflict, with Brooks Arenburg asking rhetorical questions that seemed to indicate she might like to leave, but understanding that without that job her family would suffer. And while expressing this worry, Brooks Arenburg said she also thought that women across the professions may have become "complacent" about the lack of women leaders, from CEOs to politicians to union leaders to the newsroom. Speaking of her own career trajectory, she said that she did not feel at this mid-way point in her work life that she was succeeding, but rather "surviving." This led her to speak movingly about what was most important to her. This exchange returned us to the choice narrative that women tell each other, that we are told, and that is repeated back to us through many media:

PBA: I'm surviving. When I think about, sometimes, when my son is older, will he be proud? I don't know. (silence)

VS: That's a very deep and personal thing to say. Thank you. I think that's something a lot of women feel. And if I could ask, why wouldn't he be proud of you?

PBA: Hmm. (silence). Hmm. I don't always do the most flattering stories. Like I do a lot of 'doom and gloom' stories still.

VS: So, 'doom and gloom,' by that you mean what?

PBA: You know, so-and-so is a murderer and let's look into his background and let's call his family. I do those stories. (laughs) ... Will he be proud of what I did? Will he be proud of me and what I do or will he just think that I wasn't there?

VS: Ah. I'm here to tell you that he will not feel that way at all. I have been through exactly this and lived to tell the story. And believe me, they will be proud of you. What is striking to me is how this feeling that you have is not just you. Most women I think feel that way because we are the ones who think we have to choose.

PBA: And do we? And do we really?

With that rhetorical question, Brooks Arenburg looks over the cliff edge of social norms and wonders if it possibly might be narrower and possibly more bridgeable than it seems. Her question also hints at how participants tell stories about their lives to fit larger society's value system, but counter-narratives lurk that challenge the status quo (Sosulski et al, 2010).

Of course, Brooks Arenburg said, her success was not defined by her job and whether her byline was on the front page. With the layoffs, she continued, came the realization that she could control nothing: it didn't matter that those who lost their jobs had skills and talents, they were gone nevertheless. Now she saw job success as perhaps broadening her writing skills, into reviewing and more multi-media techniques. She had already begun to add videos to her reporting repertoire. If her employer was not totally flexible, certainly she could adapt and keep up with change.

When I suggested to her that instead of using the pejorative "soft" to describe her new attitude toward journalism she try the term "richer," she laughed. "Maybe," she said, "but that is a hard sell internally, for me." Still, Brooks Arenburg agreed that political reporting needed to be more "humanizing" and that more "people" stories were needed. With the staff depleted and a demand for more short stories for the web, she said getting out into communities in Halifax was more difficult than before: she spent more time on the phone than in the field.

Just as her colleague Sherri Borden Colley could not picture herself as a columnist because she did not know how to write a column, Brooks Arenburg said of seeing herself as a senior manager that she didn't know "what people in those jobs do" and therefore she couldn't see how to be interested. Those senior positions looked like accounting or human resources jobs, not journalism. However, Brooks Arenburg also saw managers as shaping news, whereas she did not see herself in that role. I pressed her on that point:

VS: Let's say you decide your boss or your assigning editor has given you an option to cover A story or B story and your gut tells you that A is more interesting. Or it's not usually covered by the paper. Or maybe it's about some aspect about human life that the paper hasn't covered and you decide to cover that: isn't that helping shape news?

PBA: I guess. (Laughs). Again, hadn't thought of it that way. It's one of those jobs that you do what you do and you don't know why or how. Sometimes it's your instinct.

At the end of our meeting, she returned to the notion of flexibility, but her comments about what constituted a flexible newsroom were revised and expanded, and new ways of working, she reasoned, were restrained only by outdated issues of trust. Would managers trust reporters who work hard even if they did less “face time” in the office? They could do the job better, Brooks Arenburg intimated, by getting out into the community and talking to real people:

VS: So face time —

PBA: It seems like an outdated way of running a business. You can telecommute, you can video conference, here's the camera on my computer. You want to make sure that I'm here? I'm here writing. Or, log in or whatever but, face time yeah, seems like an issue of trust. But it's not very efficient. But this place is more flexible than others, so —

VS: If you could change what the newsroom does or how it does it then?

PBA: I can't speak for everybody but I can speak for myself. I wish I could go out more and have that coffee with that person and ask them, ‘hey, what's happening?’

When the women at the *Herald* received my questions by email, the topic generated discussion that prompted them all to look around at the newsroom, Brooks Arenburg told me. Two themes emerged: the first was to question how far they had really come, since no women were managers and the younger women, except for one reporter in her late 20s, were gone. The second was that the women tended to forget their successes as they worked “through the grind.” Brooks

Arenburg and Borden Colley were part of a team that won an Atlantic journalism award, for instance, and other women had gone to Bosnia and Rwanda to report. After the interview, Brooks Arenburg was nominated for a prestigious National Newspaper Award for her part in a series called Nova Scotia Burning, which looked at a cross-burning incident in Hants County. It was nominated in the Multimedia Feature category and included stories, videos, a historical timeline, court documents and an online panel discussion. It seemed her decision to work on the new media aspects of reporting paid off, but raising her head to see her success was rare.

Brooks Arenburg grappled daily with how to serve her child, husband, job and even society itself through her work, and talked of leaving as an impossibility, although she still talked of it. In Hamilton, reporter Nicole MacIntyre had more recently begun to experience these churning career/family waters, and she was ready to abandon ship the same day we spoke.

'I can't be a good mother and a good journalist at the same time'

On a bright winter morning in Hamilton, Ont., in the cafeteria of *The Spectator*, I met Nicole MacIntyre, 31 at the time, who had been employed at the daily since 2004. Born in New Minas, N.S., MacIntyre was an only child, raised by her mother, a banker. MacIntyre arrived at the *Spec* after working on short-term contracts at three other Ontario newspapers.

Having failed calculus in her first year at university in New Brunswick, MacIntyre abandoned her idea of a being a doctor and took arts courses, which she loved. She told me a story about how in high school, she had written a letter to the local paper, and became so excited seeing her name in print that much later, in her fourth year of university, she started to write for the student newspaper. "It was my calling," she said.²⁷ When she arrived at the University of Western

²⁷ N. MacIntyre, personal communication, Nov. 15, 2010, Hamilton.

Ontario's journalism school, she felt she came into her own. "I loved it beyond anything," she recalled. Her career took off quickly, despite a time of feeling intimidated:

NM: I was a night reporter, a police reporter as most young journalists start their career are, and then did some GA and then they offered me City Hall and I was scared shitless but took it. And that has become my defining thing in this community, is that for five years I was the City Hall reporter.

VS: Why were you so scared after covering cops and everything else?

NM: I was intimidated by the bureaucracy of it. I felt out of my, like cops I was good at. I knew it was essentially about people. City Hall was more about the bureaucracy, the budgets, the numbers, things like that. I also thought that it was dreadfully boring, which is why they sent me there because they wanted it not to be boring. And so, I was just intimidated by that. I remember my first budget, I would have been at City Hall maybe a month. And they were talking all these figures and I'm a crier. I came back to the newsroom and I went to the City Editor's office and I started crying. 'I don't know what they are talking about and it's my job to tell the city about this.' I was intimidated but I came to love it. I mean it has defined my career being the City Hall reporter.

VS: And why did you come to love it, do you think?

NM: I loved the game of it. I loved the challenge of having sources and busting things open. And that's what I became known as. As someone who knew the inside. The things that they didn't want you to know. I thrived in that. I hated the planning meetings and stuff like that, but I absolutely loved the politics. I also would say that I loved the importance of the job. I loved being on the front page three times a week. You know what I mean? Like it was a status job and I loved that.

VS: And then what happened?

NM: Then I got pregnant.

Meanwhile, representatives of a larger newspaper had contacted her and asked if she would like a job as City Hall reporter. She had been trying for years to work at this paper, and wrote to say that absolutely she wanted to work there, but felt bound to tell them she was pregnant:

NM: I never got a response and to this day, I have never got a response.

VS: Not even a, ‘gee, wish we could have’ or ‘come see us in a year’ or anything?

NM: No. So that experience with having finally my dream job come up, what I took away from that, was suddenly now I was less valuable to them. The fact that I was becoming a mother, in my dreams I had thought that maybe they would say, ‘you know what? We don’t care, we think you are a good reporter, come to us for the next, five months, and it’s more important for us to have you in our future.’ But the fact that I was becoming a mother meant that they no longer even wanted me. And that had a real profound effect on me and continues to.

This continuing effect showed itself dramatically at the appointed hour of our interview. I was unaware when I arranged to talk to *Spec* journalists that this would be the final day of a company buyout offer, and that MacIntyre, who is married to a journalist, had about four hours to decide if she would apply for that buyout. She was torn over whether she should abandon daily journalism, having had her baby and returned to work part-time as a GA reporter. Unfortunately, the baby was having problems in child care. With her husband doing well at his bigger paper, she and he debated constantly if MacIntyre should quit and stay at home.

A few hours after I left *The Spectator* office, its lobby full of sport trophies and the hulk of an old press, MacIntyre made her decision: she applied for the buyout. She told me later that it was better to put her journalism career aside than suffer more from what she saw as inevitable, wrenching conflict between doing good work and the needs of her growing family.²⁸

But as it turned out, the *Spec* was not done with her. Rather than see their part-time GA reporter leave, managers said no to her request. “But they have handled it well and have made me feel valued,” MacIntyre told me in an email months later (N. MacIntyre, personal communication, Nov. 30, 2010). She and her husband hired a nanny and she returned to the *Spec*

²⁸ N. MacIntyre, personal communication, Oct. 5, 2011, Hamilton.

fulltime, moving into the Go (lifestyle) section, which was difficult for her as a “hard-news gal.” However, she said, she was proud of having written a series on infant deaths, stillbirths and miscarriages, and just had to laugh at having to do a “Halloween candy taste test” for the next day’s paper.

MacIntyre was still worried about how to balance her job and family and what the future held for her career-wise. In a follow-up interview at the *Spec* office less than a year later,²⁹ MacIntyre summarized the events that saw her return to the paper to a position that, after six months of difficult adjustment, made her feel that managers saw value in her as a future leader. In fact, they had picked her to be part of a new initiative called Leadership University, which involved identifying about a dozen employees throughout the paper as having potential to advance, and offering mentorship, classes on leadership techniques and one-on-one meetings with the publisher. This was encouraging to MacIntyre, who felt her career had “just *tanked*” after having her child. But reassurances aside, her worries continued:

I am still struggling with that idea of career aspirations and being a mother. Several jobs have come up in the past year that I would have been *very* interested in before, that I feel like I can’t apply for now because, how am I going to do that and be a mom at the same time? So I feel sad that for the next few years I am not going to be able to chase opportunities. I always wanted to be city editor by the time I was 35. I don’t think that’s going to happen anymore. Simply because the nature of our newsrooms is that those jobs are 12 hours plus, because you have to be on call all the time, and again, I still feel like I could do that but I would really be sacrificing a lot of my home life. I don’t know that I want to do that to my kids. I’m now pregnant again.³⁰

This last comment brought together what MacIntyre and everyone else in the newspaper business – and beyond, into most other workplaces – accept as inevitable: that senior, mid-career positions

²⁹ N. MacIntyre, personal communication, Oct. 5, 2011, Hamilton.

³⁰ N. MacIntyre, personal communication, Oct. 5, 2011, Hamilton.

require long hours at work, and that children put women out of the running.³¹ At a time when career possibilities glittered ahead; having been given management's seal of approval as a future leader; and having seen how her husband took on more child care duties when she was ill early in her pregnancy, MacIntyre still found "it really difficult to see how much my career has changed in order to make it work for my family." In the here and now of her busy life, she focused on the fact that the next day was the provincial election, and it was the first time she was not covering it, but instead was pregnant again and doing candy taste tests:

VS: What interests me about your perspective is the word 'confidence,' You've been pegged as a leader, even though you've had what could have been career-stopping things, and yet they're saying, 'we see you for the long term; we want to invest in you.' So you don't feel that says 'we really believe in you?'

NM: I do, I guess I worry when I see the women above me, who have gone for those roles, I see that they make severe sacrifices in their home life. I guess part of it is that I think those opportunities will be there. I'm wondering if I am going to be willing to make the sacrifices to do them. How long is it going to be before I am willing to work 12- to 14-hour days every day and be away from my children that long? And it's a shame to me that we've structured some of those critical jobs to be jobs that I think a lot of women are nervous about entering.

So MacIntyre saw the structure as immutable, a shame, and her job was to choose sacrificing family or career, echoing Carla Ammerata, who said she had done the same, missing all those pizza nights. The women who could be MacIntyre's role models were, to her, models of untenable sacrifice. I talked to her about my sense from participants that women were powerless to change newspaper culture, while in their own journalistic work they felt they were changing the world:

³¹ As I write this, the news is full of how Marissa Mayer, the newly appointed CEO of Yahoo, was hired when pregnant with her first child – gasp! – reigniting heated media debates about women and work-life balance.

VS: When I asked them, ‘what do you think of your own power and influence?’ people said, ‘I change how people vote by what I write, I can affect how people think about civic issues. I can bring voice to people who don’t have voice, and I am quite powerful, in that sense.’ So what I see – and this is not a judgment – is a disconnect between women in journalism who understand they have this kind of power through their writing and editing decisions, but when it comes to their careers, they see themselves as having to fit into the structure, as opposed to having power to change it.

NM: I think it’s always a double standard that exists in the whole ‘lion in the world, lamb in the newsroom’ type of thing and I often think there is that double standard where we’re asked to go out in the world and challenge the powers that be, but sometimes in the newsroom that’s seen as disrespectful, or not respecting authority.

So she understood the male-dominant newsroom discourse was to challenge power in her role as reporter, but her role as an employee was to suppress criticism. She went on to note how senior managers paid lip service to supporting work-life balance, while mid-management positions still imposed onerous demands. The long-hours imperative emerged: MacIntyre, like City Editor Carla Ammerata, said rising journalists “mirror the person that came before them and they think that if they don’t put in those hours, then maybe they are not doing a good enough job.” She told me how she would do a city editor’s job, a dream she had abandoned, at least for five years. This involved realism (this is a fantasy, after all), communication and trust:

I’ve fantasized about how I would do that job differently, and one of the things I think newsrooms don’t do well is that we tend to act like silos, especially with managers, where if they had more respect for one another’s skills, and more co-operation, understanding – . So I am a city editor but I can trust that when the night editor comes, I can hand over this file and it’s going to be fine. I don’t need to stay until nine o’clock to see the story through. I would like to see that people could work realistic work days and still have families and things like that.

But in thinking about the chances of that job changing, MacIntyre sighed. She allowed that perhaps she could start to change the culture, as she had the luck of feeling heard by her bosses:

NM: (sigh, pause.) I feel like I've been fortunate that I feel like I have the ear, the respect of my leaders. I feel comfortable going into their offices and talking to them and I feel that they come to me for opinions. So in some ways I feel that I can. (Pause.) Although, I'd have to say I feel like I'm fighting against a lot of history and tradition.

VS: What kind of history and tradition?

NM: Well, traditionally in newsrooms we don't have a lot of time for work-life balance; we're not really into 'touchy-feely' workplace values. I also feel like it would be difficult for me, like many of the women. When I look at our newsroom, at the women who have had families, many have gone part time, many have gone from major reporting roles to lighter, feature-type of roles, many are in roles that don't demand them to be in for long hours.

VS: Go, lifestyle, entertainment.

NM: Yeah, that type of thing. Our city editor is a woman and she has teenaged children. But I look at her hours and they are just exhausting.

For a mid-career woman like MacIntyre, someone targeted as leadership material, the view ahead revealed side-lined or exhausted women, stuck enforcing the culture, all too aware of its punishments. These more senior women she saw around her, while not in the study, perhaps tended to tell stories as those in the study did, which was to summarize their lives as whole, and to be less ambiguous and contradictory than this cohort or the youngest one. MacIntyre mused on how newsrooms could redefine what dedication looks like to the next generation, what might define success differently. "I don't know what the right way to do it is," she concluded.

Meanwhile, she had her new pregnancy, the mix of pride and envy for her journalist husband's successful career at another paper, and feeling a little like a "cliché." She felt like just one of many women who had the hot-shot career but was now writing lifestyle articles and leaving to

get to the day care on time.³² She talked about other things that had happened since we first talked: a nice power shift in the home toward her husband's expanded role there; reporting important stories about miscarriage; and talking to others about the issues her participation in this project had raised. She worried that newsrooms did not handle younger women's careers well, and asked "how is this company going to manage their transitions," noting that almost all the women with whom she started journalism had left, confirming literature on the subject.

In Victoria, Sarah Petrescu was having mid-career survival issues, too. She could see all the factors pressing down on her that others in this cohort described, and had decided that work boundaries would have to be explored and established. It had become a matter of her health.

'I've always been a story-teller; I think that's it.'

In a busy Victoria coffee shop, Sarah Petrescu laughed and said maybe she did "too much work."³³ She had seen an online post of Arianna Huffington giving a TedTalk, and liked Huffington's message "to get enough sleep and stop trying to kill yourself by being everything."³⁴ That, said Petrescu, was an important message for women right now, herself particularly. At 32, she did a fashion column for the *Times Colonist*, covered breaking news on weekends and spent the rest of her shifts handling the *TC*'s web page and doing multi-media work. As a rare "destination" paper, meaning that once reporters are hired at the *TC* they seldom leave, turnover was such that only two reporters were younger than Petrescu. Having so many responsibilities, Petrescu said with a wry smile, was causing her to "find some of her strengths,"

³² Twenty years earlier, I was doing the same thing. My co-op day-care centre, where I was vice-president, charged \$1 a minute for every minute after 6 pm that parents were late. Even to the volunteer vice-president.

³³ S. Petrescu, personal communication, Jan. 11, 2011, Victoria

³⁴ http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/arianna_huffington_how_to_succeed_get_more_sleep.html, retrieved May 15, 2012.

but her expertise with new media (all learned by trial and error, she said) was also causing serious health problems:

SP: That's my struggle right now, finding a balance because it has affected me health-wise and career-wise to try to do everything. Because you realize that as much as you try your hardest and do the best work you can, that doesn't mean that in the end you're going to be rewarded with the same schedule. Or you may get lots of pats on the back but with the pat on the back also comes the next assignment.

VS: Like, 'what have you done for me lately?'

SP: Yeah, it's sort of 'oh, that's great that you can do that. Fantastic. Can you do 20 more tomorrow?' And so I'm in looking at boundaries and recording how long it takes to do things and recording the process and making sure the process is acknowledged.

It seemed to me a smart, practical move, figuring out exactly what resources she needed for her new multimedia work, so her editors could see what support was required. But it also seemed a familiar pattern of self-sacrifice. Petrescu was educating her bosses at the expense of her well-being. "The problem with being able to do everything is you end up doing everything," she said.

Born in Prince George, B.C., and raised in Sechelt, Petrescu had feminism and social justice issues bred into her early by activist parents. Her mother, an Italian immigrant who worked with victims of violence, and her father, a carpenter, shop teacher and ardent unionist, instilled in her a sense of community and championing the underdog. (Petrescu's father died of cancer when she was in her 20s; she has one brother.) Petrescu showed her narrative bent early, as she told me in this story. While many participants told tales of their early writing being recognized at school, this had more of a twist:

My first introduction to writing that I can remember was in Grade Four. My teacher, I still see him around, and he loves to tell this story. I had been writing these mystery stories and I wrote one about a kid who had been abused and had to go to jail and it was a

little dark for a 9-year-old and so he called my mother in, my parents, to ask them about this, and say ‘where’s she getting this?’ My mom hadn’t been realizing that I had been listening to her debriefing to my dad at night about working with victims and crime and that I had been kind of taking it in and had come up with these narratives.

Her early adulthood was peripatetic, which makes good yeast for journalism. She hoped to be a poet, dropped out of musical theatre study in New York, worked at a women’s centre, lived for a while in a van when she moved to Victoria to attend Camosun College, and then went to the University of Victoria, then Ryerson University in Toronto and had a *Globe* internship. “I’ve always been a story-teller. I think that is it,” she said of her life. Her best days happened when stories came together and “I don’t care if I haven’t eaten or I’ve been up all night.”

Petrescu was hired at the *TC* to write about classical music two days a week, then started to fill in on the copy desk and did TV reporting for CHEK news (then corporately connected to the newspaper) and then came on fulltime at the *TC* in 2008. At that time, she worked Wednesdays through Sundays, starting at 5:30 am, a schedule that she said she found “exhausting.”

Throughout her career to date, Petrescu had always been drawn to the creative side, absorbed in ideas about how better to tell stories that are “human, newsy, timely” and dealing with social issues, as well as fashion, about which she was also passionate. On one of her recent great days (which she said were few) she had told the story of an extremely obese man, describing his struggles and telling part of his story with a video:

I think my last great day was putting together that video because I worked so hard on it. I was teaching myself the medium, I was doing it and using a tiny \$150 camera. It’s just hard to do that kind of story-telling with that kind of equipment. I overcame a few technical hurdles and put together what I thought was a heart-warming story, dealing with the challenge of how you present somebody who is in that situation of being obese without making a mockery or a spectacle of them. When I met this person I just truly loved them right away because I saw that vulnerability and

respected his openness with me and sharing with me. A day when you can honour someone who has shared with you in what you create, is a good day. And that is getting everything right and telling their story well, and putting it into a meaningful context.

In her description of that day, she brought together her ideas of what journalism was for and how it expressed her characteristics – someone who championed the underdog, and who was, in her own words, a “humanitarian.” Being a feminist was important too, an aspect of herself in which she took increasing pride. She didn’t “care if it makes people cringe” when she used the word in the newsroom. All of these little bits of herself were important, said Petrescu, to how she did her work: being “a B.C. girl” and interested in B.C. politics, being a feminist, feeling she had a responsibility or an awareness to look out for story ideas that reflected her generation, as well as standing on guard in the newsroom for language or story approaches that she felt were sexist.

Was the gender playing field level at the *TC*? Petrescu first said she didn’t know, but talked about both editorial writers being male, how there had never been a female publisher, and mostly men worked on the editing desk. The women she worked for had gone, too.³⁵

Partly because of her early and odd hours, and because she worked alone so much, Petrescu said that she often felt “unsupported” in her career. (Working alone gave her less opportunity for mentorship in general, she said in a later email.³⁶) There were those she called “creative mentors,” older women journalists and instructors with whom she could talk shop, but who were not in a position to offer her promotions. One woman mentor at the *TC* did help her get a permanent job, however. Her journalism mentors outside the workplace had been men usually.

³⁵ Petrescu was hired by Lucinda Chodan and her immediate boss was Stephanie Coombs, who left to work with Chodan in Edmonton. Petrescu worked with the editor in charge of the website, Denise Helm, who left later to become Manager of Media Relations for the University of Victoria. Chodan, Coombs and Helm are participants in this study. Within a few months over 2011-2012, white men replaced the all-female top tier at the *TC*. The sports and business editors were also white men. The publisher (who had me fired) survived the *TC* having been sold to Glacier Media, then retired in early 2013. As of April 2013, he had not been replaced.

³⁶ S. Petrescu, personal communication, March 14, 2013.

Having three female bosses during five of her seven years at the paper up to this time provided opportunities for a mid-career reporter/columnist/editor/ multimedia journalist to observe women leaders in action, especially as Petrescu considered the possibility of having children. (One of the three was a parent, with one child.) Of course, she joked, her crazy hours meant that she had “no optional time to go on dates.” Single at the time, Petrescu noted that like her, most women reporters waited until their late 30s or early 40s to have families. They seemed to “manage fairly well,” but the idea of “working so hard and so much and then coming home to a kid” was scary:

I don't think I'd like to be in the position where I was working full-time and trying to raise a child. Twenty years of hard work into a career and finally starting a family, I'd want to not be putting as much work into the career, I'd want to be putting more into the family. I hope that at the time I would have no hang-ups about that. No financial hang-ups and no personal hang-ups about having to sacrifice one for the other.

While others like Patricia Brooks Arenburg and Nicole MacIntyre, at roughly the same age, had young children and felt that sense of sacrifice and struggle between family and career, Petrescu felt that with experience and enough income, she would not find that stepping back from her career would be a sacrifice, as Paula Arab at the *Calgary Herald* speculated that she would not have made sacrifices if she had chosen to have kids. Petrescu also commented, as Elissa Barnard in Halifax did, on how young fathers in the newsroom didn't “seem to recognize anxiety and tiredness in the same way that the women do. It's a personality type or something.” Gender was not the issue here, as Petrescu saw it.

At this stage in her career, Petrescu had come through the “ruthless, competitive” years of establishing herself, only to be surrounded by co-workers 20 years older than she was, who talked of little but retiring. She couldn't fathom her own retirement yet (officially 2033), but every day she heard older staffers (mostly men) talk about onerous financial responsibilities for

offspring (college, etc), which kept them on the job. Meanwhile, the idea lingered in newsrooms, she said, that if you put family first you were not serious about your career. And if you were someone of Petrescu's generation, managers expected you to lead in bringing new media technologies to bear on reporting, and she was complying on that score, teaching herself. So her next career moves would have to be made carefully, taking into account these contradictions and uncertainties. But she had an idea that encouraged her, which came out of the experience of competing for jobs and the new approach to online journalism that leaned toward "branding" reporters by identifying them publically as individuals. I floundered a bit, then realized this could have some impact on a more individualistic – and possibly more diverse – kind of journalism:

SP: What's interesting about the new media element is that newspapers aren't breaking stories anymore. It's *people* who are breaking stories. So I think when you look at what is going to become valued in journalists, that competitive edge, will be a different kind of journalist. Maybe more of a holistic thinker, maybe someone who has a different skill set who isn't that 'go-get-em, I'm available any time, at any moment.' It may be a new kind of talent or a different set of talents.

VS: I'm sorry I'm not following you. You think that with the new media aspect, the competition will be less?

SP: I think the competition will be less focused on breaking news and being what they call journalism school 'news-bots'.

VS: So less focus on breaking news but more focused on what the person produces as an individual, is that what you're saying?

SP: I think so, on maybe a more varied skill set.

VS: What do you think that skill set might encompass?

SP: For me it's multi-media tools, which is also male-dominated at this point. Creating writing with personality, I think is going to be something that we're going to see or seeing it already. Good thinkers.

A few months after we spoke, Petrescu went on sabbatical, which the *TC* allowed for staffers who take every seventh year off by taking less pay on the previous six years. When I checked her Facebook status some months later, she was anticipating seeing acres of hand-loomed silks at a fabric expo in Mumbai. She has since returned to the *TC* fulltime. Stephanie Coombs, with whom Petrescu had worked, also spoke of possible future motherhood and of hard work, and went on to expand the definition of workplace flexibility. For her, age was a major career factor.

‘This is a whole new world and we have to look at stuff differently’

City Editor Stephanie Coombs of the *Times Colonist* – one of Petrescu’s bosses and the same age – was recounting how she clashed with the (white, male, 60-plus) publisher over readership strategies: he said they needed more people reading the printed paper, and Coombs said “nobody under the age of 35 or under is ever going to buy the paper, full stop, you can’t do anything to make them buy it,” so “a lot more crazy ideas” were needed if the *TC* was going to survive:

If it were me, we could buy an iPad for everybody in this region and send them a paper every day on their iPad. And that would be cheaper than printing it and delivering it every day to people. In all honesty, it would be. We can’t do that because we can’t close down our press and we’d have to lay off people, and that’s a problem, but I think we need to look at things differently and radically.³⁷

Handling change was a big part of Coombs’ career story, as was continuity, in the form of long-standing industry issues. The problem-solving she did every day, like her counterpart Carla Ammerata at *The Spectator*, largely resulted from the fact that there was not enough staff to get the work done. Many long-time reporters got lots of holiday time, called in sick and took leaves, and only occasionally was someone hired to replace the few who retired. Advertising was (and is) precarious: in fact, the *TC* stopped publishing on Mondays in June 2009 to save money.

³⁷ S. Coombs, personal communication, Jan. 14, 2011, Victoria.

To be city editor of a major daily in Canada at 30 is unusual: Ammerata felt that having that position at 42 meant she had achieved a major career goal. Coombs' path from Edmonton to Victoria, and then to Ottawa for two degrees (BJ, Master's in Journalism) led almost directly to the *Ottawa Citizen*, where she went from being an intern copy editor at 22 to running the night copy-editing desk at 26, reaching management.

Luck did not emerge in her narrative: during our interview in a *TC* meeting room, Coombs described how she worked hard, was keen, curious and loved to learn, and throughout our talk she exuded a confident, relaxed demeanour. She acknowledged off the top another possible reason for her quick rise, along with print journalism's haphazard approach to leadership development, and the night shift (3 pm to midnight) being a job few wanted:

I made good contacts in the sense that I knew the senior editors socially and I think that does make a difference. I, of course, say that's part of it, I'm not sure how much of it was. I was keen and interested and hard-working and anyone who works at the night desk knows that the quality sometimes is lacking. I think often night desks are full of people who don't really want to lead and often are kind of put on a desk because the paper doesn't really know how to manage them. I was excited and I wanted to do it. Night news editor is a thankless task in a lot of ways and very few people actually want to do it. At the *Citizen* it was a burn-out job in the sense that people didn't last more than two or three years before they'd had it.

Coombs said she loved the pressure of "turning a mess into something really good" on deadline, of knowing that she would be the last pair of eyes on the paper before it went to the presses, writing the lead headlines, deciding what stories went on the front page and being "the one making the decision alone if there is a breaking story" that would have to be switched on to the front page and something else removed. She described herself as a "Type A person" and "slightly a control freak" and felt that in her position she helped set "the city agenda every day"

with her decisions about what late-breaking city stories to cover, and how they should be displayed on the page, conveying the story's relevance or level of importance to readers.

For Coombs, age, rather than gender, was the characteristic that would most likely affect her career trajectory, noting that “the age gap is a bigger issue than the gender gap” at the *TC*. She described several times the difficulties she has encountered – and had overcome with persistence, respect and “baking cookies” – as a young person in a job usually held by an older, more experienced person. For example, at the *Citizen* she asked to go to a management seminar because “I was conscious that at 26, I was the youngest person on the night desk and I was going to be the boss.” Older men might have had gender issues regarding her, she said, since they seemed to begrudge her the post, while older women on the night desk did not.

Coombs said it felt odd to say that at 32 she had already turned down the offer of becoming assistant national editor at the *Globe*. It was indeed striking to see someone at age 32 already having developed a senior-management-level sense of confidence, in that she realized she did not have to jump at any offer, even one from the *Globe*: her destiny was not a job that would require her to follow the same stories that other outlets did. “Five years ago I would have leapt at that opportunity; I would have been, ‘oh my God, yes! Let me slave away for 12 hours a day, let me do it,’ ” she said of the *Globe* offer. But on that day, Coombs said her preference was to stay connected to readers and to have more of an effect on her community's “collective consciousness” on a daily basis than she felt she would at the *Globe*.

When asked how (and if) her characteristics such as gender, age, class and race affected her practice of journalism, she said, and she knew how to manipulate those to her advantage:

I think that you are who you are, and if you don't use what you've got in a positive way then you are going to be stuck thinking there's something that's negative about it. When I worked in Ottawa and I was a manager, we had about a dozen managers and

only two of us were women. Did that work to my advantage?
Definitely. Did I exploit that? Yes.

Coombs identified how an individual's social characteristics, such as being perceived as too young to be in a senior role, work in positive ways, reflecting the intersectional notion of power being up for constant renegotiation (Bamberg, 2004), in her case through humour and respect:

I always flip it into the 'I'm really good at what I do.'. Because I think that you can take things in one way, we all have that inner dialogue in our head. Or you can turn it into something totally positive for you. I joke about how young I am. I joke with my reporters, I say 'I don't know what you're talking about, you're all so much older than me.'. If you are a good journalist, if you're good at what you do, people forget how old you are or if you're a woman or not.

And the other thing for me is the mutual respect. I always showed the older deskers the respect that I felt that they were due and in many ways I would say things candidly. 'You've been here longer than I have, can you explain this to me or what do you think because I know you know this issue more than I do.' And I find that's the strategy that always works extremely well with people is to not pretend that you know everything.

Identity also played outside the newsroom. Coombs said it wouldn't matter to her whether a potential source talked to a reporter because he or she was "cute" or smart or tall or whatever. Coombs was pleased to say, for instance, that Victoria's chief of police was unlikely to forget her, because he noticed her tongue piercing. "He takes my calls and discusses things with me: is it because I have a tongue ring? No, but that is how he remembers who I am."

Of six management positions at the *TC* at the time, three were held by women (none is now), which Coombs found odd, since there was rarely gender parity at that level. Coombs, who was single and had no children, described, as others had, the exclusionary effect of motherhood, and of the need for adaptation to the prevailing culture:

SC: People become columnists or editorial page editors usually after they've done senior management jobs in the paper. And you

don't get to be a columnist if you haven't been around for awhile and have that sort of track record, and women tend not to take those positions. This newspaper is extremely odd to me in that in our six management positions, three are women. But if you look at that, of the three only one of them has children. Women tend not to take the positions to rise up to the top levels.

VS: So why don't they?

SC: I look at what it takes to do these jobs. I wouldn't tend to try to do my job and have children. I think that would be extremely difficult. I don't work 7-1/2 hours in a day. And if you want to have it all, to me having it all is to have a career and children, you can't necessarily do the jobs that get you to those positions. It can be done, and I have former colleagues whose husbands are much more flexible in their schedules so they become more of the primary caregiver. I couldn't be responsible in this job for picking up kids after school because on really good days I'm done at 5:30 or 6, on bad days I'm here at 8. Because I can't predict the news.

VS: So a large part of the unpredictability that's embedded in news, if not the defining problem or issue for women, then it's a big part of it. Is there anything else?

SC: I think at some other papers, it was a boys' club. And some women don't operate well in that atmosphere. I was fine with it. I can sit down and tell dirty jokes, you know I don't mind doing that and I think that I consider myself the kind of person that can adapt to the sort of people they're with. This newsroom, in all honesty, there's usually three women and two men in our afternoon news meetings. And XXX and XXX have to sit there and hear us talk about how hot Colin Firth is.

Since all three women in management have left the paper, presumably Colin Firth's hotness is no longer a topic for debate. More importantly (perhaps), Coombs shed light on how gender and motherhood combined to remove women from competing for influential positions as senior editors and columnists. Other people, whose workplace was "flexible," would have to be relied on to take care of the children. She elaborated on the intractability problem with a personal story:

SC: The fact of the matter is that women actually have children. I thought about it the other day. I was talking with a friend about where I see myself going, and I said, 'if I do want to have kids, it's weird if I'm a managing editor because you want to go away for a

year and then come back.’ And do you come back to that same job? Which is a very high-level, specific job. How do they fill in for you for a year? Does that person who replaced you now jump back down the totem pole? It doesn’t happen a lot and I know logistically it can happen, but we as women, whether we have partners who do a lot of the work, we actually physically have to be out of the newsroom for a year.

VS: But if it did happen more often, then it wouldn’t be weird, right? If a 60-year-old man has a heart attack and goes off for a year on stress leave, he comes back. Or you can also give a woman who’s not quite ready to be managing editor, an opportunity to taste that in a caretaker situation.

SC: I know you do stuff like that, and you’re right, it doesn’t happen very often and maybe we’d think it was more normal if it did. But again I think, ‘could I do what’s expected of a managing editor while wanting to get home and be with a baby?’ Because even if you leave it to your husband to do more of the care-giving, you still want to spend time with your kids, and most women do subscribe to that sort of thing.

While she saw the biological factor of motherhood in nearly inevitable conflict with expected journalistic practice, Coombs named another kind of workplace flexibility as being absolutely necessary for papers to survive and which required a new kind of introspection:

SC: I think flexibility hasn’t been in this business. I say that for so many reasons; we need to be able to look at ourselves differently in what we do. One of the reporters was waxing poetic about the great days of Randolph Hearst and I was saying to myself, ‘those guys were paid cents a day, weren’t unionized, had no benefits, and people paid to read the paper because it was the only way they could get any news.’ I think often we look back at that and think, ‘aaahh.’ Well, this is a whole new world and I think we need to look at stuff differently. We need to be flexible and say ‘I’m not going to run the same story that everyone else has.’ We don’t have very much money. And we don’t have very many people, so we’re saying, ‘this is how we’ve done it so we’re just going to keep doing it so we can just survive.’ And yet that’s not the way to revitalize or make a good product. We need to say well, ‘this isn’t working.’ Maybe make radical decisions about how we’re going to present stuff.

Coombs' description of her skills and confidence, gained with years of news experience at an early age, and honed with an adaptive approach, led her to question historical narratives about the "good old days" of newspapering. As narrative analysis suggests to us, she was willing to challenge meta-narratives (Snyder, 2008), in this case, one that threatened the industry financially, but at the same time did not talk about defying the notion that women must choose between careers and children. Rather, she felt that the career vs motherhood issue did not apply to her. Coombs' personal life, not the newspaper industry, shaped her attitude on motherhood.³⁸

Like Coombs, Mary Agnes Welch regarded biology as heavily affecting a woman's journalism career. But with two women leading her Winnipeg paper, anything seemed possible.

'At the *Free Press*, there is room to be ambitious'

In a busy Winnipeg cafe, Mary Agnes Welch, Public Policy reporter for the *Winnipeg Free Press* and a two-time National Newspaper Award nominee (among other awards), was telling me about how she got the second-year blahs while studying history at the University of Alberta. She went on to finish her honours history degree in 1996, but that blah-time resulted in her journalism epiphany, that real-life turning point for which journalists always hunt and narrative analysts identify as a story-telling tool to self-revise (Bamberg, 2004), as Sherri Borden Colley did in Halifax when she received that Black doll:

I started volunteering at the student newspaper. At the *Gateway*, my first assignment – I think this was the story that got me into Columbia because I used this on my application to get in – was covering Sheila Copps, who was on the campus for the '93 election. It was winter, she was there at 7 am, not a student in sight, so I trailed behind her and her entourage. I had my clipboard with my heavy metal and alternative band stickers on it and my Doc Martens – I was so nervous that I couldn't read my own

³⁸ S. Coombs, personal communication, March 14, 2013. (Coombs followed her mentor, Lucinda Chodan, to the *Edmonton Journal*, where Chodan is Editor-in-Chief and Coombs is Managing Editor. As of early 2013, of 11 managers in the newsroom, seven are women. The five most senior editors are women.)

writing. I tried to write the story, not having any idea how. It was exciting and fun and I was interested in politics, so I realized I wanted to be a journalist. It was a good story and I wrote it all fancy and it is one of those rare times where you have an actual epiphany, something happens that changes the whole course of what you were thinking you were going to do.³⁹

When we spoke, Welch, 36, had been at the *Free Press* for about eight years, and had covered City Hall and the provincial legislature before starting her Public Policy beat, which she described as “open-ended, feature-y, document-y.” She grew up in Edmonton with one sister, her father, who went to law school at age 40, and mother, who worked for the Alberta government in health policy. She described her upbringing as solidly middle-class. Being a relatively young Canadian at Columbia in New York made her an outsider there, though, “with kids who came from very wealthy families who did the year in France.” Rather than be part of that competitive group, she went her own way after graduation in 1997 to a newspaper called the *Odessa American* in west Texas, and then returned to Canada for three years at the *Windsor Star*.

In the “mixed-up ball” of factors that affects how she does journalism, Welch said age and gender did have an impact, and she recalled being the only woman present at meetings she was covering and how she would have to spend “a bit more time listening even harder, asking smarter questions, putting your game face on in a way you might not normally have to do.” Ultimately though, she felt that “personality trumps those immutable things like ‘I was born in Kamloops’ or ‘I’m a girl’.” Curiosity, skepticism, ideology, interests, and personal experiences had a kind of immutability for her too, but these qualities were different than, for instance, having a disability or being a new Canadian. Mostly a great day was “getting a document that tells me something I didn’t know and using that to do a story that nobody else has thought of,”

³⁹ M. Welch, personal communication, Nov. 23, 2010, Winnipeg.

Welch said. A bad day involved spending a lot of time on a story she thought was important, and it not having any impact: “no comments on the website and no angry emails.”

Welch saw her success as stemming from the independence she had over her own assignments, “the big think pieces that challenge people to think more critically about their city, about poverty, about the environment and Aboriginal people,” as well as the feeling of “synch” she had with her supervisors. “I feel like there’s room to be ambitious at the *Free Press*,” she said, expressing a sentiment unique among participants.

While Welch did not describe her father’s return to school to study labour law, or her mother’s involvement in health policy as seminal to her world view, I began to wonder if that might be the case. I found her focus on matters of social justice, for instance, reflected her articles and Tweets, everything from Indigenous maternal health to civic parking problems, and even in her blog title, “Gripe Juice.” One example she gave of story choice that came out of her personal interests involved Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, “a huge issue that affects moms and kids and crime and poverty in Aboriginal people,” while simultaneously, a big story in Winnipeg about a football stadium was “interesting to the guys, it’s just not interesting to me:”

VS: What about those things – homeless kids, crime, Aboriginal people, social issues – what about that interests you, and why do you care?

MAW: They’re complex, they really, really matter to people who are not often reflected in our newspaper – they are reflected more and more, because I think we’re getting better at that kind of thing. The football stadium still takes up a hell of a lot of space: poverty and single moms and why the housing allocation is too low and simple things like that don’t take up as much space, and they’re harder to tell because they’re soft. That’s why I like data, because data puts hardness to soft things, I think, they’re kind of nebulous and there are real stories involved, real people.

VS: The idea that stories about real people are what we call ‘soft news’ and what I’m hearing you say is that by getting the data –

getting the statistics – gives it a newsier, more persuasive kind of feel?

MAW: Yes, yes.

Welch commented on the lack of babies being born to *Free Press* women as “weird” and a “funny thing” after describing the particular nature of female leadership at the paper at the time:

MAW: I think that the *Free Press* is kind of an anomaly because either the most powerful jobs or the people in the newsroom who are most respected are women. I think of Helen Fallding, she’s the smartest, the moral centre of the newsroom in a way, and Margo Goodhand, [one] the most powerful [people] at the paper, in the newsroom ... I think they are held in more respect.

VS: So not just because of the position they hold but because of who they are as well.

MAW: Who they are, yes.

VS: What qualities do they exhibit that make them so –

MAW: They’re calm, they’re rational. They are creative, they have lots of integrity. They don’t put up with too much crap. They’re political – Helen especially is political. She reads a situation – she knows who wants what, and how to manage them. Not political, like stirring up trouble, but really smart about people and how to figure out what somebody else wants and what you want.

VS: So to use that horrible cliché, it’s kind of ‘win-win’ or strategic –

MAW: – that’s the word, strategic. But I think there would be way more women in those kinds of jobs if there wasn’t this – I know for Margo, she has two kids, she’s there until 6:30, seven o’clock and it’s a stressful thing. You take it home, and your Blackberry’s always on and it’s like that for reporters, too. That’s hard on a family. The funny thing is there haven’t been any new babies born since I’ve been there, practically.

VS: Why is that, do you think?

MAW: I think there’s an age gap, or there’s a whole bunch of women who are just about to have kids and they’re going to, or are younger. There’s a new generation of twenty-something reporters, so they haven’t thought about it yet. It’s a tricky job.

VS: The women you describe – Margo you said has two young kids ...

MAW: ... Helen is a lesbian and doesn't have any kids.

VS: There might be a correlation between the fact that these women have few children and they're doing well, they're able to do the hours and all that kind of stuff.

MAW: I think that's partly it, yeah.

VS: Any other thoughts why women might not do as well, aside from your newspaper?

MAW: I don't know. I don't think it's true anymore that women aren't seen as tough or good managers or that they can't make hard decisions – all the things that you want of managers or expect them to be. I don't think that that's the case anymore, so this inherent gender bias in the newsroom – I don't know if that still exists.

Having talked about family-work stress for women, though, she said she did not know why there were few women in senior jobs in Canadian newspapers. Her own situation, with a male partner (also in the media) but no kids, meant that she was more flexible in being able to stay late. Again we see a member of this cohort accept that flexibility is something the participant can cultivate and adjust, not something that the company is offering. Her partner's job was more "stable," said Welch, and it was "just sort of a fact" that women did most of the child-rearing for the first few years of a child's life. People didn't quit journalism because of becoming parents, they did it "because they have lost their mojo or they feel the practice of journalism has been converted by demands of technology or daily shallowness." Women who have kids make it work, she said.

Having children herself might actually be a benefit, Welch said, because she might think less about her job and the downside of blogging and Twitter, which had made journalists "much more public targets," echoing Margo Goodhand's views. Welch waved away most of these missives as coming from "cranky, pajama-wearing basement dwellers," but still, their irritating, even enraging responses became another way in which journalism followed her home at night:

Every time you open your Blackberry there's something else out there that you have to deal with. I think that having a kid in some ways allows you to realize that crap's not important. It probably reorients your perspective and your priorities in a good way. In a way, a kid would be – it's not really the only reason why I would have a kid but it would help me take my job way less seriously, which would be a good thing, I think.

Welch spoke at length about projects she had spearheaded or been involved with: a whole section of stories about downtown issues, which prompted a city summit and a story about maternal health in northern Manitoba that showed how “pathetic” maternal care was for Indigenous women. But even a big political story that fizzled was useful: Welch learned she could follow up on her own stories until they did have an impact, because nobody else would.

Conclusions: Twisting and turning on a middle rung

In this chapter, the spotlight moved from the oldest participants to those who were mid-way through their careers, in their 30s and 40s. They were all well-educated, heterosexual women who felt squeezed by traditional newsroom demands at a time in their lives when they felt that reproductive organs and cultural imperatives were issuing their own deadlines. No wonder many of these participants felt their lives seemed barely in control: as one participant said, using a newspaper cliché, she was caught in a “perfect storm.” Older workers clung to good jobs above them and younger ones circled impatiently below. Age, gender and parenthood did not so much intersect for these participants as collide at top speed.

For Sherri Borden Colley, add in the complicating factors of race and class. While the other participants referred to their white, middle-class privilege mostly in the context of feeling a duty to be the “voices of the voiceless,” Borden Colley was unique as a Black journalist from a working-class family who experienced racism at a university and on the job. While rejecting tokenism, she took on the role of in-house monitor of racism in the paper, as well as focusing her

own work on fighting racial stereotypes, being a mentor to young people in the Black community and “making a difference.” Borden Colley used her experience as a victim of racism to motivate herself, not to perpetuate a “victim” narrative in her work. And she was still in her dream job.

Borden Colley was not alone, as most others felt they were in their dream jobs, too. At the same time they felt forced to work harder as resources dwindled and they were made responsible for creating stories across multiple platforms. The mothers were grateful for what they described as flexibility, but also recognized that flexibility was also a convenient cost-saving measure.

The invoking of luck as a source of professional success diminished as the age of the participants dropped, until only sheer hard work was their main career-building factor. Luck did linger for Carla Ammerata though, who experienced the imposter syndrome, in which externalities such as luck are seen as guiding someone’s success. Some professed ignorance, or a lack of awareness about senior editorial positions to which they could aspire, while others had seen the lives of scarce women in senior roles and said an emphatic “no” to those jobs. They still believed in the power of their own distinctive story-telling skills to fight for social justice. But unlike their older counterparts, these participants began their careers inside the city room, not arriving by way of the lifestyles and arts pages. The idea of being sent back to “soft” news after becoming mothers was troubling to them, even if they did exactly that.

The mid-career women positioned themselves as survivors, as did many of the oldest cohort, while glorying in their best stories. They did not see themselves as victims of sexism (and occasionally ageism) as they sensed older female colleagues did, but described subtle cultural (and obvious) racial exclusions, as well as gender-based sacrifices. One described her fight against patriarchal tradition and history, another described off-the-record how easily a liberal-minded male colleague succumbed to the group-think of older, male managers; and a third, fast-

rising editor defended her “exploitation” of her youth and gender to help her rise in the hierarchy that would eventually hold her to account for her reproductive choices.

A key theme that tends to follow generational lines (while not defining or essentializing them) emerges with this group, now set in context with the more senior participants. In terms of analysing their narratives through intersectionality, these mid-career participants were less likely to describe their characteristics as combining to form a coherent whole, but rather in terms of contradictions, self-revisions and ambiguities (Snyder, 2008).

The wrenching industry change that clashed with its patriarchal cultural continuity resulted in the women describing being torn, scared, excited, exhausted, fraudulent, confident, intimidated, and adapting creatively. Ammerata saw herself repeating patterns of behaviour learned from senior male managers – such as doing more “face time” to show commitment – but was aware that these patterns were unhealthy and unproductive. Another accepted that her job required these consistently gruelling hours. It was as natural to her as the fact of women giving birth, requiring them to make decisions that pitted career against family. Another described the pain of racism as well as its motivational power, and being the daughters of immigrants similarly added complexity to identity for several participants, in mostly positive, empowering ways. Off-the-record, one said that it was normal for women in newsrooms to go, to disappear.

The key theme of using narrative to create a coherent whole out of one’s intersecting characteristics and experiences (the most senior group) or to accommodate contradictions and ambiguities (mid-career participants), takes another turn in the next chapter, which describes the youngest cohort. This group went farther in its story-telling, often spinning identity stereotypes to perceived advantage, as a tongue-pierced Stephanie Coombs foreshadowed in the mid-career group. The youngest participants felt they could handle the challenges of gender, age, ability,

technology and parenthood that were thrown at them, if only the industry survived. While most participants across age groups expressed concern about a lack of diversity in the newsroom, the characteristic of race as they might experience personally was as invisible to the youngest group as it was to all but Borden-Colley in the mid-career cohort, and to the most senior women.

Chapter 6

For the youngest journalists, it's 'a game of chicken'

Jen Gerson, a *Calgary Herald* general assignment reporter, was 26 at the time of our interview, which took place in her Calgary apartment. She described her career trajectory as “a bit of a convoluted one.”⁴⁰ This seemed to understate the case, as she described at length and in compelling, colourful detail how she came to be where she was, and how her big worry was not that gender or age or motherhood would affect her, but that she had chosen a career in a dying industry. The problem for young journalists, she said, was bigger than any debate about male or female newsrooms experiences; it was about the very existence of newspapers:

The challenges are so different for people at the bottom of this pyramid and they're so distinct that I don't think gender is an issue anymore. I'm not worried that I'm going to be kept out of the top echelons of the newspaper hierarchy because of a glass ceiling; I'm worried that there's not going to be a newspaper there. I think those concerns are shared by everyone who's getting into journalism now and there aren't very many of us anymore. You could go across this country and count on maybe four hands how many journalists under 30 are in newsrooms. I can tell you this because I know most of them.

I actually had gone across the country; and while my study did not require doing a head count of under-30 print journalists nationally, and I did not seek a set number of women to represent age groups, the youngest participants – six – did turn out to be the scarcest. Since I conducted this study, one, Melissa Martin at the *Winnipeg Free Press*, was laid off and then later rehired.

They ranged in age from 25 to 29, were white and middle class, and all but one had post-secondary education. Two were married and none had children. All had mothers who had worked outside the home. Unlike most participants in the two older cohorts, all but one started

⁴⁰ J. Gerson, personal communication, Jan. 17, 2011, Calgary.

her career in “hard news” rather than the arts or lifestyle pages, reflecting women’s increasing presence in that higher-status area of print journalism.⁴¹ They were all in their “dream” jobs.

This cohort’s priorities were meaningful for how, unlike the more – but equally privileged – senior groups, they rested on notions of individual power and independence being key to their survival at work, along with a contradictory, residual bit of luck. This seemed reflective of how feminist researchers often characterize the “third wavers” (Snyder, 2008), young women who embrace a more individual, polyvocal approach to gender matters (Archer Mann & Huffman, 2005; Snyder, 2008). The threat and promise of the personal identity or brand journalism currently being promoted by publishers was associated with this individualistic power, as was playing with gender and age stereotypes while outside the newsroom, where they found themselves more often than the older cohorts, whose members were more likely to spend more time inside the office. While not articulating a need to make personal sacrifices to further their journalism careers, members of this cohort still felt that work-family conflicts lay ahead and were inevitable. Other themes included the daily impacts of media technology; competitiveness; being mentored and mentoring others; and a concern for honing their craft, which involved public agenda-setting through reporting for most in this group.

In terms of a key theme of how narratives reveal meaning-making over time (Coffey & Atkinson, 1999), this cohort appeared to court contradictions, actively probing for ways as complex individuals to exploit expected norms, while simultaneously decrying how structures beyond their control held them back. If we accept the theory that social actors position themselves through their narratives somewhere along a continuum (and sometimes all at once) marked by victimhood, witnessing and effective personal agency (Bryman et al, 2009), then the

⁴¹ The exception was Melissa Martin, then of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, who started her career in freelance entertainment reporting as a former musician.

participants who were oldest tended to see themselves more often resignedly in the first category; mid-career women exhaustedly in the second, and youngest participants found themselves fighting like hell in the third.

This group included Katie DeRosa, crime reporter for the *Times Colonist*; Laura Fraser, general assignment reporter for the Halifax *Chronicle Herald* and the only participant to describe herself as not being able-bodied and how that affected her relationships with managers and her reporting; Jen Gerson, general assignment reporter for the *Calgary Herald*; Melissa Martin, then a general assignment reporter at the *Winnipeg Free Press*; Nicole O'Reilly, crime reporter for *The Spectator* in Hamilton; and Emma Reilly, City Hall reporter for the *Spec*.

'We're going to be well-positioned – if we can hang in'

Having decided in Grade 10 that she loved writing stories for her Coquitlam, B.C., school newspaper, Jen Gerson went on to a high-school newspaper internship, then to Ryerson University in Toronto in 2002 for journalism (while working at the student paper and part-time at the *Toronto Star*), to a National Newspaper Award while at the *Star* fulltime. The story of how that job in the *Star*'s youth section ended was, she said, even more "fraught and complicated" than how she told it to me, but the result was she moved to work at a paper in Abu Dhabi, which she described as a poisonous, disrespectful workplace. To escape the rigid hierarchy, she decided to move to Yemen, but an offer from the *Calgary Herald* arrived and she accepted, returning to Canada in May of 2010 as a GA reporter. So far, she had found the *Herald* to be "lovely," with consultative processes and opportunities for her to have input into story ideas. Managing Editor Monica Zurowski, whom we met in Chapter 4, was her boss.

Gerson was raised by a single mother who had no university degree and was smart, said Gerson. Her mother worked her way up through Shell Canada from various jobs in Burnaby to a

senior-level position in Calgary. When Gerson was little, her mother took her from wherever they lived to a school and day care near her office so her daughter would be close by:

We lived for a time in Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge, but we were going to school in Burnaby. I would do that commute at 6 in the morning with my mom and she would make these god-awful bran muffins, they were vile, which is an ongoing joke between us. And it would be an hour to get me to day care every day. I would quietly throw these muffins out the window because they were so awful. Every once in awhile she would treat me and we would go to Robin's Donuts. That was a good day. We would get into day care at 7, I would curl up in a corner and sleep and the day care would take me into school, and she would pick me up at 6. That was hard for her for a long time.

This childhood experience, which she deemed as something difficult for her mother rather than for herself, seemed to have had a lasting impact. Gerson opposed the traditional construct of motherhood as personal sacrifice and denial of selfhood, as described by the middle cohort.

“That’s a major issue we have to overcome,” said Gerson, who was single (with a boyfriend) and had no children. She felt this attitude came from her age as well as gender and experience:

JG: I see women who are so wrapped up in being a mother that they’ve forgotten all sense of self. Their identities are just gone. I can’t relate to that, I have tried talking to those women, it’s not pleasant, this is all they talk about. I can’t picture that for myself. But that’s got a lot to do with the age that I am as well. I would love to be able to have a kid and have a kid grow up and see me be a strong, full-time working mom who is Jen Gerson, just as I am Jen Gerson today. And raise that kid to have strong sense of self.

VS: As your mother did.

JG: As my mother did, exactly, my perspective is probably different because of that. My mom didn’t have that choice. I think that if my mom had that choice she probably would have stayed home and been a typical mom but she didn’t have that option.

When replying to my question about those personal factors that are immutable affecting how she practiced journalism, Gerson said “kind of yes and no,” as well as calling her own approach of putting others at ease a “powerful” tool to get past externalities to the core of what is human:

JG: As you and I both know, when you’re sitting down to have an interview with someone, that’s always going to be affected by who you’re having the interview with and how they perceive you. So yeah, when I’m approaching a 200-pound cop at a murder scene, I’m going to play it a little differently than I would if I were a 200-pound white guy. You always have to tailor how you approach things to how people perceive you and I think there’s an element of intuitiveness to that.

VS: So how might you approach a 200-pound cop at a murder scene?

JG: Well, everybody knows if you’re female and you approach a 200-pound cop at a murder scene, you kind of play it simple. Simple and sweet a little bit. But I also think there’s some value of playing against that stereotype in different situations.

VS: How so?

JG: If I’m talking to someone who is high up in the corporate world or a scientist, not playing it down and just being dead-on smart. I’m playing against that expectation of how people might expect me to be, judging by my job and my looks and my age and my gender, it is a powerful thing to do, because the second they can see past how I look and to the fact that I’m actually engaging with them as a person, I get a better interview and I get somebody who is far more willing to take time to explain things. I think the best interviewers can connect with people on a human level and can get past the external stuff. I don’t know if I’m one of the best interviewers. I can’t really be a judge of that.

VS: It sounds like you’re sensitive to stereotypes or expectations that others might have because of these combinations of things.

JG: Probably not consciously, probably intuitively. I’m okay with that. I’m okay with playing with those stereotypes a little bit either by dealing with them or by challenging them, depending on the scenario

VS: So it’s adaptive behaviour.

JG: Yeah it's totally adaptive. I don't think that's unique to young female journalists. I think every journalist has to be somewhat conscious about what they put off, when they walk into to an environment. They have to be conscious about putting people at ease.

Furthering the idea of adaptive behaviour, or playing with stereotypes, being helpful, Gerson added that she felt women were probably better at mirroring their interviewees, and that might be a learned behaviour but “if you're a successful journalist, period, you know how to do this.” She noted a different approach for broadcast journalists, who needed the “sound bite” and would have to get more “in your face” with sources to get quotes. She also suggested that broadcast journalism was more focused on “young, attractive females” than print. Gerson also thought that because of the long hours, stress and relatively low pay of newspaper work, women would self-select to leave as long as they were expected to be primary caregivers for children, and that this held true for politics, finance and other demanding, male-dominated lines of work. Her story reflected how from her position and experiences, cultural norms seem immutable, as Daiute and Lightfoot (2004) posit such stories do.

Gerson said she could understand how someone starting in the business in 1977 (meaning me) could find gender an important aspect of newspapering. But it was no longer a boys' club, she said, and she could see herself “choosing” to be an editor-in-chief of a daily in 20 years. She introduced the social variable of class without using the word, rather describing its impact as felt through student debt levels. She argued that fewer young people could afford to go to university to study journalism than previously. Simultaneously, partly because of hiring restrictions over the past few years, instead of hiring young people from smaller papers who had proven themselves – a traditional career path – big papers were only taking hires from university internship programs, usually on contract and not fulltime:

Now if you want to work at the (Toronto) *Star* you better get an internship position out of university and increasingly if you want to get that internship you need a Master's degree and increasingly to have that Master's degree you have a huge amount of student debt and increasingly if you have that student debt you can't afford to work in a newspaper. So what I'm increasingly seeing in my peer group, and this is totally regardless of male or female, is that people in my peer group are opting out. Or they're dropping out. That's the state of the career path from where I sit and I'm ahead of most people my age because I had the luxury of graduating without debt, and I have the luxury of support networks now.

So the only way to begin a newspaper career today, she said, was to be wealthy enough to emerge from a post-graduate program debt-free and to be able to make it through the first few years of relatively low-paid, low-security contracts with lots of support. She told me a story about how she kept running into people who used to work at the *Herald*, but who were now doing public relations in Alberta health services. One such woman told her that she had "loved her job but at a certain point working in journalism becomes a luxury."

Another luxury, or at least a potential one, said Gerson, was that women "have the luxury of marrying men who can then carry on more of the financial burden," so that women, generally speaking, felt less pressure to earn higher wages, and this factor might mean more women could decide to stay in journalism, despite having been a generation that was seeing continual layoffs. However, the trend to becoming a freelance journalist, a poorly paid field dominated by women (described by McKercher, 2009), was scary. It would be like "being an Avon lady part time." Still, she was not worried about herself: "I'm going to do fine," she predicted, as the "youngest person in the newsroom now for five years' running." But down the road, newspapers will not have hired or trained the next generation of managers, creating a leadership gap, she predicted:

So right now everyone is panicking about the web and high wages and video and all that. What they're not panicking about and what they're going to start to panic about in the next 10 to 20 years is where our next middle managers are going to come from, because

they haven't trained enough of us young 'uns to take over that role. So where do you think you're going to get that staff when your next wave retires? They're not thinking long term So this is where I start to see things fall apart, and where I see this not working in a long-term way. And most people are looking at the career in the next 20 or 30 years and saying, 'I don't see how this could work'. That being said, for those 10 or 20 of us who hang in by our fingernails, we're going to be well-positioned if we can hang in. But it starts to become a game of chicken for younger journalists.

As Gerson described in more detail how few of her classmates were still in journalism, she added that nobody “stays in a contract when they have a mortgage” and “nobody hangs in when they have a kid.” The most talented of her fellow graduates were self-selecting out of journalism altogether, because of this perceived lack of long-term prospects. While monetizing the Internet was the current panic, she said several times, the real issue was that papers were “killing the next generation of people who would be taking over, forcing them out, and even she, who a few minutes earlier had said she would be fine, could not “guarantee that I'll be in journalism.”

That wavering was linked to the interplay of her age, gender and potential parenthood, and the light at the end of the tunnel shone on the *Herald's* on-site day-care centre:

VS: So, if you in five years are thinking 'I'd like to get married, get partnered, have a kid,' what would that look like for you in your career?

JG: I don't know. It's something that at 26 I'm having to start to think about. The *Calgary Herald* has a day-care program. And I'll admit the first time I walked into the *Herald* and saw the day-care program I set up my little desk and thought, 'oh good, I can breed one day. That's fabulous. Great.'

VS: That's been there for a long time, too, that day-care centre.

JG: Oh yeah, that's been there for a really long time. And I know a lot of women in the *Herald* are breeding, it's kind of ridiculous. (Laughs.)

VS: Do you think that's part of it?

JG: Oh I think that's a huge part of it. Having that there makes a huge difference. As a woman you look at that and think, 'ok that's an employer that accepts maternity leaves are a part of life, and there's a day-care downstairs and little kids run through the parking lot all day.' So that does make this a more plausible for women at the *Herald* I think. The idea of maternity leave I don't think would be career-destroying if I were to stay at the *Herald*.

So the corporate decision to support parents with a day-care centre was helpful, but the future was also mined with "really thorny issues about identity and branding and how that works in Canadian journalism," which was not a healthy model, as Sarah Petrescu of the *TC* described. Gerson said she and other young journalists felt pressure to develop brands (or sort of public identities) for themselves, to amp up their Twitter, Facebook and number of blog followers, pushing them towards a personality-centric journalism. So while that was interesting and even exciting, more "branding" could lead to fascinating gender and political identity issues:

JG: I didn't come into journalism because I wanted to be a brand. Or necessarily because I wanted to be a columnist, I just enjoy doing journalism. Now you're telling me that I need to become a public figure for doing news articles? That starts to get into real issues. Then you start to put gender politics and gender identity into those issues and you have another level of very interesting questions.

VS: Such as?

JG: Well, what's it like for a man to develop a brand versus a woman to develop a brand? Are those different spheres?

VS: What do you think?

JG: Oh, absolutely.

VS: How so?

JG: When a woman develops a brand, she always has to encompass an element of sexuality or deal with the element of sexuality. A man doesn't, generally speaking, I don't think. A man can develop a brand about just his thoughts and a woman can't develop a brand without some element of sexuality. I think that is very difficult for women to do that. Some women do, sure. But I

don't think I can think of a single, well-known journalist who at some point hasn't written about some element of her sexuality. I just don't think it really happens.

VS: And by sexuality you don't mean about whether she's gay or straight, but her womanhood?

JG: Her womanhood, some element of sexual practice, some element of motherhood, some element of procreative force. I mean, these issues become an issue and then a question also becomes if you're a brand you also have to have your image out here, you have to have your face out there. Then how you look starts to become far more paramount and that's far more of a pressure for women than I think it is for men.

VS: A guy can get away with being ordinary-looking.

JG: Absolutely.

While Gerson said early in the interview that gender was not an issue, she described here a gendered pressure, connected to motherhood and reproduction, that came to bear on reporters and commentators through social media tools. We note here again the playing with stereotypes on the one hand, the denying of them on the other, and then into the mix comes the detailed expression of how sexism actually might manifest itself on the job.

Unlike other participants, Gerson said she did not go into journalism to change the world or affect the socio-political agenda. She got into journalism because, she said, "I just love doing the daily grunt work. And whether or not it makes an impact or change in anything is beyond my ability to control." Her ego, she said, was not tied up in the outcome of stories, but journalism's appeal was that it was never boring, "because when I'm bored I'm dying." Everything from collecting the data to interviewing people to trying to understand something, every single day, was her joy. The process of sating curiosity appealed to her immensely. Being out in the world still seemed far more interesting than management, but, she said, "reporting is a young woman's game and everybody knows that. At a certain point your energy levels come down and your

priorities change.” She could see herself going into an increasingly writerly direction as opposed to management, and one day, she said, she would love to oversee young female writers, maybe when she was 50, as a mentor. Meanwhile, she did not want to “sacrifice my career for a kid, I just don’t want to. I realize that might be an inevitable reality, but so much of my sense of self is wrapped up in my career I think it would be really hard for me.” Taking a part-time position or becoming a copy editor seemed anathema to her, but she was not prepared to say it was the industry’s fault she faced these decisions. The question was whether the problem was societal.⁴²

In Hamilton, Emma Reilly saw similar conflicts about the industry, family and the gendered contours of career on the horizon. But as a contract employee, she was more vulnerable than Gerson, feeling that she had to wage a personal daily battle to stay in her job. An ambitious young person, she expanded on the notion of how age-related characteristics dominated her work day and how a female affinity for multi-tasking would prove effective down the road.

‘I have to fight every single day if I want to stay’

Family life and work life were intertwined for Emma Reilly, a 27-year-old Hamilton *Spectator* reporter. When interviewed, she lived in the west end of Toronto with her husband, commuting 45 minutes to work on the highway every morning, staying with her parents in Hamilton about once a week if the weather was bad or she worked late. Her father was a professor of electrical engineering at McMaster University and her mother was a parish nurse in Hamilton. As a middle child, she was typical in that regard, being chatty, attention-seeking, and ambitious. “I want lots of things in life both professionally and personally,” she said.⁴³ At that moment, her career was

⁴² I learned after defending this dissertation that Gerson left the *Herald* to work as Alberta correspondent for the *National Post*. In an email, she said “the game of chicken continues.” (J. Gerson, personal communication, March 14, 2013.)

⁴³ E. Reilly, personal communication, Nov. 18, 2010, Hamilton.

absorbing her, since it was demanding and intense. She was the City Hall reporter, promoted when Nicole MacIntyre went on maternity leave. She found the City Hall beat exciting and important, because Hamiltonians were, she said, particularly engaged in municipal politics.

With an undergraduate degree in English from Queen’s University – she “was never very good at math” – and having worked as a copy editor at the Queen’s student newspaper, Reilly went on to study journalism at Ryerson (as “there are no English factories that you can go to after university”) between 2006 and 2008. She interned at the *Spec* and the Canadian Press newsroom and was hired by the *Spec* for an eight-month contract, but was laid off in 2009. Reilly called being let go from her dream job “totally heart-breaking.” She found work as a legislative assistant briefly at Queen’s Park, but missed journalism. In the fall of 2009, she was rehired at the *Spec* on contract, and when we spoke, her contract had just been renewed for another year. “I’m relatively safe until October, 2011,” she said, “but who knows.”⁴⁴

Her natural affinity for descriptive journalism was evident in her story, rich with similes, of how she came to it and why she preferred print to broadcasting:

ER: It was what I was good at and I was so interested in what I was doing. It was like jumping into a swimming pool and finding out you can do a perfect front crawl. Or not perfect, but you can move around. I remember the summer before I started at the Queen’s *Journal* I was reading *The Spectator* more heavily. I wrote a letter to the editor and it was published. I was so excited. I don’t know what it was about it, it was just natural, like when you meet someone for the first time and you know that you’re really going to like this person and you can’t necessarily explain why. It’s a combination of factors that you lock into. I enjoyed the process of talking to people. I enjoyed the process of writing. I hit a little node of people who were like me, who saw the world in a similar way. Who had a bizarre sense of humour and, you know what it’s like.

⁴⁴ Reilly was eventually hired as a full-time employee.

Like the other youngest participants, Reilly said she is expected to be technologically savvy and able to multi-task. Besides print stories and her blog, she had responsibilities to update her Twitter postings constantly and more recently, to provide online video clips. Only one other reporter, a more senior Tiger Cats (Hamilton's CFL team) reporter had as many "platforms" to fill with content. She said she had been identified as an "early adopter" and while she enjoyed the role of informally showing others how to use technology, she was frustrated by older reporters who were not jumping into learning the new media technology and continued just to "write stories." Her youth was an asset, mostly, and a liability, slightly. As cohort member Laura Fraser of the Halifax paper will describe later, paternalism crept in:

ER: That's where age comes into it a lot. That extra sense of, 'you're young so you're technologically savvy, so do this for us and then you can teach other people how to do that.' And that's not something that's been enforced with an iron fist. A lot has been give and take. Some has come around naturally. I volunteered to help people with video. I'm happy to do that and that's not a responsibility that I begrudge. I like doing it and I'm happy to do it. So, it's not a negative thing. It's something that I'm conscious of. Not negative all the time, I should say.

VS: So age for you is the bigger factor?

ER: Within the newsroom, but outside as well. I get comments about how young I am all the time. And sometimes I find it funny. Sometimes frustrating. A mayoral candidate who used to be a member of the Tiger Cats came up to me at his press conference and we had talked over the phone many times. And when he met me he said, 'oh, you're still a rookie'. And I thought, 'ha, yeah I get it. You're a former Tiger Cat and I understand, but that doesn't mean that I can't do my job.' I think my age is both an asset and a liability because I think it gives an excuse for people to not take me seriously and that's something that I really don't want. I've learned to almost work it to my advantage because there's this one councillor who is almost paternal in his relationship with me, which you aren't necessarily looking for, but you can maybe spin it to your advantage. And so, it was intimidating to be so young and to have so much responsibility and go out there and work with

people who are older than me and more experienced. That was something that I was conscious of and still am.

Like Jen Gerson, Reilly felt tension between her personal ambition and the insecurity of the industry, her role in it at the *Spec* and the future of print in general. “I think you’d be hard-pressed to find a young person who doesn’t feel they have to get their dukes up if they are going to succeed,” she said. Journalism required mental stamina and toughness, and so did simply staying employed in it. “I feel like I have to fight every single day if I want to stay,” she said, and that fight was worth it for the valuable role that journalists played in informing the public.

Reilly said she preferred to write “a cool neighbourhood story over a dry budget story,” but with budgets affecting the whole city, she found herself trying to balance those larger institutional stories with the smaller, human ones. While all journalists tried to be as neutral as possible, she felt, a “wide variety of personalities” among those people she wrote about meant that her personal responses toward them had to be carefully monitored. Editors ensured that there was a “buffer” that prevented her feelings “leaching” into stories. With her journalism instructors having inculcated the notion into the students that they must not insert themselves or their opinions into news stories, it was difficult to recognize that this could, and did, happen. With every story, a reporter made choices, and so did the editors who put the headline on it. It’s a subtle difference, but synthesizing arguments and positions as she described is different from writing with an obvious point of view, as columnists are paid to do. Reporters are not.

Reilly felt that, being on contract, she was “lucky” not to have children, briefly echoing the luck theme of the senior cohort. Her generation, she said, felt pressured to “have it all” as the previous generation did, with that “bring-home-the-bacon-and-fry-it-up-in-the-pan mentality.” She saw herself as more focused on work than children at the moment, identifying the old boys’

club and how male editors were still “begetting male editors.” Reilly described looking down the road five years to when she and her husband would start a family, after focusing on their careers:

I’m not going to be able to be as devoted to my job as I would like. I think obviously, this has been written about before, maternity leave, part-time, all of that stuff can impede your progression on your career if you’re a woman in a way that it doesn’t for a man. That’s something I’m very conscious of. Looking down that road and wondering how it is going to turn out. And watching other women in the newsroom do it in front of me and seeing how they handle it. It is something that I think about a lot. That’s a huge deal in terms of climbing the editorial ladder. But, on the other hand, why stay? Well, because you love it. Because you have a family doesn’t mean that you stop loving it, or stop wanting to devote your time and energy to it.

Citing other reports, Reilly said it was “obvious” that maternity altered career trajectories.

Looking at her mother, mother-in-law and sister, and how they all thought it important to have a good work and family life, Reilly said she shared this idea, but work was more important at that moment. She listed reasons to be “Zen” about the situation for young women at newspapers, citing factors about which she felt nothing could be done. To go there would be paralyzing, while at the same time infuriating:

If I work hard and push, push, push over the next five years then maybe I’ll be in a place where I can afford to take a year off. I definitely have that mentality. Especially in this job, where it’s so hard just to get your foot in the door. Once you’re in you don’t want to pull it back out again. Whether it’s fair for men not to have to deal with that, I don’t know. You can’t change the fact that women have babies. Perhaps that makes us better journalists because we are able to multi-task and nurture and come at it from a more understanding or open perspective. I’m generalizing here in terms of ‘quote unquote female characteristics,’ but it’s kind of like my contract job. That I got used to not dwelling on it because if I do, I’m paralyzed. I get angry, I get frustrated. There’s nothing I can do about my contract other than work hard and hope. So, again, the fact that women have to take time off work to have kids, there’s nothing you can do. That’s just it. And I think it’s just another level of complexity that you have to deal with as a woman that you don’t necessarily have to deal with as a man.

Reilly touches on the levels of “complexity” that women experience, essentially calling up an intersectional concept of how individuals embody multiple identities (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). From her first days as a journalist, for example, Reilly had been thinking a lot about how to “have a life and do this really demanding job.” Even whether to change her last name on marrying was a choice to be made. She continued using her maiden name for her byline, based on talks with other women in the newsroom in the same situation, for continuity’s sake. Being flexible to fit the system seemed uppermost in her approach to newspaper work, along with the sense of power she had as a reporter to influence the socio-political agenda at the same time.

Besides the luck of having a great group of colleagues to talk to about these things, and not to have kids, Reilly also felt lucky being “in the position to set the agenda” for civic politics in Hamilton. She loved to dig around, find something – especially stories where taxpayers find out their money might have been poorly spent – and break that story and then see people talk about the issue, as well as seeing the local TV reporters having to play catch-up. This position was not only a joy, it was a weighty responsibility. Looking ahead, it seemed that the “monster” of technology was going to be a “huge deal for the rest of my career,” so she had concerns about having to spend more time on video/broadcast-style journalism, when her real love was reporting in this way for print, and perhaps providing context and analysis. Ultimately, said Reilly, the kind of multi-tasking that new media technology seemed to require might mean that women would be better suited to it than men. She used the imagery of a tree with many branches to explain this idea, and how women might not be CEOs in businesses because of it. She compared City Editor Carla Ammerata’s approach to work – as an unofficial top decision-maker by virtue of her multi-tasking brain – to how her mother organized family life while she had another job:

ER: I think that women are just generally better multi-taskers;
that’s been proven forever. Even my husband, he’s good at doing

this one thing but then you say, ‘did you make that vet appointment’ and he goes, ‘no, I forgot.’ I have to make sure that you do this and ‘did you pay the parking ticket?’ ‘No, okay well can you do that tomorrow?’ And when you don’t do that tomorrow I’m going to text you in the middle of the day. And then I’m going to buy Christmas cards and write them for my side and make you write them for your side, and all of that stuff will make us better at approaching this multifaceted media of the future. Maybe, even if we are not officially the CEOs we will be the unofficial CEOs of not only the household but of newsrooms in terms of multitasking — I’m picturing branches springing out of your brain and on each twig is a different kernel that you have to be in charge of. And that’s how a lot of women approach their homes and maybe that will be the way that women approach their work.

VS: You think of that analogy, you really do see how it has to change because of how it will remain the same if men are at the top and they have women organizing them —

ER: Yeah, exactly. You know? That’s the funny thing too.

VS: That supports their continuation in that role.

ER: That’s something interesting that I’d never really thought of. Maybe it is the women in these [senior but not top] positions who are making a lot of the decisions. And again, that’s just something I’m speculating.

Even in my household growing up, my mom was the one keeping the house together and going to work, and with me and my husband it’s the same. I’m the one who has the tree branch in my head. And he’s very good with stuff like housework, but he doesn’t think ‘okay, this, this, this and this needs to be done.’

VS: That domestic to-do list.

ER: Exactly. You could make the comparison in terms of newsrooms because Carla is the one who knows, ‘Emma’s working on this story and I’ve got this meeting’ — she’s into all of that, right? I’m being presumptuous about what’s going on in Carla’s brain.

VS: But you can see what she has to do. So, she keeps a lot of balls in the air.

ER: She sure does. She really, really does.

When I called Reilly in March 2012 to ask her to join me on an industry conference panel in Toronto on April 27 to discuss the thesis topic, she told me that she had been hired on fulltime, and what a relief that was (E. Reilly, personal communication, March 21, 2012). She also said that speculation had simultaneously risen about when she was going to have a baby (an office pool had begun for the timing), and the news that she and her husband had bought a car prompted a (male) senior editor to ask if it would be easy to outfit with a car seat. Her reproductive intent was now newsroom gossip, which was off-putting.⁴⁵

Like Reilly in Hamilton, Victoria-based Katie DeRosa found the multi-tasking aspects of her work a challenging, inevitable feature of being a young journalist. Like Gerson, she found that qualities associated with being female could be an important card to play (or hold) on the job, especially outside the newsroom. While women leaders were nearly invisible to most in this cohort because there were so few, DeRosa had the most to say on the theme of mentorship. She appreciated the support for her own career and helped others coming up behind her.

‘This shift toward technology, I don’t think it is gender specific’

Katie DeRosa, 26, and I spoke at the back of Murchie’s tea shop on Government Street in Victoria on a winter afternoon. After joining the *Times Colonist* in December 2008, first on a brief internship and then on a year’s contract to replace someone on a maternity leave, DeRosa had been hired fulltime as the crime reporter. The transition was not seamless, however. At first, then-Editor-in-Chief Lucinda Chodan had told DeRosa no money was in the budget to hire her fulltime: but after the *Ottawa Citizen* offered DeRosa a one-year contract, Chodan scraped together enough to hire her. Born in Niagara Falls, and feeling far away from her family there,

⁴⁵ Reilly joined the panel along with Margo Goodhand and Kelly Toughill, both in this study; Marci Ien, the co-host of *Canada AM*, who offered a broadcaster’s perspective; and Patricia Graham, vice-president of digital development for Postmedia’s Pacific News Group.

DeRosa was initially not sure she would take the permanent *TC* job. But she did what she always does in difficult situations:

That was a decision I had to struggle with, because it was so far away from my family, but it's a full-time position and a lot more security. I talked to a bunch of friends who are journalists, female journalists actually, and they said, 'you know it looks good on your resume to have a full-time position. Even if you don't stay there forever it shows that you're not just bouncing around for year-long contracts and someone wants to keep you.' And so, so that was a big decision, and I've been here since.⁴⁶

DeRosa said she loved her job, with its office camaraderie and competitiveness with journalists in other media. She appreciated the mentorship and encouragement of her three women bosses (who would all be gone from the *TC* by March 2012). The daughter of a restaurant manager (father) and banker (mother) with one younger brother, DeRosa said she took a lot of her confidence from a small group of friends she had had since Grade Three. DeRosa, who was single, was about to be a bridesmaid in two of their weddings. Listening to many references to her female mentors, groups of women friends and her own mentorship of even younger student journalists at Carleton University, I got the impression that DeRosa thrived in a supportive village that was helping to raise her to journalistic heights. And that was happening because enough women were in positions to guide her and each other. These relationships gave her the confidence to try new things, such as fly across the country for a new job, and to hope for – and receive – support and feedback when she wanted to write more than just breaking news.

DeRosa, while acknowledging her own determination, did talk about luck as a factor in her early career gains, but luck was related to being hired during a protracted industry downturn, while the oldest cohort had talked about luck in terms of an ongoing lack of entitlement.

“Especially because I’m young I almost feel really lucky to be where I am right now. I feel that

⁴⁶ K. DeRosa, personal communication, Jan. 12, 2011, Victoria.

I'm pretty young to have a fulltime job compared to other friends I know," she explained. Luck also allowed her to do both hard news and investigative stories; she said some of her female friends who were journalists feared being kept in lifestyles sections rather than being promoted to news. Being on the news side meant she could make the case to her editors (Stephanie Coombs and Lucinda Chodan) to do bigger investigative stories of the kind that would later win her awards, as well as simply being able to develop expertise on her crime beat. That expertise, in turn, gave her the power to choose those stories she felt needed more in-depth reporting. A recent example she gave was a story on the difficulty of charging and prosecuting impaired drivers who are under the influence of drugs rather than alcohol.

As part of a mentoring program at Carleton University, where she, as a fourth-year student, had mentored a second-year student, DeRosa had already seen a tendency among other "young girls" to be timid about asking tough questions of authority figures. She told the younger journalism students that they could "get over that" with time, intelligence and a lot of research, so there would be no need to use a confrontational approach (as many TV journalists felt they needed to do). She noted another factor regarding women's physical size, which could be a problem or something to exploit, as Gerson had mentioned and Laura Fraser in Halifax will comment on later in this chapter too:

I think women struggle because even from a physical point of view if you're small and you're questioning this big burly police officer or politician, the physical disadvantage sometimes weighs into your mental confidence. So you just literally feel small, and maybe sometimes it comes to your advantage, because you're unassuming so they don't see you as a threat and they relax a little bit, but you have to get over that, you have put yourself on an equal playing field with all the other reporters. And in a scrum I feel that really comes out, because that's when you have to yell over other reporters, and sometimes I leave those scrums feeling frustrated, because I couldn't yell loud enough for someone to hear my question, and maybe my question will still get an answer, but there

is something about standing in a scrum with your tape recorder and not getting a question in and you kind of just feel like you leech off everyone else's questions. And that is a challenge, you have to elbow your way in.

She had one "horror story" attached to an intersection of her age and gender, which also illustrated the difference between how sexism was manifested when senior participants such as Dalhousie's Kelly Toughill and the *TC*'s Lucinda Chodan (and I) were starting out, and how it can appear subtly today. This story recalled an event during DeRosa's internship at the *St. Catharines Standard* in 2008, before she came to the *TC*.⁴⁷ When DeRosa described how the night reporter took her byline off, that meant that he removed DeRosa's name from her story and put his own on, then at the bottom put "with files from Katie DeRosa." The "lede" is the first few sentences, which are often updated for breaking news, after the day reporter leaves:

KD: The most negative experience I had, and I felt it had to do with myself as a female, was when I was at the *St. Catharines Standard*. I spent four hours covering a man who fell off the Escarpment and died. And we had to find out from police if it was a suicide or not, because if it was a suicide we would downplay it; if it was an accident then we would say there was no fence there, how was he there, was he drinking, did he go for a walk and just not see the cliff?

So I spent all day talking to people, talking to the eleven-year-old boys who had found the body. I saw the body thirty metres down on the rocks, and that was the most traumatizing thing I've seen. The night reporter was tasked with calling the police and finding out whether it was a suicide, because we had been working all day and not getting anything from the police.

He took my byline off and put his byline on, and I got a 'with files from.' Even though all the information was mine, the writing was mine, and all he did was change the lede.

I was furious, because I was a young reporter and that was the biggest news story I had covered at the time, because I was just

⁴⁷ When I worked at the *Standard*, from 1977 to 1980, I was in the Women's Department, behind the washrooms. Some members of the composing room staff often tried to embarrass me when I went downstairs to watch type and photos being put on pages. This was the era of nude photos of women on composing room walls.

starting out. And everything counts for your portfolio. I was just livid, and there was no way for it to be reversed, and when I went to that editor about he said ‘oh well that’s just the way XXXX is.’

VS: So you came out as someone who was easy for him to exploit as opposed to somebody who he could mentor and share the limelight with?

KD: Exactly. If I was his age or if I was a man, would he have pulled that? Maybe not, so I was furious. And the only thing I got from my editor in the morning story meeting, which XXXX wasn’t there for, because he was the night reporter, was, ‘by the way Katie did most of the work for that story.’ So he did acknowledge that, but it still didn’t feel like enough. And you know I almost look at that as my horror story, and everything else has gotten better from there.

Much admired by more than a few survey participants was veteran sports and court reporter and columnist Christie Blatchford, a talented, hard-working journalist/author who is famously divorced and without kids, for years (but no longer) an unrepentant smoker, and known for her love of running and for being gaga over her dogs. DeRosa was a fan too, mostly for Blatchford’s “no bullshit” way of crime reporting as though she were “writing a novel” and for her toughness and persistence. DeRosa pointed out that Blatchford exemplified an advantage that women journalists and commentators had over men: she could write flirty, ribald columns that men could not get away with, as they would be accused of “womanizing.” Once again, the notion of playing with gender stereotypes – owning them instead of being victimized – appeared. Still, it was not always easy to do so without being careful.

In her own job covering the police beat, DeRosa felt that a big challenge that came with her gender was interacting with her sources in a way that “doesn’t come off as flirting” or flattery. While older, male reporters might ask police sources out for a drink, DeRosa would stick to coffee and made sure she was not sending a message that might come off as romantic interest.

The combination of her gender and marital status could be tricky, but the subject was taboo:

When you're single and you're a female, you think, 'well you don't want to go out for drinks or out for coffee with this police officer if he's married because there could be a misunderstanding.' It's almost this awkward thing that no one talks about. Often times as women we struggle with when to turn on the charm to not loosen someone up, but to get them comfortable or get them to joke and maybe get a better interview or get better information than you would otherwise. I don't think it should be construed as using your body or using your sexuality to get a story. I just think it's a characteristic of a female.

Her speculation as to why so few women moved up to senior management in newspapers, notwithstanding her own unusual experience of having three female managers (who have now all moved on), mirrored her peers across the country, touching on the pre-emptive public-relations move many young women graduates take, as noted in the introduction. She saw it as a choice:

KD: It could be because reporting is seen as so demanding you have to stay late or might have to stay late, or you stay until your story's done or something breaks. Maybe women feel that if they take more responsibility, they're the ones that have to stay late. If they have children or families, that's where they might go into PR, because it's nine to five. In my journalism school I was surprised how many really talented reporters didn't go into journalism, they went into PR and I wonder if right off the bat –

VS: These reporters were women?

KD: Yes, most people in my class who went into PR were women, so maybe they had this misconception that if you're a reporter you have to do this much overtime, and you're always at the office late. Now that I've worked with the *TC* for the most part I get out at 5:30, although Stephanie [Coombs] might have a different story, there are quite a few times where three big stories break and she's at the office 'til nine.

VS: What do you think about that? Why should we care if they go into PR and not reporting?

KD: I guess it's their choice. I just was never interested in PR, maybe I'll change my mind, but I find it so much more exciting to do something new every day and it depends on what kind of PR job I'd have.

DeRosa felt that she could not see leaving journalism, because she loved the rush of doing exclusives from within the collegial newsroom. She would not speculate on how marriage and children might affect her career, but did recall how her banker mother would leave work to pick up her kids, and then return to work, splitting up her day. That example was partly why DeRosa never expected to work regular hours herself and still needed a reminder from then City Editor Stephanie Coombs, to file for overtime when she stayed late to finish a story.

Looking ahead, perhaps when she had turned 50 or so, DeRosa said she might return to Carleton as an instructor. Editing was possible, but she felt she would miss reporting. For DeRosa, the value in “writing a successful story” was being a public educator, making people care about an issue that they might not have known about before, from mental health to police accountability. The only trouble looming for her generation was how to juggle the technological demands, which were accelerating at the same time as damaging, industry-wide cost-cutting. The word “overwhelmed” came up several times:

KD: I’ve seen everyone embracing this shift towards technology, and I don’t think it’s gender specific. There are concerns, like how am I supposed to take notes, tape record, and take a video at the same time, so I can feel overwhelmed. I have to take these notes, so when I get back to the office I can upload and put this story on the web within five minutes. But I’ve also got to be videotaping and I’ve got to go edit this video, and I’ve got to refresh this story I’ve put on the web, and find an angle for the next day’s paper.

So there’s a chance that people will feel overwhelmed, but I think that’s a resource thing, you just keeping seeing cuts, cuts, cuts, but you’re expecting more of people at the same time. So you’re doing more with less, so where is the quality going to suffer? Where is the opportunity for journalists to grow as investigative journalists if we’re not given the chance to work for a week, three weeks, or whatever on a story, because we are expected to be chasing breaking news?

VS: And, you notice that the stories that *TC* has won awards for, and is nominated for, tend to be those investigative stories.

KD: Exactly, exactly. So as a woman who is driven to get those awards and who says, ‘this is my goal to get nominated for a Webster and this is my goal to get this young journalist award.’ How do you make sure you are still writing stories that will get those awards, and then embrace the technology at the same time? So I think that is the challenge for women and men and I think that women are just as likely to embrace the technology, but there needs to be some support so you’re not overwhelmed.

DeRosa did achieve her goal of being nominated (twice) for a Jack Webster award (BC’s highest print journalism honour), and won in the best print reporter category in 2011. More recently (early 2012) she was awarded the first annual national James Travers Foreign Corresponding Fellowship. She has used the time and \$25,000 in prize money to investigate the impact of Canada’s proposed tougher human smuggling laws on refugee claimants. The judges noted that DeRosa’s win of the Webster, her top marks from Carleton’s journalism school, and her engaging story-telling skills helped her to win the Travers prize.⁴⁸

Nicole O’Reilly, a Hamilton *Spectator* reporter, also covered crime and was equally busy honing her journalistic craft and teaching others how to use new media technology. She echoed Gerson’s and DeRosa’s view that using innately female characteristics was an effective strategy for certain interviews, and like Reilly, judged her age to be a major factor in her career. O’Reilly shared the “bring it on” mentality of the others when asked by her editors to work overtime because they knew she was single and without children, but intimated her willingness to say yes every time might have its limits.

‘If someone needs to stay late because someone called in sick, it will be me’

Like her *Spectator* colleague Emma Reilly, Nicole O’Reilly, who was 25 when interviewed, was born in southern Ontario (Mississauga), graduated from Ryerson University’s journalism

⁴⁸ The Canadian Journalism Project (2012), *Katie DeRosa named first James Travers Fellowship Recipient*. <http://j-source.ca/article/katie-derosa-named-first-james-travers-fellowship-recipient>, retrieved May 16, 2012

program, was working precariously (and anxiously) from contract to contract, fearful about the future of print journalism generally. And because the two were young white women who had similar last names and sat near each other at work, they both sometimes felt they were considered interchangeable by older editors.

Single and without children when we met, O'Reilly had the experience, like Gerson, of being raised by a single mom, her father having died when O'Reilly was nine. O'Reilly considered her and her sister's upbringing as middle class, with her mother working in early childhood education. Like so many other participants, she felt the call of writing in high school (on school magazines and yearbooks) and went to Ryerson's journalism school after graduation. Heading into the coursework, she loved the writing process, then soon became enthralled with hard-news reporting and "the digging and uncovering."⁴⁹ The notion of privilege arose, not in reference to (the lack of) being white, educated and middle class, but in terms of being able to tell others' stories and expose official malfeasance:

NO: It's a real position of privilege. People invite you into their lives and they tell you things that they don't normally tell people. Invite you into their homes, you're holding police, politicians accountable, government agencies —

VS: It's so powerful when writing goes out into the community.

NO: Especially when you feel like you've made a difference or you feel like you've exposed something or given voice to people that would have otherwise not had a voice. That's far more powerful than enjoying the actual way that you write it. Although, writing is enjoyable too.

VS: So it's the craft and also the impact?

NO: Yeah.

⁴⁹ N. O'Reilly, personal communication, Nov. 18, 2010, Hamilton.

Just as Katie DeRosa and Emma Reilly echoed the luck factor of the oldest group, O'Reilly echoes the common thread of being a voice for the voiceless, which transcended the generations in this study. But as with the youngest group only, she sensed that she would not find gender holding back her career. Journalism school experiences foretold this to her: first, most of her classmates were women, which is typical for journalism schools as was noted in the introduction. Second, she said that many of Ryerson's top instructors were women. During our one-on-one interview, I asked her why she thought those women professors might have left daily journalism for teaching, but we moved on to other topics after she said she had not wondered why.⁵⁰

After graduating from Ryerson, O'Reilly interned at the *Globe and Waterloo Region Record*, before working at the *Woodstock Sentinel-Review*. She received a national young journalist award for covering municipal affairs and environmental issues for the *Guelph Mercury*, but that did not prevent the paper from laying her off to cut costs: that memory was making her nervous the day we met, because the Spec was offering buyouts for the same reason.

During our interview, O'Reilly shared the view that her age was the primary personal factor that influenced her practice of journalism inside the newsroom, but gender could be at work in the field. She was the crime and security reporter, and described what could happen at a crime scene or dealing with police, as did Laura Fraser in Halifax, Jen Gerson in Calgary and Katie DeRosa in Victoria; she then turned to the impact of her marital and parenthood status:

NO: I would definitely say that my age primarily, but also my gender, affect how people perceive me. It affects how you build relationships with sources, right? I'm a crime reporter and I go to a crime scene. How a police officer is going to react to me being a young, 25-year-old woman is different than the crime reporter whom I took over from, who was a middle-aged man. It's never inappropriate, but they can be flirty with you and you have to make sure that a line isn't crossed, but it's definitely the way you speak

⁵⁰ O'Reilly did return to the topic in the focus group the next day, which will be discussed in Chapter 7.

with them. You can be tongue-in-cheek and joke around and they react better to you that way. They are going to be more comfortable with you and honest with you. But within the newsroom I don't feel like I'm treated differently because of my gender, but definitely my age. I think because of my age technology was not as scary for me as it was for some other people in the newsroom. So, it's expected of me and I'm fine with that, I know how to use Twitter or pick up a camera.

VS: Whereas the people who are older, there is less expectation they will pick it up?

NO: It's more they get agitated and upset, 'how am I supposed to do all this' and, so in anticipation of that reaction, yeah. I also think that because I'm not married, I don't have kids and my age, and being a junior person in the newsroom, you do have to pay your dues but if there's someone that has to cover the 6 am shift they will ask me. If someone needs to pick up a weekend last minute, it will be me. If someone needs to stay late because someone's called in sick, it will be me. If someone needs to get another story thrown at them, it will be me.

VS: And how do you feel about that?

NO: I'm okay with it. I feel like I'm at least respected enough that if it was too far, I would be comfortable saying that it is too far I am happy to be busy. I'd rather have too much to do than too little.

Where members of the most senior cohort resented sexism at work, O'Reilly, like her young counterparts, saw gender as something she could perform ironically and to her advantage, which the narrative analysis literature explains as flirting with ambiguities and feminists see as characteristic of third-wave politics. At the same time (unlike Gerson at the *Calgary Herald*), she said she felt the old boys' club at the workplace was intact. She also said, however, that gender and motherhood affected women's careers more in the past than today, noting that the paper had strong women in middle-management roles, and strong women writers on staff. Still, she acknowledged that currently at the *Spec*, the publisher, editor-in-chief and two managing editors were male, with a lot of the mothers in the newsroom working part-time. O'Reilly also said she

would feel worried about her career stalling if she had a baby while on contract, but would not worry about returning to her hard-news post if she had a permanent position and got pregnant. But her *Spec* colleague Nicole MacIntyre, a few years older and a new mother, found that maternity caused her to leave her City Hall beat (to be succeeded by Emma Reilly) for part-time work, and then a full-time job in the lifestyles section.

Part of the impact of O'Reilly's journalism was based on the combination of her own skills and the power of technology that allowed her stories to go out on the Internet: she said she was known for her ability to dig, to go through databases and provide more context and details in a clearer way than perhaps other reporters could. This meant her stories, which she said gave voice to people who were victimized and gave them a human face, as so many other participants did, could have wider dissemination.

O'Reilly gave one example of an international story she had broken involving human trafficking from Eastern Europe. (She had latched onto it when it was an immigration story, before it involved criminal charges.) The story had gone so far that reporters from Budapest now called her. The only trouble was, she said, that an older, more senior male reporter (whom she liked and respected) had been put on the story with her, and her sense was that this was partly because "my being a young woman really was not safe for me to be going by myself to investigate" criminal activity in Hungary. In other words, if the company decided the story needed to be covered from Eastern Europe, she would not be sent on her own, but with the older male reporter. Now that the cases had gone to court, her story had been reported in the national news, and was said to be the largest human trafficking case in Canadian history.⁵¹

⁵¹ <http://www.thespec.com/news/crime/article/653197--human-trafficking-case-puts-spotlight-on-refugee-system>, retrieved April 15, 2012.

As for her leadership qualities, O'Reilly said that her capacity to train older reporters in new media technology was not any kind of power position; she felt she was not a mentor, just a trainer. But if she did not have power in the newsroom, she did have respect from her peers and bosses, based on knowing when to hold her tongue and when to speak out. Good journalism was what mattered, whether it was online or in print, and good journalism required investigation. O'Reilly said she loved reporting too much to see herself as an editor: rather, she looked forward to becoming a senior writer doing investigative projects in a large, daily newsroom.

As a single woman with few perceived strings attached, Laura Fraser said, like O'Reilly, that she was first called for overtime at the Halifax *Chronicle Herald*. And like O'Reilly, she dwelt on the importance of craft, drawing power from her own free agency to explore that craft within her job and beyond. She experienced the limits and advantages of power associated with physical size, as DeRosa did, but Fraser experienced the complications of having a disability. And her ideas about the power of mentoring went beyond fostering newsroom relationships.

'You can't write about the world if you are stuck in the newsroom'

Scene-setting is important to narrative: where are the characters located, literally and metaphorically? How do their positions affect the action? How does a writer compellingly describe them in their setting? These are crucial matters for fiction writers as well as non-fiction writers such as Laura Fraser, a reporter at the Halifax *Chronicle Herald*. When I interviewed her in a small meeting room beside the empty, quiet newsroom, she was 26, the same age as Jen Gerson and Katie DeRosa, also single and without children. Getting out of that office and into the community to see how people lived was central to her sense of power as a story-teller.

Like so many other participants, Fraser had wanted to write from a young age, but journalism was a flag of convenience at the start. Her real love was fiction: plays, stories, poetry. But to

make a living writing fiction seemed unlikely. So the Mississauga-born, middle-class (like most other participants) daughter of a teacher-turned-vice-principal (mom) and a hedge-fund director (dad) decided to go to journalism school at Ryerson. Graduating in 2007, she came to Halifax, partly because she knew the paper was independent (not part of a chain). During her internship at age 22, Fraser wrote stories about the cost of the Commonwealth Games, based on documents that had been slipped to her. The city eventually abandoned ideas of hosting the Games because of these costs but *The Chronicle Herald* editors were impressed enough to hire her as a summer replacement and then fulltime. After three years covering Cape Breton and winning a young journalist award, Fraser asked to return to the newsroom in Halifax, where she was working a night shift in general assignment news.

“What I really want to do is tell great stories,” Fraser said, describing in detail one she wrote that involved the Canadian daughter of a woman living in legal limbo in Romania, and how the story had propelled action that could result in the return of the woman’s mother to Canada.⁵² But in terms of professional development, Fraser said she would just as happily go for a walk in a forest, and try to come up with a compelling way to describe a ghostly grove of birch trees: she loved the image she had come up with, that of bony fingers.

For the most part, Fraser said, she did not think of herself as a “young, female journalist,” but rather as a journalist. But then she thought more about the issue in advance of our talk, and the issue of her youth emerged, as well as her small physical stature, and the impact of these changed depending where she found herself, either in the office or out interviewing:

LF: When I thought about it and looked at some of my colleagues who have been in the newsroom for significantly longer, I think at my age and lower experience, where I am still really excited about what I do, I still believe that there is a future with newspapers and I

⁵² L. Fraser, personal communication, Nov. 15, 2010, Halifax.

want to be part of making the change. I think that there are people who are a little bit older who are maybe a little more resistant to making that change. Or, simply are less excited about what they do and maybe a little more jaded.

VS: So your idea about these personal characteristics for you now, the one that is most meaningful, or the one that as you've thought about, is age.

LF: Is youth.

VS: Is youth. Not gender or anything else.

LF: I'd say the only time I'm concerned about gender is when I go out to a crime scene at night. I do think about that. I admit. You know the other night I went to a stabbing in Dartmouth and with that it's partly gender and partly size. I mean I am only five feet tall and it can be somewhat of a concern. I was out at 11:30 at night a couple weeks ago in a not so great neighbourhood, and there are moments that I am aware that I feel a little bit more vulnerable being a woman. But, at the same time, I still go out and do my job.

VS: Sure. So, for you, the gender stuff is more about how you are out in the world, your smallness, rather than how you are in the newsroom.

LF: Yeah. I don't know if that's just the way that I was raised or the way that I have grown up with other interactions with male figures in my life. Like I try not to see a major distinction between male and female journalists.

Unlike Gerson, O'Reilly and Reilly, Fraser told a more optimistic story about the industry and her future in it: she hedged her bets though, having applied to a couple of universities to take a Master's program in creative writing (some personal agency emerging here) as well as acknowledging, like the others, that she was thinking about the whole notion of being a parent, and its potential impact on her career.

Fraser saw herself as only loosely aligned to the paper, in that she enjoyed her colleagues and her job made it possible to hone her craft – to write stories, craft scenes and images, create change. Rather than being a newsroom leader, she worked independently for herself and for the

reader/public. “I’m not really doing it for the paper, I’m doing it because I think it’s important,” she said of her choice of stories. She attributed this to her creativity, need for control, and tendency to “push myself far harder than anyone else,” echoing a cohort theme of a sense of personal agency being powerful. Embedded in her (fairly typical) response to the question of why so few women were at the top of newsrooms was the downside of being a free agent, when it came to being seen that way by her managers. She was easier for them to move around:

LF: Women are less likely to hold executive positions because of the sort of family and work-life balance. I don’t know if it’s fair to attribute it to a gender cause, it’s just me speaking personally, but I have no desire to be at the top at a newspaper. It’s not at all what I want to do. If other women felt the same way I do then perhaps they just want to do an excellent job at whatever position it is that they’re holding. I think that there is a lot of pressure on women to be the head of a family in many ways, so it might be preferable to, to let someone else, in some ways, run the newspaper —

VS: Are you single now? I forgot to ask.

LF: Yes. I have thought about it and I think it’s hard to be really good at more than one thing. So I feel, and this is just purely from observation, but people, especially as I see friends who are also in the media becoming mothers, it definitely changes their attitude about work. I completely believe in a work-life balance. I think it will be hard to be a great writer, and especially if I want to write a book and be a mom at the same time. And be really good at that. Anyways, that’s just stuff I’ve been thinking about recently.

VS: Well, you’re in that age group.

LF: Anyway, we’ll see. In terms of how I’m seen in the newsroom, because I am single and don’t have children I am definitely the first person always called for OT. When I moved from Cape Breton the discussion was, ‘so you’re unattached, right? Okay, can you be here in a week?’ And I said, ‘I have to move all my physical things.’ Whereas the person who was moving to Cape Breton has two children and was given a couple [of] months to move. That might just be me attributing things differently, but I do feel there is a little more pressure on me to work holidays because I don’t have children and I don’t have family here.

VS: So you’re seen as more of a free agent.

LF: Yes, definitely. It's just expected that I will work late if something goes overtime. Normally I don't have a problem with that but just because I don't have children doesn't mean that I don't have other commitments outside of work.

In fact, Fraser was a Sparks leader, which meant that much of her free time was spent with “baby Girl Guides,” five- and six-year-old girls who were “the ones who make me think ‘all right, maybe I can’ ” be both a successful writer and parent.

I asked Fraser if she could comment on what I called a “minor physical disability” I had noticed in her neck and shoulder, about which Fraser did not offer information, whereas she mentioned her small size unprompted. I asked if not mentioning her disability might be related to her expressed values of independence and toughness, which she agreed was a factor. Fraser explained that she was born with a form of congenital scoliosis, and that while her physical health was now generally good, she had many operations growing up and had spent 18 months in a wheelchair. She explained that her arms were of different lengths and her left thumb was missing, but her disability had “never been a huge issue in the newsroom.” That is, until the previous spring. She described the power and limiting forces of disability in the workplace:

LF: I don't know if this is interesting to the study at all, but I broke my rib at work last spring. I was covering a yacht race and they went out during a squall and the boat just suddenly flipped and I was thrown about ten feet and just landed on my back and broke a couple [of] ribs. So since then, work's definitely been more gentle in some ways. But until then, and as long as I reassure people that things are okay then –

VS: And do you find that there's any sense that because of your particular abilities or experiences with your condition that you are asked to report things about people like —

LF: I would say, that's probably more of a personal thing. I sometimes go to that. Not too many people that I work with know that I was in a wheelchair but I guess my assignment editor does know now. And he sometimes pushes me towards that a little bit more. I've written probably two stories recently about teenage girls

who both through accidents are now in wheelchairs just because it's easier for them to talk to me.

VS: And you can either be ticked off about it, you don't want to be pigeon-holed — but on the other hand, you may be able to get more from people.

LF: Yes. Exactly.

VS: So you have to decide whether it's a liability or an asset, eh?

LF: It really does not bother me. I actually prefer it because the stories that bother me the most are stereotypical disabled stories. And so, like you say, I want to look at it as an asset and I'll write the story about the person. It drives me insane to read stories about, 'oh look, this person in a wheelchair did this great thing' and I think that, obviously you can't not mention that someone has a disability because it does make it all the more extraordinary, but sometimes you should still write about the whole person.

VS: I find with a lot of that coverage, people act as if it's a miracle that this person has managed to do whatever. Rather than just be pretty interesting and that's a part of them as opposed to —

LF: Yeah, exactly.

VS: I think that gets back again to some of these ideas about intersectionality, where you can have an ability or a disability, and it can be limiting, which it might be in some ways, they're not going to let you go out on the next sailboat story —

LF: No.

VS: You might not volunteer anyway. But also this is an area that you have power that they don't have. Because, you're in the position to write that story.

LF: Yep.

So where her disability, stature, age and gender met was a place she could either find power or a pigeonhole. She preferred using such situations to advance herself. As for the industry, the most important thing it could do to save itself, Fraser said, was to slow things down a little: to spend more time doing longer stories (not unsurprisingly, her forte), which increases readership

because it shows them the newspaper had true community presence. Referring to the importance of place in narrative, she said: “You can’t write about the world if you’re stuck in a newsroom.”

Expanding the definition of mentorship to encompass and engage the community, Fraser said she had suggested to management a possible mentoring role for journalists such as herself. They could go into high schools to mentor readers, and have them come to the newsroom “and understand what’s going on and actually listen to them a little bit more and have them set the agenda.” Like DeRosa, she felt that online journalism was overly focused on “instant news hits.” She could foresee a role for newspapers in fostering more magazine-like, in-depth features, and perhaps could reduce publishing paper issues to three times a week, while developing multi-media work for viewing on a tablet. Women journalists, she felt, were better than men at adapting to this kind of change, “speaking from personal experience,” and added that perhaps women were well-positioned to come forward with more creative ideas to improve newspapers, because they had little power to lose. Men had found a formula that worked for more than a hundred years for print, and it was dying. That historic concern for profit drove that model:

And I’m just saying this ‘cause, like you say, the majority of people running newsrooms right now are men. I wonder if maybe they stepped back a little bit and focused ever so slightly less on the profit margin and just looked at how to continue to make money and be profitable, even if it is slightly less money. And, just do something differently.

As of this writing, Fraser had been promoted to covering City Hall for *The Chronicle Herald*.

Taking up the theme of devotion to craft and personal development, Melissa Martin saw how she could not only hone her writing skills, but also could become invested in the next step: promoting herself as a distinctive voice on the platforms offered by the *Winnipeg Free Press*. She went on to do that for nearly two years before being laid off in October of 2012. Rather than

moving her to Chapter 8, which describes those who decided to leave, she remains in this chapter, as she did not choose to depart, but was cut as a cost-saving measure.

‘It’s possible to brand yourself and still be a good journalist’

I sat down with Melissa Martin in an empty executive meeting room at the *Winnipeg Free Press*, where, at age 29, she worked as a general assignment reporter. The story of how she got there took three solid pages of single-spaced transcript notes (my interjections and clarifications take only eight lines), recounted by a seemingly natural-born storyteller. Her autobiographical notes on the *Free Press* website display her unusual trajectory and accomplished, self-deprecating style:

An aspiring media mogul for the post-media mogul world, Melissa Martin is a word mercenary, a closet cat lady, and the best Lady GaGa impersonator in western Canada.

A Winnipeg girl by birth, and a Winnipeg woman by choice, Melissa has long been an advocate for the voice of the Prairies: its sound, its stages, its style.

She launched her haphazard, poorly planned journalistic career at age 17, writing about shows for *Uptown Magazine* that she wasn’t old enough to attend. By age 19, she was reviewing concerts and scratching out stories about music, entertainment and fashion for the *Free Press*.

What followed: a whirlwind of odd jobs and freelance spots, a few years as a sometimes-producer for CBC Radio One, an endless series of very odd nights at the Royal Albert, and a spunky but ultimately fruitless attempt at Red River College’s Creative Communications course.

This tumultuous period mercifully ended when the *Free Press* brought her on full-time in 2008. She’s been literally living her dream ever since.

When not writing, thinking about writing, hating her own writing, or wishing she could write like Salman Rushdie, Melissa’s hobbies

include trying to find anything else she's good at other than writing and wearing what are, admittedly, pretty awesome clothes.⁵³

Martin is the youngest of six children, adopted into a family of “privilege,” with her father a professor of psychotherapy and her mother at home until they divorced, then she taught pre-school. Like many other participants, Martin recalled being unusually interested in – and in her case she felt gifted in – writing. She felt that writing well was so easy for her as a child that it simply never occurred to her that it was a talent from which she could make a living. She described herself as a “great colour writer,” someone who was called on in the newsroom to do stories about events that might seem dull to others, but her editors felt she could make something out of, and she regularly did.⁵⁴ A study participant and her former *Free Press* colleague Helen Fallding called Martin “a more brilliant writer than all the rest of us combined” (Personal communication, Oct. 11, 2012).

Yet Martin also expressed a nagging disappointment that she was not successful and felt disillusioned about what she saw as her limited effect on the community. She acknowledged a tendency to self-sabotage, being particularly hard on herself when feedback from readers did not meet her expectations. She did not feel she had necessarily earned the respect she had in the newsroom, and the support from mentors like then-editor Margo Goodhand, she predicted, would surely run out some day. (As of this writing, it has not. Goodhand wrote in an email to me on Oct. 9, 2012 that Martin was “one of the best writers we had.”) If Martin connected these feelings with her self-described position in her adoptive, adoring family as “the baby,” whose every act was praised, she did not say so. Her feelings about being adopted were complicated and tough to untangle, and any impact on her journalism, Martin felt, would be subconscious.

⁵³ (<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/biographies/103305434.html>, retrieved April 2, 2012)

⁵⁴ M. Martin, personal communication, Nov. 23, 2010, Winnipeg.

During her time as a music reviewer, Martin's own musician's chops were underrated by the male-dominated world of music, she said. She had studied jazz guitar for 10 years and played blues guitar semi-professionally, but since "women really still aren't seen as musicians," her opinions as a music reviewer were often dismissed or impugned with a sexual motive:

You get accused a lot of jealousy or, 'you only like him because he's hot,' or conversely, 'you only hate him because you're not dating him,' things like that. It's always assumed to be a sort of groupie relationship, which has never been true for me. So that's very true in music. And it's definitely true in news, I mean, you don't get the groupie thing so much, but it's definitely perceived that, because sometimes your opinion on things isn't as valid, or at least that's what I assume. Guys clearly feel they can play you a lot more than is necessarily fair.

She told a story about working at CBC Radio in Winnipeg in a nearly all-women department and the inherent advantages she saw of being a woman music critic and journalist:

There were two guys and 30 women. It was ridiculous, it was like a gynocracy and I talked to my producer and said 'I did not realize it's only women who work in radio.' And she started telling me about the CBC and they had instituted in the 1970s a gender inclusion policy and she says 'what you're seeing now is the result of that.' But she said that when she first got hired her boss had told her that he thought that women made better journalists than men, always. And she said, 'why is that?' And he said that they are better able to both gain the trust the sources and be more sympathetic, more understanding and listen better.

I think that is true and there have been a lot of cases, especially on news, but sometimes in music too, where I feel like I've been able to do my job more effectively because I've grown up with the way that I am socialized as a female, which is to be less challenging and more consensus-building or more relationship-building. I feel like I'm more effective because I don't threaten people. Especially men. You know, if I'm interviewing a guy, there's not that issue with that. Do you know what I mean? They do feel like they can relate to me more, they can open up to me a little bit more.

As with the other women who were early in their reporting careers, Martin saw gender as being in play outside the newsroom, marking how she dealt with sources. Inside the *Free Press*, with

Editor-in-Chief Goodhand, Martin felt the newsroom offered flexibility for women and men: her main complaint related to a problem she had with how the male-dominated union had handled the situation when she was laid off, since she was the most recently hired. (She would be laid off again in the fall of 2012, long after our interview (M. Goodhand, personal communication, Oct. 9, 2012).) She found the union “hopelessly paternalistic” and non-consultative. The business itself, she noted, had an all-encompassing, high-stress and unstable aspect to it, the kind of stress that you took home, especially with technology connecting them to the job 24/7. Here she names what seems like an intrinsic quality to the industry that she cannot influence (Snyder, 2008).

Martin recalled organizing a radio show on “women of the *Winnipeg Free Press*” with women colleagues during which they remarked how none of the female reporters had children, while many of the men did. The reporters, they found, were also far younger than the men (the result of that “lost generation,” described by other participants from the paper) and Martin could understand why. Like Gerson in Calgary and DeRosa in Victoria, Martin had seen a lot of women leap to government public relations and communications work. “If I had any inclination to have a child,” said Martin, who was married at the time, “I would get the hell out of here.”

When sexist remarks came up about a woman reporter, Martin said, it was not because those people involved were sexist, but rather it was an expression of a larger societal problem, as Gerson had suggested. She also qualified the idea that the playing field at the paper was level for men and women, describing a vague, more subtle gender effect involving male managers:

I believe that they’re reflecting a cultural bias that they haven’t necessarily noticed or challenged in themselves. None of them are chauvinists, none of them are misogynistic pigs, but they grew up in a society that encourages and allows them to think this way about someone. They don’t think that now. So while they did correct that opinion, I think certainly you can be met with that response. So it’s not fair to say it’s completely level. I just think it’s quite subtle.

Martin, who is white, explicitly recognized the privilege of those mothers whose voices were in the paper. She “would like to see more voices from mothers, especially from a more diverse range,” including single Indigenous mothers, adding an element of diversity to the journalistic table that was missing across the papers studied. When those women were interviewed, they were “tokenized,” expected to be the voice of all single, Indigenous mothers, she said. Diversity, or the lack of it (as noted earlier in the literature review), was second on her agenda for change:

I think I would pass a law that if you didn't really want to do this job and care about it and have energy for it, you couldn't be here – number one. I think I would go out of my way to hire some people who weren't white. And I'd go out of my way to hire people from a much broader cross-section of society. Because newsrooms, I think this is true with newspapers, most newspapers are still crushingly white.

Despite her feeling that she was not a particularly powerful force in the paper, Martin recalled a piece she had written on a dying Métis language: at first she felt it did not get much feedback, but was happy to learn that a group of Manitoba speakers of that language had seen the piece. Another story about which she felt rare pride was a departure from the usual kind of reporting, in that she was allowed to follow a survivor of a residential school during a truth and reconciliation conference. She described it as reportage that recounted this man's experience at the event rather than being a “suffering porn” piece, which she said she hated.

This train of thought led to Martin describe how journalism should be less about trying to find hard answers and more about witnessing and recognizing that questions are often more important than answers. She explained her view that age was the main factor in how print journalism was held back now, as there was a “generation gap” between those who assigned the stories and those who were writing them, between “people who grew up in a digital world and an immediate world and a very self-reflective, consumerist, hyper-packaged and image-heavy world, versus

people who didn't." She returned to this idea late in the interview when I asked her to describe in more details her ideas about what her future would look like in the business.

For Martin, the critical notion to invest in was that "everything is personal now," with branding of personalities essential to newspapers retaining their currency with readers. While Gerson and Reilly had seen a gender double-standard in this area, Martin felt that staking out ground with one's own lifestyle, attitude, and personality would be instrumental to future career success, pointing out that one could "brand yourself and still be a good journalist." This branding idea challenged the traditional view of the journalist as someone who was balanced and fair, if not objective, as described by cohort member Emma Reilly. Unlike Goodhand and other participants at the *Free Press*, Martin did not comment on whether her blog or other personal aspects of her journalism were repudiated in hurtful, sexist ways by some readers. What mattered to her was to be judged on the quality of the stories, blogs and other material she produced. Like others in the youngest group, her narratives suggested that she could wield elements of her own identity as she saw fit, taking power and creativity from what might previously have held her back, while still feeling powerless in the newsroom.

Conclusions: 'There is a lot of ship to turn around'

In this third chapter of data analysis, I examined the stories of six women from five newspapers who have been in the industry the shortest time of all the participants. They had similar race, class and educational privileges as the previous cohorts, so where age intersected with these variables continued to be the main area of difference. That manifested itself in a way that was congruent with the narrative analysis and intersectional literature.

Specifically, fainter echoes of previous narrative themes emerged, such as external factors – including luck and institutional inflexibility – fuelling their career trajectories. But as this was

the youngest group, their narratives positioned them on the most pro-active end of the victim/witness/agent continuum (Bryman et al, 2009): they had the least experience but the most time and energy to focus on their developing careers. Members of the youngest cohort perceived themselves as having far more agency to direct their working lives than the other cohorts did, without family demands bifurcating their attention spans. Their work consumed them, both in journalistic practice and in simply remaining on the job in the face of severe cost-cutting measures at their workplaces. They were less like the oldest group, whose members evaluated their careers as a whole for better or worse, and more like the mid-career group, which used narratives to ‘think out loud’ about their frenzied lives which they otherwise had little time to consider, often telling resilience stories (Sosulski, 2010). This youngest group went the farthest in theoretical terms to flirt metaphorically with stereotypes surrounding age and gender, sometimes performing their identities ironically, as feminists have observed regarding this third-wave generation of Western women (Archer Mann & Huffman, 2005: Snyder, 2008). They honoured the same journalistic values as their older counterparts in wanting to make a difference in society and give voice to the voiceless, but expressed no sense of being seen as frauds or outsiders in the male-dominated newsroom culture. Patriarchy was not obviously oppressive to them as it had been to the oldest group: those they deemed patriarchy’s stragglers – a burly male cop here, a corporate honcho there – could be finessed through the performance of femaleness with flirting and sweetness.

Melissa Martin commented wryly that in the churning waters of Canada’s print news business “there is a lot of ship to turn around.”⁵⁵ Judging by this cohort’s responses, its members would be happy to have the opportunity to help set the industry back on course, although Martin herself has since been heaved overboard in a layoff. An intriguing contradiction here emerges regarding

⁵⁵ M. Martin, personal communication, Nov. 23, 2010, Winnipeg.

leadership: women managers were seen by these most junior participants to have better potential than men to lead the kind of change required to make the industry robust again. And those few participants working in women-run newsrooms described connecting with their bosses as mentors and trusted, respected leaders who knew how to get things done. Yet at the same time they did not describe themselves as agents of the kind of *workplace* change that might keep them on the job and contributing to journalistic innovation over the long term, despite their stated sense of personal agency. In general, they could not see their own careers continuing at the pace they currently experienced if they had children, which meant they would be unlikely to help reshape the news culture to help women thrive. If they were thinking that women other than themselves might lead newspapers to glory, they did not say where those women might come from. Current notions about what constitutes workplace support for mothers – a day-care centre, flexibility in scheduling – were foremost in their vision of the future. Perhaps it would not be so bad to be working mothers; after all, each of their own mothers had been employed outside the home, far more often than described by the older cohorts, and as a result they were already multi-tasking whizzes. Motherhood was just one more complexity that they, as women, could handle.⁵⁶

Being positioned by their managers as fearless technology users and teachers simply because of their youth was also a source of both obligation and oppression. These participants felt managers relied on them to use the many new kinds of media technology best and to instruct older journalists in their use, but at the same time, the general financial panic in newspapers meant their own fledgling careers were constantly in jeopardy. Perhaps not surprisingly then, they spoke less of luck (which, when mentioned, was not associated with class, race or other

⁵⁶ In fact, if it weren't for maternity leaves, Katie DeRosa and Nicole O'Reilly likely wouldn't have been hired at all, and Emma Reilly might have had to wait a lot longer to be promoted.

privileges) and more about strategizing, accommodation, and sheer hard work in their approach to success. With their feet in the door of their dream jobs, they would fight like hell to stay.

While opinions varied on whether the old boys' club inside newspapers had disbanded or was just operating clandestinely, these participants did not see themselves as victims of gender-based discrimination in-house. Still, off-the-record, one participant told a story about the male editor who had hired her, and who had, she said, "a reputation for hiring young, attractive women." But she noted that she herself had never experienced sexism in the newsroom.

In the next chapter, I explore how some of these narrative contradictions and commonly held views came in for review as members of different cohorts discussed their journalism career challenges in focus groups. What was hidden for some of them suddenly came into sharp relief.

Chapter 7

Of darkness, dragons and black holes

The previous chapters explored how three cohorts of Canadian women print journalists recounted their career experiences over time, with an emphasis on how various factors, including gender, age, parenthood status, class, ethnicity, physical ability and Indigenous status, operate in multiple, fluid, often unseen ways, to affect their career trajectories.

I focussed on the stories they told me in one-on-one interviews at each of the five newspapers, as both narrative analysis and intersectional theory privilege individual accounts (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). But I also gave participants the opportunity to gather in focus groups to discuss various issues those individual interviews brought to mind, as well as to add any other comments and questions. As narrative-making is a selective process (Herman and Vervaek, 2001), gathering to compare stories can bring what was not mentioned into the light. This chapter examines dominant themes that arose in those focus groups: aspects of leadership, power/control issues, voice/community impact, workplace frustrations and generational divides. A key theme throughout the groups and across cohorts was that the participants described, whether played-down or in dramatic terms, two ongoing struggles – one based on their personal positions (age, gender, parenthood status, race, ability) and one emanating from the precarious state of the industry. Accommodating the interplay of these struggles was part of their daily work, as much as the journalism was.

Not all participants were able to attend a focus group because of work demands. Kelly Toughill was not included in a group, because she was already head of King's University

College journalism program when we spoke. Some participants are not identified so as not to be linked to certain comments they made, and to keep Janet's identity hidden.

***The Spectator*: 'What will be left of journalism in 25 years?'**

The *Spec* focus group, perhaps because the younger cohorts dominated, had the most to say about the mentoring aspect of leadership: they needed it. It was also the day after a buy-out deadline for which staffers could apply, so weighing career pros and cons was much on their minds. I only knew of one who was considering applying at the time. With two of the youngest participants still on contract and one having difficulties with a new baby, the *Spec* focus group was somewhat tense. It included City Editor Carla Ammerata and cityside reporters Emma Reilly, Nicole O'Reilly and Nicole MacIntyre. In an office meeting room, the participants described how they felt that the individual interviews, held the previous day, were at once cathartic and difficult; they raised issues they had not considered before or thought about, or at least did not voice beyond their immediate peers. In front of their direct supervisor, Ammerata, the three reporters were able to articulate some fears about the future and their generation's attitudes toward the vicissitudes of the workplace. Emma Reilly, who was on contract at the time, spoke forcefully of feeling she could control nothing. Ammerata told them what she had told me, about her own fear of repeating a traditional newsroom management style:

ER: When I think about my career trajectory, I think, 'Yes. I would like to be in a position like Carla's at some point. Absolutely.' But whether the reality of the industry is going to allow that is another question. So the way I deal with that is to just put my head down. Because it's so beyond my control, it's not even a matter of how well I do my job, it's all these extraneous factors that we've already discussed. You literally just can't think about it. Because if you do, you drive yourself crazy. You think, 'what the hell am I doing this for?' I'm working so hard and I get nothing.' So if I let myself think that way, I can't do my job the way that I am satisfied doing it. There's just darkness, and dragons and black holes.

VS: I see it is. (To Carla) How do you respond when you hear that?

CA: I can't imagine what it's like to be Emma and Nicole's age because I ask myself the very same questions about my career trajectory, and can I actually finish my career in journalism. What will be left of journalism in 25 years? So it's a very difficult thing. And because of the economic times, we're in a reactive environment. Even for myself, there's less time for things like professional development, mentoring opportunities. I don't know what is next for me. I told you yesterday, being a city editor was what I always hoped to be, and I'm there. But in terms of what comes next, I don't know. I'm struggling with where I go personally and where the industry is going.⁵⁷

Later, with some interjections and nodding from others, the two also discussed their concern about a kind of competitiveness in the newsroom that was not seen as productive, with Ammerata wanting to draw particular attention to the power of the dominant male culture, and the difference between unhealthy (turf wars) and healthy competition. Even just describing this in the forum of the focus group felt a little dangerous to her, it seemed, since she described the expression of her view as “indiscreet:”

CA: We've adopted the male political way to get forward in newsrooms, which is competition not collaboration.

ER: I think that's deliberately propagated by the upper levels of management. That sort of sense that you have to compete and that if you're not competing you're not actually –

CA: And *healthy* competition is a good thing in a newsroom. I'm going to say something. I want to say this. We take our cues from our bosses: at one point we had more managing editors than we do now. And there certainly was a pitched level of competition, to the detriment, I think, of our newsroom at that time. Things have settled somewhat, but I do still think there's a sense, at that level, that it's more about competition and control of their respective areas than, and I'm being indiscreet here, but what is the best thing for the newsroom, right? Collectively.

⁵⁷ C. Ammerata, M. MacIntyre, N. O'Reilly, E. Reilly, personal communication, Nov. 23, 2010, Hamilton.

Vision was also lacking at *The Spectator* because of a lack of resources, said Nicole MacIntyre, causing managers to have to focus on “just getting through the day.” The younger reporters said they were less interested in vision as an abstract, wanting instead hands-on leadership, daily guidance and support that they felt they needed at the start of their careers. After some discussion they began seeing themselves as possibly leading in a different way already, when it came to the areas of training and technology. Ammerata said that yes, they definitely demonstrated leadership in that area. In this way, we can see how a “new story” about work-related orientations could develop from the sharing of the old one, reshaping what they see as being possible for them as leaders, as Gubrium and Holstein (2009) suggest can occur.

In terms of personal impact, Reilly and MacIntyre agreed their reporting actually affected the outcome of an election (without describing how), but said they could also see a public backlash against them as reporters, likely caused by people having less trust in institutions generally, including mainstream newspapers. Reilly used an example of personal impact by describing how she wrote a women voters’ story during the election, but didn’t “get around to do” one on diversity, which seemed to indicate how one seemingly small decision by a reporter could leave a huge range of topics, with diversity at their core, go unreported. Ammerata added that, on thinking more about behaviour patterns inside a shrinking newsroom, changing thinking on diversity “has to be a shift by everybody,” and described how she was a member of a community-wide group of leaders looking at diversity in Hamilton. But that was outside the newsroom, which remained overwhelmingly white. She also said she had been in sessions where hiring for diversity was discussed, but had not seen gender equity as an agenda item at a management meeting, echoing the finding that addressing a lack of diversity in newsrooms is

low on management's to-do list (Ojo, 2006). "Newsrooms haven't really caught up in a lot of their practices with the rest of the world," said Ammerata.

While many senior women had positioned themselves as victims and witnesses of newsroom sexism, the young participants at the *Spec* felt that they had the individual power to handle whatever "jabs" against women were still happening at the paper, saying "yeah, throw that at me" and "I am not even going to pay attention to that." Reilly explained it in terms of her understanding of third-wave feminism, its evolution and contradictions (Snyder, 2008):

We grew up in sort of a post-feminism era. I was born in the early Eighties and that was the height of third wave feminism or whatever. It's almost interesting how there's been a sort of pendulum swing away from feminism. I remember in high school somebody called me a feminist once and I was vaguely insulted and wondered why. It's good to be a feminist.

With two generations of women journalists comparing notes, the *Spec* focus group members saw where they shared ideas about newsroom culture (the idea of an unhelpful competitiveness, for instance) as well as to appreciate each other's angst about the future, in terms of both their own lives and the industry itself, wherever they were in their careers.

At the *Free Press* in Winnipeg, where women dominated the editorial executive ranks, finding a mentor and dealing with a gendered culture were not problems: rather, the collaborative, consultative workplace they created was described almost as an aberration.

Winnipeg Free Press: 'There would be a sea of 12 men and me'

The focus group members included participants from all three age groups: Margo Goodhand, Mary Agnes Welch, Melissa Martin (who attended before her individual interview) and Helen Fallding. While some top managers were women, the group members commented on the lack of women elsewhere (in sports and the photo department, for instance). However, the women who

were sprinkled around the newsroom were “strong” and showed a “core kind of power,” as one younger reporter put it.⁵⁸ A question about newsroom leadership prompted one participant to comment on how anomalous the *Free Press* was by practicing a “new” leadership style based on communication and collegiality: “I think of newspapers as backwards compared to the rest of the world. Here, it’s like exploring the Arctic.” As Ammerata had noted in the *Spec* focus group, the newspaper industry in Canada was seen by this participant as a throwback in terms of progressive management technique. While this focus group differed by the presence of women in the highest editorial office, stories still emerged of the personal and industry-wide struggles that were raging simultaneously as they tried to do their best work.

Editor-in-Chief Margo Goodhand, compared the working lives of reporters to those of police officers, who also find that dealing with the public can be tough. With 400 to 600 emails a day coming into her computer; with personal abuse heaped on them as individuals by readers who had not even met them; with budgets cut and staff numbers down, she said that the newsroom had to hold itself together as a kind of support group. Recalling how she knew with one job interview the person who should be her deputy, Goodhand illustrated how important it was to her to hire someone people could talk to. One participant commented that many male managers can’t or won’t do the “talking” work, as that would be perceived as weakness, underscoring the gendered nature of communication in the newsroom. Goodhand reported feeling uneasy in the individual interview, and added how she had wanted to talk more about what she could actually control as Editor-in-Chief:

I don’t like talking about myself, I’m not used to that. I think it’s a control issue maybe, but it’s also this, ‘what is she hearing, and am I saying the right thing?’ I think at this point I feel I’ve got the paper on my shoulders, too. I don’t want to misrepresent the paper.

⁵⁸ H. Fallding, M. Goodhand, M. Martin, M. Welch, personal communication, Nov. 23, 2010, Winnipeg.

And that's new. I still came away from it going, 'Well did I say--?' Because I was going to bring up, when we were talking about flexibility in the workplace, what I believe in, ultimately it still has to get past the union. And when Helen tried to go four days a week, I was behind her all the way but the union felt that what it was, was a management ploy to have people lose full-time jobs. So it was a jobs issue, rather than flexibility or even an economics issue.

Melissa Martin, a young reporter without children, talked about how she and I had discussed the “lost generation” of *Free Press* women (as others had done) and described how the lack of younger mothers in the newsroom meant she could not see how creative things such as job-sharing would work. Others in her position said they found parenthood issues “a huge question mark” for them. While men in the office discussed their wives’ activities around work and family (such as mommy blogging), those stories were not being told in the *Free Press* pages.⁵⁹

In an exchange about how print journalism was exhausting and unpredictable, Welch offered that the “slightly obsessive nature of journalists” had something to do with the long hours, too; Martin talked about the “adrenaline” factor of rushing to a crime scene. Here, the women seemed to be bonding over the narrative of how journalism is special in its inherent craziness and workaholism, but the discussion also offered hints that they might have the power to change the narrative of journalism, with a better outcome for their work and personal lives.

They also turned their attention to other newsrooms, looking at how others in their situation were handling the work/family negotiations: they talked about the *Toronto Star*, where the group members said “old boys” had been promoted and “really good women are not going anywhere.” Things were going backward because of recession fears. While lots of women were working at

⁵⁹ At a Canadian Newspaper Association panel on my thesis topic that was held in Toronto on April 27, 2012, and which I chaired, Margo Goodhand told the audience that in the previous eight years, seven babies have been born to *Free Press* editorial employees. But all of the employees were the babies’ fathers, not mothers.

the CBC, *The National* (the CBC's flagship television newscast) was an exception. Someone joked that with the job description for *The National* they gave out "birth control pills."

A few speculated about what would happen if Goodhand left (which she eventually did): the "good stuff" (features, think pieces, policy analysis and impact) would drop away, but senior management would not recognize the connection between Goodhand's gender and story quality, they surmised. That gave way to stories comparing sexist incidents, including one in which a male manager worried that a woman (the participant who told this story), newly appointed as arts editor, might be too strong a feminist and her lamentable condition would end the glamour and sex of the entertainment section. Here, narrative analysis reminds us of how we position others, as well as ourselves, in terms of our victimhood/accommodations/agency (Bryman et al, 2009).

The topic of leadership was discussed in a way that I found fascinating, since the women did not automatically start praising their top editor, Goodhand, despite their obvious respect for and comfort with her as they sat with her in her office. Instead, Welch and Fallding were singled out as newsroom leaders. Welch was identified for her "backbone" and because she was the president of the Canadian Association of Journalists. Her beat of public policy meant she was strong and independent, someone who saw the big picture. Fallding, who later left the paper, was lauded for being a combination of "hard-ass" and supportive, as well as hard-working and extremely bright and fair-minded. Women leaders were seen as less ego-driven (which may be why they did not fawn over Goodhand) and did not practice the authoritative, single-minded approach that men favoured. Female leaders were seen as more creative and collaborative. Men, they speculated, might see that as weak, however.

When sweeping newsroom changes were needed, Goodhand was praised for making "the tough decisions" that her male predecessors did not. She was a mentor, someone to whom a

reporter could say “this place drives me crazy” and she would talk that through with them.

Goodhand and Fallding recalled how important each one had been to the other in gender terms:

HF: When I first came on city desk, I felt that you were supportive in a news meeting or whatever, if I was nervous, you’d go, ‘Helen, what do you think?’ I don’t know if that was conscious.

MG: Helen, I was so glad to have another woman at that boardroom! We had so few, for so many years I was the only woman. There would be a sea of twelve men and me. I was the entertainment editor, I was the girl, right? I got almost used to it. So when Helen came in, holy shit.

HF: But I think you managed to increase my credibility with the guys by looking to me or propping me up.

MG: You always had something to say and it was always worthwhile. I wasn’t trying to prop you, I was just glad you were there. I remember one time we had a ‘women’s issue’ come up and I was the only woman there, and [the male manager] called XXXX in, who’s a lovely woman: she designs pages though. He looked out at the newsroom and he couldn’t find a woman [journalist] to bring into the meeting to discuss this issue. . . . I thought it was a low moment.⁶⁰

Today, the focus group agreed, there was a critical mass of women at the paper so that mentorship went up, down and across the newsroom, as well as over to Red River College, site of the local journalism school, where women reporters and editors were often speakers. But even so, they felt that this was “not a new paradigm” and that the men journalists were “waiting for this to be all over [so] we can get back to being a paper.” (Well they might say that: the *Times Colonist* went from having three women in the top three editorial positions to none, and both Fallding and Goodhand have left the Winnipeg paper, leaving men in nine of 11 newsroom management positions, according to Fallding.⁶¹) In the meantime, they were living with personal “branding,” no longer the anonymous reporters of the past, but high-profile tweeters and

⁶⁰ The woman was apparently not a journalist, but a clerk. J. Carl, personal communication. April 12, 2013

⁶¹ H. Fallding, personal communication, Oct. 13, 2012.

bloggers, and doing live chats about whatever issue they were covering. As well as being the targets of what they described as misogyny in anonymous comments online, participants felt somewhat positive about opportunities to analyse and even editorialize more, based on having to feed various media platforms. The more broadcast-oriented the platform, the more gender and personality came into play, they felt.

At the *Calgary Herald*, stories were told that highlighted blatant sexism experienced by the older women, as they described in individual interviews, and weighed the impact of new industry-wide uncertainties that the young faced, continuing the theme of intersecting influences. And there was a rare frank acknowledgement of the pure thrill of power. At the *Herald*, you could (gently) poke a stick at authority inside the office, as well as call the powerful to account on the outside.

Calgary Herald: 'I didn't know I'd have such a desire for power'

After a long discussion about the evolving nature of competition among and within news media – was it an evolution, a crisis or a rebirth? – the *Calgary Herald* focus group, including Monica Zurowski, Jen Gerson and Paula Arab, began to discuss how women print journalists today, at least the younger ones, felt that the issues for them were less about gender and more about the insecurity of being young inside the industry chaos. Managing Editor Zurowski posited that this could lead to newsroom managers finally having to deal with such issues as flex time and working from home. With so few reporters, editors and columnists left, senior managers would not remain long in a position to insist that online work be done in traditional ways.

The younger women also were able to hear first-hand stories about blatant sexism of the kind that they were not experiencing: a more senior participant, who had previously covered business news at a Toronto paper, told how she would not go “out drinking with the boys” and so her

sources, who drank with the reporters, would not take her seriously.⁶² Her solution was to “flirt my ass off,” reminding us of the use of narrative to situate/justify/legitimate behaviour in the face of tension between oneself and cultural norms (Coffey & Atkinson, 1999). Reporting, she noted, required her to demonstrate “male traits” such as being tough, assertive and tenacious. And she added that with friends, she had to learn how to return to behaviours that were more socially acceptable for women, describing an act of constant self-revision (Bamberg, 2004).

Men still had the advantage of being taken more seriously, this participant added. Their egos could get in the way, however, so that women had an advantage in that they were less afraid to ask “am I missing anything?” of a source or an editor. This comment bore on a notion that Kelly Toughill mentioned in her individual interview, that newsroom culture did not allow any public displays of journalists learning: one was expected to know things and never to admit ignorance and to suppress fear. The culture of factual correctness is also deeply ingrained, for the important reason of ensuring as much accuracy as possible: if a journalist errs, the standard response is to say “I have to go kill myself right now,” as one focus group participant put it.

The definition of mentorship was fluid for this focus group, which gathered in an editorial meeting room. Mentorship was seen as formal and informal, with agreement that it was important for younger journalists to see women doing well in roles typically reserved for men. For a true mentoring relationship to work, the younger person could not just “suck up” to the manager, the rapport had to be genuine. All focus groups saw mentorship as important, but equally broad in scope.

Underscoring a key theme of being social advocates, the participants described the power of their voices to tell others’ stories, to write about social justice issues and to use, as columnist Paula Arab put it, “your own discretion and what moves you” as guidelines for topic choice.

⁶² P. Arab, J. Gerson and M. Zurowski, personal communication, Jan. 18, 2011, Calgary.

Arab emphasized the importance of one's "authentic voice" as a powerful tool but also difficult to tap into and "believe in." This was easier for her to wield, as she was a columnist. Jen Gerson, as a relatively recently hired reporter, joked that being "at the bottom of the totem pole is a fun place to be" because it allowed her to challenge those in authority both inside and outside the office, with the caveat that she was still learning how to use this tool with care and not "be a jerk." She felt that technological demands put her in a sometimes scary position from which to experiment with social media (such as Twitter) in a way that might get her into trouble, especially with her wry, potentially misunderstood, sense of humour. Her boss, Zurowski, noted with amused understatement (and amid some laughter) that hearing about Gerson's potentially inappropriate tweets was "fine" and that managers were working on how to vet tweets (for taste, libel and so on) but the amount was growing too fast for them to keep up. Asked to describe the impact of power in her senior job as Managing Editor, Zurowski, then 49, replied, smiling, "Briefly, it's great," to the sound of uproarious and appreciative laughter. "When I was in my 20s, I would have said I didn't know I'd have such a desire for power," she continued, and then gave a detailed explanation of how she had learned to ask for what she needed from reporters and editors as neutrally as possible, and, she hoped, with a sense of empowering her staff. Here was a rare open expression of a senior woman journalist's desire for power, with a gendered twist of including others in its appropriate use.

One participant told a cautionary tale: a friend, another woman journalist in another city, was let go from her contract after dating a "much, much older" editor. She said she knew of many other such examples that showed a continuing double standard of what happens when newsroom staffers date one another, especially across the rigid hierarchy, where older men have power. It was precisely young women's contract status – they didn't even have to be fired, just not have

their contracts renewed – that made them so vulnerable. She described the men involved as “predatory” as they went after impressionable interns, who would then “fade away.”

At the *Times Colonist* focus group, the extent of that lingering sexism was seen in a larger context, at the corporate level, even as women celebrated their gains. They ran the joint (even if it turned out to be briefly), and having the freedom and authority to hire was a powerful way to make change. Too bad not much hiring was going on.

The *Times Colonist*: ‘Still a very male-oriented power structure’

On a day-to-day level, what constitutes a gendered workplace? For some participants in the *Times Colonist* focus group, which took place in the evening at the home of a participant, the newsroom was not particularly gender-influenced. The group included then Editor-in-Chief Lucinda Chodan, then City Editor Stephanie Coombs, then Online Editor Denise Helm, Petrescu, and reporter Katie DeRosa. Coombs reiterated her view, expressed in the individual interview, that her youth was more of an issue than gender as she negotiated the workplace. As she had supervised people who were reporters and editors before she was born, she said, gaining respect by doing her job and respecting staff was the key challenge she felt she had met.

As the most senior manager, Chodan (who had just announced she would be leaving the *TC* for the larger *Edmonton Journal*) could look back and see what changes had occurred, and what was still problematic from her generational perspective. Her position at the top of the paper gave her a closer connection to the chain’s new owners and its board, who were all men:

I’m so much of a different generation than all of the other people here, except you (gesturing to VS). Some of the things that Vivian and I talked about earlier were, what it was like being a young woman 25 years ago coming into the journalism profession, and how much it has changed, in some ways, since then. But still, I find, barriers or, not barriers, really, as much as indices of different treatment of the generation of power-holders who are older than

me, who are predominantly men. So for me, as I'm changing from a leadership role in a small newspaper to a leadership role in one of the larger newspapers in Canada, it is interesting.

In the time since we've talked, our company has changed ownership, we have announced a senior executive team who've announced a board of all males, and [clears throat] it is impossible for me not to see that coloured through a gender lens. Because that is the environment that I began my career in. It did affect my career in terms of the kinds of mentoring I received, and the career path I took, and the treatment I was afforded at a very senior table with older men, who were not as enlightened as some of the people that we have the great pleasure to work with.

So I would say that my recent experiences at a senior level, becoming more senior, have reinforced my feeling that there is still a very male-oriented power structure, where it's very helpful if we can talk about supports. That is the kind of environment in which I will continue to have to find a way to move ahead.

As a woman who came up through management ranks at the same time as Chodan, I found this a powerful statement. As women in our late 50s who had experienced overt sexism, Chodan and I shared the impact of her story, unlike the younger generation for whom blatant sexism was not imbued with personal memories. The more junior women immediately went back to what they experienced day-to-day. For them, without having the sense of being face-to-face with gender discrimination, the glass ceiling, whenever it might noiselessly slide over them, seemed an abstraction. DeRosa explained the "corporate side, the male dominance, I think that is still an issue. But in day-to-day function, does it really affect your work? I haven't found that it has."

Chodan gave an example to make the invisible, visible. She suggested how gendered decision-making was possibly at play, when cash-strapped newspapers (she mentioned a few) cut costs everywhere except the travel budget for covering professional (male) sports teams. The discussion moved to why women or men journalists were more predominant in what could be seen as gendered sections of the paper, such as arts, business and sports. But Chodan was not entirely persuasive. Coombs argued that it was her choice not to write on certain topics:

But I would ask, are women wanting to do those jobs and being denied them? Or do women not have the interest to do them? Because I think that's the crux of it, is whether women are being denied a job because they're a woman, or if women are saying, 'I'm not interested in doing that.' Because I frankly am not interested in writing about business, I'm not interested in writing about sports, and I'm not interested in being an editorial writer, an opinion writer. Those are things that don't interest me.

As the most senior editor at the *TC*, and the person who hired, among others, Coombs, DeRosa and Petrescu, and who promoted Denise Helm, Chodan explained how hiring fit into her management role: nothing else was more important for long-term success. To explain her process, she described several of her hires and how their personal circumstances were not an issue, when they might have been had she used standard (male) hiring criteria. She also used a reminiscence of an event involving a newspaper-chain-wide spelling bee, in which the updates for the bee were threatened by technological problems, and Stephanie Coombs' response:

LC: I would say that I always pick the best person for the job, because the older I get and the more senior I get, the more I realize that hiring decisions are number one, the most crucial decisions you make when you run anything. Number two, they are lifetime decisions. They have a life that goes on and on and on. And that's really something I didn't realize as a younger person, and I think that this is slightly different too. But having said that, I also think that, having chosen the best person for the job, I have not been deflected by things that other people might have been deflected by.

VS: Such as?

LC: Denise is someone with a young daughter. It never would have occurred to me, having worked with her for a couple of years before I offered her the online editor job, that she wouldn't figure out a way to make it work. And it has not been an issue. She has never made it be an issue and has always been available, able to accommodate that. In the case of Stephanie, I turned down several wizened men. What convinced me was, remember that night when you were doing the Can Spell spelling bee?

SC: Yes, oh god. Almost poked my eyes out.

LC: She was working at [the *Citizen*], and I was minding the shop at the *TC* and I could see that the whole system had broken down and so Stephanie was giving updates every 10 or less minutes. I can't remember why it broke down, but I just thought 'There is this tremendously bright person on a tight deadline who is making this thing work. Single-handedly.' So I wrote a note to the CanWest news service. And [someone] told me, 'actually Stephanie got shit for doing that because she wasn't supposed to be doing it'. I just thought, 'What a bunch of fucking morons.' So, in spite of a lot of pressure to hire somebody else, I thought, 'This person is the best person for the job.' When I met her in Ottawa my only question about it was also her age. When I met her I thought, 'Oh god, she's a teenager.'

For Chodan, this anecdote illustrated how perhaps if she had been a traditional manager, she would not have hired a young woman, but would have yielded to pressure from above to hire somebody else (perhaps one of the wizened men?), who might not have figured out how to circumvent a national-chain-wide technological disaster and then accept being berated for it.

Conversation about leadership focused on the egalitarian nature of the *TC*, where it was felt that mostly managers and staff worked hard together, with constant communication being the essential ingredient to promoting a sense of positive energy, similar to the *Winnipeg Free Press*. Chodan said that it interested her to hear the others talk about things that she believed in, such as respect, communication (including regular performance reviews and goal-setting), and collegiality. These very things were missing from the newsrooms she began in. Interestingly, the participants later spoke of how these same values (but not identified as such by them) were dominant in the *TC*'s use of its new online capabilities. Coombs described using social media in a respectful, professional way to promote "community-building, relationship-building and seeking out news." Columnist Petrescu used her own fashion blog for community-building too, to get ideas for columns, find models and allow interaction with readers. Even though the Twitter account represented a small part of the *TC*'s readership, it was worth building on, which meant saying "thank you" to those who left comments. Hearing about the power, positive and negative,

of personal branding online, Chodan said that she was probably “more careful about my personal brand than almost anyone I know.” She explained that she wanted the readers “to feel that there is somebody who’s impartial and judicious and taking the concerns of every single reader to heart.” The other reason for her discretion was that she had been a victim of a stalker in Edmonton and someone in Victoria had slashed her tires, and she had had to take out a restraining order on the person. So Chodan was “struggling with how to manage [social media use] in a way that was appropriate. She did answer nearly every reader email, however, so they felt that a real person was at the other end. This anecdote marked clearly the often difficult interplay of personal vulnerability and professional expectations.

Chodan did not see any change in how papers approached the development of managers, the DeRosas and Petrescus of the future, which would effectively continue the traditional way of thinking about leadership and who makes a good leader: “I think newspapers are the same as they've always been. They devote virtually no time and energy to developing managers and helping people with their own professional development.” She said she would be taking her practice of conducting performance management sessions to the *Journal*, and was curious as to whether they would continue at the *TC* under her successor. That person was Denise Helm, and she has already left print journalism.

At the Halifax *Chronicle Herald*, there was not the luxury of comparison between staff and management views, since the paper had no women managers. Notwithstanding a lack of role models that the other papers had, the participants still felt they had impact in the community and gradually came to feel, through their discussion, that this gave them power. The qualities they had as women who were young or in mid-career, as parents or a person with disabilities, as a Black woman journalist: all these things could be problematic, but also empowering, as

intersectionality literature suggests. And in their sharing of stories, information came to light that prompted the group to question management's behaviours.

The Chronicle Herald: 'We can challenge the status quo'

Discussion about leadership had a tone of resignation as the focus group in Halifax began. Only three participants were able to attend the event, held in the same small meeting room as the individual sessions: reporters Sherri Borden Colley and Laura Fraser, and Patricia Brooks Arenburg, who alternated between reporting and copy-editing on the night desk. The three women did not feel they would see a change in the newsroom hierarchy over their working lives, and said they were not seen as leaders in the newsroom by managers, even if they were seen as leaders, mentors or advisers outside of the paper. Borden Colley, who, in her individual interview spoke of quiet determination to combat racism, did begin to speak of hope in other areas where a difference could be made: having fought back against insensitive treatment at the paper when her newborn baby had died, she said that "maybe the next woman who loses a baby won't get a call three weeks after asking her when she is coming back."⁶³ And even if changes were not coming to the *Herald*, they could hope for change in the larger professional world of work, and "even talking together was therapeutic," she said. Later in the conversation, she indicated that she had actually blazed a trail by being the first person to return to work gradually after her maternity leave. And in response to a colleague who said she did not feel her stories changed the news agenda, Borden Colley said the work they did as women could challenge the status quo, thereby indicating that for her, her racial and gendered background and position (and presumably others characteristics) could be used to inform good journalism and keep her there:

⁶³ S. Borden Colley, P. Brooks Arenburg and L. Fraser, personal communication, Nov. 16, 2010, Halifax.

Another thing that keeps me here is, as women, we definitely add a more sensitive approach to stories. We bring a different perspective because of our experiences as women who face discrimination out in society. You know, we can call wrong ‘wrong’ through our writing. We can say it through someone else’s voice. We can challenge the status quo. There’s some fluffy stories that I just don’t think should be in the paper because they don’t make a difference, but you know, when I go looking for story ideas, I want to tell a story that either educates people on historical things that may have been forgotten in Nova Scotia or I want to write a story that has an impact. At the end of the day, I want my story to have made a difference. And that’s another reason that keeps me here. Because as I mentioned yesterday, there’s so many stories that have not been told yet and I’m going to remain here until all of those stories are told.

That prompted the others to offer examples of stories that they felt had made a difference in the lives of ordinary people – again, a key theme throughout the narratives in all cohorts. After several stories were described, the reporters agreed that they did have a lot of power, but did not realize it. It also meant a great deal to handle a news story with sensitivity and understanding, such as when a reporter had to go to interview the family of a young person killed in an accident. To reflect and describe that person who had been lost to family and community was an important duty. The victims were once babies whose mothers had dreams for them, said Borden Colley. And that idea, they agreed, was a particularly female perspective.

Laura Fraser, the reporter who had been reticent about mentioning her physical disabilities in the individual interview, told a story about how one of the male managers upset her by calling her “his daughter” and that he was her “Nova Scotia father.” As her colleagues interjected in both supporting and teasing ways, Fraser continued telling her story. Interjections from others are in parenthesis and italics; the Xs stand for the names of male reporters:

LF: I called in sick one day, when I was really, really sick. I was like, ‘oh I don’t feel well, I’m sorry, I’m going to stay home today’. He was like, ‘oh I can hear it in your voice. You just crawl back under those covers and curl up and go to bed’. (*Gosh!*) And I

remember thinking, ‘you would never say that to XXX or XXX, you would never’. And he said that ‘he was a little jealous that my dad was coming to the Atlantic Journalism Awards’. (*When you think about it, would he say that to XXX?*)

VS: Is there some aspect of your physical vulnerability, your smallness, is that a part of it, maybe?

LF: I would definitely think that’s part of it, (*Oh my god*) but whenever I get sick, whenever I get hurt, this particular person calls me every day, and I had thought at first (*Wow...*) he was concerned about me returning to work. But I think it’s the genuine concern about, I think it definitely is, he sort of sees me as this smaller, more vulnerable (*And where you don’t have family here...*) That’s a huge part of it for him (*That must be it.*). But would he do that to one of the male interns? (*He wouldn’t, he wouldn’t. They wouldn’t. They wouldn’t.*)

Hearing this story seemed to reveal to the women how fatherly concern from a manager was not necessarily welcome or appropriate. But as they were hearing this information for the first time, they also discussed reasons that the manager might realize he differentiated his reporters based on their gender, age and size. After all, the focus group participants had just started to consider themselves how his words could be perceived as paternalistic. Fraser continued to describe the uneasy feeling she had about a person she liked, saying he had two voices: the dad voice and the professional voice, and what she wanted was “one homogeneous, professional interaction.”

How they each navigated the workplace power structures was not initially connected to any sense of how they might show leadership through their daily journalistic actions. But when Fraser commented that she was not a leader and still felt “junior” in the newsroom, the others told her emphatically that she had “paid your dues” and “proven yourself.” Borden Colley described an occasion when an assigning editor had given her a story to write about a woman delivering a 13-pound baby, and the editor had done so because Borden Colley was a mother. She insisted that the editor give the story to a male reporter, which he did after some argument, and the story ended up going on the front page. Borden Colley said she had made her argument

for personal reasons, rather than out of a sense of being a leader or to challenge the idea that only mothers could write about babies. She joked that had she known the story would have gone on A1, she would not have insisted that a man write it.

Without any women in management, the *Herald* focus group members agreed that there seemed to be no room for advancement, but they still saw themselves as having power to influence the community through their journalism, and that was important. Fraser and Borden Colley assured Brooks Arenburg, who was on the night desk shift every other week, that she had power to affect the news through assigning stories. Fraser also said she could “exercise her power to leave” if the company did not see her as an asset, and that was why she did not worry about having actual newsroom power. If she consistently was not allowed to serve the public the way she wanted through her writing, she had the “ultimate power” to hand in her notice and move on. The participants to be examined in the next chapter did just that. They moved on.

Conclusions

In the focus groups, participants at all career stages told “war stories” that seemed to indicate a preference for remaining in the field of journalism doing still-important work, while feeling frustrated by what they saw as inevitable inequalities, and despite no sense of having any control over their futures in the industry. They were working hard to impress the leaders of an industry that won’t acknowledge, let alone accommodate, their gendered, age-related needs. They saw themselves reproducing the culture that holds them back, but seemed unable or unwilling to call it to account. Part of this may be due to the nightmare conditions of their dream jobs: barely hanging on to yearly contracts, working over multiple media platforms, teaching technology to older staff, handling family responsibilities along with their careers, managing with dwindling resources, and so on. Given that they were deeply embedded in their demanding daily tasks of

doing journalism with a social justice intent, they had little opportunity to analyse critically their own stories about their career situations. Given the opportunity to do so in these groups, they questioned some of the meta-narratives that they worked under and saw that they could be false, or at least contestable (Snyder 2008).

In one group, several early-career women who had previously thought the newsroom was generally gender-neutral, said they were now seeing how differently male newsroom interns were treated, as the male interns had been given hard-news (crime) stories to cover when they, the women, had not. In many cases, younger participants described how having the individual interviews made them appreciate how much had changed for women journalists, how they took for granted that they could do any hard-news beat as well as any man. Along with some aspects of their own privilege, the historic role and difficult circumstances of women who preceded them had been invisible to them. Sharing stories revealed to the women that they did have potential and real power, but did not yet realize it. In Halifax, for example, the women spoke feelingly of their own power to write for the community “good.” In this way, the participants appeared to see glimpses of how it is possible to internalize gendered norms as they negotiated work/family domains (McCall, 1992).

In her focus group, Nicole O’Reilly said she had much new information to process about her individual interview experience. She had found it surprisingly difficult:

NO: We were talking about how all my professors were women, and you said, ‘Why do you think all your professors were women?’ And it was like a light bulb going off. ‘Oh yeah, that’s probably why they were women, because they weren’t working in newsrooms any more. Because they were having trouble moving up.’ I guess I just never thought of it before.

VS: It may not be true for all of them, but that’s certainly my experience as a journalism instructor, and I think for a lot of other women too.

NO: To me, they were strong women who were great professors. I never thought their career had led them there for other reasons. If you're not advancing, if you reach a ceiling in the newsroom, and you have a family, you want more time with them.⁶⁴

In this way, the group heard how generationally-speaking, perhaps not as much had changed as they thought in terms of parenthood impacts. The group discussion also allowed many young women to speak candidly to those senior participants in leadership or “power over” roles, who could make or break their futures, indicating to me a high level of comfort and trust. (The exception was Halifax, where no women managers existed.) For example, Emily Reilly of the *Hamilton Spectator* said, in the presence of her boss, City Editor Carla Ammerata, at a time when Reilly was on a contract, that her journalism future seemed like a forbidding place of “darkness, dragons and black holes.”⁶⁵ In front of their managers, younger journalists spoke feelingly of their frustrations and vulnerability, even describing how they had been pitted against one another by managers not present. Even if they survived in the industry in the short term, they would endure only to have to “choose” between career and family later on.

These expressions of powerlessness dominated many of the focus groups, whether from the top leaders who felt they could make few changes because of dwindling resources, to contract-level reporters who felt they had barely a toe-hold in an unforgiving industry. Only Monica Zurowski in Calgary talked frankly about enjoying her power, while Laura Fraser in Halifax said her power rested solely in a choice to leave if she felt the paper was not giving her what she needed. Those younger women maintained that their youth was often more important a factor in their careers than gender, but continued to see the motherhood/family issues as defining. They did not connect their forced march toward “choosing” between work and family as a gender issue. In one group, tension arose when younger women described what they saw as a swing

⁶⁴ N. O'Reilly, personal communication, Nov. 19, 2010, Hamilton.

⁶⁵ E. Reilly, personal communication, Nov. 19, 2010, Hamilton

away from feminism in Western culture, and how they worried about being seen as “strident” or “whiny.” At least one senior participant found that idea troublesome and even appalling. But they eventually agreed that the younger women did not want to be seen as gender victims (echoing the narrative use of positioning (Bryman et al, 2009)); rather, they felt they were so strong they could “handle” sexism, so go ahead, and “throw that at me,” effectively reflecting theories of differences between second and third-wave feminisms (Archer Mann & Huffman, 2005; Snyder, 2008).

Even where women held more than one of the top editorial posts, for example at the *Free Press* and *Times Colonist*, the focus groups did not see that situation as marking a trend in the industry toward encouraging female leadership. They were smaller-market anomalies, female-led islands in a testosterone sea. As Ammerata noted in her focus group, “we take our cues from our bosses.”⁶⁶ Those cues included long hours and encouraging unproductive competitiveness.

The focus groups and individuals who left (described in the next chapter) were related in a significant way: personal/professional intersections and gendered leadership qualities were key themes in focus groups, which were dominated by younger participants; and the women who left – all but one in the oldest generation – cited these themes in terms of their own career fulfilment, both accomplished and left undone.

In the last data chapter, I examine the participants who left the business after these interviews. While one said she craved personal decompression, the others exuded a sense that not too many career years remained in which to achieve the heights they had been working toward, and newspapers were no longer conducive to the kind of goals they wanted to accomplish.

The majority of those who left were in the most senior group, and appeared to have abandoned their careers after refusing to internalize further newsroom discourses that younger participants

⁶⁶ C. Ammerata, personal communication, Nov. 19, 2010, Hamilton.

were embracing with trepidation, or accepting with regret and anxiety. Staying meant being able to continue to fight for themselves, their stories and their communities, despite industry frustrations and personal exhaustion. Leaving seemed to be about accepting what appeared to be a sad truth: newspapers were no longer the best place for a skilled communicator to make a difference in the world and finish her long, productive career with pride.

Chapter 8

Six who walked away: frustrations and new beginnings

Young reporter Laura Fraser told the members of her focus group in Halifax that she could “exercise her power to leave” if her employer did not see her as an asset. If she consistently was not allowed to serve the public the way she wanted through her writing, she had the “ultimate power” to hand in her notice and move on.⁶⁷ So far, Fraser – promoted to be City Hall reporter for the Halifax *Chronicle Herald* – has decided to stay, as have most other participants. But six have moved on, nearly a quarter of the participant group. To continue to make a difference in the world – and regain a sense of personal equilibrium – they felt they had to go.

In the previous chapter, I explored the issues that were uppermost in the minds of the focus group participants, especially regarding ideas about gendered leadership and how their careers were affected by personal characteristics as they intertwined with upheaval in the larger industry. In this chapter, I examine those intersecting forces that now appear to have moved the participants outside of the print newsroom and into new roles. Resistance, accommodation, challenging meta-narratives and gendered forms of communication, acting as witnesses and voices, experiencing victimhood: all of these experiences, over time, seem to have pointed these “leavers” to the door, judging by the narratives they offered me before leaving.

Five women have left their newspapers since participating in the study: Paula Arab, columnist for the *Calgary Herald*; Editor-in-Chief Margo Goodhand, of the *Winnipeg Free Press*; Acting Editor-in-Chief Denise Helm, formerly at the *Times Colonist*; Assistant City Editor Helen Fallding, formerly at the *Winnipeg Free Press*; and Janet, who asked to be not identified. A sixth

⁶⁷ L. Fraser, personal communication, Nov. 16, 2010, Halifax.

participant, Kelly Toughill, left the *Toronto Star* long before our interview and a seventh, Melissa Martin of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, was forced out through layoffs.⁶⁸

Unbeknownst to me, Janet had already decided to leave before the day I interviewed her. Fallding told me she was leaning toward leaving the *Free Press* at the time of the interview and Goodhand acknowledged that she saw her job as having a natural life of no more than five years. If Helm was planning to leave the *TC* when we talked, she gave no hint. Arab, she said, was in her “dream job” but could see a different future. Whether they indicated they were leaving at the time I interviewed them or not, the five who were yet to leave still spoke of newspapers as places where good work could still be done, but the possibilities were dwindling.

For Toughill, Helm, and Fallding, universities were places where good work could still happen, too: Toughill had become the director of the journalism program at the University of King’s College in Halifax; Helm now manages media relations at the University of Victoria; and Fallding runs the Centre for Human Rights Research at the University of Manitoba. Janet, who was older than the others, left fulltime paid work, which was causing her increasing frustration, to focus on freelancing and her family, which included adopted children. Goodhand has several projects in mind. Arab started her own communication consulting company in August 2012.

As with many senior participants, Toughill negotiated the children/career conflict with her husband’s help. But she left newspapers in order to influence journalism in ways no resource-starved, ham-strung publisher could. Her leadership model demanded visionaries, but what she saw happening in newspapers across the country was just sad, as other participants would find after her.

⁶⁸ Because she did not choose to leave her job, Melissa Martin remains in Chapter 6 with her cohort.

‘My father expected me to be President of the United States’

Kelly Toughill’s office in an old King’s College building in Halifax was warm on a fall morning, so we had the window open, and the sound of students below filled the air. Eventually, so we could hear each other clearly above their calls and laughter, Toughill shut the window.

Clear communication was the key to her approach to effective leadership; communications as a career was in her bones. Born in Washington DC in 1959 to “upper-middle-class” parents, Toughill said her childhood was fairly chaotic, with her mother, a TV news executive, leaving her father, a journalist-turned-congressional-aide, for a fisherman in California.⁶⁹ Toughill went to boarding school on scholarship, lived for a time in Mexico, and attended university in Massachusetts before switching to a journalism program at San Francisco State University. She met her husband at 19, and credited him for being in a support role for most of their marriage. Without him, including his conveniently being Canadian so she could work here, Toughill said, she would not have been able to do what she has done.

“My father,” she smiled, “expected me to be President of the United States.” So it was not surprising to hear of her many accomplishments, which included working at a daily newspaper in Florida and 20 years at the *Toronto Star*, where she started in general assignment (replacing a reporter on maternity leave), cycled briefly through the lifestyles section and went on to cover the HIV/AIDS epidemic fulltime, the first Canadian reporter to do so, and winning a National Newspaper Award for her work. She had one more NNA nomination.

At the *Star*, Toughill covered health, Queen’s Park (the Ontario legislature), served on the editorial board and led the paper’s Halifax bureau. She turned down an offer for the Washington, DC bureau, a plum post, because of the long hours and toll that would take on her family. Along the way she earned an MBA from Queen’s University. Her final job at the *Star* was as Deputy

⁶⁹ K. Toughill, personal communication, Nov. 16, 2010, Halifax.

Executive Editor in charge of newsroom personnel, which involved a weekly commute from Halifax to Toronto. But six months and one titanic management shuffle later, she left the job, realizing her protectors were gone, and that if she were going to influence the next generation of journalists, she could do it “a helluva lot better” at King’s than at the *Star*.

Toughill, 51 at the time, was the only participant who was no longer in daily journalism before we met. I had decided to interview her because of her unique position as a former newspaper executive with a long journalism career who was now training new journalists for the rigours of the newsroom, or, more likely, the rigours of being their own bosses. She was helping to develop two streams of journalism study; in one, young journalists, schooled in everything from writing and interviewing to videography and running their own business, could make their way into the new multimedia world as journalist/entrepreneurs; the other stream offered investigative skill development. Her career experiences and position as a female mentor made her a pivotal figure for this study, giving her a long view forward and back and a synthesizing perspective. Indeed, a year after we first talked, we met again and she offered a compelling insight about the power of shame in newsrooms, particularly when it came to journalists’ fear of being seen to learn something, and to make mistakes while doing so. She saw how the “I don’t want to look stupid” discourse had bullied journalists for years, particularly women, and was thankfully now being challenged by techno-friendly young reporters, in Toughill’s view.⁷⁰ As more of the older participants – they were all in their late or mid-late career years as journalists – began to leave their newspapers after the interviews were held, her story took on larger importance in the study, as a kind of foreshadowing. In particular, other ways of serving society were apparently on the minds of those who left, but accomplished without further loss of self.

⁷⁰ K. Toughill, personal communication, Jan. 12, 2012, Victoria.

That feeling of needing greater personal agency in her work led much of Toughill's career trajectory. Having read her work and talked to her on the phone, I knew Toughill could tell a great story about those seminal events. Here she described her first day at the *Star* in 1986:

KT: There was a deputy city editor who was somewhat infamous. And he was an asshole. My first day at work I came in and XXXX was then the city editor, and he said 'that guy over there is your boss. Go talk to him.' So, I didn't have a desk or a phone. I knew nothing about the place whatsoever. I went over and said, 'Hi, I'm Kelly Toughill. I'm the new reporter.' He said, 'Oh, yeah. Toughill.' Then he looked up and he said, 'So, Toughill, you've heard of Flannery O'Connor right? *A Good Man is Hard to Find.*' And I said, 'yeah.' And he said, 'Do you think a hard man is good to find?' That was my first conversation in the newsroom with my boss. It kind of set the tone.

VS: Do you remember what you did? Were you shocked or, 'oh, that's newsrooms'?

KT: No, I was stunned. That level of overt sexism was quite surprising to me. But I was on contract and I was a big girl so I said, 'oh, gee, I haven't really thought about it because I haven't been looking for one.'

VS: Would you say that tone was pervasive or just random sorts of guys were like that?

KT: Well, XXXX had huge power over the general assignment pool. He liked to play favourites. He was profoundly sexist and homophobic. (Pause.) What's her name? The woman who swam all five Great Lakes?

VS: Um... Cathy somebody?⁷¹

KT: The reason I can't remember her name is that the only way he ever referred to her was the 'dyke mermaid.' So that atmosphere was certainly condoned by all sorts of people. That did change considerably over time. Partly through women pushing back.

VS: Mmm hmm. That's the way it happens, yeah.

⁷¹ It was Vicki Keith in 1988.

In this example, Toughill handles the tension between herself and the dominant structure, as represented by her homophobic, sexist boss, by playing along despite being stunned, since she was a powerless contract worker. Her challenge to that behaviour came later: Toughill recalled part of the resistance came from the establishment (by two women feature writers) in the late 1980s of a so-called “women’s caucus” of reporters and editors (including a recruited Toughill), which addressed issues of content and newsroom equity. She didn’t recall the details, but noted that the caucus benefited the women involved, as their numbers gave them clout. One well-known male journalist told her he was “clearly afraid” of the caucus, and that made her feel that it “was kind of nice to realize there was a sense you couldn’t fuck around with us [women] quite as much as in the past because there was an organization.”

Toughill told many stories about life as a young woman journalist, including how she was nearly fired for writing a story that infuriated a *Star* board member, but was kept on because her boss (mistakenly) thought Toughill’s husband was unemployed. “I was a woman who needed to be taken care of,” in her boss’s view, she recalled. Several times she mentioned how important it was to break ground in her reports. She first thought she would not like the dull repetition at Queen’s Park, for instance, but quickly found how to enjoy it:

I discovered there were all sorts of stories of Queen’s Park that nobody was doing but the *Star* was happy to put them on the front page. I was again in a position where I was doing lots of stories that nobody else was doing and I really liked that because I was not interested in the political stuff. I was interested in the policy stuff. So, if it had anything to do with health, education or welfare, the rest of the bureau didn’t care about it. So all of the people stories, how people were affected [by] what was going on at Queen’s Park, my bureau didn’t care. They cared about who was up incrementally and the polls and the inside jockeying in cabinet and all that other stuff that I didn’t care about.

Toughill supports the notion here that women reporters tend to feel their best work is based in reporting social issues such as health and welfare, as Beam (2008) argues. Central to Toughill's concept of her success in this area was how she defined vision, which was the idea that she usefully zigged where other journalists zagged. As a younger reporter imagining herself as a senior newsroom manager, she could see a loss of control and independence, and hence, a loss of personal vision. Now, as journalism school director, she described a clear vision of how the new curriculum ought to go and the path to its creation. In newspapers, especially inside of the "Medici court" of the *Star*, Toughill saw limits to a hierarchical management early on:

When I was pregnant with my first child I remember XXXX, who was then our editor-in-chief, taking me out to lunch and saying, 'well, do you want to come into management when you come back?' I said, 'not really.' And he said, 'don't you want to be editor-in-chief someday?' And I said, 'not really.' And he said, 'Why? Why don't you?' And I said, 'Why would I want to? I can have so much more influence, frankly, as a really good reporter than I am going to have as an editor-in-chief who will last maybe three years and then get kicked to the curb.'

Here we see the motivation to exercise power doing what she called "my own journalism," that of the reporter with direct access to the readers, influencing their interests and priorities. Toughill reasoned – with *good* reason – that in the cut-throat business of news, her tenure as editor-in-chief would be short, with a nasty and brutish end. Interestingly, this event took place when she was pregnant, which is not usually a time when women are assumed by their most senior managers to be eyeing the top job, as so many stories in this study illustrate. This editor-in-chief appeared to understand that successful careers are built over time and many experiences. Either that, or he toyed with her because he figured she'd quit, as so many other women did and do.

Now, as the head of a journalism program, Toughill was in a different place, "in a significant leadership position." She noted that the leadership structure at the university meant she was

constantly in meetings with “women of power,” along with men, giving me the list of names. Her excitement was palpable as she described the group that was restructuring the journalism program, how the team members involved communicated well, describing communication in gendered terms. We compared the discourses of academia and journalism, with Toughill first describing her curriculum development meetings:

KT: It is the most constructive group I have ever been part of. We talk about, ‘okay what are the obstacles? How do we resolve people’s interests and then how do we find a solution?’ And there is no jockeying over who has dominance. I really think it’s a gender issue. These are the most satisfying meetings I’ve ever been in. There are substantial disagreements about what is going to be done but it’s not personal and it’s not ego-driven and it always seems to be about the work, not about the people around the table. And maybe some of that is journalism versus academia, although academics are not known for having really small egos either.

VS: When I think of journalism and academia, there is a social justice/social service component to both. Obviously, the newspaper is a profit-driven company but the work that journalism does is around social justice and particularly for crusading paper like the *Star*. But the academy has a social-justice orientation in my view. Because of the work they do and because they are public bodies spending public money.

KT: Yeah. I’m always very conscious of having to translate what I said at the *Star* in any news meeting. You know, I didn’t use the same language constructs in a news meeting that I would use at my kitchen table.

VS: How so?

KT: I haven’t analyzed it specifically but I was always far more careful and conscious of what I had to say in any news meeting. There was a barrier to communication and those were meetings of almost all men. I am just not finding that in these meetings. I’m finding that people understand what I am saying. I was used to having to repeat myself three times. First time just to get heard, you know? And the second time to get the ideas across and the third time to do the convincing. And now I only have to say it once.

Her story about deafness at meetings offered an explanation as to why an intelligent, energetic and ambitious woman might exit print journalism despite understanding – and relishing – the idea that her role as a reporter gave her the power to influence social policy. You might leave because you had to explain an idea three times to your bosses, day after day, trying to cut through another language understood by those men at the management table who decide what stories run and where resources go. She acknowledged, with humour, the substantial size of the academic ego, but was experiencing a different kind of communication in meetings with her university colleagues, one that she felt allowed each person to speak once and be heard.⁷²

Her message for her young journalism students (60 per cent of the student body in her program was female) was that the journalism school power dynamic had changed – “the women in my program do not have less power in any way than the men, if anything it is the opposite” – and that the management structure she encountered as a young journalist was now essentially in chaos. Therefore young reporters had to be “really aggressive” in order to “survive the newsroom politics,” and to stay only if they understood the work they were doing was significant, ideas that the youngest cohort in my study confirmed through stories of their experiences. She pulled together the notion of how technological flux provided the space for diversity to take root in a print newsroom culture that allowed only the male, white, educated and (at least) middle-class, reminding me of how many decades print newsrooms operated without diversity (as noted in the literature review), compared to more recently created TV newsrooms:

Women definitely have more opportunity now because the entire industry is in flux. Any time you have this level of chaos there are fresh opportunities. So, when I went into the *Star* I went into a place with a very calcified hierarchy that had been around for a very long time, and the basic theory is that you hire and promote

⁷² Toughill elaborated on this newsroom communication problem at the previously mentioned industry conference in Toronto, in April 2012, during a panel I convened to air the issues my thesis raises. She, Emma Reilly and Margo Goodhand, plus two others not in the study, participated.

people that look like you and sound like you and feel like you. And if you are a woman or a person of colour or somebody that didn't grow up educated and from middle-class, that put up huge barriers in the newsroom that were self-perpetuating.

But things are being blown up pretty dramatically right now. So I think there's all sorts of opportunity, in terms of how widely news gathering is spread across the population now. This whole new function of managing those inputs didn't exist before and that's a big part of what journalism education needs to figure out how to teach. But you look at the hierarchy on TV news programs and it was far friendlier to women than newspapers and that's because those structures were created in the '50s and '60s not the 1880s.

The challenge, as Toughill saw it, was to turn natural observers – the journalist's classic role – into managers of their own brand, with the skills to market themselves in this new, fractured world of news-gathering and dissemination, as well as acquiring journalistic skills. The trick was not only to report stories that mattered, but to “think about how those stories fit into the media landscape, and where the money is coming from,” meaning journalists needed to discern how to get paid, including studying tax law, incorporation and advertising. Her approach aligned with her credo of journalism, which was to have the confidence and skills to report stories others did not. We agreed young women would not find that confidence by reading or writing for women's magazines, which cultivated what Toughill called an “attitude of cheerful self-loathing.”

She told me why she stayed in journalism so long, a turning-point tale that also launched us into a pessimistic musing on how mainstream newsrooms could suffer even more as the ground under their sclerotic feet trembled and women sought career happiness elsewhere:

KT: There was a really pivotal moment for me. I'd been at the *Star* a year or 18 months and I had every crap general assignment that you could possibly be given and I was given another one. I think it was literally like a cat show or dog show. There was a day when I was thinking, 'I can't do this job for anybody but myself. I cannot try to please these people in this newsroom. If I do that, I will not survive. That will be a soul-sucking experience that will destroy me as a journalist and the only thing I can do is take every single

one of these assignments and find something that excites me, and I don't care what the angle was that I was given,' and that changed everything at the *Star*. And that's very hard to do as a manager. You know? So I could work with a lot of independence within a wildly sexist organization as a reporter, but it would've been difficult as a manager.

VS: You almost paint a picture, or maybe I'm inferring too much, of how the hierarchies of newspapers will be slow to change if the bright young things, who you are training here, and I'm hiring as an editor, decide to do other things because the landscape is changing [outside of mainstream newsrooms]. It's almost as if —

KT: There are opportunities now that didn't exist before.

VS: So if women take those other opportunities, the newspapers become, by definition, more irrelevant and more calcified and more dead.

KT: It's sad. A lot of what's happening in the newsroom right now is sad.

While Toughill still saw jobs at newspapers and radio stations in particular as being good training-ground for journalists, the days were gone when a reporter could win a National Newspaper Award, be given a trip to Brazil as a bonus, have the freedom (or chutzpah) to charter a plane into the Amazon without checking with managers first, and write about the environmental impact of Canadian dams in Brazil and the treatment of the people there. Toughill did all that, but nobody could today, probably not even Toughill. The resources have dwindled, and with them, many possibilities for doing ground-breaking work. Whatever emerging journalists can accomplish, her stories suggested, will come from what an enterprising person can create and market to the jumble of stalls that make up the marketplace of new media.

Janet had many similar career experiences that led her to conclude, as Toughill had, that capitulation to the dominant culture was not an option. For Janet, however, speaking truth to power was becoming increasingly infuriating. First gender and now age were becoming marks of perceived inferiority and she felt powerless to stop it. She was too tired to fight anymore.

'He golfs with the managing editor! I can't compete with that'

At Janet's office, we met in the cafeteria, but at her request we repaired to a small lounge adjacent to the women's washroom. For personal reasons, she asked to be anonymous. She wanted to vet any detail that she felt might identify her, since only five papers were involved.⁷³ Janet focussed on her passion for social justice clashing with the injustices of a newsroom where management perpetuated sexist behaviour and coverage. She felt frustrated by younger women journalists who didn't seem to see how complicit they were in allowing the situation to fester.

Like most senior-level participants, Janet was in her 50s, a white Canadian, had a liberal arts degree and grew up in a middle-class household with two parents and siblings. A multi-award-winning reporter with a passion for social justice, she had been reporting for more than 25 years and unlike many in her age cohort, did not describe luck as influencing her career.

Janet recalled details of long-ago sexist incidents (such as male editors sending women reporters across the newsroom to get something so that the men could watch them move) with frustration and anger still apparent. She described going into managing editors' offices over the years to voice concerns that "12 white guys, balding, paunchy, go in there to decide what to put in our paper," and all they seemed interested in was the courts, crime and City Hall, plus local male sports teams.⁷⁴ Even their hobbies excluded her. Of one male reporter held in high regard by management, she cried out: "He golfs with the managing editor! I can't compete with that."

Janet said years of protest earned her the reputation of being a "troublemaker" and the office "fembo." However, in the mid-90s, one manager finally asked Janet and a few other women to document their concerns about the lack of women managers. This resulted in a report that was supported by some male colleagues, but other men in the newsroom responded by calling the

⁷³ The ethical review covered this concern.

⁷⁴ "Janet," personal communication, late in 2010.

women involved “the thought police,” she said. A committee to study the news pages for male bias was struck, including men and women, but it soon collapsed in disarray. Ultimately, only one woman was promoted to mid-management, and, according to Janet, this woman felt the hostility of the men who saw her as being promoted solely because of her gender.

Janet recalled having always had a difficult time persuading editors to run her stories about social justice matters; even when her beat was called “diversity,” the problems persisted. When we met, she had four stories from the diversity beat sitting in “overset,” the electronic folder where newspaper editors keep stories they have decided can wait for a rainy day. Often, just to feel secure, they never let that day come. Said Janet:

I have a personality where I root for the underdog. It's a really good trait to have on social issues. Because I'm good at interviewing people who are homeless, bipolar, abused women, kids who've been sexually molested, those are my people. I often joke about that but they are. And I love them. I want to tell their stories because their voices are not being heard. That's my personality. And now my beat is also diversity, so for the last year, I've been covering diversity. And again, I was thrilled! Because I wanted to tell the stories of people who come here from Pakistan and Rwanda, and everything else. But it's the same thing, I can't get their stories in the paper.

As Beam noted (2008), Janet, like more women reporters than men, felt her best work put a spotlight on social issues. Toughill had said the same. Janet explained that the issues she covered were still considered “soft news” so that most of her stories about social justice issues, people’s “tragedies and triumphs,” ended up in the lifestyle section, alongside the “lipsticks and recipes and fashion and a whole page on celebrities.” She said her career had stalled because she negotiated an eight-to-four shift so she could be home for her children after school. The “optics” were bad, because others stayed until 6 pm. But of course, they were not in the office when she arrived at 8 am. Otherwise, said Janet, the paper was not flexible about child-care. She blamed

“the male culture. Definitely, absolutely long hours. Lack of flexibility and even issues around going part-time and time off and taking your kids to doctors’ appointments.”

Janet saw the future of journalism as a mixed bag for women because they were “better multi-taskers” than men, which meant they would be seen by managers as capable of blogging, tweeting, taking video and reporting simultaneously for 12 hours a day. As for her own career, Janet said that the sexism she has experienced was now intersecting with ageism, and supported her view with a couple of intricate, but telling examples.

Soon after my interview with Janet, she left her newspaper. She had become “too tired to fight” anymore. The next time I saw her, nearly a year after our interview, Janet looked like a new person: 20 pounds lighter, her face brighter, and exuding good health. She said she had felt her anger and bitterness disappearing as she had more time for her family and personal writing projects. Still, she thought a lot about workplace issues for women, such as being sidelined during and after maternity leaves and “the acceptance that comes with that.”⁷⁵ And she was concerned about the “whole push to get boomers out” of newspapers and other workplaces. This rankled her, because boomers “come with a lot of context and background, and knowledge and everything that’s been really disregarded.”

When I asked Janet whether she thought that news media reflected reality in society or played a part in creating it and perpetuating stereotypes, her response started an exchange that ended with Janet making an astute observation about the double-standard of newsgathering, wherein reporters exuded power when out on the job, but when they returned to the oppressive cultural atmosphere of the office, they wilted. For women journalists, this meant a continual reinforcement of their historically unequal status, particularly as they became mothers and as they aged, putting intersectional influences into sharp focus:

⁷⁵ “Janet,” personal communication, late in 2011.

J: I've heard women say at meetings, that it's a 24/7 business, and that's what they always fall back on and that's why we can't change, and that's why we have to work 14-hour days if you're the senior editor. I just don't buy it. If you look at new, progressive businesses, like I've heard the way the Google office works, there's a 24/7 business. They bring their dogs to work, we are still locked into the old, industrial revolution of the 1920s; hard work means you're a good person. We're still locked into that! We could be working at home, there's telecommuting, so I don't buy that.

So many people used to say to me, 'I can't believe you're dealing with all that stuff now, newspapers are supposed to be thought of as so progressive, because you write about that stuff, like sexual harassment.' And I went 'Oh no!'

VS: That brings in a central issue to the thesis that I want to write about.

J: Like can it change?

VS: Women I've interviewed often express the notion that you've identified, that that's the way it is, that's 'the way the culture works,' and we have to negotiate ways to fit into that, right? Or be sidelined, or leave.

J: Right, right.

VS: At the same time they don't talk about themselves in power terms but they say, 'I give voice to people who don't have a voice.' Or 'I can affect how people vote because of what I write about City Hall. I can bring out issues.'

J: So a very powerful job.

VS: So they describe themselves in the job as being powerful. But if you say, 'so if you were to take that power and apply it to this [equality] work, or to -'

J: To make change in the office or the newsroom.

VS: Yeah, why is there such a disconnect there?

J: And what do they say it is?

VS: They-

J: They're scared.

VS: Some are, and some don't see it.

J: Keep your head down, don't make waves.

VS: Right, yeah, and they also see it as a larger societal thing, like we're just reflecting society, the idea that women have to do the mothering, and all that kind of stuff. So why do you think that disconnect is still so powerful?

J: When I started here, there was a real kickass guy, everybody loved him, and he said to me, 'why is it management always expects you people to be tigers out in the community and wimps in the office?' I remember thinking that is so true! We are in a job where you are expected to be extroverted, like you walk into a meeting with 200 people, and you might have to go on stage, you're going around talking to people -

VS: Yeah, push your microphone into somebody powerful's face.

J: Yeah, you have to be assertive, aggressive, and also phoning people and insisting they talk to you. There are all sorts of components of our business that require you to be very assertive and passionate person. And you're absolutely right, we come back to the office and we're all supposed to be these 'yes' men and 'yes' women. And that's a huge, huge source of frustration for people.

Kelly Toughill had had the insight about journalists' tendency not to want to appear vulnerable by learning something new (like blogging) in view of colleagues who might snicker: Janet hit on a related notion that journalists had a strong, crusading face in public, and a weak, appeasing side in the office, which was echoed by Nicole MacIntyre at *The Spectator*. The male-dominated newsroom culture seemed to demand a narrative that fit the strong, silent hero, a man who cannot be seen to acquire any skills, but magically had them, and who fearlessly questioned the powers-that-be in public office, never showing disloyalty to the culture from which he had sprung, fully-formed. Women journalists went along with the good guys/bad guys approach, the conflict paradigm, suppressing their own views or voting with their feet, said Janet. She came up with other possible ways of conducting business, including running the City Desk in a more relaxed way. Otherwise, women leave the business:

Yeah, there's breaking news, but a lot of it is just smoke and mirrors. It's that old-school, macho thinking of, 'got to get the news out' (claps hands). Well, technology has made it quite possible for us to do things differently. Working from home, and more flex time, more benefits for part timers, there should be all that sort of thing.

Another thing still bothered Janet, and that was the idea, expressed to her by a few of the younger women in her focus group held months earlier, that she "paid the price" for her forthright criticisms by being sidelined, never to reach management. Janet did not see herself that way. She mentioned this in both of our interviews, nearly a year apart. How could those other women journalists have seen her as sacrificing her career options, when the only other choice was to censor herself and not to speak honestly about the situation in the newsroom for women? This story of sustained resistance (Sosulski et al, 2010) showed how she might ultimately become tired enough to retreat, and give priority to her family and her own writing.

At the focus group meeting that she and other participants attended, Janet ardently took on the interviewer role from time to time, asking the younger women if they still saw a glass ceiling, as there were no top female managers, and commented on their vulnerability as contract employees. Janet acknowledged that before this discussion, she had not thought of the younger women as newsroom leaders in terms of their informal roles as technology teachers. Janet dismissed the notion that older reporters could not handle new technologies well, noting that she had had a laptop for years and was still not recognized as an office "early adopter." Technological understanding was something Janet felt older reporters had and could develop, if trained and encouraged. She was still vehement about the newspaper's "macho" editorial culture being "absolutely entrenched" in the late 20th-century media discourse that defined feminists as "victims and whiny man-haters" and that the newsroom was "blinding in its whiteness."

Similar themes of tiring in the face of a persistently patriarchal culture ran through Helen Fallding's story, along with a sense that mentorship by women made all the difference in her wanting to stay. But even that was no longer enough.

'Newspapers are structured in a way to squeeze people to death'

A proud and self-confessed “shit disturber,” Helen Fallding was 50 and the Assistant City Editor of the *Winnipeg Free Press* when we spoke. She told me about how, when she was starting in newspapers, an interviewer at the *Ottawa Citizen* looked at her resume, which included feminist organizing and running women's centres in Victoria and Toronto, and asked if Fallding thought her interest in social justice would be “a problem” in the newsroom. “My answer at the time,” she told me with a laugh in the *Free Press* cafeteria on a winter afternoon, “was that ‘I don't expect you'll be hiring me any time soon to write your editorials’.”⁷⁶

Fallding wasn't hired for the reporting job that day 15 years ago, either. Like Janet and Toughill and the others, Fallding was committed to promoting social justice through her work, but had recently felt that she had hit a wall. Hers consisted mainly of white, male baby boomers who were getting in the way of her continuing to make an impact.

The youngest of three girls, Fallding was born in Australia to a biologist mother and sociologist father, who also was a published poet. They moved around the world, which she said programmed her to be adventurous and “totally flexible about where I lived.” They settled in Waterloo, Ontario. By 19, she was part-way through a biology degree when she began to experience sexism at the University of Guelph, so became involved in feminist organizing on campus. She stayed for some years in the Yukon after moving north for a summer job. Fallding turned to journalism in her early 30s to satisfy her social justice itch, which had been put in place

⁷⁶ H. Fallding, personal communication, Nov. 22, 2010, Winnipeg.

by her mother, “one of those women who broke every barrier there was and she raised her three girls to think we could do anything. We would run across other people who tried to stop us and it pissed me off.”

Fallding had taken time to consider my questions before we met: her responses were nuanced, thoughtful and succinct. The words “justice” and “injustice” and “social justice” came up often as she explained her approach to journalism as a reporter and in how she assigned stories as an assistant city editor. Her position put her between staff and management. On the one hand, she assigned reporters and handled copy and their problems as a sister union member, and on the other, she influenced managers, who counted on her to help with their decision-making. Reporter Mary Agnes Welch called Fallding the newsroom’s moral centre and an astute judge of its politics. Her biggest problem, Fallding said, was a dearth of reporters to assign.

The initial mention of a characteristic that might affect her career came when I asked Fallding about her first reporting job at the *Free Press*, which she joined in 1998, when she was recommended by a friend who worked at the paper. She was hired as the Brandon correspondent:

HF: I’m a lesbian and I don’t think they would have hired me for that job if they’d known. . . . I was strategic and didn’t mention anything about my partner until my probation period was over. But in some ways, it was my big journalism break to get into a bigger paper and I just don’t think it would have happened –

VS: Well, sexuality is off-limits in terms of hiring, but you felt that even if they had known somehow?

HF: You know there are so many factors in hiring. They wouldn’t have to say anything. Lots of people applied, somebody else gets the job. And Brandon was fine.

Institutional hypocrisy on the issue of same-sex rights showed up early. After being hired, Fallding said she had to threaten the paper with a human rights challenge in order to get benefits for her partner. The paper had previously taken an editorial position in favour of same-sex

benefits, but it would not extend them to its own staff, based on an argument, she recalled, that the paper at that time had an American-based owner. It took months for her to gain those rights, with support from the union. She was the only participant who told me that she was homosexual. If others were, they did not say so. I did not ask that question of anyone. But sexuality seemed otherwise not defining for Fallding at work, just one part of her identity that also had benefits, as intersectional theory suggests:

HF: Once everybody got over that (laugh), that's been a non-issue in terms of my work life. It's been an advantage in an odd way in terms of some sources that I work with.

VS: How so?

HF: I had an Aboriginal leader give me his personal cell phone number and call me all the time with scoops, and he said he was doing that because I understood what it was like to be a minority. And he just thought that I listened to him in a different way and he thought that's what it was about.

Gender, for example, was more important in her sense of how she did her journalistic work.

Fallding went from covering Brandon to become a legislative reporter, during which time she found that, like Toughill, she was not interested in covering politics the traditional way:

HF: I felt like I had to learn to be interested in horse-race style politics. I'm a political person but not in that way. I'm interested in issues and I think women tend to be more the 'how does this affect me, how does this affect the kids at school, how does this affect the food bank,' than 'does Mr. X have more power than Mr. Y right now?'

VS: The minutiae of jockeying and that kind of stuff.

HF: Which has totally fascinated whoever I'd been reporting to, so I felt like I had to develop, I had to steer myself in the direction that didn't interest me and I wasn't sure interested our readers, but it interested my guy editor. I can do it, it's just I'm not sure that's the direction the paper needs to be going in.

VS: There's this idea of holding our government leaders to account and that piece of journalism is important, but that still gets all the attention in terms of the horse race. The 'who's on first today, who's up in the polls today,' reading the tea leaves of who has power, as opposed to 'what are they doing with it?'

HF: And my sense is that the political reporters who came before me, what fascinated them was power and what fascinates me is issues.

VS: Do you think that the being-fascinated-by-the-power approach to political reporting has an impact on how society organizes, or how society responds in terms of a political agenda, in terms of a social agenda?

HF: I think it's part of why people tune out, why readers tune out. We don't get great readership on our political reporting, and all those people who don't vote. I think if you're not into that, it's like if you're not into football, if you're not into that particular game, it doesn't interest you and that has frightening implication for people's disengagement from politics. Because we're not making clear to them the connection between their everyday life or children's aspirations and what's going on politically.

Her observations on how leaders' decisions affected work life were pointed: she had been hired after the *Free Press*' "lost generation" of women was finally noted, and then she felt that perhaps it was only because management thought she was younger than she was. "There was a whole history of women coming back from maternity leave and saying, 'I'm wondering if I could work part time for a couple of years because my kids are little?' and they'd be like, 'No. If you want to work part-time go to McDonalds'." The fact that the number of racialized minorities was close to zero in the newsroom of more than 100 people shocked her. She felt the newsroom was "highly racist" and that sexism had only diminished because of Margo Goodhand's leadership: she no longer felt she had to ration her opinions on sexism as before, when she feared being "slotted as the feminist to be ignored," like Janet. With women in the top jobs, Fallding said, she could do things like write "25 stories on water and sewer issues in the First Nations. But that would not have happened without [a senior editor] and Margo because they thought it was important and I

think the guys that preceded them would have gone, ‘well, Indians don’t buy the paper’.” As an assigning editor, she brought an approach to the abortion issue that was informed by her generation’s experience:

Most of us have had abortions or have friends who have. So we know what we’re talking about and most of the guys I’m surrounded by have more of a sense of it as a theoretical issue. I have to remind them, ‘probably one in every three women here has had an abortion and probably even higher because career women, a lot of them probably wouldn’t be in this job if they’d had an unwanted pregnancy that they’d carried through with.’ So stop thinking of it as a marginal or religion issue, this is the real life of regular women, and that’s the way that we need to approach it. Not make some weird assumption about the kind of women who have abortions being not the kind of women who read our paper. About it being some unethical fringe, it’s, ‘guess what guys, it’s a mainstream reproductive health issue.’

To the extent Fallding felt she succeeded, it was “because women absolutely every step of the way” helped her. That mentorship continued, with a lot of “sisterhood in this organization at this moment and I certainly try to do that for younger women coming up.” But she also saw pretty student interns getting more attention from the male editors. She found herself watching who got help from “the guys” and who actually needed help, feeding “story ideas to the smart ones so they’ll have a better chance.” Even a shit-disturber has to work the system discretely sometimes.

Fallding told me she was being recruited for a university job and not to tell anybody. I didn’t, just as I kept similar secrets about other participants. She was leaning toward taking the post, since her partner was tired of her long, unpredictable hours – they did not have children – and the new emphasis on web-driven news meant assigning more breaking-news stories and less issues-related journalism. The newsroom was shrinking, so her worst days revolved around not having enough reporters to assign. As a commercial enterprise, newspapers were structured “to squeeze people to death” and all she wanted was to keep doing “some good in the world.” Fallding was

able to carry on doing that as she did take a leave to become Manager of the Centre for Human Rights Research at the University of Manitoba soon after. In the fall of 2012, she officially left via a voluntary buyout.⁷⁷

Like Fallding and Toughill, Denise Helm of the *Times Colonist* switched to a university job after a long career in journalism. But she did not speak of any such plan or idea when we spoke, focussing on journalism as her “calling.” If talking about the importance of “personal growth” and doing “work of purpose” was a hint that she had topped out at the newspaper in that regard, I missed it completely.

Media can help change your community, your society, for the better

Denise Helm, as Online News Director for the *TC*, described how she was responsible for bringing more readers into the daily’s web pages and related that to the industry’s need for diversity in its newsrooms. Newsroom diversity, or lack of it, was an issue for her, as was leading collegially and by example. Helm felt she needed to have personal satisfaction and growth, and a sense of purpose, in her work, and spoke of how personal subjectivity could constructively be brought to bear on journalism:

I think journalism is more of a vocation than a job. I presume, because it was true for me, perhaps not for a lot of people, but journalism is a calling and I’ve always seen it as a calling. I feel that there’s an amount of community service and community purpose to it and to me that is a very rewarding, the most rewarding part of the job.⁷⁸

She described how she was born in into a middle-class family in Vancouver, the fourth of six kids, part of a household where newspapers were important. Like many participants, she had

⁷⁷ Fallding said in an email (personal communication, March 13, 2013) that while she missed the irreverence of newsroom culture and the influence she had as a writer, her work-life balance has improved dramatically.

⁷⁸ D. Helm, personal communication, Jan. 14, 2011, Victoria.

been a strong English student in high school. Growing up, she had felt a little bit like an outsider, not a rebel like Fallding but a curious observer, which turned out to be a good fit for journalism. Helm's mother was a home-maker and her father was the executive director of a network of neighborhood houses on the Lower Mainland, overseeing an organization that did a lot of community-based work and what she considered "work of purpose."

Her interest in media didn't come into play until Helm took a solo Europe travel break in 1980 before her third year of an undergraduate degree in international relations from the University of British Columbia. She was interested in social issues, and story-telling and journalism, but didn't know if she was "hard-nosed and hard-headed enough" for newspapers. But with the Europe trip having widened her world view, and after a stint of volunteering in Nigeria, she excitedly took a certificate course in journalism at Langara College in Vancouver.

After working at a number of papers around B.C., Helm began thinking about being married and having a family, and also wanted to be closer to her own family. She began at the *TC* in 1991, thinking she would stay only a few years, but was there 20 years later, having been a reporter, columnist, press gallery reporter, assistant city editor, city editor, and online news director.⁷⁹ She had always believed, and still did, that journalism was worthy work: "Media can help people make decisions about their lives and can help change for the better your community and your society," she said. Being a middle child, said Helm, was partly why she made a better observer/reporter than commentator: she was better at empathizing and seeing all sides of an argument than trying to persuade people to a point of view. That notion of the singular perspective of mainstream media was troubling to her, with personal attributes both keeping certain people out of newsrooms and keeping current journalists from getting good interviews:

⁷⁹ Helm would go on to finish her career at the *Times Colonist* as the Acting Editor-in-Chief, after Chodan left.

DH: I would say the mainstream media do not reflect the demographics because I don't think you see working-class, marginalized people. When I look, for instance, at British Columbia newsrooms, it's white, middle class and the advertisers are aimed at that same white, middle class. I suppose my appearance and gender and middle-class upbringing allow me entrance into certain news-gathering situations that someone who would be more extreme in their appearance or personality might not have access to. Being, appearing and looking part of that 'safe' demographic, I think of when I was at the press gallery. There was a fellow who tried to get accredited who dressed oddly and he obviously had an agenda and he was not allowed to get credentialed. They were worried that he was ... he would not maybe respect the ...

VS: Code? (Laughs)

DH: The code or whatever. I think those same characteristics can be a drawback if you are trying to do some of the reporting that frankly isn't done. Is that making sense?

VS: Tell me more about what you mean. How can they be a drawback?

DH: I think you have to be more skilled as an interviewer in situations where you are dealing with minorities or marginalized people. If you come across as a white, middle-class person, if you're trying to really get at the stories of someone who's homeless or a street worker or a new immigrant or someone who might, rightly or wrongly, assume that you could have no idea what it's like to be in their shoes. You might not be able to build that kind of rapport that gets beyond the surface of an interview.

Mainstream media reporters were "part of the establishment" and rather than the mainstream expanding to include minorities, those minority groups were creating and watching their own media, Helm explained, citing a TV network being watched by Indigenous peoples, and Asians on the Lower Mainland working for their own media but not reporting for the Vancouver *Sun* or *Province*. That was a problem, because ethnic media silos meant less understanding among people and lost opportunities for a more civil and informed society.

Over Helm's nearly 30-year career, issues of age and gender had changed. When she was younger and single, she recalled, she tried fitting in with the guys, hanging out with other journalists ("a drinking crowd"), partying and so on. After marrying in her 30s and having her daughter four days before turning 42 (her daughter was eight at the time of the interview, Helm was 50) she saw how having a child "filled the well up again" after a gruelling day. Even as online editor, which meant she worked an earlier shift than she had as City Editor, and understanding the capacity of technology to lengthen her day, she did not take the job home unless she was the editor on call. She needed, and got, rejuvenation time with her family. Her husband's schedule was more flexible, so he did more of the emergency child-care work.

Helm did not mind that as a senior editor, she no longer ate and breathed journalism and commented, in a foreshadowing I missed, how work at a non-profit group might now, as a parent, give her "that sense of purpose" and of contribution and personal achievement. But at the *TC*, she saw having a child as bringing her a closer, different connection to the community, and adding to the kinds of subjectivity that she said enriched the job at the paper every day.

Since coming to the *TC*, Helm had seen parity for women journalists: there was no ghetto for them, no prestige beats for men. That might not be true at other newspapers, she felt, where women might only get so far, and the boys' network would kick in. Then, at a certain age, the women would keep their heads down or look for something else, depending on their ambitions. The *TC*, as a kind of 'destination' paper where staffers stayed, meant the atmosphere was unusually collegial, allowing even unconventional women reporters like Jody Paterson to move up the ladder.⁸⁰ Paterson broke ground for women like Lucinda Chodan, someone Helm felt was a great mentor, firm but supportive of staff. Helm mused on how women leaders in newspapers

⁸⁰ Paterson went from reporter to City Editor to Managing Editor to columnist, and then left journalism. She is now a volunteer worker in Honduras and received an honorary PhD for her community activism and journalism work from the University of Victoria on June 15, 2012.

had an easier time in smaller, more collegial newsrooms. Perhaps it was her way of wondering where she could go in journalism next, and find a similar culture:

To use stereotypes, a woman's attention to the social dynamic, and interpersonal and I don't want to say human, but human side of things, is a different type of management style. I would say there's probably other senior editors-in-chief elsewhere who perhaps, they're more manlike, right? Who are dealing with a higher ratio of men. So in a newsroom this size, it's probably easier for a female manager, I also think it depends on the culture of the newsroom and how collegial it is, because I think that (pause) a stereotype is that women tend to be a bit more consensus-building and if the ongoing culture in a certain newsroom is more confrontational and dictatorial, I think a woman might feel less compelled to join those ranks.

She was careful to note that the women's leadership attributes she described were stereotypical, but seemed at the same time to see them as having some truth. Her own style as a manager, as she described it, was informed, but not dictated, by her personal life: she'd let an employee go home to nurse a sick child, just as she would let someone go early to look after a sick mother. People had to do their jobs, but hard workers earned flexibility. For Helm, the story was that leadership had gendered elements, and paying attention to that might influence how domains of work and home could be more easily negotiated (McCall, 1992).

A great day for Helm was to see her staff engaged and enthusiastic, supporting them with constructive feedback and improving her own work with some kind of professional development: perhaps a webinar or reading a good article about online technology. As the editor of online news, Helm relied on the technology running smoothly to have peace of mind. To have someone comment on – or even notice – that she might have done a good job was also part of a great day, and offering praise was something she said she practiced with her own staff. A bad day involved technology that went wrong, being forced into “response mode,” dealing with crises rather than

in control of her work agenda. Being sleep-deprived because of her daughter made things difficult, as did office confrontations; getting into turf wars and power plays was not her style.

Charged with developing the *TC*'s web presence, Helm had joined what began as a male-dominated club of web editors across the chain's (CanWest at the time) Western Canadian papers. It evolved to become a group of 18, including nine women, whose members held regular conference calls. A shift had occurred so that the men, who had been seen at first to be more tech savvy, were being joined by women like Helm who were no longer nervous about the technology and brought new ideas – and confidence – to the table. This would enrich the news agenda, Helm felt, as well as help bring more flexibility to the workplace. It was a turning-point story (Coffey & Atkinson, 1999) in which she expressed hope that enough women would “stick with it to cause that change” because leadership could still easily remain reserved for men, if all that women journalists won was flexibility for their child-bearing years.

Harkening back to her international roots, and with a recognition of privilege, Helm was the most globally-minded participant in imagining where big change in print journalism would come from, besides the drive of technology: “I am still, at the end of the day, a 50-year-old, middle-class woman in a Western country and I am not even sure it's going to come from a Western country. Maybe China, maybe some place unexpected,” she explained. To Helm, the best word to describe what was coming next for the industry was “liberation,” set loose from the traditions that held it back. I wondered later if it was her own “liberation” she meant.

In early 2012, Helm left her post as Acting Editor-in-Chief to manage media relations for the University of Victoria. The once women-dominated *TC* masthead returned to (white, middle-aged) men as editor-in-chief, city and news editors, sports editor, business editor, and lifestyles

editor. So in the end, she did not stick with it, as she hoped other women would. Neither did Margo Goodhand, one of the few at the top of the newspaper industry's editorial hierarchy.

'That's haunted me forever, that we can't be leaders and women'

When Margo Goodhand received my request to talk about why women stay in newspapers, she said she felt grateful to be asked, and thought, "Well, that's great someone is doing it."⁸¹ I was grateful, too. She had a terrible cold the wintry day I arrived in her large office at the *Winnipeg Free Press*, but she was still up for the interview, which was conducted in comfort at a coffee table. We talked about how much has changed for women and yet nothing had, which prompted her to remark on a then-recent issue (Spring 2010) of the *Ryersonian*, a media magazine produced by Ryerson University's journalism students. On the cover was a drawing of the three editors-in-chief of the *Toronto Star*, *The Globe and Mail*, and the *National Post* respectively, three white men in suits, striding (of course) under the headline "Never Say Die":

MG: Yeah, I get the *Ryersonian*. I always think one of those young college students is going to do something on this ridiculous situation we have with women in management in the newspapers, but instead I get – well, the one that really threw me off was the one where they have John Stackhouse and Doug Kelly and the new guy at the *Star*, Michael Cooke, walking down the street. These men in their trench coats like the three men of the apocalypse and how they were changing the newspaper industry in Canada, and I thought, 'This is just so old school.'

VS: Really, and that's in the *Ryersonian*?

MG: That's in a place where there are a lot of female journalists and you wonder what they're thinking when they look to that kind of a paradigm and go, 'Where am I going to be and where do I fit in?'

In a way, Goodhand, then 53, had been trying to figure out the answers to those questions since she started in journalism. She was born to a feminist homemaker mother who voted NDP and a

⁸¹ M. Goodhand, personal communication, Nov. 22, 2010, Winnipeg.

surgeon father who voted Tory. Goodhand was the middle of five kids and raised in Winnipeg, where she got a BA in Political Science and English. She left to travel to Europe and only came to the idea of journalism when a younger brother died. She suddenly recalled it was something that had appealed to her as a child, so she signed up for a journalism course at Langara College in Vancouver after his funeral, and it was “like a light went on” for her:

The first day I was sitting there and it was the most amazing experience and I went, ‘Well, this is it, this is what I want to do and be’ and it fit into every personal characteristic that I have, every personality quirk that I have. You know, you’re relatively introspective but you like to be a part of seeing how history is made. You care about people and issues. You’re politically bent; you have a passion about making a difference. You get to meet interesting people and the whole thing was just a tremendous turn on – and then you get to write stories.

Goodhand didn’t wait to graduate from the one-year course before taking a job at a Vancouver weekly where she had interned, then moved to the Medicine Hat *News* in 1985. She quickly became the paper’s first female news editor because she says she “couldn’t stand having the City Editor change my leads any more. I got pissed off.” That meant an early end to her reporting days, which she mildly regretted, but since then she had written a couple of columns and continued to do so as Editor-in-Chief of the *Free Press*. She recounted that history and didn’t wait for me to ask the next question, because she knew that I was familiar with the barrier:

How did I get here? I worked my way up. When I had my kids – you know what that’s like – I worked nights and my husband worked days so we didn’t have to put the kids in day care.

Unlike others, most notably in her senior cohort, Goodhand said nothing about luck: she told resilience stories. Her several years on the night copy editing desk, during which she worked until 2:30 am, were terrible, she said, a horrible job of cutting stories. In those early days of her marriage and her career at the *Free Press*, she had two sets of grandparents to help with the kids.

When her journalist-husband started working from home, and when the youngest boy was in kindergarten, she felt she could go fulltime and then into management. (One editor, she recalled with a laugh, told her when she turned down an earlier offer for a management job due to family and child-care concerns that “that was ‘what nannies were for.’ I thought, ‘this is a man who has had four marriages.’ He had no idea.”)

Her career took her from a post as an assistant city editor to an assignment editing Pan Am Games stories, then to features editor, entertainment editor, deputy editor and finally editor-in-chief. I noted that most women rise through the arts sections, which are traditionally female. She replied with a reflection on the nature of women and leadership in newspapers:

MG: Yeah, they wouldn't give me the city editor's job. I applied twice and I got turned down twice and the second time I was told I was too nice to be a city editor and I'll never forgive them for that. Most of those guys are gone, but that era was 'my way or the highway.' It was very hierarchical and I'm not like that. I'm a fairly collaborative person and the whole idea about being too nice, I thought, 'That's just crap.' I think they didn't understand that women's leadership skills are so different than men's. You know, there is just so totally different a style and what they perceive as weak is actually pretty strong. We get the job done; we just get it done in a different way.

VS: Can you articulate what some of that difference looks like?

MG: [Traditionally] it's looked on as weak if you ask people's opinion, like you don't know your own opinion? Or that you don't trust your own opinion. I mean, a better decision is made if you consult with people and talk to people. In this business you're not allowed to be, or you are questioned as being weak or not decisive enough. We [women] always make a decision. I hope it's as informed as possible, and as inclusive as possible. What I've had happen a couple of times, certainly when I was starting out was that 'Oh you're too nice.' I'm not that nice. [Laughs] I would like to be known as fair and I'd like to be known as creative and certainly nurturing is too loaded a word, but I do resent the fact that nice guys don't finish first.

VS: It's also that sort of code word for 'you're too female.'

MG: Can a leader lead and inspire and make something, make a difference, and not be completely top-down? I think so. I think you can create an environment where – in the new newsroom especially is that it's not a top-down thing, and I don't think the new generation would put up with that crap either. But it's still, that was very old school and it exists in a way today. There's a real military hierarchy – those really old school guys who go, 'It has to come down, you have to *make* that reporter do that. Make that story and make this,' and I don't want to work at a newsroom like that.

Here, Goodhand describes vividly the dominant forces that perpetuate patriarchal norms (Snyder, 2008). And when reflecting on the impact of her personal qualities on her work, she was the only participant in this cohort to express a sense of history, to say how much she has benefitted from being on the “coattails” of “really great female journalists and advocates,” while the feminist in her (nurtured by her mother) was constantly sad and outraged. She had seen many female journalists come and go over the years because they “couldn't handle the atmosphere” as she described it in the exchange above, or said “it just wasn't worth it.” And the problem did not stop there. I had not asked about diversity yet but she said that hiring freezes and immovable baby boomers caused the “stuck” problem that was common among the cohorts. She did not name racism, but hinted at it in a story about a big dinner party for an Aboriginal scholar:

MG: I'm very aware of the fact that there's no diversity in my newsroom, that we need Aboriginal voices, that we don't represent the Filipino community. There are so many things that I really feel badly about and passionate about.

VS: In terms of the diversity aspect, beyond gender, when you get talking about ethnicity – is that frustration part of – is that a cultural, structural, systemic problem?

MG: It's just sheer money. I don't know, my staff will not go. I've got a certain amount of people – my head count can't go up and no one's leaving so I can't even make a change. My next hire is going to be what I want it to be but I haven't been allowed to hire anybody for years. In fact, I had to lay three people off last year in the middle of the recession so I get frustrated by that.

The whole city is like that too. I was at a very posh dinner raising money for an Aboriginal scholarship and I looked around the room and the only Aboriginal person was the one accepting the scholarship. I thought, ‘the day this place is half and half or has more – is the day that this city is healed.’ I think it’s a travesty that we try to pretend that everything’s okay and it’s not. There are a lot of issues that I do wish I had the power to address and at this point I’m still stuck.

She mentioned the paper does focus on issues, citing stories about a lack of running water and about tuberculosis, and that the Online Deputy Managing Editor was Métis. Also, one of the reporters, Alexandra Paul (see Chapter 4), had Indigenous status. Goodhand added she created a scholarship for an Aboriginal journalist to come to the newsroom for several weeks to be trained and mentored. She shrugged, it always seemed to be a tough work-around, and she did not have the power to fight it as she wanted. She seemed to feel thwarted by the force of the power that resided solely with the company, while making a case for the way women tend to accomplish things efficiently by pooling their skills and talents, rather than working top-down. In effect, she described a coping strategy, when what Goodhand wanted to do was lead change.

A great day for Goodhand was about everyone being charged up by a story, or when they tried something new, like live-streaming civic election coverage, which was so good (and original) that even the candidates were watching it live. This “rich, textural experience” was a light-bulb moment for Goodhand, enabling a 138-year-old newspaper to do “this incredibly cool stuff.” She was proud of the crusading role the paper played in areas such as social justice for children. And she had figured out a novel way to fund reporting that required travel money (especially about the environment and Manitoba’s north) by applying for Canada Institutes of Health Research grants, which provided “independent, hands-off, no-strings-attached funding” for important projects. Taking this money also disqualifies a paper from being considered for a National Newspaper Award (NNA), which is the Oscar of Canadian print journalism. I was amazed to

hear of these grants being available to the media, and impressed that Goodhand and her staff were willing to tell these stories without hope of recognition from their peers and competitors. A bad day at work involved a poorly reported or sensationalized story, and increasingly, what she called anonymous “shame-on-you comments” that could be shockingly rude and sexist. She cited, among other things, how stories circulated that she bought coffee for the men in the office.

As to why women were so few in number in senior newspaper roles, Goodhand described how “ambitious and fabulous” young women were, but then they had a “real problem when they hit the marriage and the babies.” At that point “something has to give,” she said, “and often I think women just go ‘it’s not worth it’ and my heart breaks.” If only they could see how great the rewards are – advocating for the community and for change – then more might remain, she said. She recalled the era in the mid-90s, when so many women left the paper (Goodhand can still name them and did) that it was “a whole generation gone.” That created gaps in coverage on social issues and trends, as well as eliminating candidates for important positions such as editorial writer. (Only one of the *Free Press*’s four editorial writers was a woman.) But she cited a troubling, wider viciousness, and how she had been haunted by the notion that women couldn’t be leaders as they are currently defined in journalism and politics:

Judy Wasylycia-Leis was in our office and she’s a mayoral candidate and she said she’d never had such a rough campaign. She’d never been exposed to as much sexism and aggressive hostility and held up to ridicule. I looked at her and I thought, ‘That’s why women don’t expose themselves to leadership roles,’ because if you put yourself out there, they’re criticizing your clothes, they’re criticizing the tone of your voice, the way you talk – you know, it’s ‘shrill,’ it’s always shrill – your management style, your leadership qualities.

That’s the one that’s haunted me forever, that idea that we can’t be leaders and be female, or be leaders and have a different style than the guy from the *Spiderman* newsroom, you know? That’s what they think is a leader and what they think is a newsman.

Politicians are the same way. They have to be testosterone-fuelled, aggressive. They have to go on the attack, and as soon as a woman does that, she loses her credibility because women are not perceived – they're not allowed to act like that. We're constantly assessed and found wanting for any ambitions to be in a leadership role.

I think that's where I've been finding, these last couple of weeks, you do have some rough days, and you go, 'Do I really – is it really worth it to me to stay here and accept the kind of public pillorying?'

This comment illustrates the extent to which, for these senior participants who left, the personal situation intersecting with the professional challenges had become too much. Journalism was supposed to be about people and stories, she concluded, not about being a punching bag.

Thinking ahead, Goodhand noted she had always said that she would stay on the job no longer than five years, and was in the middle of year three when we met. She was still finding reasons to be optimistic. For example, she recalled a simple meeting over coffee with someone who mentioned how a *Free Press* editorial had caused a certain influential person to call Winnipeg's mayor and resolve a pressing social issue. "So I think that the paper has a tremendous ability to make a change if we want to. We have tremendous power to put forward ideas, to discuss issues. I don't think we realize the power that we do have." She did worry, however, that with newsroom numbers cut, and the number and diversity of voices dwindling, that "police blotter" news was overdone. She saw the online paper as the more creative, collaborative place for young journalists to shine. The web culture, she felt, would change the newsroom, because it was driven by a generation that wouldn't tolerate the male-dominated, militaristic culture of the past. She laughed that because the newsroom was "cool in the summer and warm in winter," older workers stayed on and stood between her and a few good hires.

Goodhand, while saying she had never had a female mentor nor been (formally) asked to be one, still changed things incrementally with every editorial decision she made. When I spoke to

other women in the newsroom, they clearly admired her collaborative leadership and news sense and appreciated that she was a woman editor-in-chief with a woman deputy editor working beside her. Like the others who have left the industry, she described years of clashing with the dominant culture, her rise through the hierarchy marked by personal contortions to fit the expected norms, and how her position of authority was not a position of power. She was caught, unable to right historic wrongs, such as hiring for diversity. But there were many highs too, which she enumerated in a letter to the *Free Press* staff before she left on July 30, 2012.

Goodhand named the paper's many successes since she had started as a "frazzled mom," most recently an award-winning series on immigration and an all-Africa edition, and then wrote:

I've really loved this job, and you people are like family. One big, dysfunctional, fabulously creative family. And I will miss you. But I am really happy, I know how lucky I am to be able to leave on my own terms, and on good terms. If the choice is to die at your desk or to go when people think you're too old or have lost your touch, this is how I want to go. (Internal memo from Margo Goodhand to staff, June 15, 2012.)

She "just kept getting the chance to work my way up," she wrote, reflecting again the idea among the oldest cohort that such advancement was amazing and inexplicable, while at the same time she underscored how hard she had to work, which was especially difficult during the years her kids were young. And now, as the industry was shifting to reduce resources – and therefore possibilities for change – to new lows, Goodhand decided to get out. Rather than take another job in journalism or stay on past her own deadline, she is writing a book about the history of women's shelters, among other projects. The only luck she cited was about a clean getaway.

The *Calgary Herald's* Paula Arab, like Goodhand, decried the lack of diversity in newsrooms. As an immigrant's daughter, she experienced a Halifax childhood that determined her lifelong commitment to exposing social justice issues.

'I don't think any newsroom in Canada is completely diverse'

A young Paula Arab found the criminal courts in Halifax instrumental in her wanting to become a journalist. As a child of a Lebanese-born father and a Canadian-born mother of Lebanese heritage, Arab went to the courts with her mother, who worked as an Arabic-English interpreter. She loved what she called “the subculture, the excitement” of the courts. Her father, who emigrated from Lebanon at age 19 (her mother was born in Canada, and her grandparents were pivotal in the establishment of the Lebanese community in Halifax), was a businessman who was deeply involved in community issues. In her home, education was seen as the key to success, along with language and cultural learning: Arabic lessons and folk dancing were part of Arab’s childhood. Her cultural background and gender (as a woman with a cultural heritage descended from a country that oppresses the voice of women, as she described it later⁸²) informed her social justice approach, which she positioned as at odds to white, middle-class journalism. She saw a lack of diversity inside the *Calgary Herald*, and in other newsrooms, as resulting from a lack of access to journalism schools, which are the typical gateways to a newspaper career. She herself graduated in 1991 from Ryerson’s journalism program after studying liberal arts and journalism at the University of King’s College:

PA: The individual personality is so much wrapped up in journalism because we filter information differently, and that’s why a diverse newsroom leads to a diverse product, because someone with a different identity is not going to see a story or is not going to be interested in a story that I as a woman, daughter of an immigrant, strong social justice background would be. At the same time I’m not interested in the story that somebody, like a white, middle-class, private school, journalist might be interested in.

VS: Do you think the *Herald* is a diverse newsroom?

⁸² Paula Arab, personal communication, March 25, 2013.

PA: No. I don't think any newsroom in Canada is completely diverse, because you need money to become a journalist; you need money to go to school, to go to four years of university. And at Ryerson's program the last year you have to do a mentorship and it's unpaid So I think that's where the problem starts, is what we're saying you have to do to become a journalist.

VS: So it becomes an exclusive club in that sense.

PA: Well yeah. You have to be able to afford it. I don't think you can get a job anymore without having a journalism degree. Not for what you learn, but just for the foot in the door. When I was in journalism school the director didn't have a degree, because in his generation, no one had a degree. But it's becoming more competitive, I mean it's really hard to be more diverse when there aren't more efforts being made to go into those diverse communities and encourage them to be journalists.

With a last name like Arab, she said, some readers assumed she was Muslim: but "I'm Catholic and it is not my identity." She didn't feel like a "token anything; at least I hope I am not."

Because she was both a columnist and an editorial writer, Arab felt that she did have influence and authority in the community. As an editorial writer, she helped broadcast the *Herald's* stance on matters of public interest; as a columnist, she had a more personal relationship with readers, who often contacted her to tell Arab she had inspired them. She decided to write about local affairs after attending an editorial writers' conference, describing it as a turning point, which tend to highlight pivotal moments between individuals and the larger societal structures in which they operate (Coffey & Atkinson, 1999):

It was all editorial writers in the US, this was in 2007, and they were all talking about how local opinion is what's going to save local newspapers. When I pick up the phone I am more likely to get someone at City Hall as Paula Arab, columnist at the *Calgary Herald* then I am as Paula Arab taxpayer, and, ever since that conference I've really focused my writing on urban issues because I think that's what people want.

Arab gave an example of how she was bringing a quality of being attuned to diversity to bear on such local issues that would otherwise be ignored. The issue began when the Alberta government cut funding for gender reassignment surgery. She explained:

It was a tiny amount in the grand scale of a \$5-billion budget and no one wrote about it, I was the only one. It's such a minority that no one would care, and to be able to write a column on that and to shame the government, to make them accountable. There was no justification for that cut, other than it was easy to make, they thought they could get away with it. It was a group of people that were so different, so far from the mainstream that nobody was going to rise to their defense that they almost got away with it.

The column generated buzz, the province eventually relented, she said, and “rethought” the cut. For her, to give people who needed financing for their surgery this platform was “very much who I am and I don't know if that's because I am a woman or if that's just why I went into journalism. I just want to be able to be the voice for the voiceless,” as so many other participants said they did. In this instance, she expresses gender as the possible motivating factor rather than any identification with minority groups because of her racial background.

Her early career coincided with a recession, so Arab struggled through a series of short-term reporting jobs with stops along the way in Quebec to learn French and in Winnipeg to help start Canwest's wire service, before arriving at the *Calgary Herald* in 2004. She began on the assignment desk for 18 months, and was promoted to the editorial board, where she remained. Editorial board members have high status, as they have the writing and analytic skills to craft the editorials that represent the publisher's view on any subject of public interest. (They also work coveted day shifts.) In 2008, she began a weekly column, opining on any topic she chose.

When we spoke, Arab was 42 and single with no children. This footloose state, she felt, had allowed her to move when work demanded it, but left her feeling rootless, too. And today, she

said, she looked around the newsroom at other women her age with families and didn't "see them being very happy" in what she saw as an inflexible newsroom:

VS: Why is that?

PA: They seem to sacrifice so much. The strong women journalists when I was coming up the ranks looked to me like Christie Blatchford. I don't feel I sacrificed anything for my job other than I haven't put down roots, but I feel if I had a family, would I have necessarily had a conflict in balancing my priorities? Do you know what I mean?

VS: So you mean, if circumstances had said you were going to have a husband, kids, whatever, you would have found a way to balance that?

PA: Yes, at least that was always my idea, that I would have balanced that, but I have noticed places like the *Herald* are not very open to job-sharing and flexibility.

Arab said she did know of some women who have job-shared and found good day care (onsite and off), but the problem of women's unhappiness was more of a newsroom "mindset:"

PA: It's more this mindset that you have to be seen to be valued. I don't know where that comes from. I don't know if they assume if you're working from home you're not doing any work or what in journalism we should be redefining what the office looks like because we have a deadline every day, so it's pretty easy to measure if you are doing your work or not. You're either producing or you're not, and with wireless, why do we have to physically be in here? I feel that newsrooms are not as progressive as you would think they should be. And with women that makes a big deal, a big difference.

VS: Why are newsrooms not as progressive as you think they would be?

PA: Well because journalism is all about challenging the establishment and the established way of doing things right? But yet they just don't like change.

VS: Why's that?

PA: Maybe that hierarchy, that patriarchy culture, was established to get stuff done.

As other participants had commented, Arab viewed newsrooms as less progressive than their status as social barometers might indicate. Here, it seemed the hard work needed to “get stuff done” had, over time, turned into a long-hours-for-show culture that everyone took part in, reproducing culture norms. To disrupt that culture with, for instance, a run to the day-care centre or by working from home, was career-limiting. A hierarchical mentality still existed in newsrooms, Arab said, with employees feeling disempowered because “someone above them can always come and override them or discourage them.” Women, in her view, felt this keenly. Not driven by a need to have titles, they were lower on the hierarchy, and even where things looked equal on the surface, men were generally taken more seriously:

It’s how you present yourself, right? So if I have twenty facts lined up I go in to meetings with a very different voice of authority than if I don’t. Whereas my male colleague can go in there with that same voice of authority without having done any research whatsoever, because he’s a man and used to having that voice of authority. I just notice when a guy says something in the room it gets taken way more seriously. It’s not challenged the way it is when the women in the room say something. So I’m not sure how much of that is the way he says it versus he’s a man and he has an assumed authority that comes with being a man.

However, over the years, Arab said, she has sought and enjoyed the help of many mentors, male and female. Now that she was pretty much in her “dream job,” she did have ideas about turning to teaching next, even being part of redefining “journalism in the electronic age.” In the summer of 2012, Arab acted on those ideas, leaving the *Herald* dream job to start her own communications consulting company.

Conclusions

To leave the *Globe* job I (mostly) loved in 1994, one that paid well and that I believed contributed to public education, was extremely difficult for me. The decision was agonizing,

took months to make and took a toll on my emotional well-being, which, in turn, affected my whole family. I can understand how difficult it must have been for these women to decide to leave, even though I was at least a decade younger than most of them when I quit. Unlike me, the participants who left their newspapers did not have children under five still at home (although two had older children). And because I was only 41 when I left, I felt that I did not get a chance to show what I could accomplish long-term in a senior management position. There must be something wrong with me, I thought, not with them. If to leave Canada's respected national newspaper constitutes a defection, surely one who chooses to leave must be defective.

Those who left did not appear to feel that way. While some may have pointed to luck as a sizeable factor in how their careers progressed, these older participants took pride in their staff's accomplishments, their own social-activist inclinations, non-institutional story approaches and inclusive management practices. After years of accommodation, they looked around at where they were "stuck" and understood that they did not fail the system: it was the other way around. And the devil they at least knew was rapidly becoming more desperate for survival, in a frenzied spiral of cost-cutting, technological upheaval and diminishing readership. Dreams about hiring for diversity would not be realized soon if ever; a deep communication gap between them and male leaders could not be bridged; and their power bases were eroding without financial support. Burned-out and frustrated as the women journalists reported feeling in Reinardy's 2009 study, these participants left daily print journalism to focus on other ways to make a difference.

From the theoretical perspective of intersectionality, it appears that after years of accommodation and resistance, women journalists who left were no longer able or willing to suppress or accommodate their complex selves (particularly gender, age, sexuality and ethnic background) in service to the promotion of the patriarchal and other dominant values that their

newspapers represented. They had each spent decades positioning themselves in relation to the dominant forces of the newsroom, which required them to obey or engage in stressful struggle with overt and covert biased practices. Their narratives described experiences of being silenced, bullied, harassed and discounted. Their acts of resistance were often covert (such as Fallding's quiet assistance to the plain-looking women interns) or foiled by knee-jerk industry downsizing calls. They counted successes in the commonly cited role of serving community and being a voice for the voiceless, telling the stories of those whose qualities of difference (class, race) effectively kept them from telling their own stories. If these "leavers" can be seen as indicators of why so few women print journalists in Canada remain at the top, then, having analysed their stories through an intersectional lens, we can argue that much more than gender is at play when they decide to leave. Possibly, the coherent wholeness that their narratives might normally express about their lives at this point (Sosulski et al, 2010) may have unravelled. While those senior participants who remained spoke of luck in their continuing careers, these ones who left did not. Apparently, for them, the luck story has run out. It seems that it was time for a turning point, a bit of bold personal agency, perhaps a happier ending.

In the next and final chapter, I will briefly review the data, tying together theoretical and methodological aspects. I will outline the study's significance and implications as well as its limits, and make suggestions for further research in both study and practice.

Chapter 9

Conclusions: Taking control of the narrative

This project, using narrative analysis – specifically, examining story thematically (Bryman et al, 2009) – and through the lens of intersectionality, took early findings that gender on its own does not appear to determine newsroom experiences and production (Craft & Wanta, 2004) and asked if intersections of diversity might be more critically influential in the direction of career trajectories. Responding to scholarly uncertainty about journalists’ individual motivations and impacts (Hardin & Whiteside, 2009; Peiser, 2000; Rodgers & Thorson, 2003; Strong, 2011; Thiel, 2004), this study suggests that yes, other social characteristics do come into play. They do so *over time*, particularly as expressed in narratives that revealed how the most senior participant women journalists tended to combine their multiple identities and external workplace and social structures/values into a coherent whole (Sosulski et al, 2010), while the younger cohort members tended to describe experimenting with and exploiting various aspects of their complex identities and the larger societal influences to survive in a tough environment.

Building on earlier research that employs gender as a central analytical category (Barber & Rauhala, 2008; Benson, 2005; Craft & Wanta, 2004; Robinson, 2005; Rodgers & Thorson, 2003; Ross, 2007; Schudson, 2008; Strong, 2011), this study has produced evidence that the participants’ career paths appear influenced in multiple, fluid and often hidden ways by other characteristics as they intersect with gender. Assumptions about these characteristics, such as age, race, parenthood status and class, further complicated the shaping of participants’ experiences in their workplaces, offering them other possible positions from which to either reinforce or resist the traditional white, middle-class, male-dominated newsroom culture. The

participants took up navigating these confused seas in ways that often left them frustrated and angry, but ultimately most felt they were “survivors” who made a difference in the socio-political agenda through their journalism.

Key generational differences appeared when I examined participants’ stories with age as an organizing theme intersecting with gender. Generally speaking, senior participants saw themselves as *lucky survivors* in these frustratingly gendered newsrooms; those in mid-career were *self-sacrificing, hard workers* who needed, but were not getting, workplace flexibility; and the most junior ones presented themselves as *individual strategists*, capable of handling whatever routine injustices were thrown at them. They wanted to stay in the business long enough to “choose” between careers and parenthood, with technological proficiency as a lifeline.

The luck factor was seen as powerful, and had to do with what the older participants saw as sheer serendipity of circumstance. They were just lucky to have got that summer internship or that promotion at the right time in order to keep their careers moving. A sense of being entitled to those positions through their own hard work and strategizing was not often part of their storytelling, as it was with the younger groups, reflecting what feminist theorists often characterize as generational differences between second and third-wave feminisms. These differences are, in turn, complicated by “the lived messiness of contemporary life” (Snyder, 2008, p 193).

Through narrative efforts to find meaning (Bryman et al, 2009), members of the oldest generation also tended to position themselves as longer-term victims of gender bias, either personal or institutional. Meanwhile, the mid-career cohort described hearing about or witnessing such incidents and the youngest members more often talked about their own agency in playing with sexism, which they felt they could exploit to their own advantage. The less time in the news game they had spent, the less sexism was an obvious issue to them.

Generational differences are not the whole story, however: other themes spanned the cohorts. No matter what their age, ethnicity or ability, having children or deciding whether or not to have them was pivotal in their career trajectories, or at least judged as pivotal in others, whether they were new recruits, in mid-career or nearing traditional retirement age. Also, despite the structural and cultural constraints, the participants' passion for their journalistic work, largely defined as being voices for the voiceless, remained strong, even in the face of personal, deep family struggles and stressful industrial upheaval on financial and technological fronts.

Analysis of the focus group stories suggests that the participants could better identify and question limiting meta-narratives (Snyder 2008), given the opportunity to compare stories across the generations, having had the issues brought to mind in the individual interviews. Also, where their own stories dominated one-on-one interviews, the format of discussion across age ranges brought out the theme of leadership, both in a gendered quality – as women, leadership was more collegial than top-down – and in terms of the existing and pending gaps in the kind of female leadership the women felt would improve news production and how their personal lives interacted with it.

The context of their own working lives was revealed to them in the focus groups through conversation, giving them a way to see their own positions more clearly within the complex system of the 'macho' newsroom (Ross & Carter) and larger society. The taken-for-grantedness of the young women's perceived equality was challenged in this way. Sharing stories revealed to them the potential and real power they had, that they had not previously considered as such. Focus groups also appeared to solidify the notion that in terms of parenthood status affecting working lives, nothing had really changed for women over the generations in newsrooms.

Summarizing the content

I interviewed 27 women print journalists at various points in their careers across five newspapers in similar markets in five Canadian provinces, both as individuals and in focus groups, as well as one former journalist. Using narrative analysis and working through the lens of intersectionality, I explored their stories of career triumphs and challenges, looking particularly for clues as to how they described navigating the power structures of their industry and the embedded – and therefore hidden to them – discriminatory practices of the newsroom over their careers. I have documented in what ways their personal lives were affected by their journalistic work and examined how they felt their decision-making affected what is defined as news. I explored whether and how the new industry focus on emerging media technologies and personal “branding” was changing the entrenched newsroom cultural discourses that many women appear to find limiting. Now it is possible to theorize about what these stories might mean in terms of understanding the specifics of individual experience as well as their potential significance within larger socially-organized frameworks.

Intersectionality proved a useful lens through which to analyse this nearly indefatigable passion: no matter what their age, class, race, ability, sexuality or education level, the overwhelming majority of participants saw themselves as voices for the voiceless, largely defining their own work as being standard-bearers for those who they said could not speak for themselves. In the course of doing that work, they were frustrated by gender-based obstacles, and sometimes even felt crushed by them. As overwhelmingly white, middle-class, well-educated and able-bodied women themselves, they experienced exclusions and empowerments generally through gender, parenthood status and age. A few participants described an even greater, more complicated sense of difference because of their race or ethnicity (two), their disability (one),

class origins (two) or sexuality (one), with those markers giving them an added sense of personal responsibility to be social advocates in whatever ways seemed available to them. All but two participants expressed certitude about feeling called to tell others' stories, and in so doing they helped in some small way to improve their lives: Paula Arab at the *Calgary Herald*, for example, felt her column was instrumental in publicly shaming the government into reinstating support for transgendered people. What was done to them was hidden, and she revealed it. At the same time, participants seemed to feel powerless when it came to articulating their own workplace needs for flexibility and generally conceding an inevitability about gender roles on the job and at home, enmeshed as they were in the endless daily tasks demanded of them.

My study confirms several trends noted in the research, as outlined in Chapter 2. For example, women journalists do consider leaving their jobs not only when they have had children, but in advance of becoming mothers, as Melissa Martin, and others, said they would do. Women in leadership positions (such as Carla Ammerata) do feel pressure to adopt male leadership discourses (long hours, competitiveness) as they rise in the ranks (Craft & Wanta, 2004). And perhaps most telling, in terms of perpetuating certain elitist social values that tend to be universalized by newspapers, as Williams (2006) suggested, elite women such as my participants repeat and reinforce the "choice" myth of women having to choose between work and family.

I posited that traditional male discourses in newspapers would have a normalizing effect and that women would align themselves with the masculinist professional discourses or resist and alter them from within (Ross & Carter, 2011). The stories told by my participants support this notion: as McCall (1992) found, women tend to internalize the male/female opposition as they work out how to navigate the responsibilities of paid work and family.

The participants in this study perpetuated and reinforced many gendered myths, questioned them silently and suppressed their opinions about them, and also offered open resistance. In at least one case – Janet’s – their women colleagues said she had paid a price for that resistance, saddled with a label of “office fembo.”⁸³

Back in the headlines again

This question of how women “juggle” careers and families burns a quarter-century later in more lives than mine, as the stories of the women who participated in this study vividly show. It is also back in the news again, as the intense public response to an article by Anne-Marie Slaughter in the July/August 2012 issue of *Atlantic* magazine called “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All” attests, as does the media attention paid to the news that Marissa Mayer, the newly announced CEO of Yahoo, was six months pregnant when hired. This caused a deluge of stories, commentaries and frenzied Tweets across the Western world.⁸⁴ Most wondered how she could “do it all,” and even how she dared, while others insisted she be a role model for all womankind, her multi-million-dollar personal wealth aside. Some bloggers, like salon.com’s Rebecca Traister, found the intensity of the reactions “kind of depressing, as if they had hired a yeti” (in Timson, 2012). *Financial Times* columnist Lucy Kellaway opined in her column of July 29, 2012, that nothing had changed for mothers at work despite decades of research, and that the situation was a “continuing, fluid game of survival, the rules of which are unclear, shifting and different for everyone.” This forces women into endlessly judging each other for their “wrong” decisions, caught inside what U.S. feminist historian Sally Kitch calls the societal decision that

⁸³ “Janet,” personal communication, late 2010.

⁸⁴ A sample headline from the *Times Colonist* on July 19, 2012, page D7, was “The CEO is pregnant: Yahoo’s new chief reignites can-we-have-it-all debate.” *Financial Times* management columnist Lucy Kellaway found more than 4,000 newspaper articles written about Mayer as of July 29, 2012, when her column “Jobs, motherhood and varieties of wrong” was published.

“there is something inherently inferior about having a female body and producing offspring” (Nicodermo, 2012).

What struck me was a quote from the CEO herself, who appeared to have internalized lessons of accommodation/alignment to a male-dominated (high-tech) industry well, and was eager to pass them on to other mothers/managers-to-be. “My advice is to take control of the narrative,” said Mayer. “Reveal the pregnancy sooner and at the same time, clearly communicate your preparedness and competence for the next role” (as quoted in Eichler, 2012, B15).

But of what narrative is Mayer asking women to take control? It seems as if she is telling them that at the highest levels, they should continue to fall into line with the meta-narrative that suits the patriarchal systems of industry, which essentially says this: don't let your reproductive life get in the way of our business. The participants in this study, who are trained to query and challenge, and who generally saw themselves as social justice advocates, enacted this storyline with every apology for rushing off to the day-care centre and every missed family pizza night. Still, the story of women's work experiences is back in the news as women are slowly moving up most workplace ranks and the urgency for solutions rises (Ross & Carter, 2011).

The earliest days of women occasionally daring to enter strictly male newsrooms are long gone in Canada. But the stories told by the participants in this study suggest that an overt hostility toward a few has been replaced by a systemically reproduced inequality that ends the careers of many women who manage to enter the field, and limits the progress of those few who stay and seek to make change. Women journalists of privilege populate newsrooms in smaller numbers than similar men, and are positioned according to age, gender and parenthood status. They want to continue in their careers, but a host of interrelated factors tests their will to do so.

Reflexivity revisited

Back in the *Globe* newsroom on that hot August day in 1987, when the publisher marvelled at how my pregnant belly and I were still there, it might have been helpful to have been aware of the complexities I was able to tease out of this study. Like the younger participants, I was in my dream job with little idea of what lay ahead. Of course frustrations and outrages abounded at work, but I relished the challenges of helping sustain Canada's most respected newspaper. I was at that turning point where my "choices" seemed unavoidable.

Over the next few years everything changed, first with one child, then two. One day I found myself heading home from work in midday traffic, screaming and honking at every car, because the frightened nanny had called to say our son had grabbed an electric cord and pulled the television set down on his head. A few hours later, with emergency room visit done and the crisis over, I pulled society's meta-narrative about "good" mothers down on my own head. Why, indeed, was I still there in that newsroom? Why were any of us women still there, mothers or not, side-swiped, sidelined and feel guilty for not keeping up, let alone getting ahead? Those questions, coming out of my own experience and that of so many others, drove this study, for better or worse. But by developing more awareness of my own privilege in that position, through doctoral study and theoretical analysis, I have come to see that the project gleaned more meaning than it would have, had I stayed with gender as my sole criterion for why women stay. I have begun to see what was previously invisible to me, embedded as I was in my own narrative.

Implications

Like me, these participants described being constantly preoccupied with career and family survival while maintaining a social justice mission as all-consuming work. An implication of this notion is the possibility that they could not appreciate how profoundly their workplace

experiences appeared affected by absences, invisibilities and/or exclusions. For example, the ground-breaking work of previous generations of women journalists was, for most of the participants, invisible (or at least not mentioned) as a factor in making their careers possible. Continual departures of other women journalists around them created contemporaneous absences: participants spoke of women colleagues they knew who had left newspapers once they had children or the newsroom culture got to them: Margo Goodhand for instance, sadly described an entire “lost generation” of women at the *Winnipeg Free Press*. These abdications left big gaps, where female mentorship and role models could have developed but did not, and certain kinds of stories (for example, about parenting issues) were said to be not reported. Few women were left to demonstrate the kind of leadership for which the participants seemed to yearn, involving more flexibility, collegiality, understanding and diversity. As it was, junior and mid-level participants simply could not see themselves in senior leadership roles; mid-career women did not want to go beyond their current mid-management roles into corporate decision-making; and senior participants were exhaustedly trying to replicate the only leadership model they could see, the masculinist one. Another invisible group – children at home with fathers or nannies or in day-care centres that were not on site – had a profound impact on their mothers’ experiences in the workplace, as the women were torn between the urgency of their perceived maternal duties and joys, and their heavy work responsibilities and challenges. As Nicole MacIntyre of the Hamilton *Spectator* said, she could be either a good mother or a good journalist, but not both.

Other unexamined exclusions have the potential to be even more powerful as unseen forces that keep hegemony in place. Intersectionality allows us to theorize that the privileged participants might also be *de facto* place-holders for those people they characterize as invisible

and “voiceless.” By taking on a classic hero/standard-bearer role for those deemed by mainstream media to be voiceless, the participants can be seen as part of the wall of privilege that holds back members of many communities from telling their own stories as paid journalists and commentators in newspapers. As it is, Canada remains an extremely diverse society in which mainstream media do not reflect the extent of diversities of race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion or age (Fleras, 2011).

However, the women’s positive attitudes toward those they said they spoke for ran counter to the more common mainstream media storyline about Indigenous peoples and other racialized groups and non-elite classes, which is that they are social problems (Nancoo & Nanchoo, 1996), irrelevant or inferior (Fleras, 2011). Sherri Borden Colley in Halifax was proud to tell stories about individuals’ successes in the local Black community, of which she is a member. Borden-Colley, unlike many other participants, could tell those stories with authority, just as Laura Fraser could write about the experiences of disabled people from her position as a person who had used a wheelchair. Alexandra Paul, who had married into her Indigenous status, used her position at the *Winnipeg Free Press* to try to bridge the divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

This evidence suggests, as Beam (2008) theorized, that connections can be drawn between the demographic and social characteristics of reporters and the stories that they create and admire. In the case of this study, the vast majority of participants had a sense of the need to go beyond their own privilege and said they used their positions to help those they deemed voiceless. Despite seeing the exodus and sidelining of women like themselves, and the free-fall of newspapers’ financial stability, participants of all career stages often ascribed to themselves an almost messianic sense of personal influence over the course of social justice. It didn’t matter whether

they were fledgling reporters or highly-placed, senior editorial decision-makers: the participants felt they could, and did, influence social policy from the community to the country. But they did not say the same about discourses and practices at their workplaces. Their journalistic practice gave them the power to disrupt authority's narratives on the page, but inside the newsroom, they felt little power to challenge the workplace narrative that privileges traditional, patriarchal leadership. In this way, the participants told stories that were subversive, while at the same time felt that they were personally "stuck."

Janet, who left her paper, unwittingly summed up the notion of intersectionality's potential affect on the socio-political agenda: "What filters through your own life experience is what ends up in the paper," she said. Those facts and events, sifted through an industry whose practitioners, particularly at the highest, most powerful levels, are white, middle- (and upper-) class, well-educated, middle-aged men, become what we call news.⁸⁵ Whether they were aware of their own gender-based negotiations or not, many participants challenged the male news agenda, writing about gender, class, ability and race-based issues and even demanding men tackle "women's issues," as Borden Colley did. The Hamilton *Spectator*'s Emma Reilly recalled in a focus group that she had written a story about women voters, but had not "gotten around" to doing one on diversity in the electorate. This realization hit her during a discussion of how personal characteristics affected news judgment. Much later,⁸⁶ she told the same story to about 50

⁸⁵ An example: a 60-something white, male industry veteran named Lou Clancy has been brought out of retirement (after a 45-year career mostly at the Toronto *Sun* and *Star*,) to run PostMedia Network Inc.'s new Hamilton editing facility, where stories destined for all the chain's dailies will be chosen, laid out and edited. Clancy and his associates will decide what national and foreign news will go on the front page of all the member dailies, without input from local editors. See "Postmedia sheds costs with shift to Hamilton" in the *Globe*, Aug. 15, 2012, B1. The *Globe* media reporter, Steve Ladurantaye, wrote on Aug. 18, 2012 (*Globe*, B3) that Postmedia CEO Paul Godfrey told him "it's not that we want to do this: we have to do this." Clancy, said Godfrey, is "the guy in charge" who will ultimately make the front-page decisions for the entire chain (debt: \$480-million), including the Montreal *Gazette* and Vancouver *Sun*.

⁸⁶ Reilly spoke during a Canadian Newspaper Association panel on April 27, 2012, in Toronto, for which I was the moderator. The topic was based on the findings of this project: three of the participants were on the panel.

journalists and students, and at least one male publisher, offering them an opportunity to judge their own decisions about which stories to cover and why, as she had now done.

Significance of the findings

In general, it seems these absences and exclusions, detected through the interplay of various characteristics, could hold clues as to why scholars to date have noted continuing ambiguities in their search for how individuals affect news and how news-gathering affects practitioners. The study has gone some way to enhancing our understanding of the importance of these contextual variables, and how they combine, over time, to create for Canadian women print journalists enough reason to quit the newsroom or to carry on in the few numbers that they do.

The methods used for this study helped to show how a group of creators of news in Canada describe their own understanding of the complexities that may lead them to work the way they do as journalists. This group of participants was significant in its continued, relentless (albeit often frustrated) resistance: decades of working in a high-stress, male-dominated workplace did not cause these skilled women to flee, although some considered it and a few of the most senior cohort members did leave. Ultimately, this study provides additional evidence that women's exclusion from the highest ranks of print journalism – and its reproduction of hegemony – has potential implications for individuals and for matters of social justice. It may serve as a basis for future studies that use narrative analysis and intersectionality as tools to further unravel the complexities of experience in other professions in which few women remain to reach for the top.

Byerly (2008) suggested that feminist researchers had a valuable role to play in exploring why and how newspapers could provide more inclusive coverage, with difference as a central marker, so as to help build a stronger democracy. This study will stand, I hope, as part of the body of knowledge that helps the industry move toward that goal.

Limitations of the study

Certain variables will limit the scope and findings of any piece of research and this project is no exception. Specific caveats need to be noted, as does my general view that narrative inquiry does not necessarily result in any insight superior to another form of research as noted by Atkinson & Delamont (2006), and that scholars can add instability to any situation studied (Herman & Vervaek, 2001). Similarly, reflexivity might have allowed me advantages of access to and comfort with the participants, but bestowed no automatic, value-added insights.

The most important limitation to which my findings are subject is the fact that the sample size is relatively small. While I strove to make the study national in scope, the design will have missed more women print journalists in Canada than it captured. The findings may not be readily applicable to other Canadian women print journalists or transferable to other similarly positioned groups in different lines of work. A related limitation is that of language: I did not interview any women print journalists in French, because of my limited ability to speak and write it.

Men participants were excluded, so I cannot speculate on what factors they would say influence their careers as compared to the women. Men experience intersections in their own working lives, but the study cannot say which, if any, might mirror those of their female counterparts. Despite these limitations, this study focuses attention on under-theorized areas, and stands as innovative research that engages with emerging theories, such as intersectionality.

Recommendations for further work

This study was undertaken to do needed fieldwork in newsrooms to examine the career stories of individual women journalists. Since it was an interdisciplinary study, many disciplines, particularly journalism (and journalism education), women's studies and leadership studies, may find scope for further study from the new knowledge offered. A number of possible future

projects using similar methodology could be undertaken to see if women participants tell similar stories across generations in other professional arenas, especially those in such areas as technology, engineering and politics, where women leaders are relatively few. This study could also be expanded across media, to compare stories of women journalists in broadcast, both publically and privately owned, so that ownership as a variable might be teased out. How union culture influences women's careers is also worthy of examination. Further intersectional studies in other Canadian newspapers would add to the authority of conclusions and implications, as well as possibly increase awareness of the implications of the industry's lack of diversity. An intersectional study that explores the stories of Canadian men print journalists is also needed, to compare how they experience and negotiate the newsroom vis-à-vis their female peers.

To test out the implications that this study raises, considerably more work could concentrate on further identifying and theorizing the impact of newsroom absences and exclusions. The issue of workplace inflexibility, raised by so many participants, suggests that conducting an institutional ethnography, which explores individuals' participation in constructing social relations and institutions (Smith, 2005), might discover how newspaper rules and regulatory practices act as invisible influences on journalists' work experiences. This study could also be taken up and replicated internationally, which would expand our understanding of Canadian print journalism relative to other democracies, in terms of who determines what is newsworthy. It might also serve as a model for researchers globally to expand from a strictly gendered narrative analysis (North, 2009) to an intersectional approach in narrative analysis.

Recommendations for practice

As well as offering fertile ground for more research, a number of important implications for future practice in the industry arise from this study. The high level of interest shown at a recent

(April, 2012) national industry panel on this project indicates to me that Canadian women print journalists hunger for more discussion on the issues raised, and, more importantly, want action to make their lives as journalists less stressed and more rewarding, especially as technological demands increase. The participants' stories of workplace inflexibility and newsroom cultural inequities deserve to be told to a wider audience, including industry leaders. Awareness of this project could increase their understanding of women journalists' work experiences, and how reviewing and altering work practices might improve the retention of women journalists. A focus on developing future leaders, such as the *Hamilton Spectator* is doing, could be adopted, with difference as a central aspect of defining leadership potential. If increasing diversity in newsrooms is as important as participants indicated it is, the industry could conduct meaningful outreach in racialized, ethnic and other communities, market journalism in under-represented communities as an important career, and work with journalism schools to seek out a wider range of students. Exchanges with journalists in the "ethnic press" would open many eyes to how wider diversity would broaden the definition of what is really making news in Canada. Media companies could also fund scholarships for low-income students at journalism schools.

Finally, for those women journalists who participated in this project, an opportunity has emerged that might allow them to take a greater sense of power from their historic roles, as they now can situate themselves inside that evolving history. They are well-positioned to take control of the current narrative about what it means to be a Canadian woman print journalist and to include themselves in society's struggle for equality and social justice.

References

- Abrams, L. (2010) *Oral History Theory*. New York: Routledge.
- Allen, C. (2006). Narrative Research. *Nursing Research* 13(3), 4-6.
- Altheide, D. L. (1985). *Media Power*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage.
- Archer Mann, S. & Huffman, D.J. (2005). The Decentering of Second Wave Feminism and the Rise of the Third Wave. *Science & Society* 69(1), 56-91. Retrieved June 1, 2012, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40404229>.
- Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (2010). Online Live Chat. *Women in the Newsroom: Burned Out and Fed Up*. Retrieved (and joined) January 21, 2010, <http://www.aejmc.org/topics/newsroom/chat>. See archived live chats.
- Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) (2004). Intersectionality: A Tool for Gender and Economic Justice. *Women's Rights and Economic Change*. No. 9. AWID: Toronto.
- Atkinson P. & Delamont, S. (2006). Rescuing narrative from qualitative research. *Narrative Inquiry*. 16(1),164-172.
- Bamberg, M. (2004). Positioning with Davie Hogan: Stories, Tellings and Identities. In *Narrative Analysis: Studying the Development of Individuals in Society*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Barber, M. & Rauhala, A. (2008). *A Portrait of Women as Newsroom Leaders: A Canadian Perspective*. (Unpublished manuscript) Ryerson University School of Journalism.
- Barber, M. & Rauhala, A. (2005). The Canadian News Directors Study: Demographics and Political Leanings of Television Decision-Makers. *Canadian Journal of Communications*. 30(2) 281-292.
- Bateson, M. (1989). *Composing a Life*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Beam, R. (2008). The Social Characteristics of U.S. Journalists and their "Best Work". *Journalism Practice*, 2(1). DOI: 10.1080/175127800701768428.
- Beers, D. (2006). The Public Sphere and Online, Independent Journalism. *The Canadian Journal of Education*. 29(1), 109-130.
- Benson, R. (2005) American Journalism and the politics of diversity. *Media, Culture & Society*. 27(5), 5-20. DOI: 10.1177/0163443705047031.
- Biklen, S.K. & Casella, R. (2007). *A Practical Guide to the Qualitative Dissertation*. New York: Teachers College Press.

- Booth, W.C., Colomb, G.G. & Williams, J.M. (2008). *The Craft of Research (Third Edition)*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Breckenridge, J. (1984). The Patience of Shirley Sharzer. *Ryerson Review of Journalism*. Retrieved March 10, 2009 from <http://www.rj.ca/issue/1984/spring/2/>.
- Bryman, A., Teevan, J., & Bell, E. (2009). *Social Research Methods, 2nd Canadian Edition*, pp. 305-309. Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press.
- Burnard, P. (1991). A method of analyzing interview transcripts in qualitative research. *New Education Today*, 11, pp 461-466.
- Butler, J. (1988) Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory. *Theatre Journal*, 40(4), pp. 519-531
- Byerly, C. M. and Ross, K. (2006). *Women and Media: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Cameron, D. (2007). Review of the book *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: Gender, power and ideology in discourse* by Lazar, M. (Ed.). [Electronic Edition.] *Language in Society*, 36(1); 112-115.
- Caselman, T., Self, A. and Self, P. (2006). Adolescent attributes contributing to the imposter phenomenon. *Journal of Adolescence*, 29(3), pp 395-405.
- Chomsky, N. & Herman, E.S. (1988). *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Clandinin, D. J. & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Cobb, C. (2004). *Ego and Ink: The Inside Story of Canada's National Newspaper War*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart
- Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher*, 19(5), 2-14.
- Clandinin, D. (2006). Narrative Inquiry: A Methodology for Studying Lived Experience. *Research Studies in Music Education*, 27(44), 44-54.
- Clandinin, D. & Rosiek, J. (2006). Mapping a Landscape for Narrative Inquiry. *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry*. At http://www.american-philosophy.org/events/documents/SIAP_2009_Clandinin_Proof-Ch2.pdf
- Coffey, A. & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complementary Research Strategies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc.

- Cohen, N. (2012). How much do freelance journalists make? *The Canadian Journalism Project*. Retrieved Sept. 12, 2012. http://j-source.ca/article/how-much-do-freelance-journalists-make?utm_source=CJF+Programs+Newsletters&utm_campaign=1dc58d4b07-2012_09_129_12_2012&
- Connell, R.W. (2000) *The Men and the Boys*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cole, B. A. (2009). Gender, Narratives and Intersectionality : Can Personal Experience Approaches to Research Contribute to “Undoing Gender”? *International Review of Education*. 55: 561-578. DOI 10.1007/s11159-009-9140-5.
- Craft, S. & Wanta, W. (2004). Women in the Newsroom: Influences of Female Editors and Reporters on the News Agenda. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*. 81(1), 124-127.
- Crenshaw, K. (1990-1991). Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43. 1,241-1,300.
- Daiute, C. & Lightfoot, C. (Eds.) (2004). *Narrative Analysis: Studying the Development of Individuals in Society*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Davis, K. (2008). Intersectionality as buzzword: A sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful. *Feminist Theory*, 9(1), 67-85. DOI: 10.1177/1464700108086364.
- de Bruin, M. (2000). Gender, organizational and professional identities in journalism. *Journalism*, 1(2). DOI 10.1177/146488490000100205.
- Dempsey, L. (1976). *No Life for a Lady*. Don Mills: Musson Books.
- Deuze, M. (2005). What is journalism?: Professional identity and ideology of journalists reconsidered. *Journalism*. 6(4), 442-464. DOI: 10.1177/1464884905056815.
- Dines, G., & Humez, J. (Eds.) (2003). *Gender, Race and Class in Media: A Text Reader*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Djerf-Pierre, M. (2005). Lonely at the top: Gendered media elites in Sweden. *Journalism*. 6(3). DOI: 10.1177/1464884905054061.
- Donsbach, W. (2004). Psychology of News Decisions: Factors Behind Journalists’ Professional Behaviour. *Journalism*. 5(2). DOI 10.1177/14688490452002.
- Durham, M.G. (1998). On the Relevance of Standpoint Epistemology to the Practice of Journalism: The Case for “Strong Objectivity”. *Communication Theory* 8(2), pp. 117-140.
- Eichler, L. (2012) Women@Work: The baby bump pushes against the glass ceiling. *The Globe and Mail Report on Business*, July 20, 2012, B15.

- Elmore, C. (2009). Turning Points and Turnover among Female Journalists: Communicating Resistance and Repression. *Women's Studies in Communication*. 32(2), p. 232-254. Downloaded Jan. 17, 2012. DOI 10.1080/07491409.2009.10162388.
- Everbach, T. & Flournoy, C. (2007). Women Leaving Journalism for Better Pay and Working Conditions. *Newspaper Research Journal* 28(3) 52-64.
- Fetherling, D. (1990). *The Rise of the Canadian Newspaper*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fiamengo, J. (2008). *The Woman's Page: Journalism and Rhetoric in Early Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Finlayson, J. (1999). *Trailblazers: Women Talk About Changing Canada*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada.
- Fleras, A. (2011). *The Media Gaze: Representations of Diversity in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Forrest, A. (1993) Women and Industrial Relations Theory: No Room in the Discourse. *Industrial Relations*. (48)3, 409-440.
<http://www.erudit.org/revue/RI/1993/v48/n3/050871ar.pdf>, retrieved November 21, 2011.
- Fraser, H. (2004). Doing Narrative Research: Analysing Personal Stories Line by Line. *Qualitative Social Work*. 3/(179). 179-201. DOI 10.1177/1473325004043383.
- Freeman, B. (2011). *Beyond Bylines: Media Workers and Women's Rights in Canada*. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press.
- Freeman, B. (1989). *Kit's Kingdom: The Journalism of Kathleen Blake Coleman*. Ottawa: Carleton University Press.
- Freeman, B. (2001). *The Satellite Sex: The Media and Women's Issues in English Canada, 1966-1971*. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press.
- Gerson, C. (2010). *Canadian Women in Print: 1750-1918*. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier University Press.
- Gist, M. E. (1993). Through the Looking Glass: Diversity and reflected appraisals of the self in mass media. In Creedon, P.M. (Ed.), *Women in Mass Communication* (2nd ed., 104-117). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Grant, J. (1993). *Fundamental feminism: Contesting the core concepts of feminist theory*. New York: Routledge.
- Gubrium, J. & Holstein, J. (2009) *Analysing Narrative Reality*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.

- Haas, T. & Steiner, L. (2001). Public Journalism as a journalism of publics: implications of the Habermas-Fraser debate for public journalism. *Journalism*. 2(2), 123-147. DOI: 10.1177/146488490100200202.
- Haraway, D. (2004). Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of the Partial Perspective. In Sandra Harding (Ed). *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader*. New York: Routledge, pp. 81-101.
- Hardin, M. & Whiteside, E. (2009). Token responses to gendered newsrooms: Factors in the career-related decisions of female newspaper sports journalists. *Journalism*. 10(5), 627- 646.
- Harding, S. (1991). *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Hesse-Biber, S. (Ed.) (2007). *Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Juzwik, M. (2010) Over-stating claims for story and for narrative inquiry: a cautionary note. *Narrative Inquiry* 20(2), pp. 349-370.
- Kellaway, L. (2012). Jobs, motherhood and varieties of wrong. The *Financial Times*, July 29, 2012. Retrieved Aug. 2, 2012 from www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3f1db994-d73b-11e1-8c7d-00144feabdc0.html#axzz22P4maUhu.
- Kesterton, W. (1967). *A History of Journalism in Canada*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.
- Knudsen, S. (2006). Intersectionality – A Theoretical Inspiration in the Analysis of Minority Cultures and Identities in Textbooks. In *Caught in the web or lost in the textbook*. Retrieved April 13, 2010 from http://www.caen.iufm.fr/colloque_iartem/pdf/part_1.pdf.
- Lang, M. (1999). *Women Who Made the News: Female Journalists in Canada 1880-1945*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Lazar, M. (2007). Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis: articulating a feminist discourse praxis. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 4(2), 141-164. DOI: 10.1080/17405900701464816.
- Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R. and Zilber, T. (1998). *Narrative Research: Reading, Analysis and Interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Lippman, W. (1922/1965). *Public Opinion*. New York: Harcourt Brace.
- McCall, L. (1992). Does Gender Fit? Bourdieu, feminism, and conception of social order. *Theory and Society*. 21(6), 837-867.
- McCall, L. (2005). The Complexity of Intersectionality. *Signs*. 30(3), 1,771-1,799.
- McKercher, C. (2009). Commentary. *Feminist Media Studies*. 3(9), 370-374.

- McKercher, C. (2002). *Newsworkers Unite: Labor, Convergence, and North American Newspapers*. Boston: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- McKercher, C. & Cumming, C. (1998). *The Canadian Reporter: News Writing and Reporting*. Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company.
- Media Report to Women. Retrieved April 27, 2009 from <http://www.mediareporttowomen.com/statistics.htm>.
- Moosa-Mitha, M. (2005). Situating Anti-Oppressive Theories Within Critical and Difference-Centred Perspectives. In Brown, L. & Strega, S. (Eds.), *Research as Resistance*. Toronto: Women's Press.
- Morris, M. (2007). *Using Intersectional Feminist Frameworks in Research*. Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women or CRIAW. Ottawa.
- Nancoo R. & Nancoo, S., Eds. (1997). *Mass Media and Canadian Diversity*. Mississauga, Ont.; Canadian Educators' Press.
- Nelson, K. (2004). Construction of the Cultural Self in Early Narratives, pp. 87-109. In *Narrative Analysis: Studying the Development of Individuals in Society*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- Nicodemo, A. (2012). What are the Roots of Gender Inequality? Women's Rights, Race and Reproduction. Research Matters Online, Arizona State University. Retrieved June 4, 2012. <http://researchmatters.asu.edu/>.
- North, L. (2009). Gendered Experiences of Industry Change and the Effects of Neoliberalism. *Journalism Studies*. 10(4), 506-521. DOI: 10.1080/14616700902783911.
- North, L. (2007). Just a Little Bit of Cheeky Ribaldry. *Feminist Media Studies*. 7(1), 81-96.
- North, L. (2009). Rejecting the "F" word: how 'feminism' and 'feminists' are understood in the newsroom. *Journalism*. 10(6). DOI: 10.1177/1464884909344479.
- O'Connor, K. (2010) *Gender and Women's Leadership: A Reference Handbook*. DOI: 10.4135/9781412979344; Sage Publications, Inc.
- Ollerenshaw, J. A. & Creswell, J. W. (2002). Narrative research: A comparison of two restorying data analysis approaches. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 8, 329-347.
- Peiser, W. (2000). Setting the Journalist Agenda: Influences from Journalists' Individual Characteristics and from Media Factors. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 77(2), 243-257.
- Phoenix, A. (1994). Practising Feminist Research: The Intersection of Gender and "Race" in the Research Process. In Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. (Eds.). *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective*. London: Taylor Francis.

- Professional Writers Association of Canada (2006). 'Canadian professional writers' survey: a profile of the freelance writing sector in Canada', PWAC, Toronto. Retrieved April 16, 2010 from www.pwac.ca.
- Reinardy, S. (2009). Female Journalists More Likely to Leave Newspapers. *Newspaper Research Journal*. 30(3), 42-57.
- Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rex, K. (1995) *No Daughter of Mine. The Women and History of the Canadian Women's Press Club, 1904-1971*. Toronto: Cedar Cave Books, University of Toronto Press.
- Richmond, Heather. J. (2002). Learners' Lives: A Narrative Analysis. *The Qualitative Report* 7(3). Retrieved Sept. 21, 2011 from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR7-3/richmond.html>.
- Robinson, G. (2005). *Gender, Journalism and Equity*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.
- Robinson, G. (1998). Monopolies of Knowledge in Canadian Communication Studies: The Case of Feminist Approaches. *Canadian Journal of Communication*. 23(1).
- Rodgers S. & Thorson E. (2003). A Socialization Perspective on Male and Female Reporting. *Journal of Communication* 53(4), 658-675.
- Roets G. & Goedgeluck, M. (2007). Daisies on the Road: Tracing the Political Potential of Our Postmodernist, Feminist Approach to Life Story Research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 13(85), 85-112. DOI: 10.1177/1077800406295624. Retrieved Oct. 9, 2012.
- Rosin, H. (2010, July/August). The End of Men. *The Atlantic*, 306, 56-72.
- Ross, K. (2007). The journalist, the housewife, the citizen and the press: Women and men as sources in local news narratives. *Journalism*, 8(4), 449-47. Retrieved Feb. 5, 2010 from <http://jou.sagepub.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/cgi/content/short/8/4/449>.
- Ross, K. & Carter, C. (2011) Women and news: A long and winding road. *Media Culture Society* 33(8). Retrieved March 16, 2013 from <http://mcs.sagepub.com/content/33/8/1148>.
- Ryersonian* (2010, Spring) Katherine Laidlaw, ed. <http://www.rrj.ca/rrj2/catalog.aspx?id=7414>. Retrieved Jan. 31, 2012.
- Ryfe, D. (2009). Broader and deeper: A study of newsroom culture in a time of change. *Journalism*. 10(2). DOI: 10.1177/1464884908100601.
- Sangster, J. (2002). Telling Our Stories; Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History. In *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History*. Veronica Strong-Boag et al (Eds.). Don Mills: Oxford.
- Schudson, M. (2000). The domain of journalism studies around the globe. *Journalism*. 1(55). DOI: 10.1177/146488490000100110.

- Scott, J. (2008). Experience. In Jaggar, A.M., (Ed.), *Just Methods*, pp. 272-282. Green Press.
- Smith, D. (2005). *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People*. AltaMira Press: Lanham, Maryland.
- Smith, V. (2010). Educating Lotta, Kit and Shirley: How Three Women Journalists Responded to the Demands of Canadian Newspapers to Teach the Status Quo. In Clover, D.E. and Smith, V. (Editors), *Proceedings of the Canadian Society for Study of Women and Education*. Montreal: Concordia University.
- Snyder, R. Claire (2008). What is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. 34(1), 175-196.
- Sosulski, M., Buchanan, N. and Donnell, C. (2010). Life History and Narrative Analysis: Feminist Methodologies Contextualizing Black Women's Experiences with Severe Mental Illness. *Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*. 37(3), 29-57.
- Sparks, R., Young, M. & Darnell, S. (2006). Convergence, Corporate Restructuring, and Canadian Online News, 2000-2003. *Canadian Journal of Communication*. 31(2), 391-423.
- Speer, S. (2005). *Gender Talk: Feminism, Discourse and Conversation Analysis*. London: Routledge.
- Stabile, C. (2004). Getting what she deserved: The news media, Martha Stewart, and Masculine Domination. *Feminist Media Studies*. 4(3), 315-332. DOI: 10.1080/1468077042000309964.
- Statistics Canada (2008). *2006 Census: Ethnic origin, visible minorities, place of work and mode of transportation*. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/080402/dq080402a-eng.htm>. Retrieved Nov. 7, 2011.
- Steiner, L. (1998). Stories of Quitting: Why Did Women Journalists Leave the Newsroom. *American Journalism* 15(3), 89-116.
- Steiner, L. (2008). Gender in the Newsroom, *Handbook of Journalism Studies*. Hanitzsch, T. & Wahl-Jorgensen, K., (Eds.) Unpublished chapter manuscript.
- Strega, S. (2005). The View from the Poststructural Margins: Epistemology and Methodology Reconsidered, pp. 199-235. In Brown, L., & Strega, S. (Eds.), *Research as Resistance*. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- Strong, C. R. (2011). *Female Journalists in New Zealand Daily Newspapers: From Early Careers to Gender Gap in Editorship*. PhD Thesis, Massey University, New Zealand. Retrieved Nov. 7, 2011 from http://mro.massey.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10179/2780/02_whole.pdf?sequence=1
- Tasko, P. (2010). *The Canadian Press Stylebook*. Toronto: The Canadian Press.
- Thiel, S. (2004). Shifting identities, creating new paradigms *Feminist Media Studies* 4(1), 21-36.

- Timson, J. (2012) Work-Life Balance: Why it's time to be honest about babies and boardrooms. *The Globe and Mail*, National Edition, July 20, 2012, L3.
- van Dijk, T. (Ed.), (1997). *Discourse as Structure and Process*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage.
- van Dijk, T. (2008). News, discourse and ideology, pp. 191-204. In Hanitzsch, T. & Wahl-Jorgensen, K. (Eds.), *Handbook of Journalism Studies*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- van Dijk, T. (1996). *Power and the News Media. Political communication in action* <<http://refworks.scholarsportal.info.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/Refworks/~2~>>.
- Victoria-Vancouver Island Newspaper Guild Local 30223 (2012). *Negotiations Update*. Retrieved May 7, 2012 from <http://vving.ca/>.
- Vlad, T. (2011). 2010 Annual Survey of Journalism & Mass Communication Enrollments: Enrollments Grow, Reversing Stagnation of Recent Years. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator* 66(4), 299- 324.
- Waddell, C. (2009). Personal e-mail communication, April 22, 2009.
- Walker, R., Cooke, M., & McAllister, M. (2008). A neophyte's journey through qualitative analysis using Moore's cognitive processes of analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 7, 81-93.
- Wente, Margaret (2011). What Glass Ceiling? It's the mommy track that's stopping women from reaching the top. *The Globe and Mail*, Sept. 22, 2011, A12.
- Williams, J. (2006). 'Opt Out' or Pushed Out: How the Press Covers Work/Family Conflict: *The Untold Story of Why Women Leave the Workforce*. Retrieved Jan. 27, 2010 from http://www.uchastings.edu/site_files/WLL/OptOutPushedOut.pdf.
- Williams, M. (1992). *The Girls in the Balcony: Women, Men, and The New York Times. - book reviews*. Washington Monthly. Retrieved April 27, 2010 from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1316/is_n3_v24/ai_12088261/.
- Wilmot Voss, K. (2004). *Redefining Women's News: A Case Study of Three Women's Page Editors and Their Framing of the Women's Movement*. (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Maryland). Retrieved April 25, 2010 from <http://www.lib.umd.edu/drum/handle/1903/1955>
- Wohlbold, E., & Chenier, L. (2011). *Women in Senior Management, Where are They?* Conference Board of Canada. <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/documents.aspx?did=4416>.
- Wolf, D. (1996). Situating Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork. In Wolf, D. (Ed.), *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*, pp. 1-27. Boulder: Westview.
- Woodward, K. (2006). Performing Age, Performing Gender. *NWSA Journal* 18(1), 162-189.

Wong, J. (2012) *Out of the Blue: A Memoir of Workplace Depression, Recovery, Redemption, and Yes, Happiness*. Toronto: Jan Wong.

Appendix A

Application for Ethics Approval



**University
of Victoria**

**Human Research Ethics Board
Application for Ethics Approval for
Human Participant Research**

The following application form is an institutional protocol based on the
[Tri-Council Policy Statement on the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)

Instructions:

1. Download this application and complete it on your computer. Hand written applications will not be accepted. The ethical review process takes 4 - 6 weeks.
2. Use the *Human Research Ethics Board Guidelines* to complete this application: <http://www.research.uvic.ca/Forms/>. Note: This form is linked to the guidelines. Access links in blue text by hitting CTRL and clicking on the blue text.
3. Submit one (1) original and two (2) copies of this completed, signed application with all attachments to: Human Research Ethics, Technology Enterprise Facility (TEF), Room 218, University of Victoria, PO Box 1700 STN CSC, Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada
4. If you need assistance, contact the Human Research Ethics Assistant at (250) 472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca
5. Please note that applications are screened and will be returned to the applicant if incomplete (e.g. missing required attachments, signatures, documents).
6. Once approved, a Request for Renewal must be completed annually for on-going projects for continuing Ethics approval.

A. [Principal Investigator](#)

If there is more than one Principal Investigator, provide their name(s) and contact information below in Section B, Other Investigator(s) & Research Team.

Last Name: **Smith**

First Name: **Vivian**

Department/Faculty: **Interdisciplinary**

Email: **viviansmith1@shaw.ca**

Phone: **250-472-2498**

Fax: **n/a**

Mailing Address including Postal Code: 2582 Vista Bay Rd., Victoria, B.C. V8P 3E8
(if different from Dept/Faculty)

Title/Position:

- Faculty
 Undergraduate
 Ph.D. Student
 Staff
 Master's Student
 Post-Doctoral

Students: Provide your Supervisor's Name: **Dr. Lynne Van Luven and Dr. Darlene Clover (co-supervisors)**

Email: **lvluven@uvic.ca and clover@uvic.ca.**

Department/Faculty:

Department of Writing, Faculty of Fine Arts

Phone: **250-721-7306**

Educational Psychology & Leadership Studies, Faculty of Education Phone: **250-472-5005**

Graduate Students: Provide your Graduate Secretary's email address: gbennett@uvic.ca

B. [Project Information](#)

Project Title:

Do Canadian Newspapers Change Women, or do Women Journalists Change the Newspapers?

Anticipated Start Date: **May 2009**

Anticipated End Date: **July 2011**

Geographic location(s) of study: **Selected cities across Canada**

Keywords: 1. **Journalism** 2. **Women's Studies** 3. **Leadership** 4. **Workplace Gender Roles**

Is this application connected/associated/linked to one that has been recently submitted? Yes No

If yes, provide further information:

Other Investigator(s) and Research Team:

(Include co-investigators, students, employees, volunteers, community organizations. The form will expand.)

Contact Name	Role in Research Project	Institutional Affiliation	Email or Phone
--------------	--------------------------	---------------------------	----------------

For Faculty Only: Graduate Student/Research Assistant who will use this data to fulfill UVic thesis/ dissertation/ academic requirements.

Student/Research Assistant	Email or Phone
----------------------------	----------------

C. [Agreement and Signatures](#)

Principal Investigator and Student Supervisor affirm that:

- *I have read this application and it is complete and accurate.*
- *The research will be conducted in accordance with the University of Victoria regulations, policies and procedures governing the ethical conduct of research involving human participants.*
- *The conduct of the research will not commence until Ethics approval has been granted.*
- *The researcher(s) will seek further HREB review if the research protocol is modified.*
- *Adequate supervision will be provided for students and/or staff.*

Principal Investigator

Student's Supervisor

Signature

Signature

Print Name

Print Name

Date

Date

Chair, Director or Dean

I affirm that adequate research infrastructure is available for the conduct and completion of this research.

Signature

Print Name

Date

D. [Project Funding](#)

Have you applied for funding for this project? Yes No

Has notice of award been received? Yes No

If yes, please complete the following:

Source(s) of Project Funding	Project Title used in Funding Application(s)
I have applied for INTD Graduate Funding: INTD University of Victoria Fellowships; INTD Graduate Scholarships; Ord and Linda Anderson INTD Graduate Scholarship	

Will this project receive funding from US Funders (e.g. NIH)? Yes No

If yes, provide further information:

E. [Level of Risk](#)

The [Tri-Council Policy Statement](#) (TCPS) definition of “minimal risk” is as follows:

The research can be regarded as within the range of minimal risk if potential participants can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the participant in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research. The designation of minimal or non-minimal risk affects the way the application is reviewed not the substance of the ethical review.”

Based on this definition, do you believe your research qualifies as “minimal risk” research?

Yes No

Explain your answer by referring to the level of risk stated in the TCPS definition:

I will conduct individual and group interviews with female print journalists in selected cities across Canada. The questions will cover such topics as the challenges and accomplishments they experience as senior women in newsrooms. The information that will be sought relates to both personal and work-related matters, which each participant likely discusses in the course of everyday life, and some participants will already be writing

about these issues publicly. Hence, I consider this to be minimal risk research.

F. [Scholarly Review](#)

What type of scholarly review has this research project undergone?

- External Peer Review (*e.g. granting agency*)
- Supervisory Committee or Supervisor—required for all student research projects
- None
- Other, please explain:

G. [Other Approvals and Consultations](#)

Do you need to seek approval from other agencies, community groups, First Nations, local governments, etc?

- Yes No

(Attach proof of having made request for permission or approval letter. Please forward approvals upon receiving them. Be assured that ethics approval may be granted prior to receipt of external approvals.)

If **Yes**, what types of other approval will you need?

- School District, Superintendent, Principal, Teacher**
- VIHA or other regional government authority.** If you are planning to conduct research (including recruitment via poster placement), in a VIHA facility you must use the [Joint UVic/VIHA application form](#) on the ORS website. Above minimal risk applications, please contact the Ethics Office.
- Community Group (e.g., formal organization, informal collective)**
- Indigenous Organization (e.g., Treaty Group, Tribal Council)**
- Indigenous Community**

Approval from an Indigenous community or organization may be required when the research involves Indigenous people in relation to their community or organizational affiliation (whether residing in urban or reserve areas), the cultural knowledge and/or resources of Indigenous people, or where individuals speak on behalf of an Indigenous community or nation.

- a. Does your research specifically involve or include in the study's population sample individuals from an Indigenous community or organization?
- Yes No
- b. Will a particular Indigenous community, group of communities, or organization be a central focus of the research?
- Yes No
- c. Will the cultural knowledge, resources or heritage of an Indigenous community be a central focus of the research?
- Yes No
- d. If you answered "yes" to questions a), b), or c) have you consulted with the Indigenous community or communities for this study?
- Yes No

- e. If you answered “yes” to question d), describe the process that you have followed or will follow. Include any documentation of consultations and the role or position of those consulted, including their names if appropriate.
- f. If you answered “no” to question c), briefly justify your decision not to seek Indigenous community approval.

UVic Biosafety Committee Approval. Please attach Biosafety Human Materials Form to this application. Note that Ethics Approval is contingent on Biosafety Approval.

Other Approval, please explain:

H. [Description of Research Project](#)

1. Purpose and Rationale of Research

Briefly describe in non-technical language:

Please use 150 words or less. The form will expand to the length of your answers.

1a. The research objective(s) and question(s)

My research objective is to gather information about the career experiences of senior women print journalists in Canada. I am interested in discovering what some of the challenges and successes are for women in senior roles as reporters, columnists and editors, and how they perceive their influence on their profession and the community in which they write. Is there a gender aspect to success in print journalism? Do women’s gender roles outside the newsroom affect their careers inside it?

1b. The importance and contributions of the research

Research of this type is important because gender has always been a factor in how news is organized and disseminated for Canadians. Women are still underrepresented in newsrooms, but what that means for them and for the news agenda has not been widely studied. This research will also be important for students considering journalism as a career, as well as for the industry, which tends to treat women readers as a special interest group.

1c. If applicable, provide background information or details that will enable the HREB to understand the *context* of the study when reviewing the application.

I. [Recruitment](#)

2. [Recruitment and Selection of Participants](#)

- 2a. Briefly describe the target population(s) for recruitment. Ensure that all participant groups are identified (*e.g. group 1 - teachers, group 2 - administrators, group 3 - parents*).

Women who are currently or who have been recently in positions as senior reporters, columnists, editors or managers in mid- to large-circulation Canadian daily newspapers.

- 2b. Why is this population of interest?

The participants selected will be able to provide insight into gender-related aspects of print journalism as it is practiced today and into their own daily lived experiences.

- 2c. What is the desired number of participants?

As this will be a qualitative approach, no more than 20 to 25.

- 2d. What are the salient characteristics of the participants (*e.g. age, gender, race, ethnicity, class, position, etc.*):

Mature and experienced women of varying ethnicity, mostly middle-class, in senior reporting or editing roles. Since newsrooms are not particularly ethnically diverse, most will be Caucasian.

- 2e. Provide a detailed description of your exact recruitment process. Explain:

- i) Who will recruit/contact participants (*e.g. researcher, assistant, third party*)

I will contact the participants via email or by telephone.

- ii) List and explain any relationship between the investigator(s) and participant(s) (*e.g. acquaintances, colleagues*). Complete item 3 if there is a [power over relationship](#) (*e.g. instructor-student, manager-employee*).

Some participants may be former colleagues, but there is no power over relationship. I will make it clear in the consent form that a participant's decision to participate must be completely voluntary and that the participant should not be unduly influenced by any pre-existing relationship with the researcher.

- iii) Describe how recruitment will be done (*e.g. in person, by telephone, letter, snowball sampling, word of mouth, advertisement*) and from what source(s) will the participants be recruited. If applicable, include how contact information for participants will be obtained.

The recruitment will be done by e-mail or telephone using publicly accessible contact information.

- iv) Describe the steps in the recruitment process.

I will contact participants via e-mail or telephone requesting a one-time, face-to-face, 30-minute to 1-hour audio-recorded interview; if a face-to-face interview cannot be arranged, then I will ask to conduct the interview over the phone or via e-mail. Participants will also have the option of participating in a group interview involving two to three people. At the time of recruitment, I will forward my interview questions as well as a copy of the consent form. If participants are interested, I will set up a date, time, place, and mode to conduct the interview based on what is most convenient for each participant.

- v) Indicate whether the permission of other bodies is required for recruitment (*e.g. school boards*).

No.

3. [Power-Over](#)

If you are completing this section, please refer to the:

[Guidelines For Ethics in Dual-Role Research for Teachers and Other Practitioners](#)

Are you or any of your co-researchers in any way in a position of authority or power over participants? Examples of a “power-over” situation include teachers-students, therapists-clients, supervisors-employees and possibly researcher-relative or researcher-close friend.

Yes No Varies

If *yes* or *varies*, describe below:

- i) The nature of the relationship.
- ii) Why it is necessary to conduct research with participants over whom you have power.
- iii) What safeguards (steps) will be taken to minimize inducement, coercion or potential harm.
- iv) How the dual-role relationship and the safeguards will be explained to potential participants.

Recruitment Materials Checklist:

Attach all documents referenced in this section (*check those that are appended*):

Script(s) – in-person, telephone, 3rd party, e-mail, etc.

Invitation to participate (*e.g. Psychology Research Participation System Posting*)

Advertisement, Poster, Flyer

None; please explain why (*e.g. consent form used as invitation/recruitment guide*)

J. Data Collection Methods

4. **Data Collection**

For community-based research, autobiographical or observational research, please see Appendix III of the Guidelines.

4a. Which of the following methods will be used to collect data? *Check all that apply.*

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interviewing participants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in-person <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> by telephone <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> using web-based technology (explain) <p>Email Interview.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conducting group interviews or discussions (including focus groups) 	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Attach draft interview questions</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Administering a questionnaire or survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> In person <input type="checkbox"/> by telephone <input type="checkbox"/> mail back <input type="checkbox"/> email <input type="checkbox"/> web-based <input type="checkbox"/> Other, describe: 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Attach questionnaire or survey:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> standardized (one with established reliability and validity) <input type="checkbox"/> non-standardized (one that is untested, adapted or open-ended)
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Administering a computerized task (<i>describe in 4b</i>)</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Observing participants</p> <p><i>[In 4b, describe who and what will be observed. Include where observations will take place.]</i></p>	

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recording of participants using: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> audio <input type="checkbox"/> video <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> photos or slides	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images used for analysis <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images used in disseminating results <i>[include release to use participant images in consent materials]</i>
<p>Analyzing secondary data or secondary use of data (Refers to information/data that was originally gathered for a purpose other than the proposed research and is now being considered for use in research., <i>e.g. patient or school records, personal writings, lesson plans</i>).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Secondary data involving anonymized information (Information/data is stripped of identifiers by another researcher or institution before being shared with the applicant). May be eligible for Application for a Waiver from Full Ethical Review)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Secondary data with identifying information (Data contains names and other information that can be linked to individuals, <i>e.g., student report cards, employment records, meeting minutes, personal writings</i>). <i>In item 4b describe the source of the data, and explain whether and how consent was obtained from the individuals for use of their data.</i></p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Using human samples (<i>e.g., saliva, urine, blood, hair</i>) <i>Ensure that you apply to the Biosafety Committee for the storage and use of biological materials. Also, complete the Human Materials Form, have it signed and attach it to your application. If using human tissue only, skip to 7g-8, 11-end.</i></p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Other, specify:</p>	

- 4b. Provide a sequential description of the procedures/methods to be used in your research study. List all of the research instruments and interview/discussion questions, and in an appendix provide copies of all instruments. If not yet available, provide drafts or sample items/questions. For multi-method or other complex research, use the following sections in ways best suited to explain your project. If you have more than one participant group, be sure to explain which participant group(s) will be involved in which activity/activities.

The research consists of a one-time, audio-taped face-to-face or telephone interview, or an email interview if more convenient for participants. The face-to-face, telephone or e-mail interviews will be scheduled on a date and at a time that is convenient for the participant. Upon the request of the participant, a transcript of the interview will be made available to the participant to check for accuracy. I am also considering asking the questions of small groups of two or three at a time if this is more convenient. Sample questions I will ask are as follows, as well as asking basic biographical information such as age, job title, etc.:

- a) **How did you come to be in this position at the newspaper (describe your career path)? Are you where you want to be? If not, why not? If so, why?**
- b) **If you are a parent, what impact did (do) your children have on your career? If you remained fulltime in the newsroom as your kids grew UP, why did you do so?**
- c) **Do you feel that gender is an issue in how you experience being a journalist, and if so, how?**
- d) **To what do you attribute the low numbers of women in senior positions in Canadian print journalism?**
- e) **Can you describe any specific instances in which you thought your gender had an effect on your working life, including decision-making about stories or any other journalistic or personal issue?**
- f) **Is there a “level playing field” for women and men in your newsroom? If not, what contributes to that inequality? If the men and women succeed equally, what factors make it**

so? Have you “succeeded,” however you define that?

- g) Do women in the newsroom gather separately to discuss gender-related issues? What issues come up, and are they ever aired at work, outside the gatherings?
- h) What difference do your efforts make in the news agenda? Do your workplace decision-making affect what Canadians care about? Are women redefining journalism?
- i) If you could change how print journalism operates, how would you change it, in terms of its impact on women?

4c. Where will participation take place? (Provide specific location, *e.g.*, UVic classroom, private residence, participant’s workplace)

At the participants’ places of work, or homes, whatever is convenient for them.

4d. How much time will be required of participants?

About 30 minutes – 1 hour for the actual interview; if requested, an additional 30 minutes to 1 hour to review the transcript. If participants choose to be interviewed in a group, the group interview will last about 90 minutes.

4e. Will participation take place during participants’ office hours or instructional time? If so, indicate whether other permission (*e.g. from workplace supervisor*) is required.

N/A

Data Collection Methods Checklist:

Attach all documents referenced in this section (*check those that are appended*):

- Standardized Instrument(s)
- Survey(s), Questionnaire(s)
- Interview and/or Focus Group Questions
- Observation Tools

K. Possible Inconveniences, Benefits, Risks and Harms to Participants

5. Benefits

Identify any potential or known benefits associated with participation and explain below.
Keep in mind that the anticipated benefits should outweigh any potential risks.

- To the participant To society To state of knowledge

PARTICIPANT: Benefits to the participants include the opportunity to discuss the successes and challenges of the careers they have chosen.

SOCIETY: Those who read my project will gain a greater understanding of the ways in which news is decided, disseminated and discussed in a fully functioning democracy. They may discover how gender influences that process and ultimately the socio-political agenda.

KNOWLEDGE: The research that I produce will benefit the state of knowledge by providing a critical analysis of women’s roles in newsrooms in Canada and how their voices might affect the evolution of the status of women in Canada and the socio-political agenda.

6. Inconveniences

Identify and describe any known or potential inconveniences to participants:
Consider all potential inconveniences, including time devoted to the research.

The only known or potential inconvenience to participants is arranging for and taking the time spent to do the interview and, if requested, in reviewing the interview transcript.

7. Estimate of Risks

Could this study involve the following? Please answer each question by putting an **X** in the appropriate boxes:

7a. Could a participant feel demeaned or embarrassed during their participation in the research?

Very unlikely Possibly Likely

7b. Could a participant feel fatigued or stressed due to the research?

Very unlikely Possibly Likely

7c. Could a participant experience any other emotional or psychological discomfort as a consequence of participation?

Very unlikely Possibly Likely

7d. Is there any social risk, possible stigmatization, loss of status, privacy and/or reputation?

Very unlikely Possibly Likely

7e. Are there any physical risks?

Very unlikely Possibly Likely

7f. Could a participant experience any economic risk? (e.g. job security, job loss)

Very unlikely Possibly Likely

7g. Do you see any chance that participants may be harmed in any other way? (e.g. risk to community)

Very unlikely Possibly Likely

8. Possible Risks

If you indicated in Item 7 (a) to (g) that any risks are *possible* or *likely*, please explain below:

8a. What are the risks?

If any of the women interviewed recount unpleasant or frustrating experiences or events that they felt were caused by their gender, they might feel temporarily stressed or upset.

8b. What will you do to try to minimize or prevent the risks?

The participants will be fully aware of the purpose of the study and the benefits, and will be reminded before the interview. As journalists, they will understand the importance of information being publically disseminated, even if it is briefly unpleasant to recall. Their own journalistic work depends on them asking other people often uncomfortable questions, the answers to which will be published in articles written by themselves. The consent form will state that the participants are under no obligation to answer any questions they do not wish to answer and that they are in control of whatever information they choose to share and to what extent they share that information. The consent form will also state that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without question or consequences. It will also make clear that they may choose to be anonymous to the extent possible given the nature of the research and that they may read the transcripts for accuracy.

8c. How will you respond if the risk of harm occurs? (*e.g. what is your plan?*)

If a participant shows any signs of stress or discomfort at any point during the individual or group interview, the individual or group interview will be terminated immediately. At that point, the researcher would ensure she received the option of counselling from her employer's EAP (employee assistance program). The same procedure will be implemented if a participant shows signs of stress or discomfort after the conclusion of the individual or group interview. SUBJECTS WHO DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO EAPS MAY OBTAIN COUNSELLING THROUGH THEIR OWN PHYSICIANS OR HEALTH CLINICS.

9. Deception

Will participants be fully informed of everything that will be required of them prior to the start of the research session?

Yes No (*If no, complete the [Request to Use Deception form](#) on the ORS website.*)

L. Compensation

10. Compensation

10a. Is there any compensation for participating in the research (*e.g. gifts, honorarium, bonus points, reimbursement for transportation, parking, childcare, etc.*)?

Yes No

If yes, explain the nature of the compensation and why you consider it to be necessary:

Also consider if the amount of compensation could be considered to be a form of inducement.

10b. Explain what will happen to compensation if participants withdraw during or anytime after data collection (*e.g. compensation will be pro-rated, full compensation will be given, etc.*).

M. Free and Informed Consent

The following questions address the competence of participants to give consent, the process used in your research to obtain consent, ongoing consent, and the participants' right to withdraw. Consult Appendix V of the Guidelines for further information.

11. Participant's Capacity (Competence) to Provide Free and Informed Consent

Identify your prospective participants: (Check all that apply.)

Competent	Non-Competent
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Competent adults <input type="checkbox"/> A protected or vulnerable population (e.g., inmates, patients)	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-competent adults: <input type="checkbox"/> Consent of family/authorized representative will be obtained <input type="checkbox"/> Assent of the participant will be obtained
<input type="checkbox"/> Competent youth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Youth 13 to 18: consent of youth will be obtained, and parental consent is required due to institutional requirements (e.g. school districts) <input type="checkbox"/> Youth 13 to 16: consent of youth will be obtained, parents will be informed <input type="checkbox"/> Youth 13 to 16: consent of youth will be obtained, parents will <i>NOT</i> be informed <input type="checkbox"/> Youth 17 to 18: consent of youth will be obtained, parents will not be informed 	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-competent youth: <input type="checkbox"/> Consent of parent/guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Assent of the youth will be obtained
<input type="checkbox"/> Competent children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Children under 13: consent of parent/guardian will be obtained, and child consent will be obtained <input type="checkbox"/> Other, explain: 	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-competent children: <input type="checkbox"/> Consent of parent/guardian <input type="checkbox"/> Assent of the child will be obtained

12. Means of Obtaining Consent:

(Check all that apply, attach copies of all consent materials, complete item 13)

- Signed** consent. (Attach consent script(s) and consent form(s) - see [template](#) available on ORS Website)
- Verbal** consent. (Attach information letter(s). Explain below why written consent is not appropriate and how verbal consent will be documented.)
- Implied** consent (e.g. anonymous, mail back or web-based survey. Attach information letter, see [template](#))
- Other** means. (Explain below and provide justification.)
- Consent **will not be obtained**. (Please see [TCPS Article 2.1c](#) and explain below)

Explain consent procedure if "verbal consent," "other" or "consent will not be obtained":

13. Informed Consent

Describe the exact steps you will follow in the process of explaining and obtaining informed consent.

As noted above, at the time of recruitment, each participant will be sent a copy of the consent form. Prior to the in-person (individual or group), telephone or e-mail interviews, I will review the consent form with each participant and answer any questions she might have. In the case of in-person (individual or group) interviews, I will have the participant sign the consent form prior to commencing with the interview; in the case of telephone or e-mail interviews, I will ask the participant to e-mail me a signed consent form. The consent form will clearly state the objectives of the project and how the interview results will be used. It will also state that if at any point the participant wishes to withdraw from the study, she has the right to do so without explanation, penalty, or consequence. In the latter case, if a participant does withdraw, the consent form will indicate that the data gathered thus far will not be used and will be destroyed unless the participant provides written permission to use the data.

14. Ongoing Consent

Ongoing consent is required for research that occurs over multiple occasions and/or multiple research activities and/ or extended periods of time (i.e., more than one point of contact, including second interviews, review of transcripts, etc.)

14a. Will your research occur over multiple occasions or an extended period of time?

Yes No

14b. If yes, describe how you will obtain and document ongoing consent:

In instances when a participant may be interviewed more than once (in-person, over the telephone, or via e-mail), I will review the consent form with the participant prior to each interview and have her re-sign the consent form, thereby indicating ongoing consent.

15. Participant's Right to Withdraw

Free and informed consent requires that participants have the right to withdraw at any time without consequence or explanation.

Describe what participants will be told about their right to withdraw from the research at any time.

It will be clearly stated on the consent form that the participant has the right to withdraw before, during, or after the interview without consequence or explanation, and that any information provided by them will be destroyed unless the participant provides written permission to use the data.

16. What will happen to a person's data if s/he withdraws part way through the study or after the data have been collected/submitted? If applicable, include information about visual data such as photos or videos.

It will not be used in the analysis and will be destroyed.

- It is logistically impossible to remove individual participant data (*e.g. anonymously submitted data*).
- When linked to group data (*e.g. focus group discussions*), it will be used in summarized form with no identifying information. Include this agreement in the consent form.

- It will be used in the analysis if the participant agrees to this. Describe how this agreement will be obtained:

The data will only be used if the participant provides written permission to do so. If permission is not forthcoming, any hard copies of information the participant has provided such as photographs or written word will be shredded, any audio or visually recorded images will be erased, and any computer files will containing data will be deleted.

Free and Informed Consent Checklist:

Attach all documents referenced in this section (*check those that are appended*):

- Consent Form(s) – Include forms for all participant groups and data gathering methods
- Letter(s) of Information for Implied Consent
- Verbal Consent Script

N. Anonymity and Confidentiality

17. Anonymity

Anonymity means that no one, including the principal investigator, is able to associate responses or other data with individual participants.

- 17a. Will the participants be anonymous in the data gathering phase of research?

Yes No

- 17b. Will the participants be anonymous in the dissemination of results (*be sure to consider use of video, photos*)?

Yes No

18. Confidentiality

Confidentiality means the protection of the person's identity (anonymity) and the protection, access, control and security of his or her data and personal information during the recruitment, data collection, reporting of findings, dissemination of data (if relevant) and after the study is completed (e.g., storage).

- 18a. Will the confidentiality of the participants and their data be protected?

No - If confidentiality will not be protected, explain why. If you are asking the participants to waive their right to confidentiality (you plan to identify them with their data), explain what steps will be taken to respect their privacy, if any.

I will be requesting the right to use my participants' names, or, if not their names, their job titles and city, alongside the information they provide. I feel that in looking more deeply into specific experiences of women journalists it is essential to identify at least the city in question, so that the scope of their potential influence as a journalist can be understood. If requested, I will give participants an opportunity to review the interview transcript for accuracy. If requested, I will also give them the opportunity to identify themselves only by pseudonym and job title (for instance, reporter or editor) and by city size and region (for example, Jane Doe, a senior reporter in a mid-sized city in western Canada).

If the participant will speak freely only "off the record," meaning without her name and newspaper but as, for example, Jane Doe, a senior reporter in a mid-sized city in western Canada, then that is how her information will be used.

Yes, completely

Yes, with limits (*Check relevant boxes below.*)

- Limits due to the nature of group activities (*e.g. focus groups*) the researcher can not guarantee confidentiality
- Limits due to context: The nature or size of the sample from which participants are drawn makes it possible to identify individual participants (*e.g. school principals in a small town*)
- Limits due to selection: The procedures for recruiting or selecting participants may compromise the confidentiality of participants (*e.g. participants are identified or referred to the study by a person outside the research team*)
- Limits due to legal requirements for reporting
- Other:

18b. If confidentiality will be protected, describe the procedures to be used to ensure the anonymity of participants and for preserving the confidentiality of their data (*e.g. pseudonyms, changing identifying information and features, coding sheet, etc.*).

18c. If there are limits to confidentiality due to the methods (*e.g. group interview*), sample size or legal requirements (*e.g. reporting child abuse*) so that you cannot guarantee confidentiality, explain what the limits are and how you will address them with the participants:

If interviews are done in groups, anonymity is compromised and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. In addition, anonymity may be compromised due to the recruitment methods used (e.g. referrals) or to context. These limits will be made clear on the consent form. However, prior to the individual or group interviews, it will be stated verbally and in writing in the consent form that participants are under no obligation to answer any questions they do not wish to. If a participant wishes to remain anonymous as much as is possible under the above circumstances, anonymity and confidentiality will be protected as indicated in 18a. The data will be protected by using a code number to identify the results of the interview which will include audio-tapes, written notes, e-mail correspondence, and the interview transcript. Upon the participant requesting anonymity, no visual images will be included in the project that she has not explicitly agreed to or that she feels will compromise anonymity. Regardless of whether participants request anonymity or not, the confidentiality of the data will be protected by storing audio-tapes, visual files, and all hard copies of the interview data and visual images in a locked cabinet at the researcher's home, and storing any other data (typed transcripts, e-mail correspondence, etc.) in password protected files on the researcher's home computer.

O. Use and Disposal of Data

19. Use(s) of Data

19a. What use(s) will be made of all forms of data collected (*field notes, photos, videos, audiotapes, transcripts, etc.*)?

The data will be used for my PhD dissertation, which will be archived on-line at the University of Victoria. Some interviews of this nature may be done for PhD coursework beginning in May 2009.

19b. Will your research data be analyzed, now or in future, by yourself for purposes other than this research project?

Yes No Possibly

19c. If yes or possibly, how will you obtain consent for future data analysis from the participants (*e.g. request future use in current consent form*)?

The consent form will state that the data may be discussed by me in the future in classes or in the media. If they do not agree, I will use their data only for the dissertation, and not for any other purpose. If they permit a pseudonym for the data dissemination, I will obtain their written consent.

19d. Will your research data be analyzed, now or in future, by other persons for purposes other than explained in this application?

Yes No Possibly

19e. If yes or possibly, by whom and how will you obtain consent from the participants for future data analysis by other researchers (*e.g. request future use in current consent form*)?

20. Commercial Purposes

20a. Do you anticipate that this research will be used for a commercial purpose?

Yes No

20b. If yes, explain how the data will be used for a commercial purpose:

The dissertation data may be of enough public interest to warrant being rewritten and published in book or magazine or web-based form.

20c. If yes, indicate if and how participants will benefit from commercialization.

Participants will benefit from having contributed to a new understanding of, and potential change in, their role as journalists in a democracy, as well as contributing to a new understanding of the ways in which the working lives of journalists are influenced by gender.

21. Maintenance and Disposal of Data

Describe your plans for protecting data during the project, and for preserving, archiving, or destroying all the types of data associated with the research (*e.g. paper records, audio or visual recordings, electronic recordings, coded data*) after the research is completed:

21a. means of storing data (*e.g., a locked filing cabinet, password protected computer files*):

All data stored on the researcher's computer will be stored in password protected files and all audio, printed or visual data will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home, which only the researcher will have a key to. After the completion of this project the paper data, the audio and visual files will be stored in a locked cabinet, and password protected computer files will be put onto CDs and stored likewise.

21b. location of storing data: **2582 Vista Bay Rd., Victoria, B.C. V8P 3E8**

21c. duration of data storage (if data will be kept indefinitely, explain):

If the dissertation is rewritten into a book or magazine article or included in course curricula, the data storage time could be indefinite.

21d. methods of destroying or archiving data:

Audio and visual files will be stored on disks, paper documentation will be stored under lock and key, and password protected computer files will be erased after having been put onto disks and stored likewise.

22. Dissemination

How do you anticipate disseminating the research results? (*Check all that apply*)

- Thesis/Dissertation/Class presentation
- Presentations at scholarly meetings Published article, chapter or book
- Internet Media (*e.g. newspaper, radio, TV*)
- Directly to participants and/or groups involved. Indicate how (*e.g., report, executive summary, newsletter, information session*):

Other, explain:

The dissertation will be archived on-line at the University of Victoria.

P. Researchers

23. Conflict of Interest

23a. Apart from a declared dual-role relationship (Section I, item 3), are you or any of the research team members in a perceived, actual or potential conflict of interest regarding this research project (*e.g. partners in research, private interests in companies or other entities*)?

Yes No

23b. If yes, please provide details of the conflict and how you will manage it:

24. Researcher(s) Qualifications

In light of your research methods, the nature of the research and the characteristics of the participants, what training or qualifications do you and/or your research team have (*e.g. research methods course, language proficiency, committee expertise*)?

I am a PhD student at the University of Victoria and will have completed courses in both community and feminist research, as well as the history of women in journalism and media discourse by the end of 2009. I also have 30 years' experience in journalistic research as a print journalist (reporter, editor, columnist, manager, writing coach).

25. Risk to Researcher(s)

25a. Does this research study pose any risks to the researchers, assistants and data collectors?

No.

25b. If there are any risks, explain the nature of the risks, how they will be minimized, and how they will be responded to if they occur.

Q. Further or Special Questions**26. Multiple Site Research**

26a. Does this project involve collection of data at multiple sites within Canada requiring the approval of other sites, bodies or organizations (*e.g., other ethics board(s)*)?

Yes No

26b. If you responded Yes to 27a. above, list the sites, bodies or organizations:

27. International Research

27a. Will this study be conducted in a country other than Canada?

Yes No

27b. If yes, describe how the laws, customs and regulations of the host country will be addressed:

Attachments*

*Ensure that all applicable attachments are included with all copies of your application. Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be returned to the applicant.

Information for Submission

- Applications may be printed and submitted double-sided
- Do not staple the original application with original signatures
- The two photocopies may be individually stapled or clipped
- Do **not** staple or clip the individual appendices

Title and label attachments as Appendix 1, 2, 3 etc. and attach the following documents (check those that are appended):

Section I - Recruitment Materials:

- Script(s) – in-person, telephone, 3rd party, e-mail, etc.
- Invitation to participate
- Advertisement, Poster, Flyer

Section J - Data Collection Methods:

- Standardized Instrument(s)
- Survey(s), Questionnaire(s)
- Interview and/or Focus Group Questions
- Observation Tools

Section M - Free and Informed Consent:

- Consent Form(s) – Include forms for all participant groups and data gathering methods
- Letter(s) of Information for Implied Consent
- Verbal Consent Script

- Approval from external organizations (or proof of having made a request for permission)
- Permission to gain access to confidential documents or materials
- [Request to Use Deception](#) form
- Human Materials Form
- Other, please describe:

Appendix B

Interview Questions

- a) How did you come to be in this position at the newspaper (describe your career path)? Are you where you want to be? If not, why not? If so, why?
- b) Do you feel that gender is an issue in how you experience being a journalist, and if so, how?
- c) To what do you attribute the low numbers of women in senior positions in Canadian print journalism?
- d) If you are a parent, what impact did (do) your children have on your career? If you remained fulltime in the newsroom as your kids grew up (or are growing), why did you do so? Do you have any regrets about the decision?
- e) Can you describe any specific instances in which you thought your gender had an effect on your working life, including decision-making about stories or any other journalistic or personal issue?
- f) Is there a “level playing field” for women and men in your newsroom? If not, what contributes to that inequality? If the men and women succeed equally, what factors make it so? Have you “succeeded,” however you define that?
- g) Do women in the newsroom gather separately to discuss gender-related issues? What issues come up, and are they ever aired at work, outside the gatherings?
- h) What difference do your efforts make in the news agenda? Do your workplace decision-making affect what Canadians care about? Are women redefining journalism? Can you give me an example?
- i) If you could change how print journalism operates, how would you change it, in terms of its impact on women?

Appendix C

Participant Consent Form

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Junior and Senior Women Print Journalists in Canada

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Junior and Senior Women Print Journalists in Canada* that is being conducted by me, Vivian Smith.

I am an Interdisciplinary Studies PhD student at the University of Victoria. If you have further questions please contact me via email: viviansmith@telus.net or via telephone: 250-472-2498. My cell is 250-686-9596.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Darlene Clover (clover@uvic.ca or 250-721-7816) in the Faculty of Education, Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies; Dr. Lynne Van Luven (lvluven@uvic.ca or 250-721-6602), who is chair of the Department of Writing; and Dr. Annalee Lepp (alepp@uvic.ca or 250-721-1657), who is chair of the Department of Women's Studies.

The purpose of this research project is to gather information about the career experiences of senior women print journalists in Canada. I am interested in discovering what some of the challenges and successes are for women in senior roles as reporters, columnists and editors, and how they perceive their influence on their profession and the community in which they write.

Research of this type is important because gender has always been an important factor in how news is organized and disseminated for Canadians. Women are still underrepresented in newsrooms, but what that might mean for them and for the news agenda has not been widely studied.

You are being asked to participate in this study because of your involvement and experience, former or current, with one or more aspects of Canadian print journalism, as a reporter, freelancer, editor, columnist or manager.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include a 90-minute audio-recorded in-person interview on a date and time, and at a location that is convenient for you. If an in-person interview cannot be arranged, the other options are a telephone interview of the same duration or an e-mail interview. In addition, if the researcher conducts an in-person interview at the newspaper or publication you are a part of, I may seek permission (see below) to take photographs for inclusion in the dissertation. If participants so choose, they can also participate in a group interview of two to three people that will last about 60 minutes. You will also have the option of reviewing the individual or your contribution to the group interview for accuracy, which will take another 30 minutes to one hour of your time. Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including the time that it takes to participate in the interview and if requested, review the interview transcript.

Some potential risks to you from participating in this research include the possibility of experiencing some stress or emotional discomfort due to the nature of the topic. It should be noted that you are under no obligation to answer any questions you do not wish to. You are in control of whatever information you choose to share and to what extent you wish to share that information. You also have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without question or consequences. Should you show any signs of stress or emotional discomfort at any point during the individual or group interview, I will terminate the interview immediately. As the researcher, I will ensure that you have the option of counseling through your employer's EAP. The same procedure will apply if you show signs of stress or emotional discomfort after the conclusion of the individual or group interview.

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include the opportunity to discuss the benefits and challenges of being a woman print journalist, which will assist journalism students in their understanding of the work they hope to pursue; the possible personal benefit of hearing the stories of other women journalists in similar roles; and the opportunity for news-gathering organizations to assess the resulting research with a view to making changes or to stay the course. The benefit to society includes gaining greater understanding of how practitioners decide the nature and content of news, what is important for public discussion in a functioning democracy.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. Your decision to participate should not be unduly influenced by any pre-existing relationship with the researcher. As noted above, if you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will only be used if you provide written permission to do so. If such permission is not forthcoming, then your data will be destroyed by erasing audio-tapes, deleting electronic files and shredding paper documentation, including photographs.

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, as I may interview you more than once, I will review the consent form with you and have you sign it prior to each interview.

In terms of protecting your anonymity, with your permission, I wish to use your name, job title and city of employment alongside the information and data you share with me. As noted above, I am happy to provide you with a copy of the interview transcript (individual or group) so that you can review it for accuracy.

However, if you wish your anonymity to be maintained the following limits to anonymity and confidentiality must be noted. If you choose to participate in a group interview, anonymity is compromised and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. In addition, anonymity may be compromised due to the recruitment methods (for example, referrals) or context. If you wish your anonymity to be maintained as much as possible under these above circumstances, I will use a pseudonym and only identify you by your job title and city of employment or if requested, by city size and region (see below). Regardless of whether you choose to remain anonymous or not, the confidentiality of the data will be protected by using a code number to identify the results of the interview, which will include audio-tapes, written notes, e-mail correspondence, and the interview transcript. In addition, any visual images gathered during the course of the research will not be included in the project unless I receive explicit permission to do so (see below). In addition, audio-tapes, printed interview data and visual images will be stored in a locked cabinet at my home at 2582 Vista Bay Road in Victoria; any other data (typed transcripts, e-mail correspondence, etc.) will be stored in password protected files on my home computer.

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared in the following ways. I will be producing a dissertation that will be read by the committee evaluating the dissertation. The project will be archived on-line at the University of Victoria.

It is my intention to further disseminate the results of this research publically, once it has been accepted by the doctoral committee. This could be in the form of a magazine article, book, interviews, online publication or public speeches. Should this public dissemination occur, you will be contacted in advance of any publication or dissemination for your permission to use the material that you previously supplied and approved for use in the dissertation. If you do not want to be identified, your anonymity will be maintained. You will be identified only as, for example, “a senior editor in a metropolitan newspaper” or “a columnist in a metropolitan newspaper.”

Data from this study will remain in my possession and will be stored on password protected CDs, which will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at my home for an indefinite period.

Individuals who may be contacted regarding this study include me, the researcher, as well as my supervisors at the contact information provided above. You may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Permissions: Please indicate your preference:

a) Anonymity and Confidentiality

I agree to be identified by name and collective affiliation/credited in the results of the study: _____
(Example: Jane Jones, managing editor of the Winnipeg Times)

I agree to have my responses attributed to me by name and collective affiliation in the results:

(Example: Jane Jones, who is managing editor of the Winnipeg Times, reported that....)

I wish to maintain my anonymity and do not wish my name to be included in any written results, but give permission to attach my job title and city or region of employment to a pseudonym: _____
(Example: Pseudo Nym, who is a city editor in Winnipeg or Manitoba,)

I wish to maintain my anonymity and do not wish my name to be included in the written results, but give permission to attach my job title, city size and region to a pseudonym: _____
(Example: Pseudo Nym, who is a city editor in a small city in Manitoba...)

b) Visually Recorded Images/Data

Photos may be taken of the site for **Analysis** ____ **Dissemination*** ____

Photos may be taken of me for **Analysis** ____ **Dissemination*** ____

(*Even if no names are used, the site or you may be recognizable if visual images are shown in the results.)

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

INTERVIEW #1

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature of Participant</i>	<i>Date</i>
----------------------------	---------------------------------	-------------

INTERVIEW #2

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature of Participant</i>	<i>Date</i>
----------------------------	---------------------------------	-------------

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.